

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 VA'EIRA – WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“This was Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said, ‘Take Bnai Yisrael out of Mitzrayim...’ They were the ones who spoke to Paroh, King of Mitzrayim to take Bnai Yisrael out of Mitzrayim; this was Moshe and Aharon” (Shemos 6:26-27). Rashi comments that the repetition of the phrase, “this was Moshe and Aharon” teaches us that “they remained the same in their mission and their righteousness from the beginning to the end.” Rav Elya Meir Bloch asserts that Moshe and Aharon maintained the same selfless commitment to their mission and did not let their egos taint the purity of their mission. (This may be due to the fact that they had almost no egos. They were the humblest men ever.)

The Sefer Yosif Lekach observes that this characteristic of Moshe was dramatically manifested when he broke the Luchos. Imagine Moshe Rabbeinu who had reached the pinnacle of his career when Hashem revealed Himself on Har Sinai. He was Hashem’s agent to present the Torah to Klal Yisrael by bringing down to them the Luchos which embodied all 613 Mitzvos within the Ten Commandments. However, when he realized that it would not be

appropriate to give the Luchos to Bnai Yisrael after the travesty of the Golden Calf, he broke them. His greatest mission was smashed to smithereens. And Hashem not only gave His approval to Moshe’s action, but He also told him Y’yasher Koach for breaking them, for he served only Hashem and not himself. Even when Hashem told Moshe, “I will annihilate them and I will make you a great nation,” Moshe demurred and pleaded with Hashem to spare Bnai Yisrael

Rav Bloch notes that although many people who become involved in very worthwhile causes start out with the purest of intentions, somewhere along the way their egos and their self-esteem become fused with their mission. At times they make decisions which may be beneficial to themselves but not very beneficial for their institution. Sometimes their institutions may lose their way and it becomes time to close their doors. However, in order to save face, they continue to carry on.

In the year 1891 the Russians sought to impose their curriculum on the Yeshiva of Volozhin. They issued an ultimatum: either

incorporate their curriculum or the Yeshiva would be closed down. The Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, the famous Netziv, concluded that since the Russian program was antithetical to the *mesorah* of the Yeshiva, it would be better to close the Yeshiva than to accede to the governments demands. And so, the Yeshiva was closed. Since the Netziv had not bonded his identity with the existence of the Yeshiva, the decision was not about him. It was about the *mesorah* of Torah.

Working for Hashem, His Torah and His People is the highest calling, whether one is a Rosh Yeshiva, a principal, a *menahel*, a president, an administrator, a teacher, a pulpit rabbi, a fund raiser or merely a foot soldier. No matter how hard one may work for an organization, he must always bear in mind that his identity cannot be contingent on his job. We all have egos, and we may want to be identified by the success of our endeavors, but when push comes to shove we must strive to do what is best for Kavod Hatorah and Kavod Shamayim.

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 VACANCY

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion makes a reference to the importance of showing gratitude to somebody who does you a favor. The Torah writes that Moshe was unable to initiate the first two plagues by hitting the water, because he was saved by the water. This teaches us that we have to feel gratitude for something or someone that helps us. This leads to the following true story.

Refael had a jewelry business that was doing well. He wanted to expand it so he rented a storefront from Shmuel, who owned a small retail stripmall. Shmuel offered Refael a deal. If he would pay for the year's rent in advance he would give him a significant deduction. Refael agreed and paid for the entire year up front.

Before Refael moved into the new storefront, he realized that he didn't really need the new storefront anymore since most of his business was coming from online and phone purchases. Refael considered asking for a refund from Shmuel but decided that having

the storefront was beneficial for him for tax purposes. The expense of the store gave him a tax deduction and put him in a lower tax bracket, saving him a lot of money.

For a while Refael left the storefront vacant. After a while, Shmuel, the owner of the stripmall reached out to Refael. "Refael why aren't you moving into the store? It has been empty for quite a while. Is something wrong with it?" Refael replied that things changed and that he didn't really need to use the storefront but he kept it for tax purposes. Shmuel replied, "I really hope that you move in soon. Having that storefront vacant lowers the appeal and the value of my entire mall. When there's a vacant store, other businesses won't rent my other available properties in the strip mall. Please move in because by leaving it vacant you are causing me damage".

Refael said, "You know there was never any clause in our contract that I had to occupy the property. It's enough that I paid you in full".

Shmuel responded, "That is true, but you don't have a right to damage my entire real estate holding. By leaving it empty you are causing me a great deal of financial damage."

What do you think? Does Refael have a right to leave the storefront vacant? Or is he not allowed to keep it vacant as it is causing Shmuel damage? See Chashukei Chemed Bava Basra Page 533

Regarding last week's question about the draft exemption, the Ragatchover responded based on Nazir 24A that a husband commits himself for anything the wife might need. However, for something that she has no need he never accepted responsibility. Based on this he said that the father was only concerned about his son's welfare. If he does not need it, it was never given to him, and therefore the proceeds should be split between all the children.

CHERISHING YOUR WIFE

Reb Chaim, a student of Rav Aharon Kotler, was going to Lakewood with his wife and was taking Reb Aharon Kotler with him. They had already started the car and were about to pull out when Reb Aharon said, "Excuse me but I must go back upstairs, I forgot something". Reb Chaim responded that it would not be necessary for the Rosh Yeshiva to go to the effort. He can go upstairs and take whatever was forgotten. The Rosh Yeshiva said, "No I must go out myself". The Rosh Yeshiva and Reb Chaim got out of the car, went into the building, up the elevator, into the apartment and then into the kitchen. The Rebbetzin was there standing at the counter. The Rosh Yeshiva walked over and said, "Have a good day", and then turned around and left. Reb Chaim said he would never forget the smile on the Rebbetzin's face when she realized what happened. She literally beamed with happiness over the Rosh Yeshiva's gesture. The Rosh Yeshiva was an older man and

walking was tiring for him. Additionally, he was always pressed for time. He could have easily waited until they got to Lakewood and then called her up, but that would not have been the same.

Rabbi Avrohom Tannenbaum once ate at Rav Tendler's house one Friday night. He saw that Rav Tendler first cut the smaller challah. Someone mentioned that the halachah is to cut the larger one, which is considered more chashuv. "The small one was made by my wife" Rav Tendler responded. "It is therefore more chashuv to me."

In the last year of his life, on Erev Shavuos, Rav Tendler collapsed at home. He called for his daughter Berachah to come down to help. She ran down the steps and found Mrs.

Tendler holding him in the kitchen. The ambulance crew arrived, but chose not to transport him to the hospital, and he was placed in his bed. As he was lying there, pale and shaken, he motioned for Berachah to come closer. "I didn't buy flowers for Mommy yet for Shavuos. Take my credit card from my wallet and pick out beautiful flowers." He was hospitalized shortly afterward. But during that time, he apparently forgot that he had made this request of Berachah, and then asked his son as well to buy flowers so that he could give his wife something special for Yom Tov.

From The Living Mishnas Reb Aharon, by Rabbi Yitzchak Dershowitz published by Feldheim, and from I Am Your Servant, by Rabbi Akiva Tendler, 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



For more information or to register for First Seder, contact Rabbi Uri Greenspan at 732-407-3178 or RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org

Good Shabbos!