

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

BEREISHIS – WHAT IF THE SHOE DOESN'T FIT?

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Rashi raises the question why the Torah begins with Bereishis, the account of Creation. Since the Torah is primarily a document of laws and guidelines for life, the Torah should have begun with the first Mitzvah given to Bnai Yisrael. Rav Moshe Feinstein offers his own answer. The Torah starts with the description of Hashem's creation of the Universe because it is a concept that is a prerequisite for Mitzvah observance; if one does not believe this, his Mitzvos are worthless.

Why is this perception of Hashem so fundamental to our observance of the Torah's Mitzvos? The answer can be found in the Yalkut Shimoni (Bereishis 2): "When a king of flesh and blood builds a palace, he consults an architect. The architect himself does not build it based on his own perception; he consults the industry reference guides. So too, Hakadosh Boruch Hu looked in the Torah and created the world. The Torah states Bereishis, Hashem created the world for the sake of Reishis - the Torah."

The Dubner Maggid asks, why does Hashem need any instruction manual? Additionally, the Torah itself was created by Hashem – He wrote the manual! He answers that when a tailor sews a garment for someone, he must take his

measurements to assure that the garment will fit. So too, since the purpose of Creation was for the sake of fulfilling the Torah and its Mitzvos, Hashem "consulted" the Torah to assure that the world would conform perfectly to the agenda of the Torah.

Therefore, one who does not believe that Hashem created the world perceives all the Mitzvos as an afterthought – a guide for behavior in a preexisting world. He may see the Torah as Divine but may feel that the Torah must somehow conform to the world as it exists and as it changes, just as a government which makes laws to fit and apply to thousands of phenomena and millions of situations needs to make adjustments from time to time.

Rav Yaakov Galinsky was asked about this very point: why we do not adjust the Torah to deal with the changing world? He replied with the following *mashal*. When you buy a child a pair of shoes and he outgrows them, there are several options to resolve the problem. You can cut a hole in the shoe to make room for the toes or you can buy a new pair of shoes. Why don't we consider cutting off a few toes so that the shoe will fit? This is out of the question because the child's foot is the "given" and the shoe is meant to fit the foot. From our perspective,

the Torah is the "foot", and mankind is the "shoe". Man must adapt to the Torah. However if you believe that mankind is the "foot" and the Torah is the "shoe", if the "shoe" doesn't fit, make a few holes or get a new "shoe".

Someone who does not believe that Hashem created the world for a specific purpose, believes that Creation and mankind have no fixed agenda. Therefore, the Torah must be adjusted to accommodate man. This is *kefira* – heresy – and all the Mitzvos which are predicated on such a philosophy are indeed worthless.

It was this perspective, that it is man who must conform to the Torah, that drove the Chazon Ish to "restitute" Shemitta observance in Eretz Yisrael. When every "intelligent" person knew that it was impossible in modern times, he responded that if the Torah says there must be Shemitta, there will be Shemitta! He persevered and today hundreds of farmers keep Shemitta. Remember – if the shoe fits, wear it. But if not, the problem is the shoe, not the foot!

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YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD

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

BROKEN TABLET

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion, Bereishis, introduces the first commandment that HaShem gave to Adam. The commandment HaShem told Adam was, "HaShem Elokim commanded to the Man saying, from all the trees in the garden, you can surely eat". (Bereishis 2,16) Our Sages in Sanhedrin 56 teach that each part of that commandment included the seven Noahide commandments, the mitzvos that were commanded to all humanity. For example, the word "commanded" is a reference to the fact that HaShem commanded Adam about Dinim, laws of justice. This leads us to the following fascinating story.

Eli was new to Yeshiva. He was joining first year beis medrash and didn't know anyone yet. He walked into his assigned classroom and put his leather shoulder bag on a chair by a desk. Eli then stepped away from the desk and walked to the other side of the room.

In his briefcase he had a tablet because the Yeshiva would occasionally learn remotely over Zoom. Mordechai came into the

classroom. He saw Eli's shoulder bag on the chair and picked it up. "Who put this bag on my seat?", he exclaimed, and then proceeded to throw the briefcase a few feet away to an empty desk. Mordechai didn't know that there was a fragile electronic device in the shoulder bag.

Pinny, another student, saw Mordechai throw the bag, picked up the bag and said, "Why are you putting his bag near my desk?" Pinny then proceeded to throw Eli's bag to a third, empty seat.

Eli watched the incident with horror and embarrassment. He went over to his shoulder bag and opened it up. As he feared, the electronic tablet inside was broken.

Eli went over to Pinny, the last person who threw the bag and said. "I think you just broke my tablet and I believe you need to pay me for a new one". When Pinny realized what happened he felt bad but countered, "I didn't know there was a tablet in the bag. I don't think I broke it though. Mordechai threw it

first. He likely broke it when he threw it. I'm sure it was broken when I threw it". When Mordechai heard the accusation he said, "I'm really sorry about the tablet but it must have broken when it was thrown the second time. I only threw it very gently and I didn't hear anything when it fell. That second blow must have cracked the tablet".

Poor Eli now has a broken tablet and both of the negligent people claim the other broke it. Who has to pay for the broken tablet? Is it the first person who threw it? Is it the second person who threw it? Do they both have to pay half? Or perhaps neither has to pay because it's impossible to prove who broke it? What do you think?

Regarding last week's question about changing the name, Rav Zilberstein wrote that The mesader kidushin can give her a new name on the spot and write that in the kesuba.

I ADMIRED AND PRAISED IT TO APPRECIATE WHAT I'M GIVING UP

Once a man borrowed money from the Chasam Sofer. After he repaid the loan, the man took out a gorgeous esrog box to give to the Chasam Sofer as a token of his appreciation for the loan. The Chasam Sofer examined the esrog box from all sides and effusively praised its beauty.

His talmidim were shocked, knowing that accepting the box would be an obvious transgression of the prohibition against taking Ribis, interest. Noticing the look on their faces, the Chasam Sofer then said, "Let

me tell you a story about my rebbe Harav Nossan Adler".

Rav Adler was once waiting to be driven somewhere on a wagon. One of the horses pulled up lame, and the driver went to find a replacement. He came back with an ox, which he proceeded to hitch up to the wagon. Rav Adler immediately jumped out of the wagon and started dancing on the side of the road. The driver was astonished and asked why he was dancing. Rav Adler explained to the astonished driver that he was thrilled to

finally have the opportunity to fulfill the commandment of not using kilayim, a forbidden animal combination of an ox and a horse, for pulling the wagon.

Said the Chasam Sofer to his students, "I cannot accept the box because it is ribis, but I admired and praised it to appreciate what I'm giving up. This way the mitzvah will be mehudar."

From Impact Volume Three by Rabbi Dovid Kaplan, published By Feldheim and 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

Good Shabbos!