

2019 ALUMNI DVAR TORAH SNAPSHOTS

From: Dependent and Grateful by Rabbi Dan Margulies (WBM 2016)

Both the particular and the general, both mediated Divine grace and direct Divine grace, are appropriate modes through which to frame our relationship to the food we eat, and how we receive it.

From: Religious Habit: Vice or Virtue by Rabbi Noah Cheses (SBM 2006)

Is religious habit a virtue or vice? In typical Talmudic fashion, the answer is: IT DEPENDS.

From: A Change of Heart by Joshua Blau (SBM 2017)

Even a minor blunder can have disastrous consequences when it concerns a subject so fundamental as the role of God and His relationship with His people.

From: The Logic of Things and the Work of Our Hands by Rabbi Stephen Belsky (SBM 2012)

Just as Gd creates and recreates the universe, so too do we make and remake the world Gd gave us.

From: Shotgun Tabernacle? The Sifra on Philanthropy, Social Shaming, and Consequentialism by Rabbi Shlomo Zuckier (SBM 2012)

Using social pressure or censure to force someone's hand demeans and even *dehumanizes* them; it removes their agency and makes them objects rather than subjects.

From: Holy and Non-Holy by Tobie Harris (SBM 2005)

Holiness is not only a ritual status, but also a character trait and an obligation, spreading outward from the ritual sphere to the entire nation and to all aspects of service.

From: The New Mother's Chatat by Rabbi Rafi Eis (SBM 2001, 2006)

We can only enter God's domain as part of our partnership with Him.

From: Freedom and the Responsibility of Distinctions by Rabbi Judah Kerbel (SBM 2015)

[G-d's] miraculous distinguishing of the firstborns teaches us to trust His distinctions between right and wrong, justice and oppression, truth and deceit, and He therefore calls upon us to use our freedom to follow *mitzvot* with integrity and treat others in accordance with these principles.

From: Living in Mutual Support by Elie Lerea (SBM 2016)

When confronted with something foreign to our sensibilities and assumptions, it is always important to consider the core advantages of such foreignness in order to be better able to think with more nuance moving forward.

From: The Kedushah of the Nazir by Shoshana Snow (WBM 2019)

Even though everyone should be striving towards separating from physical pleasures, it is up to each person to define her own boundaries and figure out how to incorporate these values in her own life.

From: Datan, Aviram, and Korach: Parallel or Intersecting? by Ben Kaplan (SBM 2017)

Even well-intentioned people can be brought down by allying themselves with evil men, justifying it as “for the greater good.”

From: Is Isolation a Bug or a Feature? by Aliza Libman Baronofsky (SBM 2006)

The challenge in our era is to thrive spiritually in a globalized world of divergent views and values.

From: Devekut: How Can We Achieve Closeness with the Divine? by Rabbi Jared Anstandig (SBM 2011)

The experience of reflecting on everything that one has and on its Source... draws one nearer to the Divine.

From: Does Belief in Divine Reward Make Service of God Selfish? by Zachary Orenshein (SBM 2019)

There is a beautiful irrationality in love which allows us to give selflessly without constantly calculating whether or not we get more than we give.

From: The True Cost of Having Children (And It is Not Day School Tuition!) by Ben Zion Chinn (SBM 2003)

It is the great virtue of ritual that, as opposed to intellectual belief, it can be passed on to future generations.

From: Generosity vs. Integrity by Eli Reiter (SBM 2015)

The core of Avraham is that there is an intellectual honesty to his generosity.

From: Are We Living in a Greek Tragedy? by Adena Morgan (SBM 2011, 2013)

While the Greek notion of fate is that it is unchanging and binding, the Torah teaches the idea that there is no single way to live out one’s destiny.

From: Spiritual Debriefing by Eliana Yashgur (SBM 2017, 2019; WBM 2018, 2019)

Spiritual debriefing is vital to keeping our spiritual and ethical sensibilities sharpened, allowing for self-reflection, as well as dialogue with G-d and community, in order to be more thoughtful in how to approach and learn from complicated experiences.