

GROUP RIDE

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

Keeping fit is one of the requirements of Torah observance. A person should watch his or her health through good diet, exercise and avoidance of harmful habits like cigarettes. (Of course - over indulgence in matters of the body is not what is intended).

A good way to stay in shape is bicycling. Cyclists usually follow two types of training regimens - the solo training program to improve and develop breathing, strength and cardiovascular health and the group ride to go the distance and keep pace with others who share the same passion for the bike.

Each has its advantages and drawbacks. When training alone one has the choice as to which skills and which health benefit one wants to improve upon and one can work at one's own pace. The advantage of the group is that each member has to conform to the pace and the route of the other riders and is pushed to perform at higher and higher levels of exertion.

The disadvantage of training alone is a lack of drive to push for new limits, while the disadvantage of a group ride is that the group may not be strong enough to aid the growth of all of the cyclists participating in the ride.

In matters of spiritual growth and personality perfection the decision on how to train is much more crucial than the choice a biker may have to make. Maimonides says that the human being was created with a natural tendency to be drawn after the behavior patterns and the mores of those with whom one has social contact. If one is part of a group that is at a higher plane in observance and fear of Heaven the "group ride" is recommended because it will naturally foster positive progress towards perfection. If, on the other hand, one is surrounded by those who are not interested in growth, then isolation -- the "solo ride" -- even at home on a stationery trainer is preferred.

Bottom line - if you can't join a first class group -- go it alone!

DID YOU KNOW THAT

If someone borrowed a loaf of bread, he may repay his friend with a different loaf, even if the loaf is slightly larger. This leniency applies only where the size difference is insignificant.

However, if he borrowed a number of items (such as six eggs), he may return only the number that was borrowed.

[Source: The Laws of Ribbis - Rabbi Yisroel Reisman, p. 34]

CONSIDER THIS FOR A MINUTE

Prayer is a sharp sword upon which the warrior relies for protection and to attack his enemies.

Rabbi Shemuel Pinhasi Shlit'a

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