

1st Seder Weekly Divrei Torah

A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

FIRST SEDER BAIS MEDRASH established in 2012 by Rabbi Uri Greenspan, provides a unique learning program for men with diverse schedules, ages, and backgrounds. Since its inception, the daily learning programs of Gemara, Mishnayos, Tanach, Halacha, and Jewish ethics, have provided hundreds of First Seder participants with a rich, challenging, and authentic Bais Medrash experience. The wide range of subjects and the varying levels of difficulty allow for the participants to choose which learning track best fits their individual needs, enabling them to truly take their learning to the next level.

DAILY SCHEDULE:

9-11:30am: Gemara in-depth and B'Chavrusa

9:10am-1pm: Classroom Learning

Monday 9-9:45pm: Dirshu Mishna Berura Shiur

Tuesday 8:45-9:45pm: Daf HaShovua Gemara Shiur

TO JOIN: Contact Rabbi Uri Greenspan at 732.407.3178
Office@FirstSeder.org, Lower Merion Synagogue

PARSHAS KORACH – THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE FIRE

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“And Moshe arose and went to Dasan and Aviram” (Bamidbar 16:25). The Gemara (Sanhedrin 110a) states, “From here we learn that one may not persist to quarrel. Whoever persists to quarrel violates a negative commandment as it says, ‘And there shall not be [anyone] like Korach’” (Bamidbar 17:5). The Ramban (Sefer Hamitzvos Shores 8), the Smag (*lo saaseh* 157) and Rabbeinu Yonah (Shaarei Teshuva 3:58) all pasken this *halacha lema’aseh*.

To this end, Moshe attempted to mollify Dasan and Aviram. First he reached out to them at the very onset of the *machlokes*: “Moshe sent forth to call upon Dasan and Aviram” (ibid 16:12). Rashi explains that Moshe sought to make peace with them with conciliatory words. Later on, even after Hashem issued a warning of the imminent perishing of Dasan and Aviram, Moshe attempted to encourage them to repent.

Thus Moshe is the paradigm of this halacha. Moshe had suffered more than once from the abuses of Dasan and Aviram. It was they who informed Paroh that Moshe had killed the Egyptian. It was they who defied Moshe when he told Bnai

Yisrael not to leave any *mohn* overnight. “But they did not listen to Moshe and left some of it until the morning” (Shemos 16:20 and Rashi ad loc.). Now they have joined Korach in his rebellion against Moshe and Aharon. Nevertheless, Moshe seeks to make peace with them. Even after they had excoriated him, Moshe is still prepared to try to save them from being devoured by the earth. Additionally, in this case Moshe was 100% in the right, and Dasan and Aviram were totally wrong. Nevertheless, Moshe did not respond in kind and sought to make peace.

If we are to derive the guidelines of the prohibition of *machlokes* from the way that Moshe conducted himself, it would appear that even one who has been verbally attacked and even one who believes that he is totally justified must still refrain from engaging in *machlokes*.

Why? Because *machlokes* is a powerfully destructive force. As soon as one becomes drawn into a dispute, he becomes entrapped. Soon he just can't seem to let go. As it proceeds and grows, the person becomes even more entangled. And in the process there is nothing too valuable to be sacrificed in order to perpetuate the

machlokes. Dasan and Aviram blatantly declared, “Even if you were to gouge out our eyes, we would not come up to meet with you” (Bamidbar 16:15 as per Rashi ad loc.). Even as Dasan and Aviram and their children were about to be swallowed up by the ground, they stood defiantly in front of their tents. Once one becomes ensnared, there is often no turning back.

Machlokes has been compared to a fire out of control. There have been dozens of yeshivos, hundreds of communities and shuls, and countless families that have been ravaged and destroyed by this implacable fire. Years on end are spent with the goal only to prevent the other side from tasting success, regardless of how much is sacrificed. And no one wins, but everyone loses. They lose their tranquility, their *simchas hachaim* and perhaps their Olam Haba.

So what are we to do when we discern a *machlokes* flaring up? If we can't extinguish the fire with conciliatory words, Rav Shimshon Pincus recommends that we say nothing at all. As the Gemara (Chullin 89a) proclaims, “The world exists in the merit of one who withholds himself from responding during a quarrel!”

YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD

To find out how, please visit firstseder.org or speak with Rabbi Greenspan

The Mobster Loan Shark

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion teaches us about the importance of pursuing peace. Our Sages teach us that we should be like Aaron Hakohen, who loved peace and ran after peace and brought people closer to Torah. This leads us to the following story.

Eli, who lived in Israel, was struggling financially. He was in dire need of money to cover his rent payments for the past few months and didn't have anything to do. In desperation he went to an unofficial lender who was known as a loan shark. Eli asked to borrow \$2000 and promised to pay it back within a month.

The loan shark said, "Do you have anything that is valuable, like a car, to be used as collateral?". Eli said that he didn't have a car but he had a small scooter-motorcycle. The man agreed that it could be a collateral, but he explained to Eli that as long as he got paid back on time everything would be fine. However if he did not have the money on time he would take the

motorcycle and burn it. If he still did not pay him back he would start with more serious things.

Eli knew that he should get away from these under-handed people but he felt like he had no other choice. With confidence that he would have money to pay back, he borrowed the money. Lo and behold the deadline arrived and sadly Eli did not have the money. He knew that the loan sharks would come after his motorcycle. Eli had an idea. Instead of parking it outside where it was normally kept, he hid it inside his apartment building in a small closet underneath the steps. The closet was certainly not the place for motorcycles and he figured that the thugs would not be able to find it.

Sadly though in the middle of the night he woke up with the sound of alarms and a strong smell of smoke. He ran out of his apartment and there was a fire burning in the stairwell. The fire department was there putting it out. It turned out that indeed when the

gangsters did not find his motorcycle parked outside, they found it inside and they burned it while it was inside the closet.

The fire caused an enormous damage, with repair costs close to \$100,000. When the neighbors heard what caused the fire they demanded that Eli pay for the huge cost of the damage. They felt that he had no business getting involved with gangsters and even after he did, he had no business putting his motorcycle in the closet. Eli agreed that he should not have gotten involved, but still, he didn't cause the fire; it was the thugs. What do you think? See Hebrew Veharev Na Volume Three Page 159

Regarding last week's question about whether the young man should stay home with his smoker father, or go to hear Parshas Zachor, Rav Zilberstein answered that he should stay home with his father to ensure that he does not smoke.

"PLEASE USE THIS TO HELP THESE JEWISH IMMIGRANTS"

Mrs. Surtie Barkin said about her brother Rav Yisrael Belsky: "From my grandfather, Reb Binyamin Wilhelm, as well as from my parents, my brother learned to live with a sense of achrayus for others."

To illustrate this; Before and after the fall of the Soviet Union, many Russian Jews came penniless to the United States. Rav Belsky walked into an Agudath Israel

meeting where the topic of discussion was helping the recent immigrants. Rav Belsky announced that he was donating \$3,000 for this cause. Some of the attendees at the meeting who knew Rav Belsky were incredulous. They knew that he had recently sold his car to use the proceeds to help these Jews. That itself was incredibly generous. Where did he get this additional \$3000? Rav Belsky told them that that morning, he and his wife

decided that they had to do more for their Jewish brethren. His wife removed her diamond ring from her finger. "Please use this to help these Jewish immigrants", she said. Rav Belsky took it to a jewelry store, where he received \$3,000. That was the money he was donating. From Rav Belsky, By Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, Published By Artscroll Mesorah. Reprinted with permission from Table Talk.)

First Seder Bais Medrash's Mishnayos Shel Chesed Program

When a Jew passes away, they can no longer perform mitzvos or get closer to Hashem. By arranging learning for the soul of a departed family member or friend, their soul can be elevated. As their loved ones, it is within our power to help their neshamos (souls) ascend ever higher.

To join the over 200 learners or bring an Eternal Merit to a loved one, please contact Rabbi Greenspan or rabbisilver.firstseder@gmail.com

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For more information or to register for First Seder, contact Rabbi Uri Greenspan at 732-407-3178 or

RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org

Gut Shabbos!