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 TOLDOS – SHLOSHA AVOS

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

As we read through the Torah, we notice that much more of Sefer Bereishis is allocated to Avraham (Lech Lecha, Vayeira, Chayei Sara) and Yaakov (part of Toldos, Vayeitzei and Vayishlach). Yitzchak's life is discussed only in part of Toldos. Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky points out that the Rambam's discussion of the Avos (Hilchos Avodah Zarah chap.1) appears to mirror this phenomenon. The Rambam describes Avraham's activities and his method of disseminating monotheism at great length. He describes how Avraham came to believe in Hashem and how he traveled all over teaching people, ultimately attracting tens of thousands of followers. The Rambam mentions Yitzchak only briefly, noting that Yitzchak taught others and passed on to Yaakov what he learned from Avraham and appointed him to teach. Yaakov taught his twelve sons and established a Yeshiva which attracted many followers.

Rav Yaakov explains that each of the Avos excelled in a special trait. The middah of Avraham was chesed, and the middah of Yitzchak was *din* (judgment). Avraham was the epitome of kindness and forbearance while Yitzchak manifested a strict commitment to serving Hashem without any deviations or compromise. (Perhaps we could compare Avraham to Hillel and Yitzchak to Shamai.) Since Avraham personified chesed and taught chesed he was able to attract many people to him and his ideology. Yitzchak, being a stern personality, did not attract many followers and had only one truly dedicated student – Yaakov. However, the middah of Yaakov was *emes.* Yaakov personified truth and taught truth and thereby attracted many people who were seeking the truth.

Both Avraham and Yaakov were very public figures who had many followers; therefore, the Torah and the Rambam devoted much more attention to their lives. Yitzchak was a very private person who did not have major impact on the world around him and therefore received only a brief discussion.

The nation of Bnai Yisrael is founded on three pillars established by all three of the Avos – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Their lives and ideals established the principles upon which our people is predicated. Perhaps, this is due to the fact that the world stands on Torah, Avodah and Gemilus Chassadim – corresponding to the truth of Yaakov, the intense service of Hashem of Yitzchak and the chesed of Avraham. Bnai Yisrael in their role as representatives of mankind are responsible for maintaining the world's existence by upholding these three pillars. Moreover, our own relationship with Hashem derives directly from the Avos. Thus, when we address Hashem in our Shemoneh Esrei, we must begin with "Our G-d who is the G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitzchak and the G-d of Yaakov."

The Avos serve as the pinnacle of each Yid's aspirations in serving Hashem: "Each person is obligated to say when will my deeds reach the level of my forefathers: Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov" (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabba 250). By following in the legacy of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov we can maintain our connection with Hashem and keep the world afloat.

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 SIMPLE MILLIONAIRE

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the tefilla that Yitzchak and Rivka davened to Hashem in order to have children. The mitzva of tefilla leads us to the following interesting true story.

Zev was a hardworking Jew. He worked in a factory assembling furniture all day. His work required him to start at 8:00 every morning, so Zev would wake up early to daven before work. The halacha is that one is supposed to daven the Shemona Esrei after Netz, sunrise. However, if one has no other choice, one can daven after Alos, which is when the first light appears on the eastern horizon. Since Zev had to be at work so early he would often daven before Netz, particularly during the winter.

Zev did this consistently for 25 years. He would get up early, daven, and then go to work. One day, Zev participated in a fundraising raffle. To his surprise he won the cash prize jackpot of one million shekels. Overnight he became a millionaire. This should have been a life altering windfall. But after the win, Zev's wife Etty sat down with him. "I know other people who suddenly became wealthy", she said. It changed their lives, and they became miserable after that. They lived with conspicuous consumption. They bought huge homes and cars. People were jealous of them, their relationships changed, and they must have gotten an ayin hara. Their win only brought them bickering, fights and jealousy. Let's make a promise between each other that even though we have become wealthy we won't change our lifestyle. Although you can technically retire and stop working, I'd like no one to know about our win, and I'd like you to continue to work as you have in the past. Let's not change anything about our lifestyle and continue to work, and live simple, hardworking lives. I think in this way, our win will bring us baracha and not consternation and pain."

Zev understood the wisdom of his wife's request and he emphatically agreed. Despite his wealth, Zev continued to get up early to daven and work the whole day. They lived simple, inconspicuous lives, and no one would have guessed that they were millionaires.

One morning as Zev davened early, he wondered whether he was allowed to daven so early. In the past he had no choice but to daven before Netz. But now he didn't have to work anymore. He could wake up "late" and daven at sunrise. Was he allowed to daven so early, before the proper time, just to avoid changing his lifestyle after his win? On one hand maybe he should daven later, because he had no need to daven before the proper time. But on the other hand, it was really important to him and his wife not to change their simple lifestyle after their win. They did not want their win to become known and cause jealousy and create an ayin hara. Perhaps that was enough of a reason to daven before the proper time. This question was brought to Rav Chaim Kanievsky. What do you think?

Regarding last week's question, Rabbi Berger instructed Dovid, the aveil who lost his sister, that he had to keep his words of hesped limited to conform with the laws of Rosh Chodesh.

NOW, I WILL HAVE THE ZECHUS OF CLEANING

Rav Dovid Trenk of the Adelphia Yeshiva mastered the art of loving discipline and was able to stand firm and enforce rules without having to resort to frustrated threats and accusations. One morning, he came in to say shiur and the classroom was a mess, papers and used tissues strewn all over the room. "Boys, we can't learn Torah this way, it's not kavod. I'm going to leave and come back in five minutes. Please make sure that the room is spotless."

The rebbi left and returned precisely five minutes later. The boys had gone through the motions of cleaning up, picking up a few papers and kicking some of the litter to the side, but the room wasn't much neater. He looked around the room, but didn't react. Instead, he bent over and began to pick up pieces of trash.

Several boys ran over to help him, but he held up a hand. "No boys, I'm sorry, you had your chance." Now, I will have the zechus of cleaning the room so that it's a suitable place to learn Torah, and you," Rebbi looked around, his voice rising a notch, "you will remain in your seats and not move." For several quiet, uncomfortable minutes, the talmidim watched their rebbi crawl and bend and reach, tidying the room, while they were powerless to help. They learned several lessons that day.

(From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah, Reprinted with Permission from Table Talk.)

Tehillim – Life Lessons

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732-407-3178 rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org

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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

Good Shabbos!