

capabilities for spiritual growth, we are still far short of what we can and should be. We should at all times realize that regardless of how much we have accomplished, there is still much more that we must do.

Greatness and humility are perfectly compatible. (Living Each Day)

Harmony

“Even plain water is a miracle when you consider that it is a combination of two gases: Oxygen and hydrogen. The combination is not just a simple mixture, like sugar and tea. The mixture is the result of a chemical reaction that is triggered by an electric shock. Oxygen and gas cannot quench your thirst, nor can hydrogen. But put a spark through them and they become life-giving water.

We are created with two opposite ingredients. The Good and Evil inclinations within us are in constant battle with each other. To serve Hashem properly, we need both two inclinations to discover a way for them to live in Harmony together. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller’s teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

Half the Story

My neighbor Mrs. Hess called me to say she was going to the United States for six months. She needed someone to handle her weekly bank deposits, and a few other minor details like taking in her mail and watching her canary. Would it be too much of an imposition to ask me? We like canaries, and I felt I could handle the rest, so I agreed.

She continued to tell me about her forthcoming trip to her children, and went into detail about their families and where each one of them lived. As she was speaking, I thought to myself, Wonderful! – Now I can get the package to my relative. One of my relatives had been touring and had bought *mezuzos*, but the cases which had been specially ordered weren’t ready when he left. He had asked me if I could pick them up and find someone to bring them. Now Mrs. Hess was going to his town.

I told her the story and asked, “Do you think you could take the *mezuzah* cases?”

“I’d be happy to,” she replied.

“Are you SURE you don’t mind?”

“Well, how many are there?”

“There are twelve, is that okay?”

“Well,” said Mrs. Hess, “if it’s too much, I’ll give you back six.”

I thought to myself, She’s asking me to do her a favor for six long months, week in and week out – and all I’m asking for is one small favor! What does she mean, “I’ll give you back six”? It didn’t make any sense. Why would she say something like that? Then I figured out that she probably had similar experiences in the past. Someone must have said something like, “I’m just going to send a little envelope,” and then they walked in with a large parcel. Perhaps she was concerned that I would send much more than twelve *mezuzah* cases. That was it. That was the *zechus* I found for her.

I was telling the story in a class I attend and one lady said, “Come on – that was just a joke.” And right away, all the other people agreed. “Of course. It’s like giving a person twelve needles and having them say, ‘If it’s too much, I’ll give you back six.’” Someone else in the room offered, “Of course it’s a joke. It’s as if you said, ‘Could you take this sweater? I hope it’s not too much trouble,’ and the person answered, ‘If it’s too much trouble, I’ll cut off the sleeves.’”

Some people are very literal, others are witty. If we aren’t attuned to a style, we may take as an insult what was only meant as a joke. (The Other Side of the Story)

The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT AHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM אֶפְתַּח עֲיָנַי אֶת-קִדְשֵׁי

Haftarah: Yehezkel 20:2-20

APRIL 23-24, 2021 12 IYAR 5781

Early Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **5:53 pm** Shaharit: **5:06, 7:00, 8:00, 8:15, 9:00 am**

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **6:20 pm** Morning Shema by: **8:37 am**

Late Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **7:15 pm** Shabbat Class: **6:00 pm**

Candlelighting: **7:25 pm** Shabbat Minhah: **1:30 & 7:00 pm**

Evening Shema after: **8:23 pm** Shabbat Ends: **8:24 pm (R"Y 8:56 pm)**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Weather permitting, Bircat Halebanah will be said on Saturday night. If not, it may be said until Sunday night, April 25.

A Message from our Rabbi

“You shall be holy” (Vayikra 19:2)

”קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ”

Let us focus on this *misvah* “to be holy.” The *Ramban* famously says that one may not be a “*naval b’reshut Hatorah* – a glutton within Torah guidelines. Even after the numerous 613 *misvot* with all of their details and bylaws, we are still not done. We must still sanctify ourselves with that which is permitted.

Rabbi Avraham Neuberger comments: Now this sounds unfair. One feels like throwing up his arms in protest and complaining, “Let me enjoy myself! I’m keeping the rules with all the details and the Rabbinic fences, and now you tell me to add more restrictions on my own! Am I supposed to be miserable?” Indeed is the Torah anti-pleasure?

Of course not. The point can best be driven home with the following anecdote:

A man was asked by his employer to fly overseas for a business trip, and the company provided him with a seat in business class. As he proceeded to his seat, he noticed the elder Slonimer Rebbe seated in the economy section. He approached the Rebbe and insisted that they switch seats. The Rebbe demurred but the businessman insisted, so the Rebbe relented and went to the more luxurious section. Several hours into the flight, the businessman decided to go up front to see how the Rebbe was faring. To his chagrin, he found the Rebbe reading a sefer while sitting contentedly on the edge of the oversized business-section seat! He had not even used the back of the chair! But then he looked at the Rebbe’s face on which pure contentment was evident. The businessman shrugged his shoulders, smiled to himself and returned to his seat.

Let us focus a moment on the Rebbe. As he was perched on the edge of the chair, was he uncomfortable? Was he experiencing distress or was he enjoying himself? He had not even reclined!

Yet if his facial expression was any indication, he was experiencing pure pleasure. What could be better than sitting and learning without being disturbed?

In telling us to be holy, the Torah is advocating a pro-pleasure position, but it is instructing us which pleasure to choose - the pure pleasures of the soul over the immediate but fleeting pleasures of the body.

If people would only know how much pleasure the *sadikim* have, they would become *sadikim* overnight!

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Nowhere to Turn

In the first of this week's two *Parashiot*, we read of the *Abodah*/service that the *Kohen Gadol* performed in the *Kodesh Hakodashim*/Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. The *Gemara* relates that, upon exiting the *Kodesh Hakodashim*, the *Kohen Gadol* would recite a prayer that included the words: "May this year be rainy . . . and may the prayers of travelers not come before You." *Rashi* explains that the *Kohen Gadol* was praying: "Do not accept the prayers of travelers who ask that it not rain."

During the winter, all of the Jewish People – especially the farmers and other inhabitants of *Eress Yisrael* who are dependent on rain for food and drinking water – pray that it will rain. Why would the competing prayer of an individual traveler have a chance of being answered such that the *Kohen Gadol* had to ask Hashem that the traveler's prayer be rejected?

This teaches us the power of a sincere prayer. While the farmers are praying for rain, they are, at the same time, making contingency plans in the back of their minds in case it doesn't rain. Such a prayer is less accepted by G-d, because the person is not placing himself completely in G-d's hands. Not so the prayer of a person walking along a lonely country road when storm clouds are forming. He knows that he has nowhere else to turn, and he prays with a sincerity born of desperation that gives his prayer special power.

This is what King David meant when he said, "From the straits I called upon G-d; G-d answered me with expansiveness." Because I was in dire straits, He answered me. This also is why we read in *Parashat Shemot*, "During those many days, the king of Egypt died, and *Bnei Yisrael* groaned because of the work, and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to Hashem." The repetition of the phrase "because of the work" emphasizes that their prayer was answered because it originated from desperation. (Rabbi Shlomo Katz)

Darwin and the Hafess Hayim

The *pasuk* states in the beginning of *Parashat Kedoshim*: "A man, his mother and his father he shall fear, and my Sabbaths you shall keep, I am Hashem your G-d." This is the positive Biblical command of treating one's parents with awe and respect. The Torah here links this *misvah* with the *misvah* to observe the Sabbath.

We are all familiar with the exposition the *Talmud* makes on this *pasuk*: If a father tells his son to desecrate the Sabbath or to violate any other prohibition, the *misvah* of honoring and revering his parents is suspended. In other words, the responsibility of honoring and respecting the wishes of the Almighty trumps the responsibility to honor and respect his parents.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky in his *Emet L'Yaakov* offers a novel homiletic interpretation to this *pasuk*, providing a different insight as to why these two *misvot* are

linked. Rav Yaakov says that there is a fundamental difference as to how we view parents (and elders in general for that matter) depending on a very fundamental philosophical question. People who believe that the world was created on its own (e.g., the "Big Bang Theory") and that there was always some kind of matter which developed into the world in which we live, are individuals who feel that this is a godless world. Coinciding with this non-Torah theory is the Theory of Evolution which claims that slowly but surely, over billions of years the world developed. First there was simple life until there developed various forms of animal life, and so forth. We are all familiar with the basics of this theory that man evolved from a primate—an ape or a monkey or whatever it may be. The theory is that slowly but surely these primitive creatures developed until the human beings that we have today came into existence.

According to the theory, modern man is much further along in development than primitive man. Consequently, the further someone moves away from the original "cave man," the more respect the specie deserves. Therefore, the young do not need to honor their elders, but rather vice versa: The elders—who are closer to primitive man—need to honor the young, who are more developed than the older generation.

However, if someone believes in Creation—that G-d created Heaven and Earth in six days and then rested on the seventh—then the most perfect of human beings was the first one—Adam—who was created directly by the Almighty, the handiwork of the *Ribono shel Olam*. With this approach, the further we get away from that first man, and certainly the further we get away from Sinai, we witness a gradual descent of generations. Therefore, in Judaism, it is the young who need to honor the older generation, who are one generation closer to the perfect creation—*Adam haRishon*.

Therefore, the *pasuk* states: "Man, his mother and his father shall he fear; and My Sabbaths he shall observe..." Because what does Shabbat testify? We say it every Friday night: "For in six days Hashem made the Heavens and Earth and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." Shabbat testifies that the Almighty created man (and created everything else in the world as well). Therefore, because of that, people must honor their elders. The elders are closer to perfection than the youth. That, says Rav Yaakov, explains the juxtaposition of the directives to fear parents and to observe the Shabbat.

Then Rav Yaakov adds what he once heard from Rav Elchonon Wasserman: Had Darwin seen the *Hafess Hayim*, he would never have said that man evolved from apes and monkeys. Darwin only saw his own kind of people, which led him to erroneously speculate that man descended from apes. Anyone who had ever seen the likes of the great Sages of Israel would never have made such a mistake. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Ethics of the Fathers

"חִבָּה יִתְּרָה נֹדְעַת לוֹ שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְּצֶלֶם"

"Privileged is man, for he was created in the image of G-d, but it was an act of special favor that it was made known to him that he was created in His image." (*Pirke Abot* 3:14)

Knowing who we are and what we are, how much beauty resides within us, and how carefully we must protect ourselves, the wonderful beings that we are, from anything harmful, should not at all result in vanity or conceit. We should be able to recognize our greatness as a Divine blessing.

Indeed, if we were only truly aware of our greatness, this would inspire us to great performance. At the same time this would make us humble because we would realize that we have not fulfilled our potential. Rather than being vain and expecting honor and acclaim for what we have done, we would understand that given our enormous