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

This week's 1st Seder Bais Medrash has been dedicated by her children, Sarah and Jeff Rossner, in memory of Sarah's mother, Devorah Chaya bas Yosef Tzvi, whose yortzite was this past week.

For more information on times of the shiur or sponsorship opportunities, please see the back page.

PARSHAS BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI – PATIENCE

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

With the rapid advancement of technology in the past century everything is moving at a much faster pace. We have cars, jet planes, microwave ovens, internet communication with emails and tweeting, speed dial, frozen dinners and instant pudding. Many may marvel at the great prowess of our society and feel fortunate to live in such an era. They pride themselves on the fact that with these modern innovations they are able to accomplish so much more than their antecedents.

Rav Shmuel Dovid Walkin notes that with this speed-up of technology came an equal acceleration in human behavior. We expect everything to happen instantly. Snail mail is too slow; old computers are too slow; the driver in front of us is too slow. We find ourselves rushing to do everything and to go everywhere. We have lost our patience to listen to a one-minute commercial or even to come to a full stop at stop signs. And with this loss of patience comes a loss of tranquility.

Rav Walkin asserts that this loss of patience and calmness is one of the punishments described in Parshas Bechukosai. "If you will not listen to me and will not perform all these Mitzvos…then I will do the same to you and will bring upon you agitation (behalla)" (Vayikra 26:14-16). He explains that this punishment is middah keneged middah – measure for measure. We have lacked the patience to perform Mitzvos properly. We don't have the patience to daven or say berachos slowly, to learn deeply without our modern crutches, to stop and listen to people who need a caring and a friendly ear to share their problems with or to sit through a fifteen minute drasha. Not only that, asserts Rav Walkin, but we even ignore some Mitzvos for which we "don't have the time" or that are not habitual and thus require more concentration.

This is precisely what the pasuk is referring to. "If you will not listen to Me and you will not do all of the Mitzvos." You only do the ones you have patience for and only in a manner which does not require too much patience. "Then I will do the same to you" – I will take away your patience for everything else in life.

But you might ask how we can attribute this phenomenon to a laxity in Mitzvos if it is clearly a result of our society being so advanced and highly competitive. Let me answer this question with a Gemara that asks a similar question. There is a type of bowing called kidah which is quite a gymnastic feat. When Levi demonstrated the kidah he dislocated his hip. The Gemara asks, "Was this really the cause of his lameness?" We have learned that the lameness was a punishment for his having spoken to Hashem on one occasion in a very bold manner. The Gemara answers that both of these factors caused him to become lame. (Sukkah 53a). What the Gemara means is that there is both a physical and metaphysical reason for everything. Levi committed a spiritual infraction which led to the punishment, which he received when he sought to demonstrate the kidah. This is also the case in our situation. Because we lacked the patience to do Mitzvos properly, Hashem arranged for us to be surrounded by such a society which causes us to be perpetually impatient.

Rav Walkin made this assertion around the middle of the twentieth century and obviously things have gotten a lot worse since then. Perhaps if we will be committed to doing Mitzvos less hurriedly and with greater patience, we will not only learn how to be more patient, but also Hashem will bless with a life that is more tranquil. So let us all take a deep breath, slow down, and make more time for Hashem, and acquire more menuchas hanefesh for ourselves.

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.

עי' יורה דעה סימן צ"א סעי' א'

TRACKER IN THE TORAH

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Chaim, who lived in Eretz Yisrael, was sitting in a shul in his neighborhood and learning.
Suddenly, the door was violently forced open, and an Arab thief entered the shul with a gun in his hand, pointing it at Chaim. The robber threatened Chaim, demanding that he open the locked Aron Kodesh and give him a Sefer Torah. He warned Chaim that if he did not comply, he would be killed.
Chaim was not the gabbai of the shul, but he did have a key to the Aron Kodesh because he was in charge of the shul's Netz minyan and would open the Aron Kodesh on the days when the Sefer Torah was read. Chaim understood that he would not be able to run away, but then a brilliant idea occurred to him.
Slowly, he walked toward the front of the shul. Instead of opening the Aron Kodesh, he opened the cabinet underneath it, which held the Nevi'im scrolls used for the Haftorah. He knew that the non-Jewish robber would not know the difference between a Sefer Torah and a scroll of Nevi'im, because they looked similar.
Giving the robber the Nevi'im felt "easier" to him, since they were not as holy as a Sefer Torah, and their monetary value was also much lower. Chaim gave the robber the scrolls of Nevi'im. The robber grabbed several of the scrolls and ran outside.
After the robber fled with the Nevi'im, Chaim called the gabbai and excitedly told him what had happened. He pointed out that, thanks to his idea, the shul had not lost as much money as they would have.
He waited to hear compliments from the gabbai about his resourcefulness, but Chaim was shocked when he heard the gabbai cry out in distress "Oy vey, what have you done?! I had a GPS tracking device hidden in the cover of the Sefer Torah, which shows me at every moment where it is. We also had a complete insurance policy covering the Sefer Torah. If the robber had stolen the Sefer Torah, I would not have worried much, because we would either catch the robber and recover it, or I would receive full compensation. But with the Nevi'im, there is no GPS, so I have no idea where they are. I also have no insurance on them. They are completely gone, and I have lost their entire value. They cost about 20,000 shekels. I think you are responsible to pay for the loss."
But Chaim replied, "Do I really have to pay you? I was only trying to help the shul and do the right thing. In addition, even with GPS and insurance, perhaps it would still be wrong to let the robber take a Sefer Torah, since he might mistreat it, disgrace it, or even deface it."
What do you think? Does Chaim have to pay for the loss of the Nevi'im scrolls, or did he do the right thing by giving the Nevi'im instead of the Torah? Question told to R' Weiner by Rabbi Arye Zilberstein, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein's grandson.

Regarding last week's question about the hoverboard, Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, in Chashukei Chemed, Bava Kama 605, answers that mei'ikar hadin, according to the basic halacha, the buyer may keep the toy for the price she paid and is not obligated to pay the higher price, since that was the price listed on the toy. However, it would be meritorious for her to go beyond the letter of the law and pay the difference. She does not need to pay it all at once. She may pay it whenever she has a few extra shekels available, and she may even use maaser money for this purpose.

THE REBBE DIDN'T SAY ANOTHER WORD

The Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Horowitz (1921–2009), was born on July 3, 1921, in Boston, Massachusetts, to Rabbi Pinchos Dovid Horowitz. He studied at Mesivta Torah Vodaath under some of the leading Torah scholars of the era. Following his father's death in 1941, he was initially hesitant to become a Rebbe. However, at the urging of his father's followers, he assumed leadership in Boston in 1943. In 1950, he founded ROFEH, a community-based medical referral and support agency. ROFEH provides patients visiting Boston for medical treatment with specialist referrals, kosher meals, and hospitality. The Rebbe was a pioneer in Jewish outreach, particularly to college students in the Boston area. His home on Beacon Street in Brookline was famously open to all, regardless of their level of religious observance.
Non-frum and non-Jewish doctors alike respected The Bostoner Rebbe greatly and were happy to give him of their time, but he wouldn't ask them to provide their services gratis or at a reduced fee. He would only use his connections to gain access to top doctors and to enable patients to be seen and treated without a long wait.
As his network and his reputation grew, it became a matter of prestige to help the Rebbe, and he would honor physicians at ROFEH's dinners. The responsibility for paying medical bills, however, always remained that of the patient. At times, doctors offered to volunteer their services, but pressing them to do so risked creating a reluctance to take future ROFEH patients.
Once a girl from Eretz Yisrael received three months of treatment, resulting in a six-figure hospital bill. Through the standard negotiating process, the Rebbe was able to reduce the charges to twenty thousand dollars, the sum he knew the father had raised for his anticipated medical bills.
But the Rebbe's elation turned to shock when the man said he would pay only ten thousand, arguing that he needed the balance for a dowry for another daughter.
"If you walk away from this hospital bill," the Rebbe pleaded, "they're not going to take another Yid from Eretz Yisrael. You're ruining it for all future patients." But the fellow remained obstinate. The Rebbe didn't say another word, and instead paid the $10,000 balance from his own pocket.

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- *the First Seder Daf Hashavua Chabura which meets every Sunday morning at 7:45 AM and Tuesday evening at 8:30 PM,*
- *any of the First Seder Dirshu Amud Yomi Chaburas which meet Su-F at 6:45 AM, M-F at 11:20 AM, and Su-Th at 9:45 PM, and/or*
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GOOD SHABBOS!