1st Seder Weekly Divrei Torah

A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

MAZEL TOV to the Dirshu Amud Yomi chabura on finishing the second perek of Yoma.
Great time to join one of the three daily shiurim.
Please contact Rabbi Greenspan for more information.

PARSHAS KORACH – LOOK WHO'S TALKING

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

"Vayikach Korach – Korach took" (Bamidbar 16:1). The Medrash comments, "The pasuk does not say 'he split off', nor 'he gathered [people]', nor 'he spoke', nor 'he commanded.' It merely says Korach took. What did he take? He took nothing. Rather his heart took him" (Bamidbar Rabba 18,16).

What does the Medrash mean by this expression? To explain this idea Rav Yaakov Galinsky cites another Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 34:16): "The wicked are under the control of their hearts as it says, 'The villain says in his heart, Eisav said in his heart, Yeravam said in his heart, Haman said in his heart.' But Tzaddikim's hearts are under their control as it says, 'Chana was speaking to her heart, Dovid said to his heart.'"

However, we need to further clarify the difference between speaking in your heart and speaking to your heart. Also, what does the Medrash mean that the wicked are controlled by their hearts and Tzaddikim control their hearts?

I would suggest that the Medrash is referring to the discussion between the intellect and the emotions – the heart. Generally speaking, the intellect seeks to pursue that which is rational and most beneficial to the person. The emotions pursue that which is most gratifying, comfortable or pleasurable. The wicked listen to their hearts, while the intellect of the righteous speaks to their emotions. Thus, the wicked are controlled by their hearts and the righteous control their hearts.

People are speaking to themselves all the time. However, it is necessary to determine who is speaking to whom. Is the heart speaking to the mind or is the mind speaking to the heart? Or are they both speaking at the same time. Perhaps there is some kind of argument or internal battle going on. Since most of us are neither Tzaddikim nor wicked but somewhere in between, how do we determine which is the rational voice and which is the emotional voice?

Let us turn to the issue of Yefas To'ar. This is the halacha discussed in Parshas Ki Seitzei (Devarim 21:10-14). "When you go to war against your enemies… And you will see among the captives a beautiful woman and you will desire her; you may take her for a wife…But it will be that if you did not want her you shall send her on her own." Why does the Torah say, "If you did not want her" in past tense. Originally he did want her. The Ohel Moed answers that in truth he never wanted her; he merely desired her. His intellect would have told him that this woman was not the type of woman that he wanted as a wife or as the mother of his children. However, he listened to his heart that desired her. This is the question we must ask ourselves: "Is this what we really truly want or is it merely a whim?"

However, it is not always quite so simple. Sometimes the things that we desire are justified or even necessary. To deal with this we must apply the rule of the Mesilas Yesharim. Every leniency or concession must be critically examined. Even though it may be right and rational, it might still be the advice of the yetzer hara. Therefore, we must scrutinize it very carefully before making a decision. In this case the intellect and the heart might be on the same page. However, very often they are not in sync. The ultimate criteria must be to make sure that our hearts listen closely to our intellect.

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

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

QUESTION: I am making a simcha this week in my house. I want to get a few waiters to help with the serving during the kiddush and to help clean up. I only need them for a few hours on שבת. Am I allowed to get a few of my son's friends to come from 9 am till 12pm and pay them for the 3 hours?

ANSWER: When hiring waiters to work on שבת one must make sure that no איסור of שכר שבת is being done. If you are hiring goyim, then it is not an issue as they are allowed to be paid for work they do on שבת. If you are hiring Yidden, there must be a setup of הבלעה to be allowed to pay them. Which means, included in their job, they must be hired to work a little on a weekday and then you may pay them in one lump sum for all the work they did. This arrangement must be made before שבת, and it has to be one hiring for the work on שבת and the work in the weekday. If you ask an agency for waiters, then it is okay even if the waiters are Yidden, since the agency pays them with הבלעה. When you hire 3 local boys, the only way to be allowed to pay them is to hire them to help on שבת and to come for 10-15 minutes before or after שבת to help, and then you may pay them one lump sum for all their hours.

עי' סימן ש"ו סעי' ד' ומשנ"ב שם.

FIFA, TZITZES, & SHABBOS

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Eldad, a professional soccer player for Maccabi Tel Aviv, met an inspiring Rav and began learning with him. He attended the Rav's classes and loved learning Torah.

Eventually, Eldad told his Rav that he wanted to make a commitment to his spiritual growth. The Rav suggested that he wear tzitzis, something that would be easy to do and not too difficult. Eldad followed his advice and proudly wore his tzitzis.

Since Eldad was a professional soccer player, he would sometimes play on Shabbos, which is not exactly compatible with Shabbos observance. Eldad knew that one day he should stop playing on Shabbos, but at the moment, he was not yet at the level where he could quit his exciting career as a professional soccer player.

One day, he had a major game before a large crowd of spectators and realized that as he ran during the game, his tzitzis would fly in the wind.

He went to his Rav and asked, "I've been wearing my tzitzis every day, and I never forget them. But when I play on Shabbos, should I still wear them? On one hand, it is a mitzvah to wear them at every moment. On the other hand, it might give the impression that a religious, observant Jew is playing soccer on Shabbos. That could send the wrong message and make it appear that this is permitted. What should I do? Should I wear them anyway, or should I remove them for the game to avoid giving the wrong impression and causing a chilul Hashem, a profanation of Hashem's name?"

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein and can be found in Veharev Na, Volume 2, Parshas Shlach. Thank you to Rav Stephen Baars for bringing this question to our attention.

Regarding the question about the doctor who accidentally hit a boy who ran in the street, Rav Chaim Kanievsky (Chashukei Chemed Nedarim page 264) answered that even though this was a neder made under false pretenses – and we find in the Gemara that a neder under false pretenses is not binding, nevertheless, this is a mitzvah and it is the very important mitzvah of Torah that is obligated at every moment, the doctor must still complete the year of his commitment of learning Mishnayos.

THE PRISONER WHO KEPT TWO SHABBOSOS

Rav Meilech Biderman shared the following true story that took place in the United States several years ago. A Jewish man who had grown up far from Torah and mitzvos was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for a serious crime. While behind bars, he began moving closer to Yiddishkeit. An important Rav visited the prison every two weeks, and the prisoner began learning Torah from him. One of his first decisions was to learn the halachos of Shabbos. The Rav helped him greatly and brought him English books about the laws of Shabbos so that he could continue learning on his own and steadily grow in his new life.

One day, the Rav arrived and found the prisoner unusually happy and excited. "What happened?" the Rav asked. The prisoner answered, "I learned in one of the books you brought me that Chazal teach: 'If Yisrael would keep two Shabbosos, they would immediately be redeemed.' I have decided to keep two Shabbosos properly. After that, I will be redeemed and released from prison! In just a few days, I will be free and able to return home!" The Rav listened with pain. He did not want to disappoint him, but felt he had to explain Chazal correctly. "My dear friend," he said, "I deeply respect everything you are doing. However, Chazal were speaking about the entire Jewish people. They meant that if all of Klal Yisrael kept two Shabbosos properly, the geulah would come and Mashiach would arrive. They were not promising that an individual prisoner would automatically be released. You were sentenced to remain here for fifteen years. Please do not assume that you will certainly be freed after two Shabbosos." But the prisoner remained firm. "It does not say that Chazal were speaking only about the entire Jewish people," he replied. "I believe their words can also apply to an individual." He remained completely confident that after keeping two Shabbosos, he would be freed.

The Rav usually visited every two weeks, but this time he was delayed and did not return for a full month. When he finally arrived, he was shocked to discover that the prisoner was gone. The prison workers told him that the man had been released one week earlier. For several days before his release, he had been telling his friends that he would soon be leaving prison. The Rav began investigating, determined to understand how such an extraordinary thing had happened. The judge who had sentenced the man had grown old and retired. He decided to write his memories of some of the most serious cases he had handled, including this prisoner's trial. The judge reopened the case and carefully reviewed the testimony, arguments, and evidence. As he examined everything again, he realized something terrible: the evidence incriminating him was inconclusive. The judge was honest enough to admit that he had made a mistake. The authorities reviewed the case, and the Jewish prisoner was set free.

Rav Meilech concludes; tens of thousands of Jews keep Shabbos every week who do not experience redemption. The difference is that this man believed the words of Chazal with his entire heart and soul; he was already celebrating his release! He had no doubt that their promise was true and that his geulah would come. Because his emunah was so strong, he was worthy of experiencing his own personal geulah. The same idea applies to many situations in life. The stronger a person's emunah is, the more worthy he can become of receiving the help, salvation, and yeshuah he needs. Reprinted With Permission from Table Talk.

1st Seder Bais Medrash invites you to 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),*
- *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*
- *First Seder WhatsApp groups on Pele Yoetz, Shemiros Haloshon, and Tehillim – Life Lessons.*

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!