**The Art of Serenity: Peace of Mind**



**#1**

**Question: If you had to make a choice between two things, which would you choose?**

1. **You would be very wealthy and successful, but lack peace of mind.**
2. **You would have peace of mind and serenity, but not enjoy wealth or success.**

**#2**

**Today's Learning Material**

Yaakov was on the way to meet his brother, Esav. He did not know how the encounter would play out - anything between war and peace was possible. Right before the meeting, Yaakov sent gifts to appease his brother. Esav, upon seeing the gifts that Yaakov had sent, asked, “Who is so worthy in your eyes to deserve such a gift?” Yaakov answered, “I sent it to you to find favor in your eyes.”

**Torah, Bereishis 33:8-9, 11**

*And Esav said, ‘I have much, my brother; let what you have remain yours.’ … but Yaakov replied ‘G-d has been kind to me, and I have everything,’ and he persisted and Esav took.*

**Kli Yakar (commentary on Torah)**

*Esav claimed to have much. Those who are bent on physical and materialistic pleasures never feel they have it all.*

**Questions:**

* **What things do you need to obtain to have peace of mind?**
* **What situations, things, and thoughts give you peace of mind?**
* **How does the relentless chase after "more" prevent people from experiencing peace of mind?**
* **What are some causes of restlessness?**
* **What situations, things, and thoughts disturb or prevent your peace of mind?**
* **What can you do to overcome those obstacles?**

**#3**

**Victor Frankl**

Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

**Questions:**

* **How do you understand this statement in practical terms?**
* **How can knowing this help us experience peace of mind?**

**#4**

**Talmud Shabbos**

*When the day of Shabbos enters, you have to imagine as if all work is completed.*

**Siddur, Shabbos Mincha**

*You have given to your people the day of rest and holiness … a rest of love and charity, a rest of truth and faith, a rest of peace and serenity, and tranquility, and security, a perfect rest that You find favor therein … from You is their rest, and through their rest they will sanctify Your Name ...*

**Question: How can Shabbos observance give you peace of mind?**

**#5**

**Torah, Bereishis 37:1**

*Yaakov settled in the land of his father's dwellings, in the Land of Canaan.*

**Rashi commentary to Torah, Bereishis 37:2**

*Yaakov wanted to dwell in tranquility but then the ordeal of Yosef (sale into slavery) came upon him. The righteous seek to dwell in tranquility but G-d says 'Is it not enough for the righteous what has been prepared for them (reward) in the World to Come that they need to seek tranquility in this world!'*

**Daas Torah, Rabbi Y. Levovitz**

*Why is it wrong to want to live in serenity? Yaakov desired serenity not so that he could devote his time to personal pleasures, but rather to be able to engage in spiritual pursuits.*

*The purpose of this world is for a person to elevate himself by passing the numerous tests that come to him. The goal is spiritual growth from every life situation. Therefore it was considered improper for Yaakov to place his focus on serenity.*

*This is an attitude we should all internalize. Every occurrence in this world can make you a better person. When you have this awareness your attitude towards everything that happens to you in life will be very positive. Before, during, and after every incident that occurs reflect on your behavior and reactions. Ask yourself, “What type of person am I after this happened? How did I do on this test? Did I pass it in an elevated manner?”*

**Rabbi M. C. Luzzato, Path of Just**

*Everything in life is a challenge that ultimately helps us grow and develop our character traits.*

**Questions:**

* **If you viewed each new situation as an opportunity for growth, how would you achieve greater peace of mind than you presently have?**
* **Think of challenging situations that happened to you which caused you anxiety in the past. Can you change your perception of them, to see them as opportunities for growth?**
* **How could you rearrange your usual daily schedule to increase your general peace of mind?**

**#6**

**Rabbi Noah Weinberg**

*“If someone doesn't know what he's living for, then he's at war with himself.”*

*“Greatness is achieved by leading with the soul, and harnessing the passionate power of the body.”*

*“Real peace comes only when your body desires your soul's success.”*

**Question: What do you think about these statements?**

**#7**

**Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**