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 VAYEIRA – WHEN IT'S TIME TO GO PUBLIC

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

When Hashem informed Avraham of His intention to destroy Sodom, Avraham pleaded with Him to reconsider. "Perhaps there are fifty Tzaddikim in the midst of the city. Would You destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty Tzaddikim within it?" Hashem replied, "If I will find in Sodom fifty Tzaddikim in the midst of the city, I will spare the entire place on their account" (Bereishis 18:24,26).

It appears that although Sodom would have remained the vile place that it had always been, nevertheless Hashem would have spared them in the merit of the fifty Tzaddikim. However, this approach begs the question. Why would Hashem countenance the perpetuation of this morally bankrupt society because of the Tzaddikim? He could merely save the Tzaddikim and allow the rest of the people to perish.

The Seforno asserts that had there been Tzaddikim in the city there would have been some hope that the Sodomites would do Teshuva. Furthermore, the Ibn Ezra notes that Hashem stipulated, "If I will find fifty Tzaddikim **in the midst of the city (*b'soch ha'ir*)**, I will spare the entire place on account of them." Indeed, Avraham used the same expression in his request. The Ibn Ezra explains that *b'soch ha'ir* implies, "They were G-d-fearing in public." Based on this, the Alter from Kelm, Rav Simcha Zissel Zeev, asserts that only Tzaddikim who were performing Mitzvos publicly and speaking out about morality and justice could have saved Sodom; Tzaddikim like Avraham Avinu who "called out in the name of Hashem" (ibid 21:33). He deduces from the Ibn Ezra that very often the mere public display of moral and refined behavior can have a marked effect on even the most amoral people.

Furthermore, we can infer from the Gemara (Shabbos 55a) that Tzaddikim who do not take action, when it is called for, will not only fail to save the wicked, they also may be held accountable. The Gemara relates that Yechezkel Hanavi had a vision of impending tragedies which were about to befall Yerushalayim: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu told the angel Gavriel, 'Go and mark the letter *tav* with ink on the foreheads of the Tzaddikim so that the angels of destruction will not kill them and mark with blood the letter *tav* on the foreheads of the wicked.'" However, the Midas Hadin protested this distinction since the Tzaddikim should have protested and Hashem conceded to the argument of the Midas Hadin.

The prophet Micha declared, "What does Hashem require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and walk humbly with your G-d" (Micha 6:8). The Alter asserts that walking humbly with Hashem does not preclude our responsibility to go out into the public arena and do whatever is necessary for the tzibbur or for Klal Yisrael. Indeed, the greatest leaders throughout history were extremely humble and often shied away from the limelight: Moshe Rabbeinu, Aharon, Hillel, Rashi, the Chofetz Chaim to name a few. And what about Rabbi Meir Schuster, one of the shiest people ever, who sent tens of thousands of people whom he approached at the Kosel to Yeshivos and seminaries. While we might feel more comfortable keeping Mitzvos privately, we must bear in mind that our dedication to Torah observance in public can have a major effect upon those around us.

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 REMODELED KITCHEN

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha tells us the story of how the Malachim (angels) visited Avraham and Sara. The Torah says that the Malachim asked Avraham where Sarah was. Rashi quotes our Sages that they asked this to make Sarah more beloved in Avraham's eyes, by pointing out how righteous Sara was. The topic of the love between a husband and wife brings us to the following true story.

Akiva and Miriam were about to reach their 30th anniversary. In order to celebrate the wonderful occasion, Akiva wanted to surprise his wife with a gift that he knew she always wanted; a newly remodeled kitchen with new cabinets. Akiva went to the kitchen design store to choose new cabinets and a new paint job. The owner, Eli, was happy to show Akiva around the showroom. Akiva said that he wanted cabinets that were very strong. The cabinets they currently had, had shelves that began to warp and bend. This time he wanted to make sure that the shelves would be extremely strong. Eli told Akiva that he had the perfect cabinets for them. Eli then walked over to a cabinet set and stood on top of one of the shelves. Eli even jumped a little. Eli said, "look, as you can see I'm a bit overweight, and even after I stand and jump on these shelves, they don't bend at all". Akiva looked closely and saw that Eli was right. Clearly, the cabinets were unusually strong. Akiva was convinced and he ordered those cabinets to remodel his kitchen.

The kitchen remodeling was completed on the day of their anniversary. When Miriam saw the new kitchen she was ecstatic. It was exactly as she always dreamed. She loved the colors and loved the designs. She also really loved the new cabinets.

Akiva was quite proud of himself for making his wife so happy. "Miriam, let me show you a cool trick", he said. These cabinets are so strong that they can support my full weight. Then before Miriam could say anything, Akiva stood on one of the shelves. "Look how strong these are. They can hold me up as I stand on them!" Akiva then proceeded to jump on them like he saw Eli do in the store.

BOOM! As Akiva jumped, the shelves buckled and a few of the cabinets broke. The whole cabinet structure tipped over, tore out of the wall, and hung towards the floor. Akiva tumbled to the floor. Thankfully, nothing was hurt, except his pride. Akiva picked himself off the floor and surveyed the damage. The damage to the new kitchen was extreme. It would likely cost at least a thousand dollars to repair. Akiva was furious. Akiva went back to the kitchen design store. He walked in and approached Eli, the proprietor.

"You told me that the cabinets were strong enough to hold your weight and that you could even jump on it. But I tried it and they were completely destroyed. They broke even though I weigh less than you. I want you to please replace or repair them." "Wait a second", Eli replied. "I showed you that it was strong enough to hold my weight and that I could jump. But I didn't

tell you to try that at home. It's true that these are unusually strong shelves, but it's not normal for an adult to jump on cabinets. I was able to do it because I knew exactly where it was strongest and how to do it in a way that would not break it. I'm sorry, but if you jump on your shelves that is not covered under warranty and I'm not going to be able to replace them for free.

According to the Torah, who do you think Is correct? Does Eli the kitchen remodeler have to pay for the new shelves? On one hand, he made it clear that these shelves were strong enough to hold his weight. But on the other hand, Akiva was never expected to stand and jump on them, that is not its normal use. What do you think? See Upiryo Matok Shemos page 400

Regarding last week's question about the sneaker, Rav Chaim Kanievsky answered as follows. Normally the teacher has a responsibility of "lehafrisho missur" to pull the child away from doing the wrong thing. But in this case, since there is no concern that this will teach the child to steal, the teacher does not have to be "mafrish" him from this conduct.

THE COLD COFFEE

One of the students at Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood had the special privilege of serving the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Aharon Kotler, his daily cup of coffee during the days he spent in Lakewood. One day, after placing the coffee on his rebbe's desk, the student passed the office and noticed that the cup was untouched. He slipped in, removed the cold

cup of coffee and replaced it with a piping hot replacement, assuming that the Rosh Yeshiva, had simply forgotten his coffee because he was so engrossed in his studies.

Several minutes later, he passed by the office, noticing that again the new coffee remained untouched. At this point, the student realized that it was not merely a matter of concentration; there must have been a distinct reason why Rav Aharon wasn't drinking the hot coffee.

"I'll share my thoughts with you," Rav Aaron explained. "A certain family with whom I'm friendly is taking an interest in a former student of the yeshivah regarding a marriage prospect. It is very likely that they will call me to inquire about him. I am very conflicted. There are certain things about him that I think may be problematic. Praising him with attributes he does not possess is a Torah prohibition on two counts, midvar sheker tirchak — 'distance yourself from words of falsehood' — as well as lo saamod al dam reiacho— 'do not be oblivious to the spilling of another person's blood,' for if unknown negative traits ultimately lead to discord or divorce, it is directly attributable to the fact that honest information was withheld. However, on the other hand, I don't feel comfortable divulging my true feelings, since there is always the possibility that, once married, the couple will be happy with one another. My remarks might very well cause the needless disintegration of a shidduch. It is an awesome responsibility that I'm facing. For this reason I have designated this day as a day of fasting and prayer to Hashem that He grant me kindness and spare me from this call."

This anecdote was later related to the late Rosh Yeshiva of Manchester, Harav Yehuda Zev Segal, while he was visiting the United States. He was so inspired by Rav Aaron's meticulousness in guarding each word he uttered, that he remarked, "Had I come to America just to hear this beautiful story, it would have sufficed."

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MAZEL TOV!

To Daniel Baltuch and his Gemara class for completing Meseches Bava Kamma. Now would be a great time to join the class (9:55 AM Mon – Fri) as they begin Meseches Gitten. Contact Rabbi Greenspan for details.

New Shiur on Sefer Tehillim

Beginning this Sunday, a new shiur "Tehillim – Life Lessons" will be available to both men and women. Every Sunday, participants will receive a new shiur via WhatsApp. The shiur will also be available via podcast. For more information or any questions, please contact Rabbi Greenspan.

Good Shabbos!

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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