

# 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 TETZAVEH – THE CROWN OF TORAH

*Rabbi Shlomo Caplan*

Hashem said to Moshe Rabbeinu, “Now, you shall bring near your brother Aharon and his sons from among Bnai Yisrael to serve as Kohanim for me” (Shemos 25:1). The Medrash (Shemos Rabba 37:4) states that when Hashem told him to appoint Aharon and his sons as Kohanim, Moshe felt bad. However, Hashem told him, “I had the Torah, and I gave it to you. If not for it (the Torah), I would have destroyed the world.” The Netziv asks what consolation Hashem was offering to Moshe. The Torah was not given only to Moshe. “The crown of Torah is available to all who wish to acquire it” (Yoma 72b). The Kehuna, however, was a special designation which set Kohanim apart from other Jews with a higher level of Kedusha. It appears that Moshe felt bad that he had not been chosen for this designation. How did Hashem console him? Additionally, the Meforshim wonder how Moshe, the humble human being, could have been jealous of Aharon or had sought the unique *kavod* accorded to Kohanim.

Rav Yosef Sorotzkin answers that Moshe was not the least bit jealous nor did he seek

any *kavod*. Moshe longed for the closeness to Hashem that Kohanim could achieve when serving in the Mishkan – especially the closeness the Kohain Gadol feels when entering the Holy of Holies. Hashem responded: “The Torah was mine and I gave it to you.” Learn from Me. Although I sought to keep the Torah with Me in Heaven, I gave away the Torah to you because its purpose is to refine mankind. You should also be willing to forfeit the Kehuna and allow Aharon, whose personality is most fitting to the role of Kohain Gadol, to assume that title.

While I find Rav Sorotzkin's explanation of Moshe's lament very plausible, I cannot agree with his explanation of Hashem's response. When He gave the Torah to Moshe and mankind, He did not forfeit anything. The Torah remained Toras Hashem. Nor do we find any mention in the Medrash of Aharon being a more appropriate candidate for the Kehuna.

I would like to suggest that Hashem told Moshe that you have something that is better than Kehuna. You have the crown of

Torah. It states in Pirkei Avos (6:7), “Torah is greater than Kehuna and royalty.” The Gemara (Horios 13a) avers, “It is more precious than *peninim* – Torah is more precious than the Kohain Gadol who enters *lifnai velefnim*.” Hashem told Moshe, you want to come closer to Me. You don't need to be a Kohain or even a Kohain Gadol. You can achieve the greatest closeness through Torah. This is what Hashem meant when He said, “If not for it I would have destroyed the world.” Indeed, Rav Chaim Volozhin asserts that if there was one moment that the Torah was not being studied somewhere in the world, the world would cease to exist. The study of Torah far is more important than the Kehuna.

As the Netziv noted, the Torah is there for everyone. If we study Torah diligently, if we support Torah passionately, we can come close – very close – to Hashem. As it says in the Zohar, “Yisrael, the Torah and Hakadosh Boruch Hu are one.” To bond with the Torah is to bond (*kavayachol* – so to speak) with Hashem.

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.

## DAVENING IN THE AIRPORT

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha discusses the avodah, the service done in the Mishkan. Today when we don't have the Mishkan or Beis HaMikdash, we primarily fulfill our avodah with the service of our lips, with prayer. This leads us to the following true story.

Yossi was on a business trip and had a three-hour layover in an airport. It was time to daven mincha and Yossi had no choice but to daven in the airport. He looked around and it seemed pretty clear that there were no other Jews around. He tried to find a quiet place to daven, but did not find any. He was going to have to daven mincha in the busy airport with all of the non-Jews around him.

Yossi knew that davening confidently surrounded by non-Jews was a Kiddush Hashem, a sanctification of Hashem's name. But the truth was that he felt very self-conscious davening shemona esreh with all of

the people around him. He knew that if he davened feeling very self-conscious, his davening would have little kavanah. But then Yossi had an idea. He could take out his phone and hold it to his ear. If he would daven while holding the phone, people around him would think he was simply talking on the phone. This way he felt he would not be embarrassed and would be able to have more kavanah.

But then Yossi hesitated. He knew that you are not supposed to hold anything in your hands while davening shemoneh esreh. He also felt that perhaps it was not respectful to daven shemona esreh, to talk to Hashem, with a cell phone next to his ear. Imagine talking to a king, while holding a phone to your ear! He also understood that if he would daven holding a phone he would be wasting his opportunity to make a kiddush Hashem in front of all the people around him.

So Yossi felt torn between two sides and was not sure which would be preferred. On one hand, he could daven holding the phone because it would help him have greater kavana during davening. But on the other hand, it is wrong to use the phone during davening, because he should not be holding anything. In addition, he would be forfeiting the opportunity of making a kiddush Hashem. What do you think Yossi should do?

Regarding last week's question about the woman who brought many cats to the front of her apartment, Rav Zilberstein wrote that if this bothers people, even if this is in front of her apartment, in the public area, then it would be considered a mekach taus, and the landlord can retract the contract and she would have to leave. See Upiryo Matok Bereishis Page 99.

## HOW LUCKY I AM, PAYING ONLY PENNIES ON THE DOLLAR!

In his final year, Rabbi Hirsch Diskind, the dean of Bais Yaakov for 35 years, suffered severe pain on a constant basis. He once told me that he never realized that pain can reach such heights for extended periods of time. The source of the pain was from his back which suffered from a deterioration of the bone structure. During this year all the people who came in contact with him were fortunate to learn a powerful lesson. It is a lesson which if successfully absorbed can carry a person through many challenging circumstances.

When asked how he was feeling his response was always the same. The phrase he used

changed from time to time but the message was always the same. "Oh! How HaShem loves me! He who HaShem loves does He punish!" This comes from a verse in Mishle (3:12). See Shaarei Teshuvah 2:4.

Alternatively, he would say "Oh, how lucky I am, paying only pennies on the dollar!" Referring to the notion our Sages teach us that receiving punishment in this world for our misdeeds is much more cleansing than receiving it in the next world thereby mitigating or totally removing the pain one will receive there.

After hearing his response, one of his grandchildren exclaimed "Zaide, you are such a tzaddik!" He responded "A tzaddik?! One must be foolish to have any other attitude. I have already paid the price. Why should I not appreciate it? After having paid tuition for school and having gone to school, not to use your education would be foolish!" He always said that one should never pray for yisurim (any form of pain; physical and emotional) but if you are given them - cherish them! As told by Paysach Diskind who granted permission for its incorporation into the First Seder Weekly.

### Tehillim – Life Lessons

Join more than 1600 people around the world and learn the meaning, depth and historical context of each Perek of Tehillim. This week we continue with Mizmor 7: גמר נא רע | רשעים For what is Dovid Hamelech davening? – וא-ל זעם בכל יום Why does Hashem express anger every day?

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 will meet Friday night at 9:00 PM in Rabbi Greenspan's home, 113 Grassmere Road, Bala Cynwyd.

**1st**  
*Seder*

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**NOW IN OUR 10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR!**

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

**Good Shabbos!**