

# 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

## PESACH – WHO IS WISE?

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

The Torah refers to four sons: one who is wise – a *chacham*, one who is wicked – a *rasha*, one who is simple and one who does not know how to ask. Chazal understood by the Torah's repeated reference to relating the Hagadda to one's son, that one answer would not suit every type of son. They saw the need to distinguish between four types of personalities.

I believe that if we look a little more closely we will find that the distinction is not merely between different persons but also between different types of questions. Thus it is possible that one person may, on different occasions, ask each of these four types of questions. Or to put it another way, we may all be a composite of these four types of personalities.

Therefore, at the end of the day, we are not only concerned with knowing how to answer each type of questioner. We also need to look at ourselves and determine what types of questions we are asking. Let us focus on the wise son type of question and the wicked son type of question. They are actually two opposites.

We tend to think of a *chacham* as a wise person who has accumulated a wealth of knowledge, or as an individual with a brilliant mind. However, Chazal define a *chacham* for us: "Who is a *chacham*? One who learns from everyone" (Avos 4,1). A *chacham* is one who cherishes wisdom and thirsts to acquire it. Shlomo Hamelech, the wisest of all men, was granted great wisdom because he asked of Hashem, "May You grant Your servant a listening heart" (Melachim 3,9). The key to wisdom is to listen to what others have to say. (Naturally if you keep asking questions in your thirst for knowledge you will probably become a wise and learned person.)

Thus, the *chacham* in the Hagadda is not answering a question, he is asking one. The *rasha* on the other hand doesn't ask questions; he makes declarations. "And it shall be when your children will say to you, 'What is this service to you'" (Shemos 12,26). This is, at best, a rhetorical question: "What's it to you?"

The Gra asserts that we do not even answer the *rasha*. Listen to the answer

in the Hagadda. "It is because of this that Hashem did [this] for me when I left Mitzrayim – for me and not for him. If he would have been there, he would not have been redeemed." If we are speaking to the *rasha*, the pronoun should have been in second person, "for me and not for you, had you been there..." The Gra explains that we are really talking to the one who does not know how to ask. We are telling him, "Don't listen to him – the *rasha*." Indeed, the very same *pasuk* cited in the response to the *rasha* is quoted in our remarks to the one who doesn't ask, because there is really only one response and it is not to the *rasha*. You don't answer the *rasha* because his mind is already made up.

We can learn from the four sons not only how to answer questions but also how to ask them. We should analyze how we formulate our questions. If they are presented as a sincere search for knowledge – for the truth, then indeed we are already *chachamim* – who cherish wisdom and seek to learn from everyone.

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 FIRE

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We know that there is a mitzvah to eliminate all of our chametz. Nowadays one way that we get rid of our chametz is by selling the chametz to a non-Jew. It's important for us to realize that the sale of the chametz is a real sale and it is not a game or a joke. This leads us to the following story.

Yaakov owned a kosher grocery store. Over Pesach, he kept all of his chametz inventory in a separate warehouse near his store. One Pesach, as usual, Yaakov sold all of the chametz in his store and looked forward to spending the Yom Tov with his family.

On the second day of Pesach, someone came urgently knocking on his door. There was a small fire in the warehouse where he kept all of his chametz. The fire

department was called and they were on their way. All of the chametz merchandise was worth a lot of money and a fire would be a severe financial hardship for Yaakov.

Yaakov ran to the warehouse to survey the damage. As he ran, he davened to Hashem with great fervor, that the fire should not spread too much and destroy much of his merchandise. But as he was davening he caught himself. Is he allowed to daven to Hashem that the chametz does not get damaged? If he does that, he would be demonstrating openly that he sees himself as the owner of the chametz and that it was not a real sale?

Perhaps he was not allowed to daven that the chametz be spared. But on the other hand, perhaps he was allowed to daven.

He sold it legitimately and he hoped to buy it back. That was why he was davening.

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? May Yaakov daven that the chametz in his warehouse not get burned? See Chashukei Chemed Pesachim 213

Regarding last week's question about whether a firstborn inherits a double portion of the chometz that was sold, Rav Zilberstein cites the Shoel U'meishiv that he does inherit it, because in some respects it was considered in the father's possession. However Rav Elyashiv felt that this was a difficult psak, so Rav Zilberstein leaves it with a "Tzarich Iyun", requiring further study.

### WHEN I REMEMBER WHAT PLEASURE AND JOY IT WILL CAUSE RAV ELAZAR SHACH WHEN I GIVE HIM AN ANSWER, I GATHER UP THE VERY LAST OF MY ENERGY TO CONTINUE

Rav Elazar Shach once spoke about the joy he got from hearing a shiur from the Brisker Rav, Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik. "The Brisker Rav's words of Torah were so brilliant and brought so much joy! I remember once, I left his home so happy — I met a certain talmid chacham, and in my great joy I told him that indeed I don't know if I deserve Olam haba, but if I do have some reward coming to me, I have just received it in the form of the joy I experienced from the chiddush I heard from the Brisker Rav."

A Talmid of the Brisker Rav once shared the following related anecdote: We were

once sitting in the Brisker Rav's home, engrossed in a Torah debate, when Rav Elazar Shach walked in. The Brisker Rav turned to him right away and presented an answer to a question he had been struggling with for several days. Sometime later I asked the Brisker Rav 'If he had been dealing with the subject for several days, why had he not shared the answer with us? Why did he wait until Rav Shach arrived to say it?'

"It was only right that I tell Reb Leizer first", answered The Brisker Rav. "And why so?" "Often, I am involved in a difficult sugyah and wrestle with it for a long time. It gets

to the point where I feel I cannot continue. I have no more strength left to deal with it. But when I remember what pleasure and joy it will cause Reb Leizer when I give him an answer, I gather up the very last of my energy to continue the struggle. Since this is the case, he is the one who deserves to hear the chiddush first!" It was his joy that was responsible for the chidush.

Based On The Brisker Rav Volume Two, By R' Shimon Yosef Meller, 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](mailto: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](mailto:RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org)

**Good Shabbos!**  
**Pesach Kasher v'Sameach!**