

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 BO – SAY IT OUT LOUD

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

After Hashem had hardened Paroh's heart, He told Moshe that the purpose of the ensuing plagues was, "so that you will relate to your sons and son's sons that I made a mockery of Mitzrayim and [about] My signs that I have placed among them – that you will know that I am Hashem." Why does this *pasuk* say that **you** will know instead of that **they** (your sons) will know, that I am Hashem?

Rav Boruch Sorotzkin explains that the purpose of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim* – relating the story of the Exodus – is not merely to teach our children about it. This Mitzvah is also for us to gain a deeper and more intense insight into this epic event. This is because even things that we know very well become clearer and more profound when we express them to others. In order to provide an incisive and accurate picture to our audience, we are forced to find the precise words which reflect our thoughts, which in turn requires that our own thoughts become more well-defined. Therefore, by expounding the events of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we ourselves come to confirm and to know with greater veracity that Hashem is the real G-d.

This idea can be found in the Hagadda which we recite on Pesach. "Even if we are all wise, understanding, scholarly and know the Torah there is an obligation upon us to

tell about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*." If all the participants at the Seder are scholarly and know the whole Torah, to whom are they relating the story of the Exodus? Rav Sorotzkin suggests that they are telling themselves. This is because each time they articulate the details of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* they understand it better and more deeply.

As an introduction to the Hallel recited in the Hagadda we say, "In every generation a person is obligated to see himself as if he personally had gone out of Mitzrayim...Therefore we are obligated to thank, praise, pay tribute, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol and acclaim Him Who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us." Rav Chaim Friedlander asks, "How are we able to achieve such a level of recognition that motivates us to recite Hallel with such fervor?" He answers that it is through the process of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Our recitation of the detailed description in the Hagadda helps us reconstruct the events of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* so that we have a deeper and more palpable understanding of the event, which in turn generates greater enthusiasm to express our *hakaras hatov*.

This concept of gaining clarity by means of articulation has many practical applications. We can use it to enhance our *emunah* in areas that appear fuzzy to us.

By expressing our questions to ourselves or others we can hone in on what specifically is bothering us. Then we may discover that "the question of a wise person contains half of the answer." Also, in the realm of Torah study all topics gain clarity by "speaking them out" aloud.

Particularly when it comes to *hakaras hatov*, it is critical to articulate all the things for which we should be grateful. First and foremost, we must give genuine expression to our gratitude to Hashem for His countless physical, material and spiritual blessings. This is not only to tell Hashem that we are grateful, but also to make us fully aware of all the myriads of things that He has done for us. We should not be satisfied with a perfunctory recitation of *modim* in the Shemoneh Esrei; we need to know more precisely what we are thanking Hashem for.

And what about all the people in our lives who have given us so much: our parents, our teachers, our friends, our spouses and our children? Are we truly aware of all that we owe them? We need to articulate to ourselves specific details of how we have benefitted from these people. Then we should go ahead and tell them from the bottom of our hearts how much we appreciate all they have done for us. This is true *hakaras hatov*.

You can bring a zechus refua shelaima for Sandy Bruck - Shalom ben Tila Leah - by signing up for a weekly erev Shabbos contribution at <https://pay.banquest.com/lightuptheworld> and by joining the 2-3 minute daily shiur on the writings of the Chofetz Chaim. The shiur is sent out via WhatsApp and email.

Please contact rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org to join.

THE KING AND THE WISE DONKEY

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Torah portion the Torah talks about the mitzvah of sanctifying and redeeming a donkey. This mitzvah involving a donkey leads us to the following true story about a donkey, told by Rav Zilberstein.

During the Middle Ages there were once two non-Jewish neighbors, Robert and Anthony, who owned land next to each other. One day Robert went away on a trip for many months. When he came back home, he noticed that his land was a bit smaller than it had been before he left. The hedge of bushes that was a border between their yard was pushed up about 10 feet and his neighbor Anthony had moved his property into the land he usurped from Robert. When Robert approached Anthony about his theft, Anthony vehemently denied moving the border.

Robert decided he was going to bring Anthony before the King to adjudicate their claim. The King listened to both sides' arguments and wasn't sure how to judge. He asked his advisor, a Jewish sage, to help him determine who was correct in this case.

The Jewish advisor and the King went to the land of the two neighbors and asked that the hedge be removed from between the two lands. After it was removed, the advisor asked Robert to show them where he believed the original border was. Robert made a mark with a shoe to show where the border was. Then the Jewish advisor asked Robert if he could bring out one of his donkeys. The advisor told him to make the donkey run. Robert patted the back of the donkey and urged it to run. The donkey ran, but it did not stop where the hedge was. Rather it stopped running exactly where Robert had claimed that the original boundary was. The Jewish advisor exclaimed that it seemed that the donkey was used to running this far.

He said, "Let's investigate further". The Jewish advisor then asked that they dig the ground under where the donkey stopped. Underneath the ground they found the roots of a hedge. They found that the roots of this hedge went all the way across the yard. It seemed clear that this was a spot that originally had a hedge border going across the yard.

The Sage said "it seems clear that this was the original border of the yard and the evidence supports Robert's claim". Anthony was very ashamed. The King was extremely impressed at the wisdom of the Jewish sage and this caused a great kiddush Hashem. Rav Zilberstein then asked what would happen if this story happened between two Jewish protagonists and one of them came before a beis din and tried to prove it was his by using the proof of the donkey and the roots. Normally, according to the Torah, we say that in order to extract money from someone you need witnesses or a document. Would circumstantial evidence like this be enough to prove that his property was really larger? What do you think? Could such proof be used in any capacity in a Beis Din? See Chashukei Chemed Baba Basra page 277

Regarding last week's question about leaving a store vacant, Rav Zilberstein answered that it would not be permitted, as it damages the reputation of the mall. That would not be considered a Gramma, rather it would be a Garmi.

THIS YOUNG MAN WAS MOVED BY HIS CONSIDERATION AND LOVE FOR HIS FATHER.

HOW COULD I BECOME UPSET BY THAT?

A young man once informed Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski that his father had applied for the post of rabbi in a nearby community, and that he was certain that if Rabbi Chaim Ozer would endorse his candidacy, he would be selected for the position.

Rabbi Chaim Ozer felt that the candidate lacked the qualifications for the position, but wished to avoid saying this to the son. Instead, he tried to explain to the son that it was his practice not to interfere in the affairs of other communities, and that the elders would certainly make a good judgment.

The son then became enraged, and began shouting at Rabbi Chaim Ozer with brazen chutzpah, accusing him of being insensitive to his father's needs, and being derelict in his responsibility to support Torah scholars. Rabbi Chaim Ozer listened to this diatribe very quietly, trying to pacify the young man, whose disrespectful talk was now peppered with insulting terms. Rabbi Chaim Ozer then arose and politely excused himself.

The people who witnessed this scene were furious at the young man's unforgivable audacity, and later said to Rabbi Chaim Ozer,

"Even patience and tolerance has its limitations. Why did you not simply silence this upstart?"

Rabbi Chaim Ozer said, "Why do you not understand? This young man was moved by his consideration and love for his father. How could I become upset by that?"

From Not Just Stories, By Rabbi Dr. Avraham Twersky, 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

RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org

Good Shabbos!