

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

SIMCHAS TORAH – JUST THE TWO OF US

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Rashi in Parshas Pinchas (29:35) describes the special significance of Shemini Atzeres. "All the days of the Festival, Bnai Yisrael brought sacrifices (of seventy bulls) corresponding to the 70 nations. Now when they are about to leave, the Omnipresent says to them, 'Make a small meal (just one bull) so that I shall have pleasure from you. Stay a little longer.' This is an expression of endearment similar to children who are departing from their father who tells them, 'Your departure is difficult for me; stay one more day.'"

Rav Chaim Friedlander asks how this extra day and additional celebration would ease the pangs of departure. If anything, the special private meal would intensify the love and make the departure even more difficult. Secondly, why make such a small meal instead of a festive banquet?

Rav Chaim's answer is based on the Sefer Hachinuch (324). Sukkos is referred to as "Chag Ha'asif – the Festival of the Ingathering... when you gather in your produce from the field" (Shemos 23:16). This was usually a time of great joy and

exuberance celebrating the bountiful harvest. Hashem gave us the Yom Tov of Sukkos to enable us to focus our simcha toward Him. (The simcha should be an expression of our appreciation that all our wealth comes from Hashem and our gratitude for His great chesed). However, since joy and celebration often lead to a distraction from *yiras Shomayim*, Hashem commanded us to take a physical object – the lulav – to remind us that our simcha is to be focused on Him...One should wave the lulav back and forth, demonstrating at this time of joy that everything belongs to Hashem – above and in all four directions. The Chinuch then asks why on Shemini Atzeres, when our simcha is even greater, don't we continue to take the lulav? He answers that on Shemini Atzeres our simcha is entirely with Hashem and there cannot be any distractions.

Rav Chaim explains this profound dichotomy between Sukkos and Shemini Atzeres which the Chinuch puts forth. The joy of Sukkos emanates from physical and material pleasure – the ingathering of the harvest. Since it is basically a mundane simcha, it requires a means to focus it on

Hashem, therefore we need the lulav. In contrast, the joy of Shemini Atzeres is completely spiritual – spending time with Hashem. The little *seudah* is not a goodbye party at all. It is an intimate encounter with Hashem to demonstrate the true love that exists between Hashem and us. An intimacy which has been cultivated over three weeks starting with Rosh Hashana – our acceptance of His Malchus, Yom Kippur – Teshuva and atonement of our sins and Sukkos – seven days spent in the sukkah, the symbol of Divine protection.

Rav Chaim suggests that the Ge'onim (approx., 590 -1040) instituted Simchas Torah on Shemini Atzeres because it is the Torah which both demonstrates and maintains the great love and *devaikus* between Hashem and us. Thus, we declare in Maariv, "You have loved Bais Yisrael, Your people, an eternal love – You taught us Torah and Mitzvos, Chukim and Mishpatim." It is this great gift which will help us maintain the closeness we achieve in Tishrei throughout the course of the year. In a way, it is like taking Hashem with us.

YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD

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

ISABEL'S KESUBA

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week is Shabbos Chol Hamoad Succos. The Sfas Emes writes that the succah is like a chuppah where we unite with Hashem. This leads us to an interesting question about a chuppah.

There was once a young Israeli woman named Isabel. Her official Hebrew name given at her birth was Izevel. Eventually Isabel became a Torah observant woman and was engaged to be married to a wonderful young

man. At the wedding, as the Mesader Kidushin was writing the kesuba,

Isabel realized that the mesader kidushin would write her Hebrew name Izevel. Now that Isabel was more knowledgeable, she was embarrassed to be named after Izevel, the wife of King Achav, a wicked, evil queen who killed and persecuted prophets.

As the Mesader Kidushin was filling in the kesubah, she said to him, "Please can you change my Hebrew name to something else, and write it in the kesubah?"

The Mesader Kidushin was caught in a bind. What should he do? Should he write a name that the bride was embarrassed about? Or did he have the ability to give her a new Hebrew name on the spot? What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Megilla Page 139

Regarding last week's question about sleeping in the Succah, Rav Zilberstein wrote that it would be better for the father to sleep alone and not sleep in a way that is uncomfortable.

HE WAS UNABLE TO SWALLOW AND HAD TO FORCE HIMSELF TO EAT

A chassid who was destitute begged his Rebbe to bless him to become prosperous. The Rebbe said, "I will bless you, but first you must carry out what I instruct you. Then you may return for the blessing."

The Rebbe gave the chassid some money. "You are to buy the finest delicacies. You must eat them in the presence of your family, but you may not allow your children to partake of them. Then come to me for the desired blessing." The chassid did as instructed. When he set the delicacies on the table, the children were full of glee. They had little to eat that day. However, as the Rebbe had instructed, the father could not share the food with them. When the father began eating and saw the distress

of his hungry children who craved the food, he was unable to swallow. He had to force himself to eat, and virtually choked with each bite.

When he returned, the Rebbe said, "I will bless you with wealth. But as you prosper, remember that you will be enjoying your wealth while others are destitute. What kind of pleasure can you have from your wealth? It will be like eating delicacies in the presence of your hungry children."

The man indeed became wealthy and gave lavishly to charity. He never ate at home. He would take his food to the soup kitchen and share it with the poor. He always remembered how he had felt when he had eaten while others were hungry.

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev said this explains what the Torah means when it writes, And HaShem blessed Avraham with all" (Genesis 24:1). "This means that HaShem blessed not only Avraham but all those about him as well. If Avraham alone had prospered while those about him did not, Avraham would not have felt this to be a blessing." "Our Patriarch Abraham would not have considered his wealth to be a blessing if others did not prosper. True happiness must be unselfish."

From Rebbes and Chassidim, By Rabbi Abraham J. Twersky. Published by Mesorah Publications, 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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RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org

A Good Shabbos and Yom Tov!