

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 SHEMOS – TORAS CHESED

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“When the boy grew older, she brought him to the daughter of Paroh and he became a son to her. She called his name Moshe, as she said, ‘For I drew him from the water’” (Shemos 2:10). The Medrash comments, “Although Moshe had many names, there is no other name in the entire Torah referring to him besides the name given to him by Basya the daughter of Paroh. Even Hakadosh Boruch Hu did not refer to him by any other name” (Shemos Rabba 1:26).

The Medrash Rabba in Vayikra (1:3) relates that Moshe had ten other names. Each name conveyed a different aspect of Moshe. The name Moshe given to him by Basya conveys the chesed which she performed by saving and raising him. The fact that Hashem chose this name implies that of all middos, it was chesed, as demonstrated by Basya, which defined Moshe’s own personality.

To understand the significance of this idea, we must describe the role of chesed in Creation. “*Olam chesed yibaneh* – the world is predicated on chesed” (Tehillim 89:3). Hashem created the world in order to bestow chesed on human beings. By fulfilling His commandments, they could achieve a blissful closeness to the Perfect Being in this World and in the World to

Come. However, when mankind sinned and moved further away from Hashem, He chose Avraham Avinu and his descendants to be the ultimate beneficiaries of His chesed. Due to the devotion of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, Hashem bestowed the greatest chesed of all on their descendants by giving them His precious Torah. By observing His Mitzvos we have the means to achieve a reward that is greater than all the pleasures of this world combined.

Therefore, Moshe, who was rescued and named by Basya, was the appropriate person to be Hashem’s emissary to bring the Torah down from Heaven and present it to Bnai Yisrael. It was not merely the fact that he was the beneficiary of Basya’s chesed, but also because Moshe’s essence was chesed. Chesed is more than being kind and generous to people. Chesed is caring about people. Moshe cared enough to go and see with his own eyes the suffering of Bnai Yisrael. He cared enough to risk his life to save a fellow Jew who was being beaten by an Egyptian. He cared enough to rescue the daughters of Yisro from the shepherds of Midian. He even cared enough to tend the sheep of Yisro with great sensitivity and kindness as the Medrash describes. Hashem told him, “You have compassion for the sheep

belonging to a human being; you will be the shepherd of My sheep, Yisrael!” (Shemos Rabba 2:2).

The Maharal points out that the Torah is referred to as *Toras Chesed* – a Torah of chesed (Mishlei 31:26). The Gemara (Sotah 14) states, “The Torah begins with *gemilus chasadim* (Hashem made clothing for Adam and Chava) and ends with *gemilus chasadim* (Hashem buried Moshe). Indeed, the Ostrover Rebbe (Be’er Moshe) notes that the Gematria of Torah is *gemilus chasadim*.

“The world depends on three things: on Torah, Avodah and *gemilus chasadim*” (Avos 1:2). However, they are not independent of each other. The Gemara in Sukka (49b) explains that in order for Torah to be a *Toras Chesed* one must learn Torah with the intent to share it with others. Avodah – korbanos and tefillah – are performed not merely for individuals. They are also for Klal Yisrael and for all of mankind. The seventy bulls brought in the Bais Hamikdash on Sukkos were brought for the welfare of the seventy nations. No wonder that Rav Chaim Volozhin used to say, “A person was not created for himself, but rather to benefit others in whatever way he can!”

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 VALUABLE KVETENTSIA

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion makes a reference to the prohibition of theft. The Torah says that Moshe led his sheep out to the wilderness. Rashi explains this was done to make sure that the sheep would not eat from other peoples' fields. This leads us to the following interesting story that was related by the Rogatchover Gaon.

For many years under the rule of the Czars, the Russian authorities would draft people into the army. For some period of time they issued "kvetentsias" which could be bought for a price.

These kvetentsias were documents which exempted the bearer from the draft. Since it was not limited to a specific person there was a market for kvetentsias. Eventually the

period of the kvetentsias closed and they were only given out under extremely rare circumstances. Naturally, the value of the kvetentsia skyrocketed.

There was a family with many sons who had a kvetentsia. The father was about to pass away and, in his will, delineated that the kvetentsia should be used for the youngest son, as the older sons were already too old for military service and would not be drafted. Eventually the father passed away and the son inherited the kvetentsia.

When the youngest son was called to register, it turned out that he did not need to use his kvetentsia because he was medically exempt. He decided that he would sell it and keep the money. When the brothers heard about it

they objected. They argued that the only reason why the father left it to him was for him to use it to prevent him from going to the army. If he wasn't going to use it then it should be given to all of them to share equally and they should be able to equally share in the profits of the sale.

This question was brought to the Rogatchover Gaon. What do you think? Can the son sell it and keep all the money, or would the proceeds of the sale go to all of the brothers?

Last week's question about dividing the yard was brought to Rav Elashiv Zt"l. Rav Elyashiv said that they should divide the yard equally and one family cannot stop the others from building in their portions.

DO YOU THINK IT HONORS ME WHEN YOU TURN OFF THE MUSIC WHILE SHE IS STILL LISTENING TO IT?!

Last week we learned about the sensitivity of Rav Baruch Ber. Here is another similar story. Rav Shalom Schwadron related the following story: "When I passed through Baltimore I met a man whose name was Koppel. He was elderly and distinguished, over ninety years old, and was one of Rabbeinu's (R' Baruch Ber Leibowitz) disciples who immigrated to America. Although his Yiras Shamayim was unquestionable, and he was careful with all the mitzvos, he dressed like an American, and was clean-shaven as well. As a result, a person who did not know him would have doubts about his level of Yiddishkeit.

R' Koppel told me the following story. When Mari V'Rabi was in America, I went to see him at the hotel where he was staying. I entered the room, stood before him and said, "Shalom aleichem." Rabbeinu looked up at me and replied, "Shalom aleichem," but in a barely audible voice. I didn't pay much attention to that but afterwards he began to sigh. Slowly, he emitted one sigh after another, keeping his gaze down all the while. So it continued until I realized that he was harboring grave

suspicions about the level of my Yiddishkeit on the basis of my appearance. I drew closer to him, opened my shirt and said, "Let the Rebbe look at my tzitzis, which meets all of the specifications of the halachah! Please, let the Rebbe's mind rest easy, for Baruch HaShem, I faithfully keep Shabbos, daven three times a day, and attend a daily Gemara shiur that goes for a few hours — it's just that my outsides are not like my insides!" Hearing this, Rabbeinu nodded to me and said, "Ah... Azoi... Bist du noch Koppel — Ah! Yes! You are the same Koppel that I knew before!" Immediately he rose to his feet and fell on my neck, showering me with kisses, until he felt sure that he had made me feel better!

Afterwards, of course, I invited my Rebbe to my home, to be my guest. He accepted my invitation and came with me to the house. When we walked in, I saw that my wife was busy with her housework, listening to music as she went about her tasks. I immediately felt that it was not appropriate that such music be in the background, for it was an affront to my Rebbe's honor so I quickly

turned it off. Afterwards I invited Rebbe to sit down with me at the table. He did not sit down. Instead, he made a request of me. "Koppel, come out to the porch with me for a minute." We went out, and there he said to me, "Koppel! Where did you learn such a 'Torah' as that, to go turn off the machine without your wife's permission?! That was cruelty! I know that you did it out of concern for my honor, but do you think it honors me when you are cruel to your wife and turn off the music while she is still listening to it?! Therefore, I ask you to please go and ask her forgiveness." Reb Shalom used to conclude this story by saying, "This teaches us that if anyone thinks that jealousy for another person's honor revolves around subjective feelings, he is surely mistaken! There is a precise Shulchan Aruch for everything, telling us how to act and when!"

From "Reb Baruch Ber" by Rabbi Chaim Shlomo Rosenthal, published by Feldheim, 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!