

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 VA'ESCHANAN - NACHAMU

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

This Shabbos is called Shabbos Nachamu on which we read the Haftorah which begins "Nachamu, Nachamu Ami" – Be consoled, be consoled my people. This Haftorah is the first of the seven Haftorahs of consolation (Sheva D'nechemta). After mourning the great tragedy of the *churban* – the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash - and all the ensuing *tzaros* of our difficult history, we begin the process of consolation.

This ritual of consolation is very difficult to comprehend. Why should we be consoled? The Bais Hamikdash has not been rebuilt and our bitter *galus* still continues. What is even more strange is that the observances of mourning begin to diminish on Tisha B'Av itself. After *chatzos* - midday - we no longer sit on the floor and the *paroches* is replaced on the Aron Kodesh. What has changed on Tisha B'Av itself to warrant the beginning of a period of consolation?

The Shulchan Aruch states (Orach Chaim 559:4) that we do not recite

Tachanun on Tisha B'Av since the day is referred to as a *mo'ed* – usually translated as a "festival". Why is Tisha B'Av, the most tragic day on the Jewish calendar, called a *mo'ed*? The Telsher Rav, as quoted by his *talmid* Rav Mordechai Gifter, explained that the word *mo'ed* really means a meeting, such as *Ohel Mo'ed* – the place where Hashem met with Moshe Rabbeinu. Thus a *mo'ed* on the calendar refers to a time of meeting with Hashem. Some holidays are joyous times of meeting with Hashem and some are times of meeting for judgment. Tisha B'Av is the ultimate time of meeting for judgment.

This concept can be appreciated even more deeply with a profound insight of Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz. The Gemara (Yoma 54b) states that when the gentile aggressors entered the Bais Hamikdash – just before they destroyed it - they found the two Keruvim in the Holy of Holies embracing each other. The Maharsha asks, "How is this possible, since the Gemara (Bava Basra 99a) says that when Bnai Yisrael fulfilled Hashem's will the Keruvim faced each other, and

when they did not fulfill Hashem's will the Keruvim turned away from each other?" Rav Chaim answers that although at the time of the *churban* Bnai Yisrael were not fulfilling Hashem's will, the judgment of Hashem emanated only from His love of His people. Just as a father punishes his son only due to his deep concern and fondness for him, "so does Hashem chastise you" (Devarim 8:5).

Thus, Tisha B'Av, despite its tragic and painful nature, is a day of remarkable closeness with Hashem. It is a time when we can bond with Him and attempt to tap into His love for us. It is with this appreciation that on Tisha B'Av itself we begin to move from a state of mourning to a state of anticipation for the ultimate fondness of Hashem to be expressed through our Final Redemption. This is our consolation.

May all the mourners of Tzion be consoled by Hashem with the arrival of the Mashiach and the building of the Bais Hamikdash speedily in our time.

YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD

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

THE SCHLEP

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion talks about the mitzvah to love HaShem. (Devarim 6,5) Our Sages teach us (Yoma 86) that this mitzvah goes beyond feeling love towards HaShem. It includes an obligation for us to behave in a way that others will be motivated to love HaShem as well. Furthermore, this week was Tisha b'Av. We know that one of the causes of the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash was the altercation between Kamtza and Bar Kamtza, over a dinner celebration.

This leads us to the following story. One day Yehuda received a wedding invitation from his first cousin Eli. Yehuda lived in Baltimore and Eli lived in Lakewood. The wedding would be in Lakewood. Yehuda normally enjoyed attending his cousins' weddings and would often drive to Lakewood for those weddings.

However, when it came to attending Eli's wedding he really didn't feel like going. The reason for this was because when he invited Eli to his own wedding, Eli did not attend. So Yehuda was planning not to go to this wedding and just sit this one out.

Some time before the wedding Yehuda started to think about it. He realized that there was a prohibition against taking revenge. The prohibition of taking revenge is not doing a favor to someone because they wronged you. Yehuda wondered if perhaps by his not attending the wedding he was taking revenge on his cousin for not coming to his wedding. Perhaps he was obligated to make the two and a half hour trip (each way) in order to prevent it from being revenge.

But on the other hand, perhaps one could say it's not revenge to not go to the

wedding. He just didn't feel close to him and was not in the mood of attending. He did not have to attend the wedding of someone he did not feel close to, or did he? What do you think? Does Yehuda have to travel to attend the wedding in order to avoid the prohibition of taking revenge? See Chashukei Chemed Yoma page 189

Regarding the question of the dry cleaners, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered that it is the cleaner's responsibility. He is responsible because he put all the shirts together so he has a responsibility to the other people.

Correction: Last week I mistakenly wrote that this question was brought to Rav Zilbebrsten. A similar case was brought to him, but it was not this case.

RUNNING THE MARATHON WITH A TEN-POUND SACK ON ONE'S BACK

A Camp Agudah camper who knew Rav Yisrael Belsky related the following story: There was a bachur who joined the Masmidim program in Camp Agudah and after the summer he went to learn in the yeshiva where I was learning at the time. He felt very attached to me, as I was the only person he knew in that yeshiva. It made me uncomfortable.

One day we got into a bit of an argument and he hurt my feelings. I decided to end the relationship. When he came over to me to ask mechilah I told him, "I am mochel, but we don't have to be friends." However, he wanted our friendship to continue.

One day, Rav Belsky came to the neighborhood of our yeshiva for Shabbos. The bachur approached Rav Belsky and requested that he speak to me on his behalf. Rav Belsky took me aside and said, "Without going into the details, I want to give you a mashal. Imagine someone is preparing to run a marathon and a person tells him, "I know the marathon passes through the Bronx where my aunt lives. Could you drop off a ten-pound sack of potatoes while you're passing through?" Of course, the idea of running the marathon with a ten-pound sack on one's back is ludicrous. And so I say to you: Do you want to run through life with a ten-pound sack of potatoes on your back? Why let this

thing weigh on you? Accept his apology and renew the relationship and move on. Don't hold a grudge against him. Let go of it."

I was still somewhat reluctant but I tried. I approached the bachur and said, "Let's be more friendly." This was clearly very important to him. On the day of that bachur's wedding he sent me a note stating that before he goes to the chuppah, he wants to make sure that I was mochel him. Of course, I sent back a note stating that I was completely mochel him. (From Rav Belsky, By Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, Published By Artscroll Mesorah. Reprinted with permission from TableTalk.)

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

Good Shabbos!

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