

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 NOACH – OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

The generation of Noach had sunk to a level of depravity so deep that Hashem decided to eradicate all of humanity. Although they were guilty of idolatry and immorality, Rashi states that their fate was sealed because of robbery. Ostensibly the first two sins were much more serious; why was it robbery that tipped the scale?

I thought of four possible explanations:

- 1) While the first two sins may have been committed many times, they were distinct repetitions; the perpetrators were not in a continuous state of sin. However, the sin of robbery continues uninterrupted – every moment – until the stolen goods are returned or compensation has been made. The perpetrator is in constant violation of the negative commandment of *lo sigzol* – do not steal and the positive Mitzvah of *veheishiv es hagezeila* – He shall return the stolen object.
- 2) Even if they had performed many Mitzvos of Tzedakah that might have counterbalanced their *aveiros*, those Mitzvos would not be attributed to their credit if they were performed with stolen assets.
- 3) The likelihood of the people being able to do Teshuva for idolatry and immorality was much greater than in the case of robbery. If at the last

minute, they had sincere thoughts of Teshuva for these *aveiros*, they could have reversed the verdict. However, Teshuva for stealing requires complete restitution. For one who engaged in robbery for many years this is almost impossible.

- 4) They were certainly aware of their two very serious *aveiros* and might eventually do Teshuva for them. However, when it comes to stealing, it is likely that they were oblivious to this sin, since people tend to rationalize acts of dishonesty. It appears that human beings have all kinds of excuses and explanations for thievery. If that were the case, they would never think of doing Teshuva

This last point bears a very significant message for us. The Gemara in Bava Basra (165a) asserts that most people are guilty of stealing because of the common tendency to rationalize in business affairs. Thus, even at Ne'ila on Yom Kippur when we delete the long list of *aveiros* in the *Al Cheit* (as if we have dealt with all those *aveiros*), we nevertheless say in the Shemoneh Esrei, "...so that we may desist from our dishonest actions."

Our observance of Mitzvos and our Torah learning have made major strides in the past seventy-five years. Our standards of

kashrus in America have risen considerably. The tefillin that a Bar Mitzva boy dons today are of a higher standard than those of anyone who lived one hundred years ago. Nevertheless, we still suffer from this same problem when it comes to this issue. While people have become accustomed to ask *she'ailos* about every detail of halacha, this is not true for monetary matters. It seems that in this area there are still many of us who feel quite comfortable *paskening* our own *she'ailos*.

Rav Yisrael Salanter states that all illegal gains – by any other name – are still stealing. Therefore, it is high time that we gave more consideration to learning the halachos of monetary matters. They are no less worthy of our attention than the laws of Shabbos and lashon hara. Here are a few suggestions of practical sources: "A Journey to Virtue" (Artscroll), "Halachos of Other People's Money" (Feldheim) and "The Business Newsletter" (email subscribe@businesshalacha.com).

Additionally, when in doubt, we must be prepared to ask a *she'aila* to someone proficient in these halachos.

Taking a more conscientious approach to monetary matters will not only prevent serious cases of Chilul Hashem, but it will also create a major Kiddush Hashem.

YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD

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

THE TENS UNIT

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion talks about the destruction of the flood. Our Sages teach that the decree of the flood was sealed because of the sin of theft. This leads us to the following true story.

Naftali lived in Israel during the intifada, when sadly, terrorist attacks were a relatively frequent occurrence. Naftali suffered from chronic back pain. He went to different doctors but they were unable to solve his chronic pain. Finally, one doctor suggested that he try TENS Therapy. TENS or Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve stimulator, is a therapy that can help stop chronic back pain in some people. This is done by attaching several electrodes to the body that stimulate the painful area. The TENS device sends electrical pulses through the skin to start the body's own painkillers. The electrical pulses can release endorphins and other substances to stop pain signals in the brain.

Naftali decided that he had nothing to lose and decided to try the treatment. The TENS machine was not very common. He had to borrow the device from a well-known Medical Device Gemach, similar to Yad Sarah. He borrowed the device and began trying the

treatment every day. The treatment had to be done while walking or jogging so Naftali would walk around his neighborhood with the TENS machine in a gym bag, with wires attached to his body. The therapy was going great and the pain was beginning to subside.

One day Naftali was taking his daily brisk walk holding the gym bag with the electrodes attached to his body. He passed Yaron, a tough guy with a lot of military training. When Yaron saw Naftali with the wires attached to his body coming out of a gym bag, he was certain that Naftali was a terrorist carrying a suicide bomb. Yaron tackled Naftali, pushing him to the ground, ripped the cords off of him, and smashed the gym bag to the ground. Yaron was certain he had stopped a terrorist plot, but to his shock Naftali got off the ground, and showed Yaron the contents of the bag. It was not a bomb; it was just a simple medical device.

The TENS machine was totally smashed. Naftali forgave Yaron for the misunderstanding but politely explained to Yaron that the device did not belong to him. Naftali asked Yaron to pay the \$1000 for the replacement of the TENS unit. "Mah, Pitom,

not so fast" retorted Yaron." I'm sorry I made the mistake but this was really your negligence. It was foolish of you to walk around with this machine during the intifada when Israelis everywhere are on high alert for terrorism. Naftali argued that this was a mainstream treatment and Yaron had no right to break the device.

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Did Yaron have to pay for breaking the TENS Unit, or was it Naftali's negligence and is Yaron perhaps exempt? See Veharev Na Volume Three page 311

Regarding last week's question about the broke laptop, Rav Zilberstein answered as follows. Normally we would use the principal of Hamotzie Mechaveiro Alav Haraiya, that the burden of proof would be on the owner of the laptop to prove which person broke it. However, in this case we can say it was an "umdena", presumption, that one broke it, and use that to obligate him to pay. Therefore, if the first person threw it far enough to potentially break it, the first person would be liable to pay even though we don't have proof that he broke it.

I MUST FIRST CHECK WITH HER

Consideration for others, including those who serve us, is a hallmark of our great people.

Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzinski once came to a small resort town called Druskenik. The Rav of the town selected a house that was quite large, close to the "yeshiva corner" for Reb Chaim Ozer to live in. Reb Chaim Ozer and the Rav entered the house while the students remained outside. When they came out, the students could hear Rav Chaim Ozer saying to

the Rav, "I cannot accept the house yet. I must first check with her." Someone whispered, "Reb Chaim Ozer is a widower, his wife passed away, who is he referring to?"

Later the talmidim realized what Rav Chaim Ozer meant. Reb Chaim Ozer had been referring to his cook. In this particular house that the Rav prepared for Rav Chaim Ozer, the kitchen was a distance from the dining room. Rav Chaim Ozer feared that it might be too

difficult for the cook to walk back and forth from the kitchen to the dining room. He felt he could not commit to taking the house until his cook approved it. Eventually, the cook arrived and gave her approval to the quarters. Rav Chaim Ozer then agreed to use the house.

From [The Torah Personality](#), 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

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

Good Shabbos!