

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 VAYEITZEI – WITH LOVE

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

When Yaakov approached the city of Charan, he found the shepherds gathered at the well. He struck up a conversation with them. “My brothers, where are you from?... Do you know Lavan ben Nachor?... Is all well with him?” (Bereishis 29:4-5). Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky finds it odd that Yaakov would refer to total strangers as his brothers. He points out that almost nowhere else do we find the use of the word brother in reference to people that one does not know. (The one possible exception in Bamidbar 20:14 is expounded by Rashi.)

Rav Yaakov offers a remarkable explanation. In the next pasuk the Torah states that Yaakov began to admonish the shepherds: “Behold, the day is yet long; it is not time to bring the animals in. Water the sheep and go on grazing [them].” As Rashi explains, he told them, “If you were hired for a day you haven’t yet provided a full day’s work.” How do you go about rebuking a total stranger? You tell him that you come in friendship like a brother. You mean no harm. You have only his best interest at heart. You must truly feel a sense of kinship.

Rav Yaakov asserts that this is because it is the only way the criticism will be accepted. The Gemara (Arachin 16b) states that one is obligated to admonish a sinner until he abuses him by cursing or hitting him. Rav Yaakov asks why this should exempt someone from the Mitzvah of *tochacha* – the obligation to admonish a sinner. It is not a case of *pikuach nefesh* (danger to one’s life). He answers that this is not an exemption. Rather such a response from the sinner is evidence that he will not accept the admonishment. Since all attempts to reach him are futile, there is no longer any Mitzvah to rebuke.

To understand why the sinner refuses to even listen to the legitimate advice that he is being given, we must delve a little deeper. The Rambam (Hilchos Dai’os 6:7) states, “One who admonishes a fellow [Jew], whether in matters that involve the two of them or in matters between him and Hashem, must admonish him in private and speak to him softly and in a gentle manner; and inform him that he is only telling him for his own good...and he must persist to admonish him until the

sinner hits him and says I refuse to listen.” Rav Yaakov infers from the Rambam that the response of the sinner is due to the fact that he does not recognize that the *tochacha* is really for his own good. The only way to get through to him is to convince him that you care very much about him. And you can do that only if you love him.

Now let us take another look at this Rambam. Note the phrase “whether in matters that involve the two of them.” Even when the *tochacha* is directed at someone who harmed you, you must still speak to him with love. Why? Because that is the only way to rebuke or criticize. In truth this message is stated explicitly in the Torah (Vayikra 19:17-18): “You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall admonish your fellow and do not bear a sin because of him. You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge; you shall love your fellow as yourself – I am Hashem.” Need I say more?

YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD

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

CUT-THROAT COMPETITION

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Torah portion, the Torah references the importance of honesty. The Torah writes how Reuvein went out during the harvest season to collect dudaim for his mother (Beresheis 30,14). Rashi points out that this was a praise about Reuvein; he was careful to only collect dudaim that were hefker, ones that were ownerless. We know that theft is an extremely serious transgression in the eyes of the Torah. There's also another form of theft called Hasagas Gevul, which includes unfair competitive practices. This leads us to the following true story.

In Israel there is universal healthcare known as Kupat Cholim. The government pays for this health insurance. However, there are four basic different private insurance groups that one can be a part of: M'uchedet, Makabi, Leumit and Klalit. This can be compared to the United States where Medicaid pays for the insurance but there are different Managed Care organizations (MCOs), that one can join like Amerigroup, or Aetna.

One of the private insurance groups under Kupat Cholim wanted to increase its subscriber base. This is because they would get more money from the Kupat Cholim with each new member. Let's call this group Olympia health. Olympia Health launched an initiative that every person who would leave the other healthcare groups to join their group would receive 200 shekel. This initiative was very successful and the other insurance groups lost many of their subscribers.

One of the other insurance groups which we will call United Insurance, was very distressed at this practice. They needed to find a way to compete with Olympia. They came up with the following plan. They told the doctors that were in their network, that if anyone switched from nationwide to Olympia, then the doctors should no longer accept them. If the doctors would not agree to do this they would face sanctions from the insurance company. There were obviously very harsh tactics used by each of the insurance groups.

When faced with this ultimatum from the insurance company, one of the doctors approached Rav Zilberstein with these questions. First of all was Olympia Insurance allowed to take customers away from United by paying them to switch? Second of all, would the doctor be permitted to listen to the insurance company and drop patients who were switching? And third, was United allowed to retaliate that way? What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Baba Basra page 137

Regarding last week's question of whether it is permitted to put up a fake "Beware Of Dog Sign", Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered as follows: It is ok to do it if your neighbors don't mind. It may scare visitors or children so that is a concern. You are allowed to deceive potential burglars but you should explain to your children that this is being done as a protection.

SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S HASHGACHA

REB AVRAHAM DOVID, REB ARYEH SCHECHTER, & THE OHR HACHAIM HAKADOSH

After Reb Avraham Dovid returned to his home from Boston on December 10, 2019 he asked Rabbi Henoah Rubin, his gemara chavrusah, to please switch their seder from gemara to Ohr Hachaim. Reb Henoah told him that he really preferred to stick to gemara. Reb Henoah spoke to Mrs. Wiesz, suggesting that she find someone else to learn Ohr Hachaim with her husband. She pleaded with him to try it till after Shabbos, maybe it will work out. Two days later at the Weisz residence, where they have a small chaburah Thursday nights where they talk in learning, sing and enjoy themselves, Reb Henoah walked in looking like a ghost. He told Reb Avraham Dovid that he was ready to learn with him Ohr Hachaim. "What is happening in the world so that you should get your wish is incomprehensible!" He related to everyone in

attendance about the accidental phone call he just received.

Reb Aryeh Schechter zt'l was a great tzadik in Eretz Yisroel, who cared about all Jews. He reached out to many Jews who were not connected to Torah in a very loving and meaningful way. He always taught the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh. At an advanced stage of pancreatic cancer, he realized that his time to leave this world was approaching. In an effort to say good-bye to his dear friends he called a very close friend of his, Rabbi Itcha (Yitzchok) Rubin, the father of Reb Henoah. However, he accidentally dialed the wrong number and called Reb Henoah instead of Reb Itcha.

Reb Henoah answered the phone and upon hearing Rav Aryeh he asked how he was feeling. Reb Aryeh told him that was expecting to leave this world soon and had

intended to call his father. However, once he was on the phone with Reb Henoah, he shared with him how he just finished learning one more piece of the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh with his family members. He told him how grateful he was to HaShem to have had the opportunity to learn with his family a piece from the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh so soon before his departure. "Do you hear, Henoah, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh is so sweet, it is so holy, yes, it is sweet and it is holy." A few hours later Reb Aryeh passed on. Reb Henoah turned to Avraham Dovid "I understood the message and have come back to learn with you. I am looking forward to the seder. The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh is so sweet and so holy." 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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Good Shabbos !