

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 SHEMINI – THE IMMUTABLE QUESTION

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Our parsha presents us with a remarkable contrast in personalities. On the one hand, there was Aharon who was reticent to assume the role of the Kohen Gadol. Moshe had to coax him, "*Krav el hamizbe'ach* – draw near to the altar. Why are you embarrassed? You were chosen by Hashem for this service!" (Rashi, Vayikra 9:7). Furthermore, although Aharon was older than Moshe and had become a prophet long before his younger brother, he was fully content to 'play second fiddle' to him. When they were commanded to speak to Bnai Yisrael in Mitzrayim, Hashem said, "He will act as your mouth and you will be his leader" (Shemos 4:16). And although the Torah states many times that Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon, Rashi (Vayikra 1:1) informs us that Hashem only spoke to Moshe and merely told him to repeat His words to Aharon. Finally, when he was called upon to serve as Kohen Gadol, he balked. This role was too exalted for him.

On the other hand, Aharon's sons Nadav and Avihu were over-eager to assume their roles as Kohanim. Upon their induction into the *kehuna*, they could not wait to begin their *avodah*. They each took a pan of *ketores* and entered into the Mishkan to offer them to Hashem. Rav Shimon

Schwab attributes this behavior to their boundless love of Hashem. Similarly, at Har Sinai, they were so entranced by Hashem's revelation at Matan Torah that they gazed unabashedly at the Shechina.

However, every middah, no matter how lofty and admirable it may be, must ultimately be subjected to one immutable question: Is this really what Hashem wants? Is my humility holding me back from fulfilling my responsibility to the *tzibbur*, to Klal Yisrael? As Shmuel Hanavi told Shaul, "Although you are small in your own eyes you are the head of the tribes of Israel, and Hashem has anointed you to be king over Israel" (Shmuel 1 15:17). In a similar vein, Nadav and Avihu did not stop to ask, "Is this really what Hashem wants?" Chazal tell us they failed to consult with Moshe. Their unbridled love of Hashem propelled them to "offer to Hashem an alien fire that He had not commanded them" (ibid. 10:1).

Conversely, we find that Pinchas, the ultimate zealot, who was totally outraged by the immoral deeds of Zimri, consulted with Moshe before taking matters into his own hands. Thus, Hashem praised him for his zealotry although it was very extreme and harsh.

There is no question that good middos must be cultivated, especially humility and love of Hashem. Regarding humility Chazal state, "Be very, very humble" (Avos 4:4). Similarly, the Torah commands us, "You shall love Hashem with all your heart and with all your soul" (Devarim 6:7). However, the more intense a middah is, the more careful one must be that the behavior that it generates is in keeping with the will of Hashem. Perhaps this is what Chazal meant, "Whoever is greater than others has a greater yetzer (hara) than they" (Sukka 52a). Indeed, when someone said to the Gra, "I wish I had your yetzer hara" the Gra told him that he should not want such a yetzer. For example, because of the Gra's passion for Torah, he had an enormous challenge to avoid thinking Torah thoughts before reciting the beracha for learning Torah.

While there are many middos that are essentially good and virtuous, no middah is appropriate at all times and in all situations. One must always be prepared to ask and know where to find an authoritative answer to the immutable question: Is this really what Hashem wants?

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 REMOTE VILLAGE

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the death of Aharon's sons. The Torah says that Aharon was silent. (Vayikra 10,3) Our Sages teach us that this is an allusion to the mitzvah of Tziduk Hadin, of accepting Hashem's judgment when someone passes away. This leads us to the following true story.

Ronen was a successful businessman. His company needed some rare chemicals from a remote area of China. It was not an easy trip and the chemicals were potentially poisonous. Ronen hired Moshe to travel to China to purchase the chemicals and have them shipped to Ronen. Moshe was concerned about the

hazard of the chemicals. Ronen promised Moshe and Moshe's family that if anything would happen to Moshe because of the dangerous chemicals that he would be dealing with, Ronen would take care of the family for the rest of their lives. He also wrote this guarantee in writing.

Moshe traveled to this remote area in China and stayed in a remote, rural village. Sadly, while in the village he got sick and passed away shortly after. It was never clear what caused him to get sick. Was it the chemicals or was it the conditions of the village? Ronen was very saddened to hear the news. He then

wondered if he had an obligation to support Moshe's family. On one hand, the only reason why Moshe went to China was because of Ronen's business venture. But on the other hand, it was not at all clear what caused Moshe's death. Perhaps it was not related to the chemicals. This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Bava Basra Page 561

Regarding last week's question about the perfume, Rav Dovid Heber answered that it was not necessary to notify the purchaser and no money was owed.

THANK THE EIBISHTER THAT HE MADE YOU A HUMAN BEING AND HE DIDN'T MAKE YOU A FROG OR A TREE OR A CHALOPTCHES!

Rav Dovid Trenk Zt"l was renowned as a master educator.

One Shabbos, a young boy in Camp Munk, the child of one of the division heads, mistakenly turned off a light on Shabbos. The eight-year-old was inconsolable, crying bitter tears at the chillul Shabbos.

His parents tried to reassure him that it had been an accident, and he was just a child, it was okay. But the boy was not consoled. Finally, they suggested that they go together to Rabbi Trenk and tell

him what happened. Yes, the child agreed, he wanted to do that. He himself told Rabbi Trenk of his "aveirah," how he had accidentally clicked the light switch. "What should I do?" he asked tearfully.

"What should you do?" Rabbi Trenk looked down at him. "Kalman," he cried out, "what you should do is you should thank the Eibishter that He made you a human being and He didn't make you a frog or a tree or a chaloptches (stuffed cabbage) - He made you a human being and human beings make mistakes! Say

'Thank you, Hashem, for making me a human being!' "The boy wiped away his tears, pleased with the answer.

Later on, the child looked up at his father, his eyes brimming with clarity and honesty. "Tatty," he said, "I hope I never forget what Rabbi Trenk told me."

(From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, 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

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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!
A gutten Chodesh!