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

The First Seder Weekly is sponsored by Joshua and Michele Levy in memory of Chaim ben Yaakov Yisroel and mother Sara Chasha bas Dovid Binyomin and wife's father Zev ben Binyomin

SHAVUOS – A MISSION STATEMENT

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

The Yom Tov of Shavuos is identified as "Zeman Matan Toraseinu – the Season of the Giving of our Torah". It would seem that our response to this occasion should echo the words of our forefathers: "Naaseh Venishma – We will do and we will hear" (Shemos 24:7). This represents our total commitment to keeping all of the Mitzvos.

The Sefer HaTodaah asserts that in truth our acceptance of the Torah on Shavuos represents much more than a commitment to keeping the Mitzvos. It represents our acceptance of a very specific destiny for our people. Hashem created a world without Jews or any Chosen People. He called upon all of mankind to serve Him by living a moral life as prescribed by the Seven Noachide Mitzvos. However, mankind failed miserably in this mission and Hashem brought upon them a flood of annihilation with the intent to start all over again. This new start ultimately failed. Although there were isolated individuals who were faithful to Hashem, there was no commonwealth of people who were carrying out Hashem's agenda.

Hashem thus set about a process of forging a nation which would represent all of humanity in the fulfillment of the Divine Mission. The progeny of the Patriarchs descended to Egypt into the iron crucible of purification. After ten miraculous plagues and a dramatic sea splitting episode they arrived at the "Mountain of Hashem".

In three succinct verses Hashem lays out the destiny which He asks Moshe to present to Klal Yisrael. "You have seen what I did to Mitzrayim; I have borne you on the wings of eagles and have brought you unto Me. And now if you will hearken well to My voice and you will observe My covenant, you shall be for Me a beloved treasure of all the nations; for Mine is the entire world. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of ministers and a holy nation" (Shemos 19,4-6).

This is far more than merely a commitment to serve Hashem and keep all the Mitzvos. This is an acceptance of the responsibility to ensure the perpetuation of the world by acting as proxy for the entire human race. Indeed, the Gemara in Maseches Shabbos (88a) states that Hashem stipulated with all of Creation that if Bnai Yisrael do not accept the Torah, He will return the world to nothingness. Bnai Yisrael's response to this proposal was not "We will do and we will hear" which referred to the Mitzvos that they had yet to hear. Rather the response was "All that Hashem has spoken we will do" (Shemos 19,8). This was their reaction to their designation as proxy for all of mankind.

As representatives of the human race, we must bring morality and Kedusha to the entire world. By keeping Hashem's covenant alive we become a role model for all the nations. Our very survival throughout our tenuous presence in Eretz Yisrael and our turbulent years of galus has demonstrated to the world that we are indeed the bearers of Hashem's message. And ultimately the entire world will acknowledge our message and declare with us in unison, "Hashem is one and His name is one."

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

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

QUESTION: When making a ברכה on נרות for יום טוב, is it said after lighting the נרות just like on ערב שבת or is it said before lighting? What are all the differences between שבת and יום טוב when it comes to הדלקת נרות? (If you have a מנהג how to light for יום טוב, follow it, otherwise read on…)

ANSWER: Regarding when to make the ברכה, it is a מחלוקת and the משנה ברורה seems to say that one should make the ברכה before. The reason is: On ערב שבת we (Ashkenazim) make the ברכה after lighting because we hold that after making the ברכה and lighting one candle it is then already שבת for the woman lighting and then she wouldn't be able to light the rest of the נרות. However, on יום טוב when one is allowed to light נרות there is no reason to make the ברכה afterwards, and one should rather make the ברכה first like all מצוות. On יום טוב after the ברכה it is יום טוב and one may not put out the match. One also may not strike a match. On שבת one may still light matches and put out the match until the ברכה is made. On ערב שבת the eyes are covered during the ברכה so that when she opens them and enjoys the light of the נרות it is considered as if she made the ברכה before doing the מצוה of getting הנאה from the נרות. On יום טוב, covering the eyes is not necessary since the ברכה is made first.

ע' משנה ברורה סימן רס"ג ס"ק כ"ז.

Emailim Batorah *asks "How many mitzvos/commandments are there in the 'Ten Commandments'?"* (answer on back page).

RETURNING WHAT YOU STOLE ON SHABBOS

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This story takes place in the 1800s. There was once a Jewish-owned store, and Zalman was one of the workers there.

One day at work, Zalman came across a drawer that contained a large bundle of cash. At that point, he was strapped for money himself. Realizing no one was watching, he was overcome by temptation, put the money into his pocket, and stole it from his boss.

Later that week, it was Shabbos. Zalman went to shul and heard a powerful derashah from the rav. The message of the derashah, combined with the beauty and sanctity of Shabbos, moved him deeply. Zalman felt overwhelmed with remorse and wanted to return the money he had stolen. He was inspired in that moment, but he wasn't sure if the same feeling would remain after Shabbos. Right then and there, he went to his rav and asked: "I know there is a Torah mitzvah of veheishiv es hagezeilah, returning what one has stolen. Am I allowed to fulfill this mitzvah on Shabbos? On the one hand, the money is muktzeh, and you're generally not allowed to handle it. But on the other hand, I'm afraid that if I wait until after Shabbos, I might lose this inspiration and not return it at all."

So which mitzvah takes precedence? Does the Torah commandment to return what one stole override the rabbinic prohibition against handling muktzeh on Shabbos? Is Zalman allowed to return the money and put it back in the drawer on Shabbos, since that would fulfill a Torah mitzvah, while muktzeh is only a rabbinic prohibition? What do you think the halachah would be? See Shabbos Besimcha Page 167

Regarding last week's question about whether to split the minyan, Rav Akiva Meister answered that in our case, we were discussing a shul with 50 people. Splitting it would result in 25 people in each minyan. Since each group would still have more than 20 participants, it would still be considered berov am. Once you have 20 people, having more doesn't make it more berov am. Therefore, in this case, it would make sense and be acceptable to split the group, allowing both people the opportunity to lead the minyan. However, some shuls choose not to split a minyan for other reasons. For example, they want the minyanim to be more orderly, or they want the minyanim to daven with the Rav. So even though there may not be a problem of berov am with splitting, some shuls may still choose not to allow this.

THE KEVARIM WILL ALWAYS BE THERE, GO TO THE LEIBEDIGER!

Rav Chaim Segal was my menahel in Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin.

Born around 1926 to Ger Chassidim in pre-war Poland, Chaim Segal fled east with his family when the Nazis advanced. Siberian exile, displacement camps, and a brief stay in France followed. By 1947, he stepped onto Brooklyn pavement with a cardboard suitcase and one cherished volume of Gemara.

From his first day at Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin, he gravitated toward the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yitzchok Hutner. The Rosh Yeshiva soon began addressing him as "mein Chaim'l," inviting the newcomer to private vaadim and planting in him the seeds of a uniquely American chinuch.

For forty years, Rav Segal ran the Mesivta with a rare blend of warmth and steel. He insisted on polished shoes and respectful

speech to reflect the dignity of a ben Torah. "To raise iluyim, you must be a gaon," he told the faculty, "but to raise the weak ones, you need to be a gaon ha'gaonim." That quip concealed his demand: every student deserved greatness from his teachers.

Rav Segal kept a card file listing each talmid's strengths, challenges, and home life. Twice a year, he updated the notes by hand. One entry might read, "Worries about father's health, encourage during bein hazmanim." Another: "Brilliant in math, find a tutor to translate that discipline into Gemara."

Here is one insightful story.

A talmid once told Rabbi Segal, "Rebbi, I am going to Eretz Yisrael. Rebbi has gone many times, which kevarim (graves) should I daven at?"

"Tzaischem l'shalom," Rabbi Segal replied heartily. "But why are you asking about kevarim? The kevarim will always be there. Go to the leibediger, the living tzaddikim."

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Answer from ***Emailim Batorah*****:**

There are a total of 14 mitzvos/commandments in the "Ten Commandments":

There are three positive mitzvos (מצוות עשה): 1) אנכי ה' אלהיך 2) זכור/שמור את יום השבת 3) כבד את אביך

and eleven negative mitzvos (מצוות לא תעשה): 1) לא יהיה לך 2) לא תעשה לך 3) לא תשתחווה להם 4) לא תעבדם 5) ולא תשא את שם 6) לא תעשה 7) לא תרצח 8) לא תנאף 9) לא תגנב 10) לא תענה ברעך 11) לא תחמד בית

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HAVE A GOOD SHABBOS AND YOM TOV!