

and sleep on the earth." (Pirke Aboi 6:4)

Does observance of Torah require living a life of poverty and depriving ourselves of all the niceties of the world? Certainly not. The *Talmud* is elaborating upon another *Talmudic* statement: "Who is wealthy? One who is content with his portion." (4:1)

People who can be happy with the basics of life - food, clothing and shelter - can truly enjoy the luxuries of life, because they can be happy even without them. Those whose happiness depends upon luxuries are likely to be always dissatisfied, in constant need of more, and consequently unhappy, even if they have everything they desire.

A wise man once observed a display of various items in a store window. "I never knew there were so many things I can get along without," he said.

If bread and water can satisfy us, then we can enjoy a steak. If we are not satisfied unless we have caviar, we will discover that even caviar is not enough. (Growing Each Day)

Kosher Media

"A person can allow his awareness of Hashem to be dissipated by exposing himself from time to time to the corrupting influence of the wicked liberal newspapers and magazines that are constantly speaking of subjects like evolution, the theater, arts and homosexuality. All the wickedness entering his mind will surely destroy all of his noble thoughts."

With social media today, it is extremely easy to be influenced by unkosher influence. It is important to put walls up on our access to such influences. Kosher Media is one of the fences that we can put up to protect ourselves and families from spiritual toxicity. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller's teachings - permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

A Solid Investment

Velvel Bernstein was a wholesale distributor of toys who, in 1973, was the only firm of its size to be closed on Shabbat and holidays. One day, he called his son-in-law, who worked for him, into his office and told him, "I am about to make a wrong business decision, but it is, at the same time, a correct ethical decision."

He explained that the company which had given him his first big break, and had made his business what it was today, was now on the verge of financial collapse. They were now asking Velvel for credit so they could rebuild themselves, and Velvel knew he would be taking a chance.

"I have no justification for giving them credit. Chances are that they won't make it and I'll never see any of the money. But I owe them a debt of gratitude. When I needed to expand, they were there to give me that break. Their assistance helped bring about my success. My accountant tells me not to do it, but nevertheless I will give them the goods on credit. I owe it to them, and I feel that this is what Hashem would want me to do."

Velvel gave the credit, then sadly watched when they went bankrupt at the end of the season. He lost \$82,000 on the deal, but he had no regrets. He felt sure he had done what was right. He wrote it off as a bad debt and that, he thought, was the end of it.

A year passed. Another toy company formed out of the ashes of the bankrupt company. To stay on good terms with the vendors in the toy trade, they decided to pay back all the old debts. Surprised, Velvel said, "I've already written it off as a bad debt!"

"But we'd really like to clear up all the old debts," they insisted. "What about accepting stock in our new company for the value of the debt?"

Velvel agreed to that idea. He never looked at the stocks until four years later, when he decided to sell them. The stock? Toys 'R' Us. The value? One million, seven hundred thousand dollars. (Visions of Greatness III)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהֵיכָל

בס"ד

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SHABBAT BEMIDBAR ✪ שַׁבַּת בְּמִדְבָּר

Haftarah: Hoshea 2:1-22

MAY 14-15, 2021 4 SIVAN 5781

Early Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 6:09 pm	Shaharit: 4:42, 7:00, 8:00, 8:15, 9:00 am
Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 6:36 pm	Morning Shema by: 8:21 am
Late Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 7:30 pm	Shabbat Class: 6:25 pm
Candlelighting: 7:46 pm	Shabbat Minhah: 1:30 & 7:25 pm
Evening Shema and Omer after: 8:44 pm	Shabbat Ends: 8:45 pm (R"Y 9:17 pm)

Day 48 of the Omer These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Rabbi Dabbah's Ladies' class will be in the main floor midrash at 6:25 pm.

A Message from our Rabbi

”וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה...חֶמֶץ תִּפְאֶפְיָנָה בְּכֹרִים לָהּ”

“And you shall offer a new meal offering...they shall be baked leavened first fruits to Hashem” (Vayikra 23:16-17)

In *Parashat Emor*, the holiday discusses the holiday of Shabuot. The offering is baked into two loaves of bread of *hametz*. This is unusual since *hametz* is never brought alone; it's usually non-*hametz*. *Hametz* represents the *yesser hara*, our physical desires. Why, on the holiday of Shabuot which celebrates the giving of the Torah, do we bring *hametz*!

Rabbi Reuven Trop zt"l explains that Shabuot is also the holiday of *bikkurim*, the bringing of the first fruits. There is a debate regarding other holidays whether it should be celebrated with meals or *misvot*. However all opinions agree that on Shabuot we must celebrate with meals. We don't study Torah all day. Even though we received the Torah we have meals, because on this holiday we learned, when we received the Torah, that there is no real conflict between the *yesser hara* and the *yesser hatob*. The physical needs of a person are important because through those needs, we realize all the food and everything else is from Hashem.

The *yesser hatob* which urges us to do *misvot* and the and the *yesser hara* which urges us to have physical pleasures are both creations of Hashem, to bring us closer to Him. It's man that has made the two *yessers* argue, but they are not really arguing. That's why on Pesah, which was before the giving of the Torah, the meal offering of the *Omer* was

not *hametz*. It represented the *yesser hara* as the enemy. Now on Shabuot we understand that the *yesser hara* could be our ally.

Let us celebrate this wonderful holiday of Shabuot with Torah and meals, as they all bring us closer to Hashem.

Shabbat Shalom and Tizku l'shanim rabot

Rabbi Reuven Semah

The Little Things Count

Bemidbar is known as the Book of Numbers. Moshe is told to count all the males from age twenty and up. One tribe, however, was not counted together with the general population. *Shebet Levi* was counted separately and differently. Though the all the other tribe's males were counted only from age twenty and older, even the babies of the tribe of Levi were counted. Even infants from age thirty days and above were counted!

All the other tribes were counted in relation to military age —twenty-years old. What made the tribe of Levi different? Why were the infants counted? In fact, even a day old baby would have been counted if not for the fact that until one-month of age the infant was of questionable viability. Why is *Shebet Levi's* count intrinsically different?

A number of years ago a dear friend of mine, I'll call him Dovy, received a knock on the door of his home in Pittsburgh. A distinguished looking man stood at Dovy's door. He had a beard and looked at least ten years older than Dovy. He appeared to be either a Rebbi in a Yeshiva or a leader of a congregation. Dovy went for his checkbook.

"I just came to your home to say thank you," he said gratefully. "Thank you?" asked my friend in astonishment. "I don't even know who you are! In fact I don't even think I ever saw you in my life!" "Let me explain," said the visitor in a clear and reassuring tone. "About 15 or 20 years ago, you must have been no more than ten, I visited Pittsburgh. At that time, I was totally non-observant. I was facing many paths in my life. I lacked vision and direction. I explored returning to my roots, but I was not moved. Then I met you."

Dovy looked at him incredulously. "Me?" He thought. "What do I have to do with this Rabbi? And besides I was only about ten years old at the time."

The Rabbi continued as if he read Dovy's mind. "You were about ten years old and returning from a ball game. Your *sisit* were flying in every direction and beads of sweat were still on your face. And you were running.

"I stopped you to ask where you were going. You told me about *Minhah*, we spoke about what you were learning in school. To you it was just the way of life, normal routine, but to me I saw something else. I saw a pure enthusiasm for everything Jewish from prayer to *Talmud*. All from a ten-year-old-kid. I asked for and made a note of your name.

"I left college to study in Israel. I did well. I am now a teacher in an Israel yeshiva. All these years I made sure to remember to thank the little kid whose little acts made the biggest impact on my life. You taught me something that no teacher had ever taught me!"

Each tribe had a role for the Jewish nation. But the tribe of Levi's role was unique. Their members were the teachers and mentors of the Jewish people and they were counted in that vein. And being that their role was different, they were counted in a totally different manner — separately and beginning at a much younger age.

The Torah teaches us that when counting the tribe of teachers, one need not start appreciating only those who are ordained as official Rabbis. One need not focus his appreciation for those who are over twenty, or even over *Bar-Misvah*. He can learn from a child who is one-month-old as well. Even the child whose *sisit* are flying as he runs home from playing in the yard, has something to teach. If he is immersed in the world of the Levite — the world of teaching Torah, then he is part of the teacher tribe — and he counts! And if he counts, you can count him as well! (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

Rallying Round the Flag

In the beginning of Parashat Bemidbar, the *pasuk* says, "The Children of Israel shall encamp, each man by his flag (banner) according to the insignias of their fathers' household..." The Torah describes the method and order by which the Children of Israel traveled in the Wilderness. The twelve Tribes were divided into four camps. Each camp had its own flag.

The *Midrash* states that when G-d revealed Himself on Mt. Sinai, there were 22 myriads of angels with him and all of the angels had flags (as is written "*Dagul m'revava*." When the Jews saw that the angels had flags, they too had a strong desire for flags. They said "If only we too could have flags like the angels." G-d then swore to them that the time would come when they too would have flags. That time came in *Parashat Bemidbar*, when the tribes and encampments were each assigned flags (*degalim*).

A flag is a very physical item. Angels are entirely spiritual. Why would angels need flags? Furthermore, what was the strong desire that the Jews had for flags? The *Netivot Shalom* writes that flags demonstrate the mission (*tachlit*) of every single group. This is true. We are not necessarily very conscious of the military, but think about it: The army has its own flag, the navy has its own flag, the air force has its own flag. Every branch of the service has its own flag. Every flag somehow identifies what the unit or group is all about.

When *Hazal* say the angels came down with flags, it is a way of saying that every angel has its own mission and purpose of existence. The flag demonstrates what the angel is all about. This also explains the tremendous passion that *Klal Yisrael* had for flags. When the Jews saw the flags that proclaimed that every angel had a mission and purpose they proclaimed "*Halevai* (if only) we too would have such flags!"

Is there anything greater that a person wants out of life other than to know what his '*tafkid*' (mission) is and what his purpose is and what he should do with his life? They strongly desired something which would testify to the fact that each of them had a defined purpose, as was the case with the angels. The Almighty responded "Yes. Every tribe will have its flag. Every camp will have its flag. "Even though physically, every Jew does not walk around with his own personal flag, he does have his '*tafkid*' (mission). He has his purpose (*tachlit*). That is what the flags are all about.

This is perhaps why *Parashat Bemidbar* always precedes Shabuot. The *Halacha* teaches: "Count, then observe the Holiday of *Aseret*. First experience *Parashat Bemidbar* and then experience Shabuot. One of the conditions of receiving the Torah was that "Israel encamped (singular verb) opposite the mountain." When the Almighty saw that Israel rejected disputes and loved one another, He concluded that the time had arrived to give them the Torah. Unity amongst *Klal Yisrael* is a prerequisite for *Kabalat haTorah*. There cannot be competition and jealousy. There cannot be "I want this guy's job. I want this thing. I want that thing. "People will not be jealous of one another if they know they are fulfilling their purpose in life. In order for that to be true, they must know why they are here and what purpose they are fulfilling. Only when there is confusion of personal mission does dispute enter into the picture.

Therefore, first count, then celebrate *Aseret*. When we learn the lesson of the flags - that every angel has his purpose and every Jew has his purpose (every Jew counts) - then we can arrive at *Kabalat HaTorah* (receiving the Torah). (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Ethics of the Fathers

"כֹּדֵד הִיא דְרָבָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה, פֶּת בְּמֶלַח תֹּאכֵל וּמִים בְּמִשׁוֹרָה תִשְׁתֶּה וְעַל הָאֶרֶץ תִּישָׂר"
"This is the way of Torah: eat bread with salt, drink water by measure,