

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 VAYECHI – CALCULATING THE KEITZ

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“Yaakov called for his sons and said, ‘Gather yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the end of days’” (Bereishis 49:1). Rashi explains that Yaakov intended to reveal the *keitz* (the time of the ultimate redemption), however the Shechina departed from him and he began to speak about other things.

The following Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 98:2) will give us some understanding of why Hashem reveals the *keitz* yet seeks to conceal it: “The *keitz* was revealed to two people and then hidden from them: Yaakov and Daniel.” Rav Yaakov Galinsky asks how the Medrash could claim that the *keitz* was hidden from Daniel when the date of the *keitz* is described in Sefer Daniel in chapters 8 and 12. Indeed, Rav Saadya Gaon, the Ramban, Rabbeinu Bechayei, Abarbanel, Chasam Sofer and the Malbim all extrapolated dates for the *keitz* from pesukim in Sefer Daniel. Rashi notes that the date assigned by Rav Saadya Gaon was proven wrong when that date passed “and those who follow will attempt a different approach.” And they have and they too have been proven wrong.

It appears that Daniel was told a very cryptic description of the *keitz* which at first he understood but thereafter it was hidden from him. If the cryptic *keitz* was not

deciphered by Daniel, why would the commentaries seek to explain it? Additionally, if they could very possibly be proven wrong, why did they take a stab at it?

Rav Galinsky explains that Hashem initially reveals a date that can be understood in many ways. For instance, Hashem told Avraham that his progeny would be sojourners in a foreign land for 400 years. That might have simply meant that they would be exiled in a foreign land for the entire 400 years. Nevertheless, the tribe of Ephraim understood that the 400 years began with the *Bris Bein Habesarim* when Avraham was originally informed of this galus. Hence many of them escaped from Mitzrayim at that “*keitz*”. However, their calculation proved wrong and they met their death at the hands of the Plishtim. In truth the “*keitz*” came after 400 years from the birth of Yitzchok. (Perhaps this idea is conveyed in the Hagaddah: “Blessed is He who keeps His pledge to Yisrael... For Hakadosh Baruch Hu calculated the *keitz*.” That is to say that it is Hashem Who makes the ultimate calculation of the *keitz*.)

So too, the final *keitz* was foretold cryptically in order to allow for many possible interpretations. According to Kabbalah there are times which have been

predestined to be auspicious for the redemption to take place. However, the redemption is dependent on the worthiness of Klal Yisrael. If we fail to rise to the occasion and mend our ways, that possible *keitz* will pass without the redemption.

Rav Galinsky explains that Yaakov understood that by concealing the *keitz* Hashem wanted him to focus on Bnai Yisrael’s role in bringing the *geulah*. Thus, he turned his attention to the strengths and weaknesses of his sons. He admonished Reuvain for his hastiness and Shimon and Levi for their unbridled anger. He commended Yehuda for confessing his sin and doing Teshuva.

Thus, in truth Rav Saadya Gaon and the other great Talmidei Chachamim did not err in the extrapolation of the dates that they suggested. Those dates were all potential dates which could have and should have heralded the *geulah*, but we dropped the ball. The message for us is to do Teshuva and intensify our longing for the complete redemption. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 98a) states that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked the Mashiach, “When will you come?” He replied, “Today!... if you will heed **His** word” (Tehillim 95:7). If we strive to achieve a Teshuva Shleima, the Mashiach could come this very day.

YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD

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

BUILDING ON YOUR PROPERTY

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Torah portion the Torah makes a reference to the partnership between Yissachar and Zevulun. (Bereishis 49,13) Zevulun would support Yissachar so that they could learn Torah. In return, Yissocher shared the reward and blessing of Torah learning with Zevulun. This partnership leads us to the following story of partnership.

Four families lived in an apartment building. They all owned the building jointly and they also owned a grassy yard next to the building. One day some of the families raised the idea of converting the yard next to the building into an extension that would greatly increase the size of each of the apartments.

Three of the families agreed and thought it was a great idea. They wanted to extend the apartments into the yard. One family, the Greens, disagreed. They preferred to have a yard for their children to play in. They also enjoyed the view that the yard offered. The other three families replied that they were the majority and their interests override the views of the minority. However, the Greens argued that they had a valid reason to object. The yard was necessary for the kids. In addition, even though the others were a majority, the Greens still owned a significant portion of the yard. If the others would use the yard to build an extension they would be using the land without the Green's permission. They felt that ownership of the

yard was not a democracy that can simply be decided by majority rule. If someone builds on the yard then they are building on the Green's property too, and that is theft.

What do you think? Does one family have the right to block the extension? Or does one family have to follow the will of the majority? See Chashukei Chemed Bava Basra page 83

Regarding last week's questions about the kidney miracle, Rav Elyashiv Zt"l answered that the doctor is exempt to pay any damages, and the woman is obligated to pay the doctor. But she is obligated to pay the costs of removing a cancer and not the more expensive costs of a kidney transplant..

THE IMPRESSION OF THOSE FIRST WORDS , "I DIDN'T GET IT", WOULD REMAIN, FOREVER TAINTING THE JOY

The name of Rav Boruch Ber Leibovitz, the Kamenitzer Rosh Yeshiva, has become synonymous with lomdus, a penetratingly deep insight into each word of the Gemara. But Rav Baruch Ber was a lamdan in another area as well, and possessed an equally keen perception of the practicalities of life. Many aspiring talmidei chachamim from across Europe sought letters of semicha, Rabbinical ordination, from Rav Boruch Ber. However, it wasn't easy to procure a letter from him. Reb Boruch Ber had his own standards, and would keep potential Rabbanim in his yeshiva for a full week, watching how they davened, how they ate and how they interacted with others. Talmudic proficiency wasn't enough to become a Rav, and the Rosh Yeshiva wanted to see the whole picture.

One day a young Kollel man entered Reb Boruch Ber's office, and introduced himself,

asking to be tested for semicha. Reb Boruch Ber told him to unpack and get settled, and they would find time to speak in learning over the course of the week. The visitor was surprised. He had expected the entire process to take one day and had told his wife that he would return that night. He asked Reb Boruch Ber if he could return home immediately and inform his wife that he would be away for the whole week, and would then return to Kamenitz. Reb Boruch Ber thought for a moment, and then told the fellow to sit down. He began to test him. After an arduous exam, he wrote him a beautiful letter of approbation. The talmidim asked their Rosh Yeshiva why he had deviated from his tradition of keeping applicants in Yeshiva for an entire week.

Reb Boruch Ber explained what had occurred. "Let us imagine the scene had I allowed that

youngerman to return home and ask his wife for permission to spend the week here in Kamenitz. She would have heard him coming and anticipated his joyous announcement that he had received the semicha. He would then enter and his first words to her would be that he didn't get it... but he would then proceed to explain to her how he hadn't yet taken the exam and would have to go back.

However, the impression of those first words, 'I didn't get it,' would remain, forever tainting the joy that she would eventually feel when he got the semicha later. Even when he would get it later, she would always remain with a vague feeling of disappointment, that it hadn't been perfect." Rav Baruch Ber did want to allow that to happen. (From Warmed By Their Fire, By Rabbi Yisrael Besser, 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

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

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Good Shabbos!