

# 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

## SHAVUOS – VEKERVANU LIFNEI HAR SINAI

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

At the Seder on Pesach we recite, "If Hashem had brought us close to Har Sinai and not given us the Torah that would have been sufficient." What does this mean? What was accomplished at Har Sinai even before we received the Torah? Furthermore, the Ramchal (Daas Tevunos) notes that Hashem did not give us the entire Torah when we stood at Har Sinai. The Torah that Moshe received on Har Sinai was transmitted to us by him during the forty years in the desert. What happened at Sinai?

The Gemara (Kiddushin 31a) states, "*Gadol hametzveh ve'oseh mimi she'aino metzveh ve'oseh* - One who performs Mitzvos which he is commanded to perform is greater than one who performs Mitzvos which he is not commanded to perform." The Ramchal explains that the performance of Mitzvos is not merely the fulfillment of G-d's will. Each Mitzvah has the capacity to enhance the world and contribute to its perfection. It is more than our own spiritual growth; it is the spiritual perfection of all the physical and metaphysical realms. Only one who is specifically commanded to perform the Mitzvah – a *metzveh ve'oseh* – has the capacity to accomplish this. At Har Sinai we became *metzveh ve'oseh*. This is what *Kervanu lifnei Har Sinai* accomplished.

There is yet another facet to being *metzveh ve'oseh*: We were invested with the ability to keep all the Mitzvos. This idea can be explained by learning the Gemara in Shabbos (88a). A heretic said to Rava, "You are a hasty people...When Hashem presented the Torah to you, you should have found out what was written in it to determine if you were capable of keeping all the Mitzvos. Rava answered that we trusted Hashem that He would not have given us a Torah which is too difficult to keep. The Ramchal is teaching us that the ability to keep all the Mitzvos – no matter how difficult – was given to us by Hashem at Har Sinai. He commanded us to do the Mitzvos and concurrently gave us the ability to keep them. (See Sifsei Chaim by Rav Chaim Friedlander.)

Rav Mattisyahu Salomon finds another facet in becoming a *metzveh ve'oseh*. The Torah commands regarding the Mitzvah of *Shikcha*. If one leaves a sheaf in the field and forgets to bring it in with the rest of the harvest, he is forbidden to go back to retrieve it. He must leave it for the poor to take when they come to glean in the field. Rashi (based on the Sifrei) comments that if there is a great reward for the Mitzvah of *Shikcha* which comes about unintentionally, we can deduce that if someone lost money which was found by a poor person, he will also be

rewarded for this Mitzvah. Rav Mattisyahu notes that the reward for *Shikcha* is for the person who remembers the sheaf and intentionally refrains from returning to get it. In the case of the lost object, the person regrets that he lost it. The only reason that he does not retrieve it is because he does not know where it is. Why should he be credited with the Mitzvah of Tzedaka?

Rav Yeruchom Levovitz explains that Chazal perceived that every Jew wants to do Hashem's will. Once he realizes that he cannot get his money back, he would be very happy if a poor person should find it and benefit from it. Indeed, this is the exact concept that the Rambam applies in the case of the husband who refuses to give his wife a get. When Bais Din forces him to give a get, we deem it valid since deep down every Yid wants to keep Hashem's Mitzvos.

On Shavuos we celebrate all the great bounty that was bestowed upon us just by coming to Har Sinai. Indeed, this theme is expressed very succinctly in the Yom Tov Shemoneh Esrei. "You have chosen us from all the nations; You loved us and found favor in us; You sanctified us with Your Mitzvos; You, our King, drew us close to Your service and proclaimed Your great and Holy Name upon 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 PARKING LOT

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha, Bamidbar, makes a reference to the prohibition of stealing from the Beis Hamikdash (Bamidbar 4, 20, and see Sanhedrin 81b). This leads us to the following true story.

Yosef lived in Israel and owned a parking lot in a busy area of town. Every day he would work from 9-5 managing his parking lot. He would sit in the front of the parking lot collecting money as people came in to park their cars. After 5 PM he would close the lot and go home. He would eat dinner and then spend the rest of the night learning Torah. He maintained this schedule for years. Manning his parking lot during the day and close it and then learn at night.

Meir became aware of Yosef's consistent schedule. He realized that the parking lot was not being used all night and Yosef was never there at night. He took the initiative and decided that he would not let the parking lot go to waste. Without asking the owner, he set up his own sign at the entrance to Yosef's parking lot and began to attract cars to park there in the evening. Meir collected the money as the cars pulled in. Meir rationalized to himself that he wasn't taking anything away from Yosef, and the customers were gaining by getting access to parking spots. In his mind it was a win - win. He

gained, the customers gained and Yosef did not lose anything.

One day Yosef needed to attend a wedding. The wedding was close to his parking lot so he decided that he would park in his own lot. As he pulled up to his lot, a man asked for payment to enter the lot. It was Meir. "Excuse me, what are you doing in this parking lot?" Yosef demanded. Meir said, "What do you mean, I've been managing this lot for a while." "Well please leave, this is my parking lot. And not only that, I want you to make sure you pay me every penny that you collected for charging people to park in my lot."

Meir suddenly realized that he was talking to the owner of the lot. He tried to muster as much charm as he was able and began to speak to Yosef. "You are right, this is your lot. But I didn't take any money from you. It was not being used at all and it was totally vacant. I was providing a service to the people of the neighborhood. This is an example of 'zenehene ve ze lo chaser', where one person benefits and the other does not lose. I don't owe you anything as the money collected would not have gone to you.

As Meir spoke a small crowd gathered around the car. One of the bystanders, a man named Eliezer, spoke up. I think another stakeholder needs to get the money back. Every single person who paid money to park here should get a refund, because they should not have been charged. The money should not go back to the owner of the lot, or the squatter, but to all the people who paid money to this man.

What do you think? Who gets the money? Yosef, the owner of the lot, Meir the one who charged people at night, or the customers?

Regarding last week's question about the pidyon haben, Rav Zilbertsien wrote that if the story was that the Kohen found out he was really a Yisrael, then it would be no question that he would have to return the money and all the firstborns would have to do it again. In this case, however, where he was a Kohen who was a challal, he was for sure not permitted to do it, but after the fact there is a question about what to do. In practice he said we should be stringent and the Kohen should return the money and they should each do the pidyon over again with a kosher Kohen.

## LEARNING BY HEART DOES NOT COMPARE TO LEARNING FROM A SEFER

A great grandson of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv related the following story. Once, when it was his turn to spend the night with Rav Elyashiv, there was a major thunderstorm throughout Israel. Rav Elyashiv awoke at 2:20 a.m to learn but there was no light. Rav Elyashiv continued sitting in his place and learning as usual — saying the gemara, Rashi, Tosafos aloud in his pleasant melody, asking questions and answering, without pause.

When the young man approached his great grandfather, Rav Elyashiv asked whether there was anything that could be done about the power. "I already tried everything," his great-grandson said. "We need an electrician to come." He lit some candles, and Rav Elyashiv directed him where to place them. Rav Elyashiv then asked his great-

grandson to bring him a certain sefer. The young man searched for the sefer in the dark room but could not locate it. Rav Elyashiv himself got up and said, "It's possible to see in the dark, too." He went over to the bookshelves and immediately found the sefer he wanted. A short while later, after attempting unsuccessfully to learn by candlelight, he said, "It's possible to learn by heart, too." He then continued learning energetically and aloud by heart until daybreak.

On another occasion, on a long winter Friday night Rav Elyashiv awoke to learn but the electricity in his house blew, plunging the house into darkness. Without thinking twice, he took his large Gemara over to the window, and, holding it toward the streetlight, he continued to learn while standing for

hours. What was remarkable about this episode is not that Rav Elyashiv wouldn't give up his learning session due to a blackout, even though he was in his 90's at the time, but rather that he persisted in learning out of a Gemara even though he knew all of Shas by heart!

Rav Elyashiv would explain that learning by heart does not compare to learning from a sefer, and when one learns from a Gemara he delves deeper into the sugya. And for this seemingly minor difference, he exerted himself to stand by the window holding his Gemara for hours on end.

(From Rav Elyashiv, By Yehuda and Malky Heimowitz, Published By Artscroll Mesorah, page 222. 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)

**1st**  
*Seder*

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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!**  
**Chag Sameach!**