

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 RE'EH – SIMCHA REVISITED

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

The Torah adjures us nine times to experience happiness: “*vesamachta, usemachtem,*” This Mitzvah can be found six times in our *parsha*, Re'eh, twice in Ki Savo and once in Emor. (Seek and you shall find.) In seven instances the Torah says to experience this simcha “before Hashem, your G-d.” When we come to the Bais Hamikdash and stand in the presence of Hashem, we are commanded to be happy as it says, “Might and joy are in His place” (Divrei Hayamim 1, 16:27).

While the phrase “before Hashem” is speaking in geographic terms, Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik sees a deeper implication: True simcha is experienced when we feel that we are in the presence of Hashem. When we realize that Hashem is with us, taking care of us and doing only what is best for us, we are able to experience a profound sense of happiness. Like the smiling toddler, who looks up to his father trustingly, feeling warmth and security, the happiness that we are to feel in the presence of Hashem is more a sense of serenity and inner joy than one of elation.

With this approach Rav Soloveitchik explains a difficult Gemara in Berachos

(60b). The Mishna states, “A person is obligated to make a beracha over a tragedy in the same manner that he makes a beracha over good tidings.” The Gemara explains that the Mishna does not mean that one should recite the same blessing, for the Mishna already stated that for good tidings one says, “Hatov Vehameitiv” and for bad tidings one says, “Dayan Ha’emes”. The Mishna means that just as one responds to good news with simcha, he should accept bad news with simcha. However, simcha seems to be a very inappropriate response to tragic news.

According to Rav Soloveitchik, here too the simcha is not a state of being overjoyed, but rather a state of security and serenity. One should feel as if his Heavenly Father put His hand on his shoulder and reassured him that as painful as it may be, it is His will and it is for the best. This is what Rashi means, “recite the blessing with a complete heart” – fully reconciled. No one is saying that it is easy, but this is the appropriate response. Simcha is the state where we feel at peace and reconciled. This then is the meaning of the Mishna in Avos (4:1) which states, “Who is wealthy? One who is happy with his lot.” He is happy because

he realizes that Hashem, Who knows what is best for him, has selected this portion for him.

In Parshas Ki Savo (26:11) the Torah says, “You shall rejoice with all the goodness that Hashem your G-d has given you.” This reflects the concept of being “happy with one’s lot.” He is happy because he acknowledges that Hashem gave it to him – be it bountiful or austere. This can affect one’s whole attitude toward performing Mitzvos. The Medrash (Vayikra 27:2) states, “Ruach Hakodesh declares, ‘Who preempted Me, and I shall reward him (Iyov 41:3). Who made for Me a *maakeh* before I gave him a roof? Who made for Me a Mezuzah before I gave him a house? Who made for Me a lulav before I gave him money? Who made for Me Tzitzis before I gave him a garment?’” When one appreciates that everything that he has comes from Hashem, he doesn’t mind giving some back. On the contrary it’s the least he can do. Realizing how much Hashem cares for us and does for us is not only the catalyst for our doing Mitzvos *besimcha*, but it also the mechanism whereby we can live happy, contented lives.

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.

CLEARING OUT THE RESTAURANT

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha, Re'eh, talks about living and settling in Eretz Yisrael. This leads us to the following true story.

Yosef lived in Eretz Yisrael during a time when sadly suicide bombings were not infrequent. Everyone was on edge. Yosef once went with his wife to a fancy restaurant. They sat down and looked around. The room was full and everyone was eating their meals happily.

Suddenly a young Arab man walked into the restaurant. He was wearing a bulky jacket and was carrying a heavy, bulky duffel bag. To Yosef's eyes, the man looked on edge and nervous. To Yosef, it was obvious that the Arab man was a terrorist and was about to commence a suicide attack.

Yosef stood up on his seat and shouted, "Terrorist! Look out, a terrorist is here! Suddenly panic filled the entire restaurant. People jumped out of their seats and rushed toward the door. In their haste, people

knocked over entire tables, and shattered dishes and glasses. People rushed out the doors and soon enough the packed room was entirely empty.

Quickly two security guards rushed the Arab man and tackled him to the ground. To the guards' shock, the man said, "Please let me go. I'm Jewish. I'm Israeli!". The man opened his wallet and showed the disbelieving guards his ID and Teudat Zehut. It was true, the young man was an innocent Israeli and his bag was filled with innocent items. It was all a terrible mistake. In fact, the man said that in the past he was mistaken for an Arab.

The guards left and Yosef was left alone with the owner of the restaurant. The owner turned to him. "I appreciate your concern and conscientiousness. But you shouting out like that caused me an enormous loss of money tonight. The house was full tonight and now everyone went home without paying for their dinner. In addition, many of my chairs, tables,

dishes, and stemware have been broken in the tumult. I estimate I might have lost close to \$5000 tonight. I am holding you responsible to pay for the unpaid meals and for all of the damage."

"What do you mean, I have to pay for all the meals and damage?" Yosef replied. "I was only trying to keep everyone safe." "Yes, and I thank you for that", the owner said, "But I also expect you to pay me for the losses you caused."

Yosef sent this question to Rav Zilberstein. Was he obligated to pay the owner for all of the meals and for the damage? What do you think?

Regarding last week's question about the expensive engagement gift, Rav Zilberstein wrote that it would be permitted to leave the price tag on.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOSE OUT BECAUSE OF MY TARDINESS

Rabbi Avigdor Miller had great ahavas Yisrael. If a bachur asked if he could come over to discuss something private, or even if Rabbi Miller only suspected that the subject was of a sensitive nature, he would meet with the bachur while facing the wall, or inside his apartment with the door partially opened, without looking at him, explaining, "So that you shouldn't be embarrassed every time you see me".

Rabbi Miller's ahavas Yisrael naturally extended to extreme concern for people's money. Once it was time for one of his vaadim to begin, and uncharacteristically he had not

yet arrived. An attendee called him from the shul payphone and Rabbi Miller quickly came. After the vaad, he asked who had made the call. Afraid that he had done something wrong, the bachur did not come. Rabbi Miller persisted, and finally the anxious young man confessed. Rav Miller quickly eased his mind and handed him a quarter. "You don't have to lose out because of my tardiness," he said.

A group once came to ask Rav Miller to sign a letter of protest against a newspaper that was disrespectful to a great person. He told them he had to think about it and he specified a time for them to come back. When they

returned, he handed them an envelope. They left, opened it and found that he had written a note saying that he decided "after much consideration" not to sign the petition since it would possibly be misunderstood as getting involved in controversy. Nevertheless, he enclosed \$25 for traveling expenses since he had told them to come back for nothing.

From Rav Avigdor Miller, His Life and Revolution, By Yaakov Y. Hamburger, Published by Judaica Press, 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 Shmuel Zavel ben Yisrael a"h (Yona Zaslav's father).

1st
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NOW BEGINNING OUR 10TH YEAR!

For more information or to register for First Seder, contact Rabbi Uri Greenspan at 732-407-3178 or RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org

**Good Shabbos and a
Gutten Chodesh !**