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

PARSHAS YISRO – WITH ONE HEART

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Rashi describes the encampment of Bnai Yisrael at Har Sinai to receive the Torah, as being "like one person with one heart" (Shemos 19:2). However, Chazal tell us that just as people's faces are very different, so too their mindsets and attitudes are very distinct. The Brisker Rav, Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik, asks that in light of this reality, how was it possible for them to camp by Har Sinai "with one heart"? He explains that had Bnai Yisrael put Nishmah (we will hear) before Naaseh (we will do) it would have been impossible to be totally unified "with one heart." Each one would have heard things differently and their commitment would be based on their own understanding and perception. However, since they put Naaseh before Nishmah, they were willing to forego their personal understanding of the Mitzvos and to submit to Mitzvah adherence without any preconceived notions. Thus, their hearts were perfectly unified.

The Brisker Rav adds that this helps us understand the following stanza in the zemer Yom Shabbason: Uva'u chulam bevris yachad, Naaseh venishmah amru k'echad. "They entered the covenant together" because "they said Naaseh venishmah as one." This approach goes to the very definition of a Torah observant Jew: the commitment of a single-minded people to keeping all the Mitzvos of the Torah exactly as transmitted to Moshe, via Chazal and the Shulchan Aruch. We are all part of the same identical covenant with Hashem.

However, after the Naaseh comes the Nishmah. This represents each one's own perception. Thus, Bnai Yisrael could be divided into distinct Shevatim with different flags and different designations. Similarly, we witness today, as in every generation since Matan Torah, many different types of Torah observant Jews. Sephardim, Ashkenazim, Chassidim, Litvaks and so on. We are by no means monolithic nor can we be, because "Just as our faces are different our mentalities are different." What binds us together is our declaration of Naaseh Venishmah

And since each of us as individuals don't look alike and don't think alike, our performance of Mitzvos manifests itself differently, with our own perception, our own emotions and our own personalities. All this without veering one iota from the Sinaitic covenant of Torah Shebichsav and Torah Shebe'al Peh and a commitment to abide by Da'as Torah, by following the decisions of Gedolei Torah and qualified Poskim.

The Gemara (Taanis 31a) states that in the future, when the Mashiach comes, Hashem will be encircled by Tzaddikim in Gan Eden and they will recite, "Behold, this is our G-d that we have awaited." The Meforshim explain that although each Tzaddik may have had a distinct personality and manner of performing Mitzvos, they will nonetheless proclaim that they were all serving the same G-d with the same Torah and the same Mitzvos.

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

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

QUESTION: May one use an apple corer or slicer on שבת?

ANSWER: An apple corer is not allowed to be used on שבת, but an apple slicer is מותר to use. When cutting up an apple with a knife, it is מותר to cut around the core to separate the apple from the core. The only way to eat pieces of apple is to cut it up and it is therefore not an act of בורר. Using an apple corer which is a כלי המיוחד לבורר – a specialized tool for בורר, is not allowed. When using a corer, you are removing the part you do not want and that is בורר בכלי. One may only do בורר on שבת if you are taking the good from the bad, for immediate use and without a כלי. Even if you are also removing some of the apple with the core, it is only a small amount and normally thrown out so it is all considered פסולת and one may not remove פסולת even by hand and certainly with a כלי. Using an apple slicer to cut up an apple into 6 or more slices with one push is מותר. Although the core is being removed at the same time, that is not your main objective. This is similar to cutting up an apple around the core which is מותר since it is the only way to eat a cut up apple. This is surely not טוחן because the slices of apple are decently big and not דק דק, and you can cut the apple even for later.

עי' סימן שי"ט ושש"כ החדש פרק ג' סעי' נ"ט וכן איתא בכמה פוסקים

FLYING SPARKS

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We know that there is a mitzvah called maakeh, which means making a fence around a roof so that nobody falls off. This leads us to the following true story.

Yaakov and Eli lived in a two-story building. Eli lived on the bottom floor, and Yaakov lived on the top floor. Eli had a blue plastic awning over his front door on the porch. Yaakov, who lived on the top floor, also had access to the roof. The roof belonged to him, and he had never gotten around to building a maakeh.

One day, Yaakov became aware of his obligation to build a maakeh. He realized that his roof needed one and was eager not to delay the mitzvah.

He called a man who could install a metal fence around the roof. The installer said he could do the job, but explained that because the fence would need to be welded, the process would produce a lot of sparks. He therefore asked that the occupant of the bottom floor, Eli, remove the plastic awning, since it was likely to burn from the sparks.Yaakov then asked Eli, “I want to install a maakeh. Could you please temporarily take down your blue plastic awning?” Eli said, “Sure, no problem. I’m happy to.”

Eli tried to remove it, but he couldn’t figure out how. The hardware was rusty, and eventually he forgot about it. Yaakov kept asking about it, and Eli kept saying he would take it down, but he never actually did. Yaakov told him, “Please make sure it’s done, because the installer is coming on Wednesday.” Eli said he would do it by then, but Wednesday came and it still was not done.

When the installer arrived on Wednesday, Yaakov tried one more time to reach Eli to have him remove the awning, but Eli was not around. Yaakov didn’t want to delay the mitzvah any longer, so he told the installer to go ahead with the work.

The installer said he would try his best to ensure that the sparks would not cause any damage. He was careful, but because of the large number of sparks produced during the installation, some of them landed on the awning. Sure enough, the awning quickly caught fire and was completely destroyed.

Yaakov felt terrible. He then wondered whether he or the installer had an obligation to pay for the awning. On the one hand, Yaakov himself did not cause the damage directly. The installer did the work. On the other hand, the installer was acting only on Yaakov’s instructions. At the same time, Eli had been asked multiple times to remove the awning, said he would do it, and never did. Perhaps they were permitted to proceed anyway, since Yaakov was performing a mitzvah, the mitzvah of building a maakeh. So the question is: Does Yaakov have to pay for the awning? Does the installer have to pay for it? Or does the responsibility fall on Eli, since the awning was never removed like he promised?

Regarding last week’s question about eating the kosher food, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed, Bava Kama, p. 358) said that strictly speaking, it would be permitted for the man to eat the kosher meal, since otherwise it would be thrown out in the garbage. However, it would be a Kiddush Hashem for him not to eat it, because a sin was done for this meal.

“THIS IS MY MANHIG”

Rav Yaakov Edelstein treated every Jew like royalty. Here are two beautiful anecdotes.

A talmid of Rav Yaakov related:

"I once drove Rav Yaakov Edelstein to a bris," "I let him off at the entrance and went to find a parking spot. Suddenly I saw someone running over. He had come to get me. 'What happened?' I asked. The man explained that Rav Edelstein said that the bris couldn't start without me. He always made me feel like we were equals, like we were in it together."

Another talmid shared:

"I once gave Rav Edelstein a ride to a family wedding in Jerusalem. He took a plate, filled it for me, and brought it over. People followed him, and when he reached me, he pointed to me and said, 'This is my "Manhig" (leader)!' He used the term Manhig instead of nehag, driver, but everyone now thought that I was someone special. They asked me who I was, and I said, 'No one. I just drove him here.' But they said, 'Yes, yes, you're just being bashful. Surely you must be a hidden tzaddik...'"

From Reaching To Heaven, By Yedidya Meir, and Sivan Rahav-Meir. Published By Artscroll Mesorah. Reprinted With Permission from Table Talk.

***Mazel tov** to R' Chesky Weiss and his Mishnayos chabura on the completion of Seder Moed! This is the second time that R' Weiss and the participants have finished Seder Moed at the 1st Seder Bais Medrash! You can join the shiur which meets M-Th 9:20-9:55 AM.*

Please join any of the 30+ First Seder weekly shiurim – Mishnayos, Gemara, Halacha, Tefilla, Parsha, Tehillim, Mussar and more! M-F 9:20 AM. - 1:15 PM. If you have any questions, or to register, sponsor or donate, please contact Rosh Bais Medrash Rabbi Uri Greenspan at rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org 732-407-3178

Good Shabbos!