1st Seder Weekly Divrei Torah
A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

PARSHAS TOLDOS – IT'S ABOUT TIME

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

"And Eisav became a hunter, a man of the field" (Bereishis 25:27). Rashi comments that the description of Eisav as a man of the field means that he was an idle person. Although Eisav had already begun to pursue his evil ways, the Torah merely states that he was idle and hunted for sport. Why is there is no mention of his wayward ways and his terrible sins?

Rav Shimshon Pincus explains that this description provides the reason that Eisav pursued a life of crime. It was because he was idle and didn't exert himself to engage in any profession or productive venture. Since nature abhors a vacuum, the yeitzer hara rushes in to fill it. Chazal (Kesuvos 59b) state that idleness leads to promiscuity and insanity. When a person does not use his time and talents for worthwhile activities, he provides the yeitzer hara with the perfect opportunity to entice him to evil and corruption. Without responsibilities and constructive ambitions that place demands on his time, one naturally follows the path of least resistance.

"Yaakov was a wholesome man dwelling in tents." Rashi explains that Yaakov dwelt in the tents of Shem and Eiver, studying Torah day and night. Here too, Rav Pincus points out, there is no mention of Yaakov's great piety and his fervent pursuit of truth and honesty for which he is known. The Torah focuses on the cause and reason for his greatness – his diligence. He was totally committed to acquiring the Torah's wisdom, leaving no time for idleness or distractions.

In Maseches Avos (2:2) Rabban Gamliel states, "Torah study is good together with an occupation for the exertion of both of them makes [the temptation to] to sin forgotten." Rabban Gamliel recognizes that the average person cannot be expected to learn full time, day and night, and consequently he will have plenty of spare time for other activities. Without a totally structured schedule he may be left with idle hands. Therefore Rabban Gamliel recommends that he find a profession to occupy himself during the time that he is not learning Torah. This leaves him no time to get into trouble.

We live in an age when even hard working people have plenty of time to spare. Thus there has been a proliferation of pastimes such as sports, attending all types of entertaining attractions, watching hundreds of channels of TV, texting, emailing or surfing the net. Even an observant Jew can have a full time career and set aside time for Torah study, yet still have plenty of time on his hands. It is this vacuum in time which can suck him into pursuits which are highly questionable if not outright forbidden. This is a matter of particular concern with regard to our children. However, with a bit of foresight and motivation, this time can be put to good use with constructive family time, activities of chesed, klal work and maybe even a little more time for Torah study.

Whether one is ten, twenty, forty or seventy years old, time is still our greatest and most valuable asset. It all depends on how we fill it.

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

Please contact R' Ungar (Ymungar@gmail.com) with questions or comments

QUESTION: I placed a fleishig bowl in a milchig sink. Does that make the bowl treif? If while washing a piece of raw salmon it fell into my fleishig sink, is the fish אסור to eat? I used a clean fleishig measuring cup to measure out oatmeal which I then cooked in a milchig pot. May the oatmeal be eaten? We used a clean fleishig fork to mix macaroni and cheese….

ANSWER: All these questions require one question to be able to answer them. Was there heat involved in the scenario? One big rule regarding all בשר בחלב questions is, was there heat involved. Except for a דבר חריף/sharp food, any interaction between milk and meat that is lacking heat, will not create any problems. In order for there to be an infusion of בליעות/taste there must be heat. Otherwise, nothing happens when they touch and all is okay, usually with only a good rinse. Just placing a bowl in a milchig sink with no heat will just require washing the bowl well. The piece of salmon only needs to be washed well and it is as good as new. Oatmeal in a clean cold measuring cup does not become fleishig and may be cooked in a milchig pot. Macaroni and cheese, mixed with a clean אינה בת יומא (not used within 24 hours) fork, is fine to eat but the fork must be kashered. If the food was not יד סולדת, the fork is fine.

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SHOOT MY HAT

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha discusses the ostensible deceit that Yaakov used to receive the blessings from Yitzchak. The truth was that it was not deceitful because Yaakov was indeed the firstborn and the blessings were meant for the firstborn. This leads us to the following well-known story, told over by Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein.

There was once a Jew tasked with carrying a briefcase full of cash from one business location to another. As he was walking in an area devoid of other people, another Jew, who was very desperate and needy and aware that Yehuda was carrying a suitcase of cash, approached him. Looking around to make sure that no one was around, the man pulled out a gun and said, "I'm very sorry to do this, but I am desperate. Please hand over your suitcase; I know it's full of cash."

Yehuda thought quickly on his feet and said, "OK, I'll give you the cash without struggle, but you need to do me a favor." "What?" the burglar asked. "If I come to work without the cash, my boss will never believe me. You need to provide some proof that I was robbed", Yehuda said. "How do you want me to prove that to you?" the burglar asked. Yehuda replied, "I would like you to please shoot two holes in my hat so I can show my boss that I was held up." Yehuda took off his hat, put it on the ground, and the burglar obliged, shooting two holes in it. Yehuda continued, "You know what? That's not enough to convince him. Please shoot a few times into my jacket, so I'll be able to convince him." Yehuda placed his jacket on a ledge, and the robber obliged, shooting three holes into the jacket. Yehuda said, "Sorry, it's still not enough. Could you shoot once more into my hat?" The robber obliged, but the trigger just clicked quietly. The magazine was empty. The robber said, "I'm sorry, I can't shoot another bullet into your hat. I'm out of bullets." Yehuda said, "In that case, I have a surprise for you." Yehuda quickly tackled the burglar, threw him to the ground, and put him in a headlock.

Yehuda said, "OK, now I'm calling the police, and you're going to jail. But on top of that, I'm going to make sure you pay for my expensive hat and my jacket that you ruined. Together they cost close to $1000." The burglar said, "But what do you mean? You told me to shoot your hat and jacket. You asked me to do it! You clearly forgave the damage to the items." Yehuda replied, "Yes, I did ask you to do it, but you were pointing a gun at me. I had to do something to escape with the money. Of course I did not forgive the loss. "

So the question was brought to Rav Zilberstein: What would the Torah say in this case? Does Yehuda have a right to ask the burglar to pay for his hat and jacket if he expressly asked the burglar to do it? Could one argue that the fact that he asked for it implies he forgives the burglar, and therefore he doesn't have a right to ask for compensation? Or do we say no, he had the right to use that trick in order to keep his money, and therefore, since the robber did it, the robber is responsible and has to pay? Not only does he have to go to jail, but he also has to pay for a new hat and the value of the jacket. What do you think? See Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page 151

Regarding last week's question about the water, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page 111) wrote that the Rabbi does not have to disclose that he is really not a mekubal and he does not have to tell anyone that this is regular water. This is because his intention was not to get honor by being known as a kabbalist.

WHY SHOULD I TREAT THIS COLLETOR ANY DIFFERENTLY THAN I WOULD WANT HASHEM TO TREAT ME?

R' Michoel Antebi was once deep in conversation with his Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Elya Meir Sorotzkin. The music and joy of the wedding swirled around them as R' Elya Meir immersed himself completely in his talmid's question.

Suddenly, a tzedakah collector passed by asking for a donation. Without missing a beat, the gave him a $5 bill. A few minutes passed. The discussion continued, only to be interrupted when that same person returned, again asking for a donation, and the Rosh Yeshivah pulled out another $5 bill.

Their conversation resumed. Ten minutes later and the same collector was back... again! R' Michoel assumed that R' Elya Meir must have been so deeply involved in their conversation and thinking of a solution that he simply did not realize that it was the same person coming for the third time, trying to cash in on his lack of focus.

"Rebbi," R' Michoel felt compelled to tell the Rosh Yeshivah, "This is the same person for the third time!" "Michoel," he replied, "don't we come to Hashem and ask Him repeatedly for the same things not once, not twice, but three times a day? When we need something, we come to Hashem today and tomorrow and the next day, and we ask and ask and ask again. Why should I treat this collector any differently than I would want Hashem to treat me?" (From Rav Elya Meir Sorotzkin, By Avrohom Birnbaum, Published By Artscroll Mesorah, and Reprinted With Permission from Table Talk.)

1st Seder

A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

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Good Shabbos!