

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 BEHAR BECHUKOSAI - PATIENCE

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

With the rapid advancement of technology in the past century everything is moving at a much faster pace. We have cars, jet planes, microwave ovens, internet communication with emails and tweeting, speed dial, frozen dinners and instant pudding. Many may marvel at the great prowess of our society and feel fortunate to live in such an era. They pride themselves on the fact that with these modern innovations they are able to accomplish so much more than their antecedents.

Rav Shmuel Dovid Walkin notes that with this speed-up of technology came an equal acceleration in human behavior. We expect everything to happen instantly. Snail mail is too slow; old computers are too slow; the driver in front of us is too slow. We find ourselves rushing to do everything and to go everywhere. We have lost our patience to listen to a one-minute commercial or even to come to a full stop at stop signs. And with this loss of patience comes a loss of tranquility.

Rav Walkin asserts that this loss of patience and calmness is one of the punishments described in Parshas Bechukosai. "If you will not listen to me and will not perform all these Mitzvos...then I will do the same to you and will bring upon you agitation (*behalla*)" (Vayikra 26:14-16).

He explains that this punishment is *middah keneged middah* – measure for measure. We have lacked the patience to perform Mitzvos properly. We don't have the patience to daven or say berachos slowly, to learn deeply without our modern crutches, to stop and listen to people who need a caring and a friendly ear to share their problems with or to sit through a fifteen minute drasha. Not only that, asserts Rav Walkin, but we even ignore some Mitzvos for which we "don't have the time" or that are not habitual and thus require more concentration.

This is precisely what the *pasuk* is referring to. "If you will not listen to Me and you will not do **all** of the Mitzvos." You only do the ones you have patience for and only in a manner which does not require too much patience. "Then I will do the **same** to you" – I will take away your patience for everything else in life.

But you might ask how we can attribute this phenomenon to a laxity in Mitzvos if it is clearly a result of our society being so advanced and highly competitive. Let me answer this question with a Gemara that asks a similar question. There is a type of bowing called *kidah* which is quite a gymnastic feat. When Levi demonstrated the *kidah* he dislocated his hip. The

Gemara asks, "Was this really the cause of his lameness?" We have learned that the lameness was a punishment for his having spoken to Hashem on one occasion in a very bold manner. The Gemara answers that both of these factors caused him to become lame. (Sukkah 53a). What the Gemara means is that there is both a physical and metaphysical reason for everything. Levi committed a spiritual infraction which led to the punishment, which he received when he sought to demonstrate the *kidah*. This is also the case in our situation. Because we lacked the patience to do Mitzvos properly, Hashem arranged for us to be surrounded by such a society which causes us to be perpetually impatient.

Rav Walkin made this assertion around the middle of the twentieth century and obviously things have gotten a lot worse since then. Perhaps if we will be committed to doing Mitzvos less hurriedly and with greater patience, we will not only learn how to be more patient, but also Hashem will bless with a life that is more tranquil. So let us all take a deep breath, slow down, and make more time for Hashem and acquire more *menuchas hanefesh* for ourselves.

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.

CAN I KEEP THE COINS?

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha, Behar, talks about the prohibition of Ona'as Mamon, of cheating in business. This leads us to the following true story.

Ephraim was a kohen. As we know, a kohen has a mitzvah to preside over a pidyon haben. The pidyon haben is where the father of a firstborn son gives five silver coins to a kohen to redeem his firstborn. Our Sages explain that one of the ideas behind this mitzvah is that really a first-born son is supposed to serve in the Beis Hamikdash. However, the firstborns were disqualified to do the service in the Beis Hamikdash after the sin of the Golden Calf. The son has to be redeemed with five silver coins because he can no longer do the service and has to return to a normal status.

Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch writes that one lesson behind this mitzvah is that a firstborn is to be reminded that even though he cannot technically

do the service in the Beis Hamikdash, his status as being the role model and spiritual leader of the family remains and the firstborn son is to always be cognizant that he is to be an example for the rest of his siblings.

So back to our story about Ephraim. Ephraim presided over many pidyon habens over the years. From scores of families, he received the five silver coins to redeem their sons. But a great challenge arose. When Ephraim was in his 70's, he learned that his mother was married and quickly divorced before she married his father. His mother was a gerusha when she married his father the kohen. A kohen is not allowed to marry a divorcee and consequently Ephraim was a challal, not a kohen, and he was not allowed to redeem the firstborn sons.

Ephraim now had two pressing questions to answer. Number one, did he have to return the pidyon haben money to all of the families that used him over the years? Number two, were all of his pidyon habens counted as nothing? Do all of the firstborn sons have to do pidyon haben all over again, now that they are adults?

This question was brought before Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Pesachim 421

Regarding last week's questions about the rats, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered as follows: If the previous owner were there for a few years and the neighbors did not protest, the neighbors may have lost their right to protest.

AS MUCH AS HE NEEDED THE MONEY, HE NEVER FORGOT WHAT HE WANTED IT FOR

Rabbi Hanoch Teller shared the following beautiful anecdote about Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel.

Before the global financial crisis, an entire world of Torah institutions and chesed organizations were funded by multi-tiered strata of the religious population. But now the rug had been pulled out from under them. Not just the rug, but also the floor and the foundation. Only people of substantial means were left to support what had previously been shouldered by thousands of others. This meant that the truly affluent, those who had already been targeted by numerous charitable organizations, were now on the crosshairs of triple, conceivably octuple the number of causes. So, just like so many others, this Gvir, who was being actively pursued by the Mir Yeshiva, did not answer his phone nor reply to emails. No one was really surprised. Therefore, personal agents who were friendly with him and associated with the Mir were dispatched to request an appointment. The Gvir was noncommittal to these requests, undoubtedly knowing full well that

Reb Nosson Zvi would not be content with a check for \$3,600 or \$7,200 for that matter. They begged that he at least meet with the Rosh Yeshiva and even for this they could not secure his agreement. But he did not say no, he just did not say yes.

One Motzei Shabbos, to the utter surprise of all who were present, the Gvir himself walked into the home where the Rosh Yeshiva was staying. Meanwhile, the Rosh Yeshiva also saw who had entered, was in the middle of talking to a bachur about his Torah studies. Everyone started gesticulating wildly to indicate LOOK WHO'S HERE! But Reb Nosson Zvi continued to hear out the bachur who was explaining his extraordinarily long and exceptionally protracted diyuk in Rashi. The bachur was taking what seemed to be an eternity, and meanwhile Mr. Elusive was in their clutches. Yet the Rosh Yeshiva continued to listen with patience and concentration while everyone else in the room was going insane.

Two of the yeshiva's activists in New York, who had high fived each other when the Gvir walked in, were

now emitting involuntary gasps. Even the air seemed to be holding its breath while the boy droned on and on. One of the many admirable things about the Mirrer Yeshiva staff is that everyone recognizes that the Rosh Yeshiva is indeed, the Rosh Yeshiva. In the case of Reb Nosson Zvi, his brothers-in-law, and even those more senior and more learned than he, never, ever challenged his authority or leadership. And even in that exasperating moment it was no different. The Rosh Yeshiva, as much as he needed the money, never forgot what he wanted it for. And that is; to expand Torah, to strengthen Torah and to teach Torah. First and foremost, he was an educator, and not only did he teach Torah, he taught Torah values and Torah priorities. And at that moment, there was nothing more important than a diyuk in Rashi.

From [For the Love of Torah](#), By Hanoch Teller, 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 mitzvot 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

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Good Shabbos!