

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 VA'ESCHANAN – PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“*Va'eschanan el Hashem* – And I beseeched Hashem” (Devarim 3:23). Rashi interprets the word *va'eschanan* as a derivation of the word *chinam* – a free gift, implying that Moshe was asking Hashem to allow him to enter Eretz Yisrael as a magnanimous gift. “Although Tzaddikim are able to rely on their righteous deeds as a means to secure their request, they only ask of Hashem to provide them with a free gift.”

Since Moshe certainly had enough merit on which to predicate his plea, why did he refuse to take advantage of that approach? This question becomes even more profound when we consider that, according to the Medrash, Moshe davened 515 times – all to no avail. Instead of begging for a freebie, why not ask for what was coming to him?

In Kiddushin (39b) the Gemara states in the name of Rabbi Yaakov that there is no reward for Mitzvos in Olam Hazeh. The meforshim explain that the true reward for any Mitzvah is so great that it can never be paid fully in Olam Hazeh. Only the infinite

spiritual bliss of Olam Habah can compensate for the performance of Mitzvos. It is true that evil people who do not deserve Olam Habah get the reward for their good deeds in this world. This is because those people lived their lives devoid of spiritual pursuits and their true currency is strictly physical beneficence. However, if a Tzaddik asks to be compensated for his Mitzvos in this world, he is forfeiting the infinitely greater reward in Olam Habah. Therefore, Moshe asked to be permitted to enter Eretz Yisrael as a free gift.

The Gemara in Berachos (17b) states that the entire world was sustained by the merit of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, but Rabbi Chanina subsisted on a *kav* (a small measure) of carob per week. While Rabbi Chanina did not want to exchange any of his merit in Olam Habah for more than he needed to exist, he was willing to share it generously with the rest of mankind. You might ask, “If so, what did he have left for his Olam Habah?” The answer is that when one gives his merits to others, he is not losing them; he is investing them. This will

only serve to multiply the returns on the principle.

Perhaps this will help us understand a puzzling remark of Moshe Rabbeinu. After the sin of the Golden Calf, he said to Hashem, if You will not forgive their sin, erase me from Your Book (Shemos 32:32). What would be gained by such a gesture? Perhaps Moshe thought that he could bequeath the merit of his Mitzvos to Bnai Yisrael and thereby tip the scales in their favor. However, Hashem turned down his offer stating, “Whoever has sinned against Me shall I erase from My Book.”

There is a powerful message here for us. As we travel through this world doing Mitzvos and earning considerable merits for our Olam Habah, we must be careful not to squander these *zechusim* on meaningless pursuits. While none of us can aspire to be like Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, overindulging in Olam Hazeh could come at the cost of our Olam Habah. We must protect our greatest investment.

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.

CHEESE DANISHES

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha the Torah says "You shall do what is Just and Good. (Devarim 6,18)" Our Sages explain that we have a mitzvah to copromise with another and go liflim meshuras hadim, beyond the letter of the law. This leads us to the following interesting story.

Chava would bring her young children to a pre-nursery playgroup across the street from her. Morah Mimi was a wonderful Morah and the kids loved her. One year, shortly before Shavuos Morah Mimi opened her door. At the door was Chava holding a large tray. "Morah Mimi, we are so grateful to you for all of your wonderful work, I bought you a tray of cheese danishes for Shavuos. I hope you enjoy them." Morah Mimi was very grateful and profusely thanked Chava.

Morah Mimi put the cheese danishes in the refrigerator. The truth was that in her family they didn't really enjoy cheese products. The cheese danishes sat in the fridge for two

weeks but they were not touched. After being in the fridge for a while they got spoiled and Morah Mimi threw them out in the garbage.

About three weeks later Morah Mimi realized that Chava was unusually late with her monthly payment. She was usually very prompt and on time, but this month it seemed unusually late. "She probably just forgot about it", Morah Mimi thought, and sent Chava a short message reminding her about the monthly payment for the playgroup.

Chava came over a few minutes later. "I was surprised about your message," Chava said. "I personally handed you the payment three weeks ago. Don't you remember, when I gave you the cheese danishes I left an envelope right under the danishes with the cash for our payment?"

Morah Mimi felt terrible. Because she didn't eat the danishes she never saw the envelope

with the cash of her payment. When she threw out the danishes she also threw out cash. Morah Mimi now felt very conflicted. Did she have a right to ask for the payment again? On one hand, she did receive it from Chava and she actively destroyed the money that was given to her. But on the other hand, Chava never explicitly told her that her payment was there. Perhaps that was not considered paying and she would have to pay again. Morah Mimi wondered if she had a right to ask for the money again? What do you think? See Upiryo Matok Bereishis 427.

Regarding last week's question about the two painters, Rav Zilberstein wrote that the customer does not have to tell the painter that the first estimate was not accurate because it is normal for a seller or contractor to state a higher price with the assumption that they will accept a lower price. See Upiryo Matok Bamidbar Page 128.

YOU ARE A GUEST, NOT A CUSTOMER

The Lev Simcha, the Gerer Rebbe, would often make sure to perform acts of chesed anonymously. A young man from Bnei Brak was told by his doctor to spend some time in a location with dry air, such as Arad. As he could not afford to take his entire family with him, he traveled there alone. To his surprise, the one glatt kosher restaurant in Arad refused to accept payment for his meals. "You are a guest, not a customer", the owner explained.

Some time later the young man happened to meet the restaurant owner in Bnei Brak, and he thanked him once again for his hospitality.

This time the owner offered more details. The Lev Simcha had told him that should young men with little means of support go to spend time in Arad for health reasons, the owner should let them eat free of charge. The bills were then sent to the Lev Simcha, who paid them.

Once, upon returning from a trip, the Lev Simcha discovered that he did not have the key to his house. One of the attendants told him he had a spare key at home, and he went to fetch it. While he was waiting, the Lev Simcha searched his pockets again, and deep in one of the corners, he felt the key. The

attendants sighed with relief and moved toward the door, but the Lev Simcha did not move. "We must wait for him," he said as he put the key back in his pocket, and then he began pacing calmly back and forth.

When the attendant returned with the key, the Lev Simcha took it from him with a glowing smile, and he walked together with him to open the door, never letting the attendant know that his efforts had been unnecessary.

From The Summit, By Simcha Leib Grossbard, Published By Yeshurun Publications, Reprinted With Permission From Table Talk.

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First Seder Bais Medrash's Mishnayos Shel Chesed Program

Thank you to all the learners who are currently learning for Ilan ben Kalman a"h (Ilan Naibryf was niftar in the Surfside collapse), Shmuel Zavel ben Yisrael a"h (Yona Zaslowsky'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!