

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 VAYISHLACH – GENUINE HAKARAS HATOV

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“Yaakov traveled to Succos and built himself a house, and he made *succos* for his livestock; therefore, he called the name of the place Succos” (Bereishis 33:17). The Ohr Hachaim asks, “What was so significant about the *succos* that motivated Yaakov to name the place after the *succos*?” He answers that it was a new idea since no one had ever built shelters for sheep before. Rav Meir Tzvi Bergman explains that Yaakov built shelters for his sheep because he felt *hakaras hatov* (a sense of gratitude) toward the sheep which were his source of livelihood. He wanted to enshrine this concept by giving the name Succos to the first place where it had been demonstrated.

With this approach Rav Bergman sheds light on the Tur Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 417) where the author quotes his brother Rav Yechiel that the three festivals correspond to the Avos. Pesach corresponds to Avraham who told Sarah, “Knead and make wafers” for the three wayfarers, which was on Pesach. Shavuos corresponds to Yitzchak because the shofar sounded at Matan Torah was from the ram slaughtered in Yitzchak’s stead at

the time of the Akeidah. Succos corresponds to Yaakov as it says, “He built *succos* for his sheep.” Pesach commemorates the chesed of Avraham; Shavuos commemorates our *mesirus nefesh* to proclaim Naaseh Venishma, which we merited from Yitzchak; Succos commemorates the ultimate *hakaras hatov* performed by Yaakov.

The Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 79:6) comments on the pasuk, “[Yaakov] encamped near the city [of Shechem]” (Bereishis 33:18), inferring that Yaakov set up shops to sell goods at reduced prices to demonstrate *hakaras hatov* to a place from which he derived benefit. Here too, Yaakov was the progenitor of this perception of gratitude.

Yaakov subsequently educated Yosef in *hakaras hatov*. “Go, now and look into the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the sheep.” The Medrash (ibid 84:13) once again takes note of this concept. “This teaches that one should look into the welfare of something from which he derives benefit.”

Following this approach, Rav Bergman explains an enigmatic statement of Chazal cited by Rashi (Bereishis 37:12). “The brothers went to graze their father’s sheep.” Chazal derive from the dots placed on the word “es” in this pasuk that they did not go to tend the sheep but to tend to themselves. What is meant by “tending to themselves and not to the sheep”? They felt no *hakaras hatov* to the sheep. Anything that they did for the sheep was only perceived as something that would eventually benefit them. They had not absorbed Yaakov’s concept of *hakaras hatov*.

Although ultimately every benefit we derive comes from Hashem, He has many agents through which He bestows His kindness on us. Certainly, our primary *hakaras hatov* must be directed toward Him. Nevertheless, Rav Bergman demonstrates that *hakaras hatov* must be an innate quality which elicits a sense of gratitude to any person, place or object from which we benefit. There is no such thing as a ‘free lunch’ and we must feel indebted to whomever or whatever was involved in providing it.

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 CANTEEN TAB

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha references the camps of angels which Yaakov encountered at the end of last week's Parsha. The reference to camp leads us to the following story.

Yanky went to a summer sleep-away camp. At the camp, there was a canteen. The canteen had a tab, a credit account for each of the customers and the campers would usually pay their tab after a few weeks. Yanky went to the canteen regularly and racked up a significant bill. Yanky left camp early and sadly forgot to pay the balance of his bill with the canteen.

About six months later Yanky remembered that he still had an outstanding bill with the canteen. He reached out to the canteen director and asked the director if he could tell him how much he owed the canteen. The director replied that he no longer had the records from the summer and was unable to tell Yanky how much he owed. Yanky told him that he knew that it was more than 100 dollars and not more than \$300. The director told him that he could split the difference and pay \$200. Yanky was not sure what to do. He knew the director agreed to \$200, but if he owed less than that amount perhaps

the excess would be ribis (interest). What do you think? This question was sent to Rav Mordechai Shuchatowitz.

Regarding last week's question about the tzedakah box filled on shabbos from a poker game, Rav Zilberstein said that the money should not be returned but it should not be used by the Gemach. Rather it should be designated to an organization that promotes the observance of shabbos.

I'LL BE SUGGESTING TO HER THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH WHAT HER HUSBAND DOES

Reb Mendel Kaplan was once discussing with his students the requirement to extend Shabbos into the week by delaying havdalah, when Reb Mendel related an experience that showed his great sensitivity towards other people's feelings.

"A neighbor of mine in Chicago went away one Shabbos. Towards the end of Shabbos his wife came over and asked if she could hear

me make havdalah. In those days, few people waited even an hour after nightfall and this woman appeared at my door barely half an hour after sunset. When I asked her if it wasn't a little early for Havdalah, she told me that her husband made havdalah at this time every week. Although it was still Shabbos for me, I thought to myself, 'Her husband is also frum and if I tell her it's still Shabbos for me, I'll be suggesting to her that

there is something wrong with what her husband does.' I remembered this Gemara that we were discussing and made havdalah for her without a candle."

From Reb Mendel, by Yisroel Greenwald, published by Artscroll Mesorah, Reprinted with permission from Table Talk.

Tehillim – Life Lessons

Join the hundreds of people from all over 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.

Besura Tova!

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

1st
Seder

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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!