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

YOM KIPPUR – STANDING BEFORE HASHEM

"For on this day He shall provide atonement for you, to purify you; from all your sins before Hashem shall you be purified" (Vayikra 6:30). Rav Matisyahu Salomon reflects on the significance of "before Hashem." It signifies that Yom Kippur is a day that is spent in the presence of the Ribono Shel Olam.

In the Haftara of Shabbos Shuva we read, "Return, Yisrael, to Hashem." Teshuva is the process of returning to Hashem. The Navi goes on to explain how to return: "Take (these) words with you and return to Hashem. Say to Him… "Assyria cannot help us, we will not [escape] by riding on a horse nor will we call our handiwork our god – only in You will an orphan find compassion." Rav Matisyahu explains that the process of returning to Hashem requires that we recognize that there is no independent power other than Hashem Himself. Whatever happens is governed only by Him. All natural forms of salvation are events orchestrated by the Omnipotent Creator. We cannot rely on a government, 'horsepower' or any other natural power. Indeed, idolatry is the belief that there is any other causative force that is not entirely in the hands of Hashem.

This recognition of Hashem as the only independent power is particularly beneficial in relationships *bein adam lechaveiro*. The grudges that we bear toward others and the lashon hara that we speak derive from an attitude that some person caused us pain or distress. In reality, it all came from Hashem. The human being is just a pawn. And in the area of *bein adam laMakom*, when one truly believes and feels that "*ein od milvado* – there is no other power besides Him," they automatically recognize that we must live our lives in accordance with His will. Our lives and our fate are exclusively in His hands.

Yom Kippur ends with the declaration, "Hashem Hu Ha'Elokim – Hashem is the [only] G-d." Rav Matisyahu explains that the word "elohim – god" – refers to anything to which people attribute independent power. Thus, the pasuk (Devarim 10:17) states, "For Hashem, your G-d is Elokai ha'elohim" – Hashem is the G-d who controls all gods, whether it be doctors or science or even false perceptions of cause and effect – anything that people believe in. Even believing in "*kochi ve'otzem yadi* – by my might and by the strength of my hand" is a type of idolatry. Hashem is truly the only cause, the only true god.

This is the message that we should take with us from Yom Kippur and it should continue to ring in our ears throughout the year. Of course, Teshuva requires that we stop doing our aveiros, intensify our observance of Mitzvos and uproot the bad habits which contribute to these lapses. But if we take this message with us and reinforce it, we gain a powerful catalyst to doing a complete Teshuva.

Rav Matisyahu urges us to allow this concept of Hashem's absolute power to permeate our speech. It takes much more than a perfunctory "Baruch Hashem" or "B'ezras Hashem." We should express in English these ideas in all our pursuits and all our expectations. This will put us on track to "returning to Hashem" and a Teshuva Shleima.

May we all have a *gmar chasima tovah* for good health, prosperity and nachas!

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 MAFTIR AUCTION

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha, Ha'azinu, has an allusion to the bracha we make before reading the Torah and getting an aliyah. The Torah says, "When I call the name of Hashem, I will bring greatness to our G-d" Devarim 32,3. Our Sages in Barchos 21a say that is an allusion to the mitzvah to make a bracha before learning Torah. This leads us to the following fascinating true story.

Chaim, who lived in Eretz Yisrael, was one of the leaders in a shul that would sell and auction off the aliyos every week. They would not sell the first three aliyos, of Kohen, Levi and shlishi.

One week Moshe told Chaim that he had a yahrzeit for his father. That same week, Shlomo, who was a Kohen, told Chaim that he had a yahrzeit for his grandfather. Chaim knew that Moshe was struggling financially and could not afford a lot of money. Shlomo, on the other hand, was the richest person in the shul. Chaim, the shul leader, approached Shlomo on Shabbos and said as follows. "Shlomo, I understand that it's your grandfather's yahrzeit and that you would want the aliyah of Maftir. I also understand that if you get into a bidding war with Moshe or anyone for that matter, you will win. Shlomo, can you kindly let Moshe win the auction and let him buy maftir for his father's yahrzeit? Shlomo replied with a smirk, "You don't have to worry about it. Not a problem." Chaim felt assured that he had addressed the issue.

Soon the auction began. When they came to auctioning off maftir, Moshe offered 50 shekels. Shlomo countered with 200. Moshe offered 250, and Shlomo countered with 800. Moshe offered 1000, and Shlomo countered with 3000 shekels. Moshe was unable to compete with that and with great dismay, backed out. Shlomo chuckled to himself. Moshe looked crestfallen, heartbroken and ashamed.

Chaim, who thought he had an understanding with Shlomo, felt indignant. Why didn't Shlomo uphold his commitment? Chaim, aroused with a sense of justice, decided to take action, but behind the scenes. His plan was to make sure that Shlomo got the aliyah of Kohen instead! In that shul there were only three Kohanim, and Shlomo was one of them.

When the shul took the Torah out and was about to begin the aliyos, Chaim called the other two kohanim and asked if he could talk to them outside. The two kohanim complied and they followed Chaim outside. Chaim spoke to them outside and meanwhile, the gabbai called up the Kohen for the first aliyah. The gabbai understood that Shlomo bought maftir but there was no other Kohen there, so he called up Shlomo for the first aliyah. Shlomo was surprised but took the aliyah because he was the only Kohen. When they got to maftir Shlomo started to walk up to get maftir. But then people in the crowd reminded him of the halacha that one cannot get two aliyos.

Because Shlomo was not able to go up, even though he won the auction, the gabai called up Moshe, the second-place winner of the auction. Moshe went up, and Shlomo chuckled to himself, with good humor, realizing that he was outsmarted. So Chaim succeeded in righting what he saw as a wrong. But then he had the following realization. Because of his hidden intervention, the shul did not get the three thousand shekels that Shlomo offered. At the most, the shul would get 1000, because of Chaim's intervention. Although he thought he did the right thing, he caused the shul a loss of 2000 shekels. Chaim wanted to know if he was required to pay the shul the difference for its loss. He sent this question to Rav Zilberstein. First of all, did he act properly in his situation, and second of all, did he have an obligation to pay the difference to the shul? What do you think? See Upiryo Matok Shemos Page 303

Regarding the question of the expired registration, Rav Zilberstein wrote that the owner of the car has to pay the fine.

"THE CUSTOM NOT TO EAT KITNIOS IS OF RABBINIC ORIGIN, WHEREAS TO EAT WHAT IS OFFERED BY RAV CHAIM OZER IS KAVOD HATORAH, WHICH IS D'ORAISA"

In 1940, the Brisker Rav went to Vilna and visited Rav Chaim Ozer Grodensky on Pesach. Those who accompanied the Brisker Rav that Pesach can testify about the tremendous sense of awe he felt in the presence of Rav Chaim Ozer. Here is what happened. The Brisker Rav's family members noticed that the sugar sold in Vilna was different from the raw sugar they used to buy in Brisk, and the question came up whether the local sugar might have some vegetable oil mixed

in during processing, thus raising a she'eilah of kitnios. The Brisker Rav therefore instructed his family to cook the sugar before Pesach in large quantities of water, such that the volume of their mixture would certainly be sixty times more than that of any oil that might be in the sugar; thus rendering any oil in the sugar halachically nullified before Pesach, allowing the sugar to be eaten during Pesach.

During that Pesach visit, the Brisker Rav was served a cup of tea, and Rav Chaim Ozer himself passed him a plate of sugar cubes. The Brisker Rav helped himself to one of the cubes, mixed it into his tea and drank, in honor of his host.

Immediately upon leaving the house, the Brisker Rav was seen spitting, trying to clean out his mouth and get any remnants of sugar out of his mouth. How did he explain his behavior to those who had noticed what had happened? "The custom not to eat kitnios is a chumrah of rabbinic origin, whereas to eat what is offered by Rav Chaim Ozer is kavod hatorah, which is d'Oraisa (an obligation from the Torah)!" When Rav Chaim Over offered him the sugar cubes, the Brisker Rav ate them out of kavod for him.

This story is all the more meaningful when we appreciate The Brisker Rav's lifelong commitment to following every halachah to the letter and how he trembled over the smallest detail without giving the slightest thought to what others would say. He did this even in cases where a normal person would have rationalized and allowed himself to be lenient, as the concern was very remote. And yet — kavod hatorah, is d'Oraisa!

From The Brisker Rav, By R' Shimon Yosef Meller, Published By Feldheim page 458. Reprinted with permission from Table Talk.)

Mishnayos Shel Chesed

We are currently learning for:

Sima bas Dovid, Ron Goldberg's mother
Menka bas Moshe, Mrs. Dahlia Ocken's aunt

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NOW IN OUR 10TH YEAR!

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

Gmar Chasima Tova

Good Shabbos