

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 VAYEISHEV – ADVERSITY

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Rashi (Bereishis 37:1) cites the Medrash that Yaakov, after many years of hardship and travail, sought to settle down in tranquility. Yaakov had suffered for twenty years from the guile and thievery of Lavan. He had lived in fear of Esav who planned to kill him. He suffered anguish due to Reuvain's rash behavior, Dinah's abduction by Shechem, Shimon and Levi's vengeful attack of the inhabitants of Shechem and finally the premature passing of his beloved Rachel. Yaakov did not seek to live idly in comfort or in the lap of luxury; he merely wanted to be able to serve Hashem without adversity. Nevertheless, Hashem deemed this desire inappropriate. "Are the righteous not satisfied with what they will attain in Olam Haba?"

While no one looks forward to adversity, it is the mainstay of Olam Hazeh. The Mesilas Yesharim spells it out very clearly. "Chazal have taught us that man was created to derive pleasure from (his closeness to) Hashem and delight in the radiance of the Shechina...The place for this pleasure is Olam Haba, which was created for this purpose. However, the

path to this destination is through this world as Chazal said, 'This world resembles a corridor leading to Olam Haba'...In this world who is truly happy and tranquil? There are so many forms of anguish, illnesses, pain and burdens and ultimately death." The corridor is filled with all types of adversity and challenges – from minor disappointments to real tragedies, G-d forbid.

Indeed, this suffering is not by chance. It is part and parcel of the means to reaching Olam Haba. "Hashem gave Yisrael three wonderful gifts, and they were all given only through suffering. They are Torah, Eretz Yisrael and Olam Haba" (Berachos 5a). The plan was never meant for man to serve Hashem in tranquility. Rav Yeruchum Levovitz explains that true Avodas Hashem is serving Him despite adversity. It is only in the cauldron of hardship that genuine growth is achieved, and that greatness is born.

However, we do have some control over the mechanism of our suffering. The Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 92:1) states,

"There is no one who does not undergo suffering. Fortunate is he whose suffering comes from Torah." When one toils in Torah study or in the performance of mitzvos, the hardship that he experiences suffices as suffering that he was destined to endure. The Chofetz Chaim found this concept in the following pasuk: "May only goodness (tov) and kindness (chesed) pursue me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the House of Hashem for long days" (Tehillim 23:6). This is how he interpreted the pasuk: Many people are pursued by all different forms of hardship. Dovid Hamelech prayed, "Hashem, if I must be pursued by adversity, may it be by the struggles which pursue me due to my performance of tov (Torah) and chesed. Then I would be assured that I will merit even greater reward in the "House of Hashem" in Olam Haba.

By committing ourselves to pursue tov and chesed – regardless of the discomfort or pain that we may encounter – we have chosen the high road and most secure path to Olam Haba.

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 FIRE

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This coming week we will be starting the Yom Tov of Chanukah.

Eli was on a business trip and staying at the home of his old friend Tzvi. It was the fifth night of Chanukah. Tzvi prepared to light with his family. Eli gave Tzvi a quarter and said, "as the halacha requires (Orach Chaim 677), here is my payment to be a partner with you in the mitzvah of lighting the menorah. Because I am your guest, I will be a shutaf with you in the mitzvah.

Then Tzvi and his family lit the menorah and Eli watched. The family turned away and left the menorah to continue burning. Sadly one of the menorahs tipped and a fire spread across the carpet. The fire spread to the bushes outside, and soon enough much of the

block was in danger of burning. Thankfully the fire department arrived and no one was hurt. But the fire caused a tremendous amount of damage to Tzvi's home, as well as a few homes on the block.

After the dust settled, Eli reached out to Tzvi. "I need to know how much damage was caused by the menorah". "What do you care", Tzvi replied, "it wasn't your fault". "It wasn't my fault, but I was a shutaf with you. Therefore I have to pay for half of the damage that was caused." But Tzvi said, "Nah, you were only a shutaf for the mitzvah, you weren't a shutaf to be obligated in paying for the damage".

This question was sent to Rav Zilberstein. If Eli was a shutaf with Tzvi for lighting the

menorah, is he liable for half of the damage? On one hand he was a partner. But on the other hand, he never intended to be a partner to pay for damages. He only wanted to do the mitzvah. He never took it upon himself to be liable for damages. What do you think? See Umatok Midvash Bereishis Page 397

Regarding the question of paying the canteen tab, Rav Shuchatowitz said that even if the agreed upon money will exceed the actual amount owed there will be no concern of ribis because the increase was based on p'shara, a compromise not due to s'char hamtanans maos, it is not a compensation for extending the duration of the loan.

BUBBY AND ZAIDY SAID I SHOULD BUY WHATEVER WOULD MAKE ME HAPPY

Rabbi Raphael Mendlowitz was shopping for Chanukah presents for his children at a large toy store in Maryland. He noticed a father and daughter also buying toys for Chanukah. They had already filled their cart with some toys, and the young girl was busy looking for a few more. The girl picked up a doll and asked her father, "Does this cost too much?" Her father replied. "No, it's fine. you may have it." The girl put it into their cart and then picked up a second doll. She asked her father if she could buy that doll too. "Sure," said her father, and the girl dropped the doll into their cart.

Rabbi Mendlowitz's attention was quickly drawn to a father and son who were also shopping for Chanukah presents. The young girl with the dolls was also listening to their conversation. They overheard the boy begging his father to buy him a remote-control car. The father told his son it was too expensive. but the boy persisted. "Please Tatty" he pleaded, "this would be the best Chanukah present I ever got! Please buy it for me!" "You know we can't afford it," his father said. "Let's go over to the last aisle and you

can pick out some nice stickers." The boy sadly walked away.

The young girl turned to her father and said, "I've decided I don't want the second doll." She put it back on the shelf and walked over to the next aisle, where she picked up the remote-control car that the young boy had been eyeing and put it in her cart.

A few minutes later, Rabbi Mendlowitz was waiting in line to pay for his purchases. In front of him were the girl and her father. He watched as the girl handed over the remote control car to the cashier after her father paid for it, whispering something into his ear. The cashier put the car under his counter. Rabbi Mendlowitz paid for his toys and watched as the man and his son, who were standing behind him, prepared to pay for their stickers. Suddenly, the cashier began shouting, "Congratulations! Congratulations! You are our one-thousandth customer this week. You have won a brand-new remote-control car!" He reached under the counter, took out the car, and handed it to the boy. The boy looked startled and then his face broke out in a huge

smile. He jumped up and down and shouted, "This is my best Chanukah present ever!".

Rabbi Mendlowitz noticed the girl and her father smiling at each other as they left the store. He was very moved by the beautiful act of kindness that he had just witnessed. Coincidentally, Rabbi Mendlowitz's car was parked right next to the car that belonged to the father and daughter. As he walked to his car, he overheard the father say to her. "That was a very nice thing you just did. You know though that Bubby and Zaidy really sent you money for Chanukah to buy toys for yourself." The young girl turned to her father and answered, "Bubby and Zaidy said I should buy whatever would make me happy and giving the car to that boy made me happy!"

What a wonderful lesson we can all learn from this young girl. Sometimes you can enjoy a gift more by giving it away to someone else than by having it yourself. From For Goodness' Sake By Rabbi Baruch Brull, published by Feldheim, reprinted with permission from Table Talk.

Tehillim – Life Lessons

Join more than 650 other people around the world and learn the meaning, depth and historical context of each Perek of Tehillim. This week we will begin chapter 3. Dovid HaMelech is running away from Avshalom and responds by writing Tehillim!? The 10-15 minute audio shiur is sent out every Sunday via WhatsApp. Please contact R' Greenspan to join.

Kli Yakar Chabura

The Kli Yakar Chabura has resumed Friday nights at 8:30 PM in Rabbi Greenspan's home, 113 Grassmere Road, Bala Cynwyd.

1st
Seder

A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

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

A Good Shabbos and a Freilichen Chanukah!