

**Freedom**

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)



I am looking at how [Pesach](passover.html) ([Passover](passover.html)) is related to [Shavuot](shavuot.html) ([Feast of Weeks](shavuot.html)). I can see that they both involve freedom.

[Pesach](passover.html) is the feast of [physical](physical.html) freedom.

[Shavuot](shavuot.html) is the feast of total freedom.

[Shavuot](shavuot.html) ([Pentecost](shavuot.html)) appears to be the [time](time.html) of the [betrothal](betroth.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) and Israel. [Betrothal](betroth.html) is [one](one.html) way that we are set free even though we have bound ourselves to another. Most folks seek out, and look forward to, [marriage](mashal.html); even so, we ought to look forward to our [betrothal](betroth.html) with [Mashiach](mashiach.html), the [Messiah](mashiach.html). We should see His dowry, the Torah, as something of value to set us free. This is beautifully illustrated by examining a pasuk and the words contained in it:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 32:16*** *And the tables were the work of G-d, and the script was the script of God, engraved upon the tablets.*

The word for "engraved" in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) is *chorus*, identical except in pronunciation to the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word *cherus* meaning "freedom." Our Hakhamim (Rabbis) understand this similarity to indicate that only the person who spends his [time](time.html) trying to master what is written on the tablets is truly free. A Baraitha in the [Mishna](orallaw.html) emphasizes this point:

***Avot 6:2*** *BARAITHA2. R. JOSHUA B. LEVI SAID: EVERY DAY A BATH* [*KOL*](voice.html) *GOES FORTH FROM MOUNT HOREB, AND MAKES PROCLAMATION AND SAYS: WOE UNTO MEN ON ACCOUNT OF [THEIR] CONTEMPT TOWARDS THE TORAH, FOR WHOEVER OCCUPIES HIMSELF NOT WITH THE [*[*STUDY*](study.html) *OF] TORAH IS CALLED: ‘[THE] REBUKED [*[*ONE*](one.html)*]’ AS IT IS SAID, AS A RING OF GOLD IN A SWINE'S SNOUT, SO IS A FAIR WOMAN THAT TURNETH AWAY FROM DISCRETION, AND IT SAYS, AND THE TABLES WERE THE WORK OF GOD, AND THE WRITING WAS THE WRITING OF GOD, GRAVEN UPON THE TABLES. READ NOT HARUTH [WHICH MEANS ‘GRAVEN’] BUT HERUTH [WHICH MEANS ‘FREEDOM’]. FOR THERE IS NO FREE MAN FOR THEE BUT HE THAT OCCUPIES HIMSELF WITH THE* [*STUDY*](study.html) *OF THE TORAH; AND WHOEVER REGULARLY OCCUPIES HIMSELF WITH THE* [*STUDY*](study.html) *OF THE TORAH, LO, HE IS EXALTED, AS IT IS SAID, AND FROM MATTANAH TO NAHALIEL; AND NAHALIEL TO BAMOTH.*

Notice how often the Torah is associated with freedom:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 119:41-48*** *{Waw} May your unfailing love come to me,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, your* [*salvation*](salvation.html) *according to your promise; Then I will answer the* [*one*](one.html) *who taunts me, for I trust in your word. Do not snatch the word of truth from my* [*mouth*](body.html)*, for I have put my hope in your* [*laws*](law.html)*. I will always obey your* [*law*](law.html)*, for ever and ever. I will* [*walk*](walking.html) *about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts. I will* [*speak*](mashal.html) *of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame, For I delight in your* [*commands*](cmds613.html) *because I love them. I lift up my* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *to your* [*commands*](cmds613.html)*, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees.*

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 61:1-2*** *The Spirit of the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is on me, because* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has anointed me to preach* [*good news*](mishna1.html) *to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, To proclaim the year of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who* [*mourn*](mourning.html)*.*

***Romans 8:18-23*** *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The* [*creation*](bara.html) *waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the* [*creation*](bara.html) *was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the* [*one*](one.html) *who subjected it, in hope That the* [*creation*](bara.html) *itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We* [*know*](daat.html) *that the whole* [*creation*](bara.html) *has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present* [*time*](time.html)*. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the* [*redemption*](redemption.html) *of our* [*bodies*](body.html)*.*

***II Corinthians 3:13-18*** *We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his* [*face*](body.html) *to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *is read. It has not been removed, because only in* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

[***Galatians***](galatian.html) ***5:13-14*** *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve* [*one*](one.html) *another in love. The entire* [*law*](law.html) *is summed up in a single* [*command*](cmds613.html)*: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

[***Yaaqov***](jacob.html) ***(James) 1:22-25*** *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his* [*face*](body.html) *in a mirror And, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect* [*law*](law.html) *that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.*

[***Yaaqov***](jacob.html) ***(James) 2:10-14*** *For whoever keeps the whole* [*law*](law.html) *and yet stumbles at just* [*one*](one.html) *point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *and act as those who are going to be judged by the* [*law*](law.html) *that gives freedom, Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment! What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith* [*save*](salvation.html) *him?*

***I Tzefet (Peter) 2:11-17*** *Dear friends, I urge you, as* [*aliens*](aliens.html) *and strangers in the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, to abstain from sinful* [*desires*](needs.html)*, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every* [*authority*](authority.html) *instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme* [*authority*](authority.html)*, Or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers,* [*fear*](fear.html) *God, honor the king.*

***II Tzefet (Peter) 2:17-21*** *These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they* [*mouth*](body.html) *empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful* [*desires*](needs.html) *of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity--for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the* [*world*](worlds.html) *by knowing our Lord and Savior* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have* [*known*](daat.html) *the way of righteousness, than to have* [*known*](daat.html) *it and then to turn their backs on the sacred* [*command*](cmds613.html) *that was passed on to them.*

A slave was "allowed" to enjoy the freedom of the Torah under certain circumstances:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:43-45***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses and Aaron, "These are the regulations for the* [*Passover*](passover.html)*: "No foreigner is to* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it. Any slave you have bought may* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it after you have* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html) *him, But a temporary resident and a hired worker may not* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 23:12*** *"*[*Six*](six.html) *days do your work, but on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day do not work, so that your ox and your* [*donkey*](chamor.html) *may rest and the slave born in your* [*household*](househld.html)*, and the* [*alien*](aliens.html) *as well, may be refreshed.*

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 22:11*** *But if a* [*priest*](priests.html) *buys a slave with money, or if a slave is born in his* [*household*](househld.html)*, that slave may* [*eat*](eating.html) *his* [*food*](food.html)*.*

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:39*** *"'If* [*one*](one.html) *of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:7*** *If a man is caught kidnapping* [*one*](one.html) *of his brother Israelites and treats him as a slave or sells him, the kidnapper must die. You must purge the evil from among you.*

The Torah freed slaves from abuse:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 21:20-21*** *"If a man beats his* [*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *or* [*female*](male%2Bfemale.html) *slave with a* [*rod*](staff.html) *and the slave dies as a direct result, he must be punished, But he is not to be punished if the slave gets up after a day or* [*two*](two.html)*, since the slave is his property.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 21:32*** *If the bull gores a* [*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *or* [*female*](male%2Bfemale.html) *slave, the owner must pay* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *shekels of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull must be stoned.*

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:20*** *"'If a man sleeps with a woman who is a slave girl promised to another man but who has not been ransomed or given her freedom, there must be due punishment. Yet they are not to be put to death, because she had not been freed.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 21:26-27*** *"If a man hits a manservant or maidservant in the eye and destroys it, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of a manservant or maidservant, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the tooth.*

The Torah gives us a picture of our relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html), through the Torah, in:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 21:2-6*** *"If you buy a* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html) *servant, he is to serve you for* [*six*](six.html) *years. But in the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *year, he shall go free, without paying anything. If he comes alone, he is to go free alone; but if he has a wife when he comes, she is to go with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall belong to her master, and only the man shall go free. "But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' Then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.*

We will be successful if we obey Torah:

***Yehoshua (Joshua) 1:6-9*** *"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to* [*inherit*](inherit.html) *the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the* [*law*](law.html) *my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the* [*Law*](law.html) *depart from your* [*mouth*](body.html)*; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God will be with you wherever you go."*

Let's take a look at what "bondage is". Bondage is being a slave to Pharaoh (HaSatan) in the land of Egypt ([sin](sin.html)):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 15:13*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to him, "*[*Know*](daat.html) *for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated* [*four*](four.html) *hundred years.*

[One](one.html) of the passages often used to promote the fact that the "[law](law.html)" enslaves us, is found in:

[***Galatians***](galatian.html) ***4:4-12*** *But when the* [*time*](time.html) *had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under* [*law*](law.html)*, To* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *those under* [*law*](law.html)*, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, <"Abba>, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. Formerly, when you did not* [*know*](daat.html) *God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you* [*know*](daat.html) *God--or rather are* [*known*](daat.html) *by God--how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I* [*fear*](fear.html) *for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong.*

What ever you decide are the "weak and miserable principles" that previously enslaved us; it is obvious that it is not the Torah because in this passage Paul indicates that freedom can be yours if you become like him. Paul obeyed Torah all of his life! There is not a single example, anywhere in scripture, where Paul violates the Torah without due consequence. Further, at the end of his life he indicates that he has never abandoned the traditions of the [fathers](fathers.html):

***I Corinthians 11:1-2*** *Follow my example, as I follow the example of* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*. I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.*

[HaShem](hashem.html) will rescue His people from slavery and give them freedom:

***Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 34:22-31*** *I will* [*save*](salvation.html) *my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between* [*one*](one.html) *sheep and another. I will place over them* [*one*](one.html) *shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *have spoken. "'I will make a* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and* [*sleep*](mashal.html) *in the forests in safety. I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. The trees of the* [*field*](field.html) *will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will* [*know*](daat.html) *that I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of those who enslaved them. They will no longer be plundered by the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no* [*one*](one.html) *will make them afraid. I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of* [*famine*](famine.html) *in the land or bear the scorn of the* [*nations*](nations.html)*. Then they will* [*know*](daat.html) *that I,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.'"*

Following our own ways is to be a slave. In fact, most of the things done in the [name](name.html) of liberty are [sin](sin.html), and [sin](sin.html) enslaves us.

[Sin](sin.html), therefore, enslaves us! We can see this in:

***Nahum 3:1-6*** *Woe to the* [*city*](city.html) *of* [*blood*](body.html)*, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims! The crack of whips, the clatter of wheels, galloping horses and jolting chariots! Charging cavalry, flashing swords and glittering spears! Many casualties, piles of dead,* [*bodies*](body.html) *without* [*number*](nchart.html)*, people stumbling over the corpses-- All because of the wanton lust of a harlot, alluring, the mistress of sorceries, who enslaved* [*nations*](nations.html) *by her prostitution and peoples by her witchcraft. "I am against you," declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty. "I will lift your skirts over your* [*face*](body.html)*. I will show the* [*nations*](nations.html) *your nakedness and the kingdoms your shame. I will pelt you with filth, I will treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle.*

So, when did [Mashiach](mashiach.html), or Paul, ever violate Torah?

To emphasize that Paul never violated Torah, let’s look at another passage:

***II Luqas (Acts) 26:4-5*** *"The* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *all* [*know*](daat.html) *the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*. They have* [*known*](daat.html) *me for a long* [*time*](time.html) *and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.*

So, when does scripture ever show a Pharisee not upholding the Torah?

To emphasize that Paul never violated Torah, let’s look at another passage:

***II Luqas (Acts) 24:14-16*** *However, I admit that I worship the God of our* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the* [*Law*](law.html) *and that is written in the Prophets, And I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a* [*resurrection*](techiyat.html) *of both the righteous and the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.*

The "[law](law.html)" mentioned above is the word used to translate "Torah", from this quote of Yiremeyahu (Jeremiah) 31:31, in:

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 8:8-12*** *But God found fault with the people and said: "The* [*time*](time.html) *is* [*coming*](coming.html)*, declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, when I will make a* [*new*](new.html)[*covenant*](covenant.html) *with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *I made with their forefathers when I took them by the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *to lead them* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, because they did not remain faithful to my* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*, and I turned away from them, declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. This is the* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *I will make with the house of Israel after that* [*time*](time.html)*, declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. I will put my* [***laws***](law.html) *in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man* [*teach*](teacher.html) *his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, '*[*Know*](daat.html)[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*,' because they will all* [*know*](daat.html) *me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will* [*forgive*](forgive.html) *their* [*wickedness*](wicked.html) *and will remember their* [*sins*](sin.html) *no more."*

Strong's defines this Greek word as:

3551 nomos, nom'-os; from a prim. nemo (to parcel out, espec. [food](food.html) or grazing to animals); [**law**](law.html) (through the idea of prescriptive usage), gen. (regulation), **specifically (of Moses** [includ. the volume]; also of the [Gospel](mishna1.html)), or [fig](bethphag.html). (a principle):-[law](law.html).

Paul is therefore arguing strongly, in [Galatians](galatian.html) 4:4-12, that the Torah sets us free from slavery!

The trip from the land of [sin](sin.html) (Egypt) and the slavery of the man who typifies HaSatan (Pharaoh), was a trip towards freedom that began when we left Pharaoh, became more apparent when we left the land of [sin](sin.html) (Egypt), and culminated in the absolute freedom found in the Torah!

This passage from Hoshea (Hosea) puts [Shavuot](shavuot.html) and [Pesach](passover.html) together:

***Hoshea (Hosea) 2:14-23*** *"Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and* [*speak*](mashal.html) *tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*. "In that day," declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.' I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. In that day I will make a* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *for them with the beasts of the* [*field*](field.html) *and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety. I will* [*betroth*](betroth.html) *you to me forever; I will* [*betroth*](betroth.html) *you in righteousness and justice, in love and* [*compassion*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CShavuot%5Cjonah.html)*. I will* [*betroth*](betroth.html) *you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. "In that day I will respond," declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*--"I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth; And the earth will respond to the grain, the* [*new*](new.html)[*wine*](wine.html) *and oil, and they will respond to Jezreel. I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the* [*one*](one.html) *I called 'Not my loved* [*one*](one.html)*.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'"*

In Egypt, [HaShem](hashem.html) began courting His [future](future.html) bride (the house of Israel) by delivering her from the bondage of Pharaoh. On [Pesach](passover.html), He delivered her from Pharaoh’s (Satan’s) [hand](fourteen.html). On the [seventh](seven.html) day of [Pesach](passover.html), the “day of faith”, He delivered His [future](future.html) bride from the land of Egypt ([sin](sin.html)). But, it was not till [Sinai](stages.html) that the betrothed bride saw a glimpse of real freedom. The bondage of slavery, that binds the bride, will not be broken until Torah is written on her [heart](body.html), by the [hand](fourteen.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html). In that day, we will be truly free.

What is the difference between [*chametz*](chametz.html) and [*matzah*](chametz.html)? It's just a matter of [time](time.html). The same flour and water, dough with which [*matzah*](chametz.html) is made, if left to rest for more than [eighteen](eighteen.html) minutes, becomes what is considered [*chametz*](chametz.html).

It is therefore perhaps wise to bear in mind that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) verb *lematzot* means "to make good use of, to take advantage of, to enjoy" whereas the verb *lehachmitz* means "to waste, to throw away" because the temporal dimension of our tradition comes into its own during [Pesach](passover.html). It is from this point that we count the months, not merely because [Pesach](passover.html) is the [first](one.html) month, but, more fundamentally, because [one](one.html) of the clearest [signs](signs.html) of liberty comes of being able to set temporal standards without having them set for us by others.

It is during these times of crossing seas, these unique moments (as all moments are) that a difference of a few minutes defines where on the coast we end up landing. Freedom, in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) terms, sometimes seems synonymous with non-postponement.



This [study](study.html) was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

(Greg Killian).

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: gkilli@aol.com

Web page: http://www.betemunah.org/

(360) 918-2905

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Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: gkilli@aol.com