

# 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 KI SAVO – IDENTITY CRISIS

*Rabbi Shlomo Caplan*

When a person brings Bikkurim to the Bais Hamikdash, he makes a declaration before presenting the fruits to the Kohain. In this declaration, which describes our exile in Mitzrayim, he states, "My forefather [Yaakov] descended to Mitzrayim and sojourned there, few in number, and he became a **nation...**" (Devarim 26:5). The Sifrei (cited in the Haggadah) comments that they stood out as a distinct nation. Bnai Yisrael stood out because they did not change their names, their language or their clothing.

Rav Yaakov Galinsky notes that while this certainly was a positive attribute, it seems to pale in significance when we consider that they no longer performed circumcision, they worshiped *avodah zara*, and they had sunk to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of *tum'ah*. If I were to tell you that your good friend Chaim, who used to be frum, goes to church, eats *treif*, is *mechaleil* Shabbos and does many illicit things, however he still goes by the name Chaim, speaks Hebrew and wears a long Jewish-style frock, would you be impressed? Why does the Torah praise them for not changing these three things?

I believe there is a very basic concept here. When Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem in what merit Bnai Yisrael would be redeemed, Hashem answered, "When you take the people out of Mitzrayim, they will serve G-d on this mountain (Har Sinai)" (Shemos 3:12). Rashi comments, "You asked, 'What merit does Bnai Yisrael have to be redeemed?' There is a good reason

for them to go out of Mitzrayim, for they will accept the Torah on this mountain."

Why was there any hope for Bnai Yisrael, on their extremely low level, to accept the Torah? Because they still held on to their Jewish identity. They had Jewish names, they wore different clothes and they spoke their own specific language. They remained a distinct nation even in the midst of the Egyptian depravity. And this means that there is still much hope for Chaim. The flame of Yiddishkeit, albeit almost gone, has not been extinguished. He can be reached and brought back.

In fact, there is a story that Rav Galinsky relates (in a different *dvar Torah*) which bears out this point very sharply. Rav Galinsky would travel all over the world to raise funds for Yeshivos in Eretz Yisrael. On a visit to Mexico, a woman approached him with tears in her eyes. Her son plans to marry a gentile woman. She pleaded with the rabbi to please speak to her son; perhaps he could dissuade him. Although he had never met the young man, Rav Galinsky agreed. (Leave it to a true Novardoker.)

Their conversation went as follows:

Are you a Mexican citizen?  
Yes and proud of it.

If Mexico would go to war  
against Argentina, would  
you fight for Mexico and

even be willing to kill for your country? Definitely

Had your parents originally moved to Argentina, would you fight for Argentina? Absolutely.

Four more questions:

Do you know that you are Jewish? Yes.

Do you know that Hitler killed six million Jews? Yes.

Do you know that if you marry a gentile, your children will not be Jewish? Yes.

So, you are going to bring more non-Jewish children into the world that has already seen one third of its Jewish population annihilated. Now where is your loyalty to your people?

Case closed! The man broke his engagement and went on to build a *bayis ne'eman be Yisrael*.

As long as there is some glimmer of Jewish identity, there is always hope. We can never give up on any Yid, for who knows what is buried deep in his psyche. If we can stoke those coals, we may very likely ignite a real flame of Yiddishkeit.

**YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD**

To find out how, please visit [firstseder.org](http://firstseder.org) or speak with Rabbi Greenspan

## THE REALTOR

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Torah portion the Torah says, "Cursed be the one who corrupts the justice of a stranger, orphan and widow". This leads us to the following true story.

Avi was a young man who was recently engaged. He and his fiancé had money saved up to purchase a small starter home. During the engagement they reached out to a realtor to help them find a house. The realtor was happy to help them. He showed them a house and the couple thought that it was perfect. They agreed to purchase the house and signed the deal with the seller.

Things were going smoothly until tragically, in the middle of the engagement, Avi and his fiancé got into a car accident. His fiancé was badly injured and shortly thereafter she passed away. Avi was devastated. He wasn't going to be getting married and he wasn't going to buy the house with her. Everyone was very understanding and the purchase of the house never went through.

Two years later Avi met another woman, got engaged and got married. When they were ready to buy a house, he reached out to the owners of the original home that he had been looking at. Sure enough, the house was still on the market. Because he wasn't using the realtor, the selling price was 6% cheaper and there were significant savings. Avi made a private deal with the seller of the house and was ready to move in with his new wife.

Eventually the realtor heard about the sale. He approached Avi and said, "I don't understand. How could you make a private deal with the seller? You owe me 6% of the cost of the house." "What do you mean?", Avi replied, "I didn't use you this time." "Of course you did", retorted the realtor. "You only knew about this house because I showed it to you two years ago." Avi replied, "Yes, but two years ago the whole deal fell through because of the terrible accident. It was canceled". "Still", argued

the realtor, "I am entitled to my 6% fee for showing you the house".

What do you think? Does Avi owe the realtor the money? See Chashukei Chemed Bava Basra Page 516

Regarding last week's question about the emergency room, Rav Zilberstein wrote as follows. If it was a Jewish hospital, the mother should not have tricked them, because there is a chazaka that the doctors would do their best job even if she wouldn't urge them with her story. Nonetheless we cannot fault the mother for doing what she did. However, concluded Rav Zilberstein, there are hospitals in the world that will not give elderly patients above the age of eighty or seventy, the best care. In that case it would be a mitzvah to lie and say that the patient is really younger.

### "I FORGOT TO TELL HIM THAT HE SHOULD REASSURE HER AND GIVE HER CHIZUK"

The Steipler Rov was always on the lookout for situations that might require some action on his part to make life more comfortable for others. One day he came to Lederman's Shul and found that new shelving had been put on the wall that separated the main section from the women's section. The top shelf, however, extended above the upper ledge of the wall. As soon as the Steipler saw this, he went as quickly as he could and started removing seforim from the top shelf.

Someone asked him what had happened and offered to help. Without stopping what he was doing, he answered that the seforim were blocking air from the women and had to be removed.

Although walking was very difficult for the Steipler Rov and he rarely left the house, one Friday night he hurried to the home of a student to ask directions for finding a particular acquaintance. After receiving the information, he apologized for the

disturbance on Shabbos and explained why he needed to find this man so urgently. "He came to see me today to ask me to daven for his wife who was not feeling well. I forgot to tell him that he should reassure her and give her chizuk. I must therefore immediately go to remind him that he should reassure his wife."

From The Steipler, By Rabbi Moshe Sofer, Published by CIS page 196-197. Reprinted with Permission of 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](mailto:rabbisilver.firstseder@gmail.com)

**1st**  
*Seder*

A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

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

[RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org](mailto:RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org)

**Good Shabbos!**