

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

THE THREE WEEKS – YEARNING FOR THE MOSHIACH

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

The Three Weeks between Shiva Asar B'Tammuz and Tisha B'av is a time to reflect on the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash and the bitter galus that ensued. We need to think not only about the physical implications but also about the spiritual devastation that is a consequence of this galus: the decline in Torah scholarship and performance of Mitzvos, the horrific moral state of the world around us and most profoundly, the awesome chilul Hashem.

In addition to feelings of mourning and loss, this contemplation should also elicit a strong anticipation for the immediate *geula* and *yemos Hamoshiach*. The Rambam in Hilchos Melachim (8:1) writes, "Anyone who does not believe in the Moshiach or anyone who does not await his arrival denies not only the prophecy of the prophets but also the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu." This assertion is quite puzzling. We can understand that not believing in Moshiach is *kefira* – heresy. But awaiting is an emotion, it

is not a belief or a lack of some belief. Why is someone, who firmly believes that Moshiach will arrive someday but does not await his coming, a heretic?

Perhaps the answer is that the concept of Moshiach is predicated on the fact that the world needs a *tikkun* – a perfection. This is not just a matter of fixing a few problems. The world is in a horrid state. This has been true throughout 5781 years of history. First there were the ten idolatrous and immoral generations that totally defied Hashem until they were destroyed by the Great Flood. Then came another ten evil generations. The problem was in no way solved with the arrival of Avraham Avinu. Avraham had a son Yishmael and Yitzchok had Eisav, the father of Edom. Although Yaakov had twelve faithful sons, ten of them committed an egregious sin by selling their brother Yosef into bondage.

This was followed by the exile and enslavement in Mitzrayim. Even after their redemption there were many

serious lapses in the Wilderness, including the *eigel* and the *meraglim*. If you continue reading the books of Shoftim, Shmuel, Melachim, Yeshaya and Yirmiya, it does not get better. And finally, you get to this long bitter galus filled with oppression, pogroms, wars and plagues. The world has been in a terrible state ever since Adam and Chava left Gan Eden.

The world needs Moshiach urgently. That is what the belief in Moshiach is all about. If one does not believe this and thinks that some band-aid approach will fix everything, then he is denying the very principle upon which Moshiach is based. Therefore, we must yearn for the ultimate solution. One that will rid the world of all wars, all diseases, all tragedies and all evil. It is these Three Weeks of mourning – not just for the Bais Hamikdash but for the whole world which Hashem created – that should motivate us to yearn and daven for the immediate arrival of the Moshiach.

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 PROFANE PARROT

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha states "You shall not profane your words" (Bamidbar 30,3). Simply, this is referring to the prohibition of profaning your words by not keeping a vow. This can also be an allusion to the Torah prohibition of *nibul pe*, using and listening to vulgar language. The Sefer Charedim (Sefer Chareidim 24-49) says that the Torah says "Lo ireh becha ervas davar" (Devarim 23,15). Our Sages say that this can be read "Hashem should not see in our camp immorality of speech." This leads us to the following fascinating true story.

Zev had a teenage son Eli who had some emotional difficulties. Their family doctor recommended that Zev buy his son a pet. If Eli would take care of the pet it would help him to develop his social skills. Eli was very excited about the idea. He asked his father if they could buy a talking parrot. Zev agreed and together they traveled to Tel Aviv to an expensive pet store to purchase a parrot.

Zev walked into the store and greeted the store owner. "Hi there. We are looking to buy a trained, talking parrot. Our doctor recommended we get a pet for my son. Do you have one?"

The proprietor smiled and said, "as a matter of fact we do. This parrot here has been trained to talk. It had a previous owner and it knows many interesting phrases. He says the funniest things. Guests love this bird and he is a constant stream of entertainment." In front of them, the owner prompted the parrot to

speaking, and indeed it said some very cute and humorous phrases.

Eli's face lit up when he heard the parrot. It was perfect. The owner asked for a price of 5000 shekels, and Zev gladly agreed.

The two took the parrot home. Zev gathered the family together and showed his wife and all his children the new bird. But then to Zev's utter shock, the parrot used a vulgar phrase. Then again the parrot used a profane phrase with language that is forbidden for a Jew to use. Zev and his wife were shocked and embarrassed. They did not want their children to listen to such words. Zev grabbed the cage and immediately drove back to the pet store.

"You never told me that the parrot uses vulgar language", Zev told the store owner. "Can I please have a refund?"

"Wait a minute," the owner said. "We only give refunds if there is a severe defect in what we sold. Is anything wrong with this parrot? Does it not talk?"

"It talks, but we are a religious family and I can't have the parrot using vulgar language in my home," Zev replied.

"Ahh, interesting", the owner said. "So far the feedback I have heard about the parrot is that people thought its manner of speaking was really funny. Well since it knows how to talk, why don't you just train it to use some new Jewish phrases?"

"I can do that", Zev said. "But in the meantime, it will be using crude language and I can't let the parrot into my home."

The owner said, "Listen, I think there is no apparent defect with the parrot as it talks perfectly well. Also you never made any stipulations regarding the language the parrot uses. But I'm sympathetic. If you ask your Rav if I have an obligation to return the money to you, I will follow his advice."

Zev brought this question to Rav Zilberstein. Did the owner have to take back the parrot and refund the 5000 shekels? On one hand, there was nothing physically wrong with the parrot. But on the other hand, a parrot that uses foul language is certainly a defect for a Jewish home. What do you think? According to the Torah does the store owner have a legal obligation to refund the money? See Upiryo Matok Bamidbar Page 371

Regarding last week's question about the sleeping passenger, Rav Zilberstein answered as follows. The passenger has a weakness to his argument because he should not have slept for such a short trip. But the driver has a weakness in his position because he should have clarified if the passenger meant Petach Tikva street or Petach Tikva city. Because of this, they should compromise and split the fare from Yerushalayim to Petach Tikva and the passenger should pay half. With regard to the return trip, this is like a new fare and if the passenger wants he can take a bus home or pay the full fare back home in the taxi. See Upiryo Matok Bereishis 132.

LOOKING FOR RUBBER BANDS

Rav Avigdor Miller sometimes asked people to look on the street for rubber bands that the mailmen discarded, claiming he needed them to pack his tapes. This was an unusual request, but his loyal students complied. One person was particularly scrupulous in keeping his eyes glued to the sidewalk and managed

to amass a large quantity of rubber bands. When he brought them to Rabbi Miller the Rav told him to keep them because they were holy — they protected his kedushah. The man then realized that the reason Rav Miller asked for the rubber bands was to help his students

avoid looking at improper things while they walk.

(From Rav Avigdor Miller, His Life and Revolution, By Yaakov Y. Hamburger, Published By Judaica Press, Preprinted With Permission From Table Talk.)

COMING SOON- Listen to Rabbi Greenspan's weekly shiurim via podcast. Watch for details.

First Seder Bais Medrash's Mishnayos Shel Chesed Program

Thank you to all the learners who are currently learning for Sean Tyzler a"h,

Shmuel Zavel ben Yisrael a"h (Yona Zaslow's father), and Moshe ben Yitzchok a"h (Berel Rapoport's father-in-law).

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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!