

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

YITRO

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 6:1-13
JANUARY 29-30, 2016 20 SHEBAT 5776

**DEDICATIONS: In memory of Eliyahu Ben Esther 21 Shebat and Sarina Bat Victoria 24 Shebat
And for a refuah shelemah – Hava – Evelyn bat Esther**

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Editors Notes

This week we read of the revelation at Sinai and the giving of the Aseret HaDibrot, the Ten Statements (Commandments) in the portion we call Yitro. Yitro is the father-in-law of Moses and is honored in having this important Parsha named for him, perhaps because he is the first to openly bless Hashem. Yitro gives advice to Moses on governing the people. Yitro is called the Priest of Midyan and the Rabbis elaborate that he experimented with every known religion until he came to the realization of the truth in the One Al-Mighty G-d. The Talmud tells us that Yitro was one of Pharaoh's counselors along with Bilaam and Job. When the prophecy was told of the birth of a baby who would redeem the people from slavery, Pharaoh consulted with his advisors. Balaam advocated the destruction of the children, Job remained silent, and Jethro defending the children of Israel fled to Midian. And Yitro is called the first convert.

The portion begins with the words, and Yitro heard. The question asked by Rashi is, "What did Yitro hear that made him come? He heard about the splitting of the sea and the war against Amalek." And what did he come to do? He came to convert.

Now one can readily understand why the miracle of the splitting of the sea would prompt someone to convert, especially Yitro. The Rabbis explain that Pharaoh decided to kill the baby boys in the water for a number of reasons. One being, that Pharaoh understood that the Creator promised never to bring a flood to the world. Since Pharaoh rejected any possibility of individual Divine providence, he felt that he had nothing to fear from the water. Yitro who was present and heard the king's rationale, saw the Midah KeNeged Midah, which means "measure for measure." This is better understood in the full statement, Bamidah she'adam moded ba, modedin

lo; or "by the measure that a man measures, they measure to him." Given the ten plagues and the destruction of all of Egypt at the splitting of the sea, Yitro understood absolutely and without doubt that G-d the creator is also running the show and that there is detailed Divine supervision of every occurrence and every creature. Additionally as we read each day, Az nivhalu alufei edom, Edom's chiefs panicked; elei moav yochazemo ra-ad, Moab's heroes were seized with trembling; namogu kol yoshvei kenaan, Canaan's residents melted away. If ever there was a moment in history when Israel was on top, then this was it.

And all this brings me to a question. If the reason for his conversion was because Israel was undoubtedly on top at that moment, doesn't the Talmud teach that it's precisely at that moment when we are forbidden from accepting converts? The Rabbis write, "We (the Jewish people) will not accept converts in the Messianic Era, similarly, they did not accept converts, neither during the time of [King] David, nor during the time of [King] Solomon. (Avodah Zarah 3b) I believe that this is precisely why Rashi quotes the second opinion of the Talmud as to what Yitro heard. Rabbi Yehoshua says that he heard about the war with Amalek.

Amalek does not attack Israel in defense of their land or of themselves. The motivation is simple and pure hatred. They have nothing to gain and everything to lose. The Israelites were a nation that had just experienced an exodus from the world's most powerful country and had the entire world in awe of them. Suddenly, without warning, Amalek attacked them; what they accomplished was that they had cooled down the boiling hot bath, without regard for themselves, their losses and their own pain. Up until that point the children of Israel were viewed as invulnerable and untouchable-but Amalek disproved that attitude to the world by attacking them.

"And he attacked the hindmost of you, all those who were feeble at the back." This is the way of those who hate us, to attack the most vulnerable. And although Moses sent Joshua to battle Amalek while he prayed together with Aaron and Hur, the war ended far short of a sweeping Israelite victory. We know that Joshua "weakened Amalek by the sword",

but for the most part this battle seemed to end in a stalemate. And Amalek would remain with us always. My own conclusion (typically I am only a tape recorder playing back what I have learned – in this case I am making a suggestion which you are invited to accept or not) is that accepting Judaism based on the miracles of the crossing of the sea is not possible. But tempering the miracles with the reality of Amalek, with the reality of Anti-Semitism unafraid to raise its head only days later, means that Yitro saw the entire picture.

Yes, we are the chosen people. Yes, we stood at Sinai and heard the words of the Creator Himself. Yes, G-d is involved in each of our lives moment by moment. We see it in the miracles of our own day; the miracles of the six day war and the miracles of building a land. A generation ago the death knell was heard, the tolling of the bell was impossible to miss, both Jews and non-Jews predicted the demise of a Torah observant people. Yet today we see more people learning than at any other point since the destruction of the Temple 2000 years ago. We see more acts of kindness and charity. This is a G-d's miracle. But we have seen up close what Amalek can do. And still today there is Amalek in the world.

The atrocities committed by our enemies during World War Two are horrible beyond understanding, but even more upsetting are when we hear of the atrocities committed by our friends. I was sent a story this week of the death at 91 of David Stoliar who for many years remained a silent witness to the worst civilian maritime disaster of World War II and was the only survivor among nearly 800 Jews fleeing the Holocaust in Romania aboard a refugee ship that was barred from Palestine, interned by Turkey for months, set adrift without power and torpedoed by a Soviet submarine in the Black Sea in 1942.

As the NY Times noted: "The sinking of the overloaded ship, a 150-foot steamer called the Struma, was a calamity compounded by Britain's refusal to admit the refugees into Palestine and by Turkey's 71-day quarantine, ending with the vessel being towed out to sea. The coup de grâce was fired by the submarine as the ship lay dead in the water seven miles offshore.

"The war in Europe had been underway for two years and Jews in Romania, their numbers swollen by refugees from Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary, were perishing under the nation's fascist Iron Guard. Thousands hoped for passage out of Constanza, Romania's port on the Black Sea, and through the Bosphorus to Palestine. Their desperation was ripe for exploitation.

"On Dec. 11, 1941, the Struma left Constanza with more than 790 Romanian, Bulgarian and Russian Jews — the number is still disputed — crammed into a squalid, leaky former cattle boat with bunks stacked 10 high, little food or fresh water, no kitchen and only eight toilets. There were no life preservers and just two small lifeboats. The crew of 10 was mostly Bulgarians.

"Passengers paid up to \$1,000 each, gouged by a charlatan who lied about the ship's seaworthiness and visas, which were never provided. Mr. Stoliar's father, a textile manufacturer, paid his passage. When the engine failed a few miles out, the captain of a passing tug repaired it in exchange for the passengers' wedding rings, their last valuables. "Three days later, as the Struma limped toward Turkey, the engines failed again. Turkish tugs towed it into the Bosphorus, the divide of Europe and Asia. Neutral Turkey, whose leaders feared angering either Britain or Germany, interned the Struma offshore while its fate was considered. Istanbul's Jews donated food, but conditions onboard deteriorated as talks dragged on.

"Britain, which had control of Palestine, limited Jewish immigration to avoid antagonizing the Arabs, and refused to let the passengers continue without visas. Ten were allowed to disembark in Istanbul: a woman who suffered a miscarriage, and nine others helped by an American oil executive, the Jewish Agency in Palestine and a Turkish Jew who aided refugees.

"Finally, the Turks cut the Struma's anchor, towed the ship back into the Black Sea and set it adrift. It was spotted the next day by a Soviet sub, identified years later as SC-213. Its commander had standing orders from Stalin to sink all neutral ships in the Black Sea to prevent supplies from reaching Germany. "Despite the target's benign profile, a torpedo was fired at it dawn on Feb. 24, 1942. In a gray overcast sky, it struck amidships with an explosion that tore the Struma apart." Everyone but Mr. Stoliar died either in the explosion, by drowning or from hypothermia.

Yitro came to convert. True, he heard of the miracles and had firsthand knowledge of G-d's Divine Providence, but he also knew that there was evil in the world as personified by Amalek and those who would carry his banner; some who announce themselves as our enemies, but also by those who claim to be our friends, and it's up to us to change the world and eliminate that evil.

Shabbat Shalom, David Bibi

Another UN disgrace Boaz Bismuth

Earlier this week, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon gave us a lesson in behavioral science. After he explained, during a discussion on the situation in the Middle East, that he opposes construction in the settlements, he went on to add that it is "human nature" to resist occupation. In crazy days such as these, when Israeli civilians have been stabbed and murdered for four months on end in this most recent wave of terror, we can only wonder if it is also "U.N. nature" to grant Palestinian terrorists the legitimacy to kill.

"Palestinian frustration is growing under the weight of a half century of occupation and the paralysis of the peace process," he said. "Some have taken me to task for pointing out this indisputable truth. Yet, as oppressed peoples have demonstrated throughout the ages, it is human nature to react to occupation, which often serves as a potent incubator of hate and extremism."

Ban also condemned the acts of violence while mentioning Palestinian terror, but considering his outlandish declarations in support of terror, the only conclusion we can reach is that Ban essentially condemned and justified, justified and condemned, this terrorism. It is disgraceful, it is dangerous, it is uncouth -- but mostly it is also a testament to ignorance or hypocrisy, maybe both.

On second thought, perhaps this explains why the Middle East is so dilapidated and broken. The international community and the person at the helm of the United Nations do not understand the "nature of the Middle East" or simply do not want to understand. They do not comprehend the rules of the game and the root of the conflict. They also do not want to understand the extent to which history and geography dictate our future here. Not to mention religion -- for better or for worse. The bottom line from the secretary-general's ignorant/hypocritical (take your pick) statement is that the Jewish state is the de facto punching bag, in the same week that International Holocaust Remembrance Day is being commemorated. What's new?

From the perspective of French Nobel laureate Albert Camus, terror is terror, and it doesn't matter who is perpetrating it and where. It cannot be justified. Camus used his play "The Just Assassins" to brilliantly convey, through his philosophical-humane prism, the subject of terrorism and its legitimacy.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading Yitro - Matan Torah

- 1- Yitro comes to be part of the nation of Israel
- 2 - Yitro advises Moshe to set up different levels of judges instead of judging all cases himself
- 3- Moshe follow the advice of Yitro
- 4- Benei Israel encamp by har sinai. Hashem offers us, through Moshe, to be his special nation
- 5- Benei Israel accepts. They ask to hear directly from Hashem and prepare for 3 days.
- 6- The 10 commandments
- 7- Benei Israel are afraid and ask that Hashem not speak to them directly but rather through Moshe

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"And Yitro heard." (Shemot 18:1)

This is the perashah which tells us about the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, perhaps the greatest event that ever took place in the world. Wouldn't it be proper to have the entire perashah devoted to that special occurrence, rather than begin with Yitro joining the Jewish? What was so important about Yitro that this had to precede Matan Torah?

The answer is the first word - גִּוְיָוִי - and he heard! The Torah is teaching us that if we don't hear, we will not be able to receive the Torah. Hearing means being able to concentrate and focus on someone else and not only on ourselves. It means to accept that we're not perfect and we can hear advice and criticism. The whole world was aware that the Jews came out of Egypt with great miracles but did nothing about it. Yitro, however, heard and came. Because he was willing to truly hear and understand, he changed his own life and ultimately gave some very useful advice to Moshe. That is why the giving of the Torah must be preceded by the story of Yitro, to teach us what hearing can bring.

We often ask others how they are, but do we really hear their answers? Our kids are constantly talking to us, but are we truly listening? Even if we do allow the words of others to enter our ears, do we hear "between the lines"? Let us learn from Yitro to truly hear and listen to what's around us and this will make our lives a little bit better. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

There are billions of people on this earth, most of whom you will never get to meet. There are others whose paths will cross yours once, very briefly. Still others are relatives who will spend hours and hours influencing your development and

attitudes. And then there is one more group from whom you may benefit: your neighbors.

Hashem, in His Divine wisdom, puts people in close proximity to each other. Those of us whose eyes and minds are open to growth may take advantage of the people that Hashem places in the next apartment, the neighboring office, the school dormitory, or the same camp bunk. They are there every day for us to learn from. They see situations differently than we do. Their overall perspective on how to handle life's challenges may be a far cry from our own.

The problem is that many people live in close proximity to others without ever communicating with them. A kind gesture, a smile and a good morning, the sharing of good news or a happy occasion – any of these might be enough to open the floodgates of friendship.

When you make that inevitable contact with your neighbors, do something to communicate with them. Give them the opportunity to reciprocate. You may convert a cool or nonexistent relationship into a warm and beneficial lifelong friendship. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR
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Taking Advice

The Torah in Parashat Yitro tells about the arrival of Moshe's father-in-law, Yitro – for whom the Parasha is named – to join Beneh Yisrael as they encamped at Mount Sinai. Yitro was formerly an idolater – in fact, he was the pagan priest of Midyan –and he now embraced the belief in the one, true God and underwent conversion to become part of Am Yisrael.

The Torah tells that after Yitro's arrival, he advised Moshe to change his procedure of judging the people and answering their questions. Yitro saw that Moshe handled all the nation's questions personally. The people stood in a long line waiting for their turn to bring their questions and disputes to Moshe. Yitro alerted Moshe to the fact that he cannot shoulder this burden by himself; it is simply too much for one person to handle. He urged Moshe to establish a network of scholars and judges to whom the people could bring their questions, such that Moshe would be called upon to decide only the most difficult cases. Moshe accepted Yitro's advice, and he appointed scholarly and righteous men to serve as judges to help him bear the responsibility of resolving the people's questions.

We know from elsewhere that Moshe appointed judges only after God commanded him to do so. This

measure was taken not as a result of Yitro's suggestion, but rather in fulfillment of the divine command. The obvious question thus arises as to why God waited until after Yitro proposed the idea before instructing Moshe to appoint a judicial network. If this is what God wanted, why had he not told Moshe to make these appointments earlier? Why was it necessary for Yitro to first suggest the idea before God issued the command?

It seems that God wanted to demonstrate the importance of seeking and accepting advice, even from people of lesser stature. He of course wanted Moshe to appoint judges; but He decided to allow Yitro to make the suggestion so that Moshe could accept the advice and thereby teach us an important lesson. Yitro was formerly a pagan priest, deeply entrenched in the world of idolatry. He had only recently come to the Israelite camp and accepted the belief in God. Without question, Moshe's credentials far surpassed his. Moshe was God's personally appointed messenger, the greatest prophet that every lived. We might have expected Moshe to say something to the effect of, "Who are you to start telling me how to run the nation? Don't you think I have more experience than you? And don't realize that God Himself tells me what to do?"

But instead, Moshe humbly listened and accepted Yitro's advice, to show us that a person should never feel too proud or too important to hear or accept advice, regardless of who offered it.

In Parashat Bereshit, we read that before God created Adam, He said, "Na'aseh Adam" ("Let us make man"), as if speaking to other people. The Sages explain that before the creation of man, God "consulted," as it were, with the heavenly angels. Obviously, this was His decision, and not theirs. Nevertheless, God convened a "meeting," so-to-speak, in order to teach us the importance of consultation, of hearing another opinion, of listening to what others have to say.

A person with a healthy ego welcomes other opinions and other people's advice. He feels confident enough in his capabilities to hear a different view, and even to defer to another person's expertise. It is the insecure person who feels uneasy about consulting, who is afraid to expose himself the possibility that somebody else might have an idea that he did not think of himself.

The remarkable story of Moshe and Yitro thus teaches a critically important lesson about humble regard for other people's advice. We have much to gain by availing ourselves of the ideas and

knowledge of the people around us, rather than stubbornly insisting that we have all the answers and all the right ideas. If Moshe could accept advice from Yitro, then we certainly should be prepared to hear and accept the advice of our colleagues and peers.

**VICTOR BIBI
SOD HAPARASHA**

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**Rabbi Wein
RIVALRIES**

Being raised as an only child in my parents' home I was spared the experiences and challenges of sibling rivalries. Not having anyone to compete with I was blissfully unaware that there were others who felt that they were also entitled to parental love, weekly allowances and unlimited bathroom privileges. No one ever dared to wear my clothing, play with my toys or read my books without my permission.

Naturally, in school and yeshiva there were constant rivalries but in the main they were never really personal or long lasting. Yet, as all of the biblical commentators point out to us, the book of Bereshith, which we have recently completed in the yearly cycle of Torah readings, is really the book of sibling rivalries. Cain and Abel, Avraham and Lot, Ishmael and Yitzchak, Yaakov and Eisav, Rochel and Leah, Yosef and his brothers are all examples of the intensity of emotion and of the sometime dire consequences of sibling and familial rivalries.

And the consequences and results of these rivalries, over the span of human history and millennia have been great, often tragic and of unending influence. The current turmoil in the Middle East of Sunni versus Shiite, Moslems versus Christians and Jews, and the Arab world against Israel are all basically products of ancient sibling rivalries perpetuated through the ages by familial traditions and the inherent evil nature of human beings.

Currently in USA, I am witness to the interaction of my grandchildren and great- grandchildren, I am happy to report that sibling rivalry is thriving and certainly is alive and well. This is pretty sobering for the old patriarch of the family who firmly believes that all of his offspring are pious, perfect, peaceful and generous to a fault. But as the old Yiddish aphorism goes: "In a time of plague, my goat apparently is also an animal."

So what is to be done to try and ameliorate the situation? In many if not most cases, sibling rivalries are outgrown. Many situations in life are resolved simply by benign neglect – not doing anything and letting time and life experiences work their magic. The prophets of Israel seem to indicate that this is what will happen regarding the internal squabbles that plague the Jewish world. "What logic cannot heal, time will."

Unfortunately, patience, silence and waiting are not primarily Jewish traits in our time. But many a serious and even bloody rivalry between families, countries and even religions has dissipated over time. In spite of all of the stabbings, incitement and terrorism that are currently our daily fare, I believe that it is possible for Israel to live in peace, albeit a cold one perhaps, in our ancient homeland.

If we persist in the fatalistic approach that none of our rivalries can ever be overcome, that will certainly fall into the realm of a self-perpetuating prophecy. I regret that I have no plan to recommend as to how to actualize my hopes in this matter. But I am willing to let time run its course and then to see what actually happens.

There is an essential difference between the concept of competitiveness and that of rivalry. Competitiveness presupposes a goal, that if reached, is beneficial to all concerned and is not predicated on the destruction of the "other." Rivalries have less to do with achieving anything but rather concentrate on depriving others of any gain, even trying to destroy that "other."

The rabbis of the Talmud proclaimed that "competitiveness amongst Torah scholars increase wisdom (for all concerned.)" Throughout the Talmud we are aware of the differing and competing opinions and personalities of the great men of Jewish tradition. Yet they are in no way viewed as being rivals. In a strange way, their differences of opinion and even of behavior are blended together into the Talmudic way of life and have shaped Jewish tradition until our very day.

The Talmud records for us the competing views of great scholars without passionate rancor or personal insult. Therefore, there are really no rivalries present on its pages. The lessons of the damaging rivalries narrated to us in the Bible were apparently well learned by the men of the Talmud. They attributed the destruction of the Second Temple to the unreasoning climate of hatred generated by the political, religious and social rivalries of the time.

Better to destroy one's rival than to work with him and compete with him for the common good. The rivalry that remains with us today is a sure recipe for societal sadness, social turmoil and foolish policies. Just look around at our current world of rivalries and dangers.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks To Thank Before We Think

The Ten Commandments are the most famous religious-and-moral code in history. Until recently they adorned American courtrooms. They still adorn most synagogue arks. Rembrandt gave them their classic artistic expression in his portrait of Moses, about to break the tablets on seeing the golden calf. John Rogers Herbert's massive painting of Moses bringing down the tablets of law dominates the main committee room of the House of Lords. The twin tablets with their ten commands are the enduring symbol of eternal law under the sovereignty of God.

It is worth remembering, of course, that the "ten commandments" are not Ten Commandments. The torah calls them aseret hadevarim (Ex. 34:28), and tradition terms them aseret hadibrot, meaning the "ten words" or "ten utterances". We can understand this better in the light of documentary discoveries in the twentieth century, especially Hittite covenants or "suzerainty treaties" dating back to 1400-1200 BCE, that is, around the time of Moses and the exodus. These treaties often contained a twofold statement of the laws laid down in the treaty, first in general outline, then in specific detail. That is precisely the relationship between the "ten utterances" and the detailed commands of parshat Mishpatim (Ex. 22-23). The former are the general outline, the basic principles of the law.

Usually they are portrayed, graphically and substantively, as two sets of five, the first dealing with relationships between us and God (including honouring our parents since they like God brought us into being), the second with the relations between us and our fellow humans.

However, it also makes sense to see them as three groups of three. The first three (one God, no other God, do not take God's name in vain) are about God, the Author and Authority of the laws. The second set (keep Shabbat, honour parents, do not murder) are about createdness. Shabbat reminds us of the birth of the universe. Our parents brought us into being. Murder is forbidden because we are all created in God's image (Gen. 9:6). The third three (don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't bear false witness) are about the basic institutions of society: the sanctity of

marriage, the integrity of private property, and the administration of justice. Lose any of these and freedom begins to crumble.

This structure serves to emphasise what a strange command the tenth is: "Do not be envious of your neighbour's house. Do not be envious of your neighbour's wife, his slave, his maid, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that is your neighbour's." At least on the surface this is different from all the other rules, which involve speech or action.[1] Envy, covetousness, desiring what someone else has, is an emotion, not a thought, a word or a deed. And surely we can't help our emotions. They used to be called the "passions", precisely because we are passive in relation to them. So how can envy be forbidden at all? Surely it only makes sense to command or forbid matters that are within our control. In any case, why should the occasional spasm of envy matter if it does not lead to anything harmful to other people?

Here, it seems to me, the Torah is conveying a series of fundamental truths we forget at our peril. First, as we have been reminded by cognitive behavioural therapy, what we believe affects what we feel.[2] Narcissists, for instance, are quick to take offence because they think other people are talking about or "dissing" (disrespecting) them, whereas often other people aren't interested in us at all. Their belief is false, but that does not stop them feeling angry and resentful.

Second, envy is one of the prime drivers of violence in society. It is what led Iago to mislead Othello with tragic consequences. Closer to home it is what led Cain to murder Abel. It is what led Abraham and then Isaac to fear for their lives when famine forced them temporarily to leave home. They believe that, married as they are to attractive women, the local ruler will kill them so that they can take their wives into their harem.

Most poignantly, envy lay at the heart of the hatred of the brothers for Joseph. They resented his special treatment at the hands of their father, the richly embroidered cloak he wore, and his dreams of becoming the ruler of them all. That is what led them to contemplate killing him and eventually to sell him as a slave.

Rene Girard, in his classic *Violence and the Sacred*, says that the most basic cause of violence is mimetic desire, that is, the desire to have what someone else has, which is ultimately the desire to be what someone else is. Envy can lead to breaking many of the other commands: it can move people to adultery, theft, false testimony and even murder.[3]

Jews have especial reason to fear envy. It surely played a part in the existence of anti-semitism throughout the centuries. Non-Jews envied Jews their ability to prosper in adversity – the strange phenomenon we noted in parshat Shemot that “the more they afflicted them the more they grew and the more they spread.” They also and especially envied them their sense of chosenness (despite the fact that virtually every other nation in history has seen itself as chosen[4]). It is absolutely essential that we, as Jews, should conduct ourselves with an extra measure of humility and modesty.

So the prohibition of envy is not odd at all. It is the most basic force undermining the social harmony and order that are the aim of the Ten Commandments as a whole. Not only though do they forbid it; they also help us rise above it. It is precisely the first three commands, reminding us of God’s presence in history and our lives, and the second three, reminding us of our createdness, that help us rise above envy.

We are here because God wanted us to be. We have what God wanted us to have. Why then should we seek what others have? If what matters most in our lives is how we appear in the eyes of God, why should we want anything else merely because someone else has it? It is when we stop defining ourselves in relation to God and start defining ourselves in relation to other people that competition, strife, covetousness and envy enter our minds, and they lead only to unhappiness.

If your new car makes me envious, I may be motivated to buy a more expensive model that I never needed in the first place, which will give me satisfaction for a few days until I discover another neighbour who has an even more costly vehicle, and so it goes. Should I succeed in satisfying my own envy, I will do so only at the cost of provoking yours, in a cycle of conspicuous consumption that has no natural end. Hence the bumper sticker: “He who has the most toys when he dies, wins.” The operative word here is “toys”, for this is the ethic of the kindergarten, and it should have no place in a mature life.

The antidote to envy is gratitude. “Who is rich?” asked Ben Zoma, and replied, “One who rejoices in what he has.” There is a beautiful Jewish practice that, done daily, is life-transforming. The first words we say on waking are *Modeh ani lefanekha*, “I thank you, living and eternal King.” We thank before we think.

Judaism is gratitude with attitude. Cured of letting

other people’s happiness diminish our own, we release a wave of positive energy allowing us to celebrate what we have instead of thinking about what other people have, and to be what we are instead of wanting to be what we are not.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL “You shall not murder.” (20:13)

This command is an essential corollary of the First Dictum “I am Hashem.” “He that shed the blood of man, by man his blood must be shed, for G-d made man in His image” (Bereshheet 9:6). Included in this Dictum is the duty of rescuing a fellowman’s life, and also the necessity to guard ones own life in safety and in health. Thus RMBM includes these matters under one heading: “Laws of Murder and of Guarding Life” in which he deals also with the law of *Maakeh* (unstable ladder) and similar admonitions of safety.

“You shall not kill” even unintentionally. The entire tractate of *Makot* is here included. And especially today all rules of traffic safety for drivers and pedestrians are certainly intended by this Commandment. The precautions against fire in the home and in public institutions, and the building codes for prevention of fire or collapse, are without question included in this Dictum of Hashem. Parents are here admonished by Hashem to protect children from open windows, burning candles and stove fires and from contracting avoidable illness.

When a husband or wife afflicts a mate so seriously that illness and death are caused, this Commandment has been transgressed. Killing by embarrassment or by depriving of a livelihood is another form of bloodshed. Suicide is also hereby forbidden.

Thus “You shall not kill” Includes: You shall not cause death, or premature death, by neglecting your health or your safety; or by endangering the health or safety of others. One who shortens his own life or his fellowman’s life is a transgressor of this Dictum. Even killing a dying man is included here because even one minute of life is sacred.

Therefore when one wastes his life without purpose, or even part of his life, it is a form of transgression of the intent of this Commandment. Quoted from “A NATION IS BORN” by Rabbi Miller ZT’L

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