

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 ZACHOR – WITHOUT A DOUBT

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

"He called the place Massah U'meriva because of the contention of Bnai Yisrael and their testing Hashem saying, 'Is Hashem in our midst?' Amalek came and battled Yisrael in Rephidim" (Shemos 17:7-8). From the juxtaposition of the *pesukim* it appears that the attack of Amalek was a consequence of Bnai Yisrael questioning, "Is Hashem in our midst?" Why was the attack of Amalek the appropriate consequence of such doubt? In order to explain this, we must understand the battle with Amalek in a spiritual sense. Moshe perceived that the complaints of Bnai Yisrael derived from a lack of appreciation that Hashem is with them all the time. It is not dependent on their worthiness but is due to the spiritual core of every Yid. As the Rambam asserts (Hilchos Gerushin 2:20) that every Jew deep down wants to comply with the will of Hashem. The divorce document of a *get* can only be given with the consent of the husband. If a man is obligated to give his wife a *get* and refuses to do so, Bais Din may beat him until he states, "I am willing to give it." The Rambam asks how we can consider such a statement uttered under total duress to imply consent. He answers, "Since he

wants to be a Yisrael, therefore he really wants to perform all the Mitzvos...It is his *yetzer hara* which has gotten the best of him. When he is beaten until the point that his *yetzer* is weakened and he states, 'I want to do it,' he has indeed given the *get* voluntarily."

It was Bnai Yisrael's self-doubt that opened the door to Amalek's confrontation. The Kaballistic commentaries note that the *gematria* of Amalek is *safek* – doubt. Amalek plays on our doubts: doubts about Hashem's omnipotence or doubts about our relationship with Hashem. When we feel that we are unworthy and therefore Hashem has abandoned us, we lose the confidence to improve and intensify our connection to Hashem. This empowers Amalek to attack us and attempt to destroy us.

It was precisely in the time of *hester panim* in the exile of Persia that Haman felt that he had the power to annihilate Bnai Yisrael. The Gemara (Megilla 13b) describes the conversation that took place when Haman approached Achashveirosh with his plot to destroy all the Jews. Achashveirosh

countered, "I am afraid of their G-d that He may punish me as He did to my predecessors (Nevuchadnetzar and Balshatzar)." Haman replied, "Yashnu – they fell asleep in [in their performance of] Mitzvos." They have given up on themselves and therefore Hashem has abandoned them.

The miraculous salvation of Bnai Yisrael that occurred on Purim reminds us that Hashem is always in our midst. The Torah declares, "Who dwells with them amid their *tum'ah*" (Vayikra 16:16). Even when we have been sleepy in our adherence to Mitzvos or have totally fallen down on the job, He maintains His connection with us because of who we are. We are Bnai Yisrael and acknowledge the core of *kedusha* within us. Buoyed by this recognition, we are prepared to reaffirm with certainty our own "*kiyemu vekiblu*" – our complete and voluntary acceptance of the Torah and its Mitzvos.

*This Dvar Torah is based on a shiur by
Rav Ephraim Wachsmann*

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.

MISHLOACH MANOS & KOSHER SYMBOLS

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We just started the month of Adar. Because the arrival of the month of Adar brings with it joy, I'd like to share with you a story that helps prepare us for the upcoming Yom Tov of Purim.

One year, Binyamin bought and prepared a beautiful array of mishloach manos for his friends. There wasn't a lot of food in each of the packages but the presentation was beautiful. He spent the day of Purim delivering his mishloach manos to his friends. Close to the end of Purim, Binyamin's friend brought his attention to a potential problem. All but one of the food items that he gave to his friends had a hechsher, a kosher symbol, that his friends did not

eat from. Although the hechsher was reliable and the food was certainly kosher, his friends did not use that hechsher because they relied on a more stringent supervision. It turned out that Binyamin's friends would likely not eat the food that he gave them.

Binyamin wanted to know if he fulfilled the mitzvah of giving mishloach manos. On one hand he gave them kosher food. But on the other hand, they would not eat from it. Binyamin wondered if he had an obligation to quickly give mishloach manos to a new friend that would for sure eat the food he was giving. He also wondered if he had an obligation to notify all of

his friends that the food he gave had a hechsher that they did not eat. On one hand the food was kosher. But on the other hand, perhaps he was making them violate their kosher standards if they eat it without realizing. Would Binyamin have an obligation to overcome his embarrassment and call each of his friends about his mistake? What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Megilla Page 101.

Regarding last week's question about the outreach organization's interest in announcing their new book at their annual fundraising event Rabbi Dovid Heber said it is permitted to advertise it in their Shabbos newsletter.

THE POWER OF JUST A FEW MINUTES

Someone once asked the Chasam Sofer the secret to his success in Torah. "I became a talmid chacham in five minutes," the Chasam Sofer said.

"Really?" asked the man. "All those five minutes that go to waste in the course of one's lifetime - I made sure to maximize the use of them. That is why I say I became a talmid chacham in five minutes. Five minutes here and five minutes there."

The Ponovezher Rav, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, would tell the following story to illustrate true ahavas haTorah, true love for Torah.

Rav Avraham Burstein was the rav of the city of Tevrig in Lithuania during World War I. There was a curfew placed on the city. No one was

allowed to have any lights in their homes lest the enemy spot their homes and attack. Rav Avraham heeded the warning but left on a very small light, enough to enable him to see the page he was learning.

Nevertheless, the soldiers noticed it and barged into his home, accusing him of being a spy. Rav Avraham tried to explain that he was only using the light to study, but the soldiers would hear none of it. They demanded that he admit to his crime. Rav Avraham stood by his story and would not admit to any wrongdoing. The soldiers, determined that he must be a spy, prepared to shoot him. But just before they did, Rav Avraham asked for one last wish: 15 minutes more of life. Rav Avraham opened a Rambam,

explaining to the soldiers that he had been studying something and had yet not figured it out. He needed a bit more time with it. This was his dying wish. They granted his wish for 15 more minutes to find an answer to the

perplexing Rambam. A few moments later, a siren sounded to call the soldiers together; they needed to move on to the next village. They immediately left, leaving Rav Avraham alive to figure out his Rambam.

From Impact Volume One, by Rabbi Dovid Kaplan, published by Feldheim, and Touched By Their Tears, by Rabbi Yechiel Spero, published by Artscroll Mesora. (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!