

# 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 VAYIKRA – THE MESSAGE OF THE SMALL ALEPH

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“Vayikra el Moshe – [Hashem] called to Moshe” (Vayikra 1:1). The meforshim note the small aleph in the word Vayikra and explore its significance. The Baal Haturim states that the small aleph denotes Moshe’s humility. Rav Zev Wolf Frank (Toldos Zev) cites Rashi’s comment that the word Vayikra connotes *chiba* – a special fondness – as we find this term used to refer to the Kedusha recited by the angels: “*Vekara zeh el zeh* – they called to each other” (Yeshaya 6:3). Rav Frank asserts that Hashem instructed Moshe to put the small aleph in the word Vayikra to imply that the reason for His *chiba* for Moshe was because of Moshe’s humility. Hashem loves those who are humble and self-effacing people and since Moshe was the most humble person, Hashem’s love for him was very unique.

Perhaps we could add that this is the reason that Hashem granted Moshe’s request that the Shechina would reside exclusively on Bnai Yisrael. Hashem replied, “This too I will do, for you have found favor in my eyes” (Shemos 33:17). This favor was another

expression of Hashem’s *chiba* for Moshe.

However, we need to understand why the Torah put the small aleph in this pasuk even though this phrase appears a few times earlier in the Torah. (See Shemos 19:3,20; 24:15). Additionally, why is this *chiba* stated preceding the laws of *korbanos* found in this parsha?

Rav Frank explains that the reason that the small aleph was placed in this pasuk which introduces the *korbanos* can be found in the Gemara (Sotah 5b). “Come and see how great humble people are considered by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When the Bais Hamikdash exists, someone who brings an *olah* is granted the reward of an *olah*. Someone who brings a *mincha* is granted the reward of a *mincha*. However, the pasuk considers one who is humble as having brought all the *korbanos* as it states, ‘The *korbanos* (plural) of G-d are a humble spirit’ (Tehillim 51:19).

Let us try to understand why humility is greater than sacrifices and why

Hashem loves humble people. The purpose of a *korban* is to bring one closer to Hashem. The word *korban* derives from *karov* – to be close. The sacrifice of the animal symbolizes the willingness of a person to sacrifice himself to Hashem – to sublimate his own existence to Hashem’s supremacy. It is this gesture which can atone for sins which were actions that ignored Hashem’s will.

Humility is a far more effective way to come close to Hashem. What separates us from Hashem is our egos. Moshe Rabbeinu was able to achieve the highest level of prophecy precisely because he was the most humble human being. Hashem could speak to him “*panim el panim* – face to face,” a form of prophecy that was not obstructed or filtered by Moshe’s sense of self. The more we are wrapped up in “what I want” and “what I need” the more we separate ourselves from Hashem. Conversely, the more we think beyond ourselves, the closer we come to Hashem. And the more we cultivate the *middah* of humility the more Hashem loves us.

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 YERUSHA

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We know that in the Torah there is a mitzvah to give the bechor, the firstborn, a double portion of an inheritance. Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch writes that perhaps a reason behind this mitzvah is that the firstborn is the leader of the family and the extra portion is for him to help take care of the needs of his siblings. This leads us to the following interesting story about Pesach.

Baruch owned a food distribution business. He had large factories and warehouses filled with chametz items. It was a million-dollar business. Every year Baruch would of course sell the chametz in his factories to a non-Jew. One Pesach after all the chametz was sold Baruch passed away in his sleep.

Baruch had two sons, Eli and Yoni. Eli was the bechor. When all the dust was settled after the funeral, Eli and Yoni discussed the yerusha of their father's holdings. Eli assumed that he would get a double portion of the value of the factories. "But I'm not so sure about that", Yoni countered. At the time of Abba's death, the factory was not owned by him, it was in the possession of the non-Jew who bought it. That means that when he died, Abba did not own the factory it was just "coming to him". A bechor only takes a double portion of what the father owns, not what is coming to him. That is called Rauli."

But Eli replied, "I'm not sure you are right. Even though it was sold to the non-Jew, we knew it would come back to our

father's possession. It is therefore like muchzack, and it is like it is assumed to be in the father's possession".

What do you think? Does the bechor get pi shnayim, a double portion from the chametz that was sold on Pesach? See Chashukei Chemed Pesachim 173

Regarding last week's question about whether an oath taken under duress in order to save your life is binding, Rav Zilberstein quotes a major authority who says that it would not be binding. However, he concluded from his brother-in-law, Rav Chaim Kanievsky that the oath is still binding in this case and therefore the man would have to make every effort to keep his oath.

### LET THEM START ALREADY!

About seven years before his passing, Harav Ovadia was complaining of terrible stomach pains, and his son Rav David accompanied him to the hospital. The doctors ordered a battery of tests, and they uncovered an issue that required immediate laparoscopic surgery. But at his advanced age, and considering his weak overall medical condition, the doctors felt that it was dangerous to place him under anesthesia. "It will take him several weeks to recover from the anesthesia," they explained. "That's when he'll come out of it."

They told Rav David that they would do the half-hour surgery without anesthesia, but they warned him that the procedure would be extremely painful. "We're going

to summon several staff members just to hold him down," they said, "and you must remain outside because you won't be able to handle the sight of him suffering so much. If you want to remain right outside the operating theater, you may, but be prepared for his shrieks of pain."

Rav David asked the doctors to describe to the Rav what the procedure would be like, so that he wouldn't be shocked when the pain began. "B'seder," Harav Ovadia sighed upon hearing the plan. "If this is a pain that I have no choice but to suffer, it should be kaparat avonot (an atonement for my sins). But please bring me my Gemara and I'll try to distract myself from the pain as much as possible." "I brought him his Gemara - he was learning Bava

Batra at the time — and I left the room," relates Rav David. "A large group of doctors and other hospital staff entered the operating room, but I did not hear a single sound emanating from within. Finally, after about half an hour later, the doctors came out and said, 'We were shocked — he didn't utter a peep.'

"I went inside and asked, Abba, how are you feeling?" He looked up at me and said, slightly irritated, "Ask the doctors how long they're going to make me wait. Let them start already!" "He was so utterly absorbed in his learning that he had not felt them operating!" (From Maran HaRav Ovadia by Rabbi Yehuda Heimowitz, 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](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!**