

Virtue – Frugality

בַּל תִּשְׁחִית

Bal Tash-chit / frugality

noun / fru·gal·i·ty / frōō'galədē

prudent in saving; the lack of wastefulness

Guide For Your Circle

1

ICE - BREAKER

Ask each person to introduce themselves, and to share with the group:

(a) their name; and

(b) a part of their day they would like to bring with them as they begin this conversation, and/or a part of their day they would like to leave behind

2

RECAP LAST MONTH'S VIRTUE

Ask the group to reflect on how they fared with their commitment from the last month

- Did you achieve your commitments around this virtue?
- What challenges did you face?
- What surprised you about the experience?
- Did your understanding of the virtue change over the month?

3

DISCUSS NEXT MONTH'S VIRTUE

Compare Ben Franklin's definition of the virtue with the passage from Pirkei Avot. Use the questions below to help guide the conversation.

4

MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT:

Before your meeting ends, set a goal for yourself for how you can better live that month's virtue. Share it with the group and plan to follow up on how you did at your next meeting.

Example: For frugality, could you create a daily budget to evaluate what you spend and how? What is worth the money you spend? What isn't?

Side-By-Side: Ben Franklin And Pirkei Avot

BEN FRANKLIN'S DEFINITION:

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself. Waste nothing.

PIRKEI AVOT

(PA 2:7)

The more flesh, the more worms. The more possessions, the more worry. The more wives, the more witchcraft. The more maidservants, the more lewdness. The more man-servants, the more theft. The more Torah, the more life. The more sitting [and studying], the more wisdom. The more counsel, the more understanding. The more charity, the more peace. One who has acquired a good name has acquired for himself. One who has acquired words of Torah has acquired for himself the life of the World to Come.

(PA 4:9)

Rabbi Yonatan says: Anyone who implements the Torah in poverty, his end will be to implement it in wealth. And anyone that disregards the Torah in wealth, will in the end disregard it in poverty.

Questions To Ask The Group

- Both Pirkei Avot passages suggest what we should value and what we shouldn't. How does this coincide with Ben Franklin's definition?
- How does frugality play out in Jewish ritual or holiday life?
- How might you become more frugal? Is frugality a goal for you?
- Conversations about Judaism and frugality are quite loaded – why is this? And what are some ways around it?
- In what ways could our community be more frugal? How can the practice of frugality benefit the community?