

Peulat Shabbat – Korach – doing things for the sake of Heaven!

The goals:

- a) To teach the idea of “leshem shamayim” (for the sake of Heaven).
- b) To introduce Parshat Korach and to contrast it with to Batei Hillel and Shamai’s story.
- c) To illustrate arguments not for the sake of Heaven and to stress their moral disadvantages.
- d) To find the expressions of struggle “lo leshsem shamayim” in the campers own experience.

1. Hot argument

Two campers stand in the circle, their mission is to argue (one of them – for and one – against) about any issue that the leader defines. When the leader claps their hands the campers in the circle switch their positions and keep arguing. The leader is to switch the campers in the circle one by one from time to time, to switch their positions and the issues. (To let as many possible campers to experience arguing in the circle).

Possible topics include

- Should women be allowed to take the cohen aliyah?
- Who should be the next president of the USA?
- Should American Jews serve in the Israeli army?
- Should American Jews loyalty be with America or Israel?

2. Discussion

- How did you feel standing in the circle and arguing about the things that don’t concern you?
- Did you feel comfortable switching your position?
- What was the purpose of the argument as far as you’re concerned?
- Did you feel that it was easy to switch your opinion so quickly?
- How does this activity parallel with our everyday life?
- Can you give us examples from your own life, when you struggled for something, using moral and ethic explanations, when deep in your heart you knew that your opinion was actually wrong?
- Why does this happen? (Because our own interests and strive sometimes more important for us than justice and truth).
- That’s what we call “lo leshem shamayim” (not for the sake of Heaven).

3. Analyzing of the differences between the deed’s reasons “leshem shamayim” (Justice, G-d’s commandments, law, moral, righteousness) and “lo leshem shamayim (personal interests, envy, power, jealousy, revenge, anger).

4. Comparison between Parshat Korach and Hillel and Shamai.

A leader divide the group for three little groups and gives each group the first paragraph of Parshat Korach, the group is to analyze the paragraph, to discuss and to decide if Korach acted “leshem shamayim” or not. At the end of the discussion each group presents their conclusions to the whole group.

5. Conclusion

- Is it easy to prefer high justice or your own interests? The question is no, but actually this may be the whole purpose of the human being, to cope with our animal desires and egoistic wishes in order to act according to the commandments of Torah.
- That’s why we have to analyze our every argument or dispute if we are going to do it “leshem shamayim” or not.