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

PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH – ME, MYSELF AND I

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Avraham sent his loyal servant Eliezer to Charan to find a wife for Yitzchak. Eliezer devised a test to determine which girl who went to draw water was worthy to marry Yitzchak. "And it will be that the young girl to whom I will say, 'Please tip your jug so that I may drink' and she will reply, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels' - she has been designated by You for Your servant Yitzchak." Rashi comments that Eliezer was looking for a ba'alas chessed steeped in acts of kindness. He explains that since Avraham was the paradigm of chessed, the girl that Eliezer selects for Avraham's son should also possess this middah.

Perhaps we can take this idea a step further. Someone who is a true ba'al chessed is someone who will focus on their spouse's needs and not on their own. The ideal relationship in a marriage is not about what I can get from my spouse, but what can I do for my spouse.

Perhaps this approach will help us understand a Gemara in Berachos (8a). It says that in Eretz Yisrael there was a remarkable practice at weddings to ask the chosson, "mawtzah" or "motzeh"? Mawtzah alludes to the pasuk: "Mawtzah isha mawtzah tov - one who has found a wife has found goodness" (Mishlei 18:22). Motzeh refers to the pasuk: "Motzeh ani es ha'isha mar mimaves – I find the wife to be more bitter than death" (Koheles 7:25). Is this a case of mawtzah or is it motzeh?

While the question appears to be focusing on the worthiness of the woman, most meforshim suggest that the question focuses on the attitude of the man. For instance, Rav Pinchas Halevi Horowitz (the Hafla'ah) explains that if the answer is mawtzah (third person), he is attributing the shidduch to Hashem and that is good. If the answer is motzeh ani (first person), he attributes the shidduch to his own eminence, and in such a case it will be bitter.

Perhaps we can suggest another approach. When the husband speaks about "ani", he is implying that he is not getting enough from his spouse. Marriage to him is all about me, myself and I. However, in the case of mawtzah he leaves himself out of the picture. The focus is not on himself, but on his wife and what he can do for her.

Eliezer's mission was to find a girl whose acts of chessed reflected her selflessness; thus, her focus would be on her husband and what she can do for him. In truth, selflessness is not only the most important attribute in marriage, it is the most important attribute in life. We must remember the astounding directive of Rav Chaim Volozhiner (cited in his son's introduction to the sefer Nefesh Hachaim): "A person was not created for himself, but only for the purpose of helping others as much as he possibly can."

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

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

QUESTION: I am preparing my שבת day סעודה for which I will be hosting ten extra guests. The guests are my future mechutanim and their children whom I want to impress. Included in my preparations is some בורר. I want to put out a lot of food in an impressive way. May I be בורר extra food to fill up my nice serving trays, even though I know that not all of the food will be eaten? Also, what if I know that they won't eat it at all, but it will make my table look pretty?

ANSWER: The three rules one needs to follow for בורר to be מותר are: 1- אוכל מתוך פסולת/to select the good from the bad, 2- ביד/to select it with your hand and not a כלי, and 3- לאלתר/to use it immediately. These rules will allow one to select food or even non-foods if the intention is to use it right away. Selecting a tablecloth to put on your table to make it look nice now is okay even if you aren't using the table to eat on. Selecting silverware from a big pile is okay if you will use them immediately. To impress guests by putting out a nice spread is called using what you selected, for immediate use. It is all the same whether you eat, play, or show off the items that you selected. If you want to just make your table look nice, you may select fruits to put in a bowl as a center piece even if you know no one will eat them.

עי' סימן שי"ט סעי' א' וד' לעניני ברירה. וההיתר לאורחים הוא מהכף החיים. סי' שי"ט ס"ק ל"ו בשם הבן איש חי.

COFFEE & A PASTRY

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

There was a certain shul in a small city in Eretz Yisroel. During the coronavirus pandemic, because the authorities forbade indoor gatherings, the shul began davening outside.

Moshe was a member of this shul. The shul happened to be right next to a nice kosher café. Moshe went to the café owner and said, "Let's make a deal. I want to run a promotion: anyone who joins the minyan, even just to say Shema, put on tefillin, or participate for a little while, can get a free coffee and pastry."

The café owner readily agreed. They put up a big sign near the outdoor minyan announcing the promotion: Shacharis, Mincha, Maariv, anyone who joins the minyan, even briefly, will receive a free coffee and pastry.

It was in Eretz Yisroel, the weather was pleasant, and the idea turned into a great success. Many new people, some of them secular, straight off the street, came and joined, then enjoyed their fresh coffee and pastry. The minyanim were full of energy and joy, and the initiative worked beautifully.

Eventually, though, the pandemic ended. Once restrictions were lifted, some members of the shul were eager to return to davening inside. But Moshe felt the outdoor setup had been so successful that they should continue. He argued, "If we move back inside, fewer people will join from the street. Let's keep the minyanim outside."

Others disagreed. They felt it was better to daven inside a proper shul, a makom tefillah with fewer distractions. Moshe maintained that engaging more people was more important, and since there weren't enough participants for both an indoor and outdoor minyan, they had to choose one.

So the question became: What's more important, davening inside a shul, in a makom tefillah, in a focused environment, or staying outside to reach and inspire more people, especially those who might not otherwise come to shul? What do you think? See Veharev Na Volume Four, Hebrew Edition Page 499.

Regarding last week's question about the Gabbai who made a mistake and gave away one Hagbah to the wrong person, Rav Akiva Meister answered that since the Gabbai is not a paid employee, he has less responsibility and is not obligated to pay for the error. In this case, the man who bought the kibbudim should pay $1,500, and the shul should be willing to accept the loss. Of course, if the Gabbai wants to pay, he's allowed to, but he is not required to.

HE CAME INTO MY ROOM EVERY HALF HOUR TO MAKE SURE THE BLANKET WAS COVERING ME PROPERLY

Rav Nota Greenblatt told of one summer when he went to visit Rav Moshe Feinstein in the Catskill Mountains.

He arrived in the evening, and Rav Moshe greeted him warmly. As they spoke, Rav Moshe noticed that Rav Nota had a cough. Rav Moshe insisted that he stay the night rather than travel back to New York.

"I didn't sleep that night," Rav Nota said, his eyes welling with tears. "You know why? Because Rav Moshe didn't sleep! He came into my room every half hour to make sure the blanket was covering me properly."

The mere mention of Rav Moshe's name brought tears to Rav Nota's eyes.

(From Rav Nota, by R' Shmuel Botnick, published by ArtScroll/ Mesorah. Reprinted with permission from Table Talk.)

How many times, in *Chumash*, does it mention that a woman passed away?

SEVEN

1. Lot's wife
2. Sarah Imeinu
3. Devorah *meinekes* Rivkah
4. Rachel Imeinu
5. Bas Shua,Yehuda's wife
6. Miriam
7. Kozbi bas Tzur

Source: Pischai Parsha

Good Shabbos!