

1 – Topic – A Technical Dvar Torah about Shemittah.

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Korach and the upcoming summer season a season in which many of us have different schedules and need to make something good of it. For Parshas Korach let me start with a technical Dvar Torah and then an Inyan of Machshava. I am going to start with the later part of the Parsha which deals with the Mitzvah of Terumos and Maasros. Of course, the coming year is the year of Shemittah and every Yeshiva Bochur knows that on Shemittah we are not obligated to give Terumos and Maasros from the produce of Eretz Yisrael. Why is it this way? Why is Shemittah produce Patur from Terumos and Maisei?

Rashi in Masechta Rosh Hashana 15a quoting a Mechilta says that we learn this from a Posuk. The Posuk says regarding Shemittah (ויתרם תאכל חית השדה) whatever you leave in the field that remains will be eaten by the animals of the field. The Gemara Darshuns (מה חיה אוכלת ופטורה מן המעשר) just like what is eaten by the wild animals of course has no Din of Terumos and Maasros (אף אדם פטור) also when a human being eats Shemittah produce he is Patur from giving Terumos and Maasros. That is what Rashi says.

The Turei Even asks a Kasha. He says why do you need a Posuk to tell you that Hefker is Patur from Terumos and Maasros. Shemittah is Hefker. Why do you need a Posuk to tell you that Hefker is Patur from Terumos and Maasros on Shemittah? Taipuk Lai that all Hefker is Patur from Terumos and Maasros. We already know that the reason the Levi gets Terumah and Maisei which is mentioned all the time including in this week's Parsha. It is interesting that in Sefer Yehoshua when it says that the Leviim don't have a Cheilek in Eretz Yisrael each time it says it it repeats because Hashem Hu Nachalaso. In other words, the Levi doesn't get Terumos and Maasros because he doesn't have a part in Eretz Yisrael, and therefore, he gets that instead of his part in the land.

In Hefker, where a Levi and Yisrael are equal, Leviim and Yisraeilim can take from Hefker equally, so there is no Terumos and Maasros as it is a rule in Hefker. Why do I need a special Posuk in regards to Shemittah when I already know that Hefker is Patur? This is the Turei Even's Kasha and there are a number of Mehalchim that answer it.

I would like to use this opportunity to introduce you to one of the most fundamental of the Machloksim regarding the upcoming Shemittah year and show how the Marit brings a Raya from this Kasha to his own Shittah. Let me explain.

We all know that on Shemittah the fields are Hefker and a person can go and take from any field he wants. Now does this mean that during 5782 which is Shemittah, if you are driving in Eretz Yisrael somewhere in the country and you pull over and there is an apple tree that you can just take an apple and eat it? I would think yes because it is Shemittah.

The Bais Yosef and the Marit have the following dispute. There are two ways to learn Shemittah. You can learn that the fields are Hefker because of what is called Haf'kata D'malka, the king made them Hefker. G-d declared that all the fields in Eretz Yisrael are Hefker on the Shemittah year. Or you can learn no, it is Haf'kata D'gavra. Meaning, the fields are not Hefker as they belong to people. There is a Mitzvas Asei on every Jewish farmer to make the fields Hefker. When I say the fields I mean the produce of the fields and he should declare them Hefker.

The Nafka Mina is that according to the second way of learning if he does not declare them Hefker then they are not Hefker. He did an Aveira because you are supposed to declare them Hefker. According to the

second Shittah, the Turei Even's Kasha is answered. Why? Because it is true that when the farmer makes a field Hefker of course it is Patur from Terumos and Maasros. But what happens when you have a non-observant farmer who does not make his fields Hefker. What about his produce? Is it Chayuv in Terumos and Maasros? For that you need a special Posuk to tell you that even then there is no Din of Terumos and Massros.

The point I am making is this fundamental Shaila which is Noge'a L'mayseh. If the fields in Eretz Yisrael are Hefker only because the farmer declared them Hefker, otherwise it is Genaiva you are not allowed to steal from a field, or is it Haf'kata D'malka. It is hard to say a Psak Halacha for a question such as this. But with Shemittah coming up it is a Yedi'a, a wonderful piece of knowledge about Shemittah for you to have.

2 – Topic – An Inyan of Machshava on the Story of Korach at the Beginning of the Parsha.

Let us move back to the beginning of the Parsha and the story of Korach. In the Peninai Kehilas Yaakov there is a letter in which someone asked the Steipler the following question. The Rambam says in his Igeres Taimon, (והודיענו), HKB"Y has taught us (שכל מי שעמד על הר סיני), any individual who stood at Har Sinai at the time of the giving of the Torah. (שהם מאמינים בנבואות משה רבינו בכל מה שבא על ידו הם ובניהם ובני). (בניהם עד עולם). Whoever stood at Har Sinai is inherently a Mamin, will always believe, him and his children for generations. (שכן אמר הקב"ה יתברך) as is found in Shemos 19:9 (הנה אנכי בא אליך בעב הענן בעבור) (ישמע העם בדברי עמך וגם כך יאמינו לעולם). HKB"Y promised Moshe Rabbeinu that Jews will always believe in him. (שכל מי שנטה מדרך הדת הנתונה במעמד), (לפיכך יש לדעת), and therefore, you should know, (שאינו מזרע האנשים ההם), anybody who strays from the laws given at Sinai, (וכן אמרו רבותינו ז"ל על כל המסתפק בנבואה), he is not a descendent of someone who stood at Sinai, (לא עמדו אבותיו על הר סיני), anybody who is not sure about Moshe Rabbeinu's prophecy, (לא עמדו אבותיו על הר סיני), he must be a descendent of a Ger.

The Rambam writes in numerous places in the Yad that there are certain Middos that are inherent in the Jewish people and if somebody doesn't have it we need to worry that maybe he is not really a descendent of people who stood at Har Sinai.

In Hilchos Teshuva 2:10 (וזהו דרכם של זרע ישראל ולבם הנכון). It is the normal way of a Jewish person to forgive, to let bygones be bygones. The Rambam says that it is an inherent genetic trait of a Jew. (אבל העובדי כוכבים ערלי לב אינן כן אלא ועברתן שמרה נצח). They, those who don't have this trait, maintain their anger. (וכן הוא אומר על הגבעונים לפי שלא מחלו). Those who know from Navi the Givonim did not forgive. And so on and so forth.

So someone asked the Steipler in a letter, Korach stood at Har Sinai. There is no doubt that Korach was there. You know we blame most of the trouble in the Midbar on the Eiruv Rav which is a very confusing thing. What are you going to say about Korach? Korach certainly stood at Har Sinai and he doubted the Nevuah of Moshe Rabbeinu. So someone wrote a letter to the Steipler asking what is Pshat.

To which the Steipler answered, he said that the trait of a person, of a Yid is to be a Maimon, to believe in Torah and Avoda. However, there is still Bechira, there is still free will. He says the Taivas Hakavod, the Taiva for honor, for respect, makes people fall away from Nevuas Moshe Rabbeinu.

When people see the Derech Hatorah as being something in which they don't excel and they want to excel, there is a big Yeitzer Hora to find honor and Kavod in other things, in non-Torah ideas. It is a very dangerous thing. We find that very often when Yeshivas are not able to give the average student or the student who struggles a sense of worth, it is a very dangerous thing. Every human being has a certain amount of Taivas Hakavod. Every human being has a desire to be a respected person, to be an honorable

person, to be someone who others look up to. If Mechanchim, Yeshivos, parents are not able to give a person that sense of Kavod, that self-esteem, it drives a person G-d forbid away from his inherent Maminim Bnei Maminim traits, his Emunah. The Steipler says this is where the danger is, in Taivas Hakavod and Korach had that. He had it in a big way.

The Steipler mentions a second thing. He says eating Ma'achalos Asuros, eating food which is not really Kosher also pushes a person away from the inherent traits of believing in HKB"H. Metamteim Haleiv. Now these are the two things the Steipler chooses. Taivas Hakavod and Ma'achalos Asuros. Many people eat anything with a Hechsher. Many people eat things and they know there are disputes, they do have bugs they don't have bugs, maybe yes, maybe not. People are callous sometimes in their eating habits and being careful about things that are properly Kosher. It is a danger, it is a Sakana, it is a Sakana to the Ruchnios. These are the two traits that the Steipler brings.

I would add an overarching consideration. That is that a person has to live with the knowledge that it is not a Hefker Velt. There has to be a discipline. Once you know there has to be a discipline you may do well, you may not do well, you may do half a job and not a full job but you will get to where you have to be. The life of a Yid is to be disciplined, to be careful.

Many women before they give birth go to labor classes. Part of the class is that they give them breathing exercises. Every decade there is a different one. There is the Swiss plan, all kinds of different plans. The husband is supposed to coach his wife, breathe in and out, breathe in and out. The husband knows it is so silly, breathe in and breathe out. That is going to change the labor pain? The answer is yes. Because as long as a human being is focused on whatever he may be focused on, he is going to do the right thing and he is going to be in control.

Different diets that come and go. Remember the Atkins diet, with everybody busy eating protein and losing weight. Are they all silly? No! Every diet that works is just telling a person it is not a Hefker Velt, control yourself. Once you get into the mode of controlling yourself, if you control yourself this way and you control yourself that way, it doesn't matter so much.

If you learn Chofetz Chaim Hilchos Lashon Horah two Halachos a day. You are going to become an expert in Hilchos Lashon Hora? Maybe, maybe not. But you remind yourself every day it is not a Hefker Velt. What you could say, what you can't say it depends. You have to know, it matters. It is not a Hefker Velt. A Yid has to know that it is not a Hefker Velt.

What you eat what you don't eat, you have to be guided. Some people have this standard or that standard, but you have to be guided. Taivas Hakavod comes from a Hefker Velt. A person decides that this insults him and that insults him. Of course a person can get insulted, it is painful. But where does that lead you? You have to remain with the idea that it is not a Hefker Velt, we are guided by Torah, we are guided by rules, we are guided by Yir'as Shamayim. It is not a Hefker Velt.

Korach said it is a Hefker Velt as is found in 16:3 (כִּי כָל-הָעֵדָה כֻּלָּם קֹדְשִׁים). We all can figure out what to do ourselves, we don't need Moshe Rabbeinu. Why did he pick Begeid Shekulo Techeiles, a Begeid that is full of Techeiles is Patur. He said when you have ordinary clothing you need something with holiness to give it holiness. But if the entire Begeid is holy then you don't need to give it holiness. He meant to say if all the Jews are holy we don't need to be guided, we can figure it out ourselves. No! Yidden are naturally Maminim in the Nevuas Moshe Rabbeinu but only if you know it is not a Hefker Velt, you don't do what you want, you don't say what you want, you don't eat what you want. It is not a Hefker Velt it is a Velt that you have to be guided.

A person who understands that then the Rambam's promise will come through that you are Bnei Yisrael and you will not be Achzarim, you will be Mochel things and you won't be insulted and you won't be carried away with Taivos Hakavod. Gevaldig!

What a lesson for Parshas Korach. With that I want to wish everyone a wonderful summer. The summer is not a Hefker Velt. Vacation is not a Hefker Velt. Even when we leave things behind, wherever you go it has to be with discipline. Have an absolutely wonderful Shabbos Kodesh!