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

PURIM – ANOTHER "CLOSE CALL"

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

The Gemara (Megillah 11a) records the various *drashos* made by Chazal on the message of the Megillah. Rav Masneh cites the *pasuk* in Devarim (4:7), "For what great nation has a G-d Who is close to it as is Hashem, our G-d, whenever we call to Him?" Rav Masneh saw this phenomenon as the primary theme of Megillas Esther. Indeed, the Rambam seems to be following the opinion of Rav Masneh when he writes, "The prophets together with Bais Din instituted and instructed us to read the Megillah in its proper time… to inform future generations that it is true that which [Hashem] assured us in the Torah, 'For which great nation has G-d close to it as Hashem, our G-d, is – whenever we call to Him?'" (See Rambam in the conclusion to his enumeration of the 613 Mitzvos included in his Mishneh Torah.)

Rav Matisyahu Salomon seeks to define from where this closeness emanates. We state in Ashrei, "Hashem is close to all those who call to Him, to all who call to Him sincerely" (Tehillim 145:17). It is the sincere calling to Hashem that elicits the closeness. And what defines the sincerity of the caller? Teshuva. Rav Salomon cites the following Medrash (Shemos Rabbah 21): "'And Paroh drew near, and Bnai Yisrael lifted their eyes and behold the Egyptians were coming after them, and they were very frightened; and Bnai Yisrael cried out to Hashem.' What is meant by 'Paroh drew near'? He brought Bnai Yisrael nearer to Teshuva...When they saw [the Egyptians], they feared greatly and lifted their eyes heavenward; they did Teshuva and prayed." This, then, is the sequence: Hashem sends a *tzarah* which elicits fear, which leads to Teshuva and prayer, which bring us closer to Him.

The Rambam (Hilchos Taanios 1:4) adds another component. "There is a Rabbinic precept to fast when any misfortune arises upon the *tzibbur*…and during these fast days we cry out in prayers and supplications." Thus the Mishna Berura (686:2) states, "It is the established custom to fast on the thirteenth of Adar. It is called Taanis Esther to remember that Hashem Yisborach sees each person in his time of distress when he fasts and returns to Hashem with all his heart as He did in those days."

In conclusion I might add that the Gemara (Sanhedrin 97b) says that Moshiach will come when Bnai Yisrael do Teshuva. "If they do not do Teshuva on their own, then Hashem will cause a tyrant whose decrees are harsh like those of Haman to arise. Thus, Bnai Yisrael will do Teshuva and return to Hashem." Here, too, we see the same pattern: Hashem sends the *tzarah* to elicit Teshuva which will bring us closer to Him.

We are presently surrounded by many *tzaros.* A rampant antisemitism has led to the tragic death of numerous Jews. We are engulfed in a society filled with terribly immoral values which threaten our whole way of life. Furthermore, we might presently be witnessing a ruthless tyrant reminiscent Haman. Are we getting the message? Taanis Esther and Purim are here. Let us cry out to Hashem, return to Him and bring the final *ge'ula.*

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 PURIM TOOTHACHE

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week was of course Purim. Please enjoy this true Purim story.

Menachem was a busy dentist. On the day of Purim, he only had one hour free to do the mitzvah of hearing the Megillah. As he was driving to shul to hear the Megillah, he got a phone call from one of his patients. His patient was in extreme pain from a tooth infection and he wanted to see the dentist right away to alleviate the pain. His patient was not in danger of dying, but he was in great agony.

Dr. Menachem felt very torn. This person was in great pain and he needed help. Dr. Menachem could help him. But if he would help him, he would miss the mitzvah of listening to the Megillah. Dr. Menachem wondered which mitzvah would take priority. Would the Torah mitzvah to help a person in pain, override his rabbinical mitzvah to hear the Megillah on Purim? Should he miss the Megillah entirely this Purim to take care of this patient?

Or would we say that simply alleviating another person's pain, when he is not in danger, would not override this mitzvah of hearing the Megillah. Perhaps he should do the mitzvah of Megillah and help the person later.

What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Megilla, Page 51

Regarding last week's question about the balloons placed on the cars, Rav Zilberstein wrote that if the people in that area have young children who would enjoy the balloons, it would be permitted to tie balloons on the cars because it can be assumed that they would enjoy it. Regarding whether the man can take the balloons on the other cars, Rav Zilberstein wrote that it would not be considered theft because there was no kinyan, no acquisition on the balloon yet, nonetheless the man should not take the other balloons because it does not belong to him, and it will make other people upset.

THEY WILL BE FINER JEWS THAN WE

Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky zt'l spoke at the 1981 Torah Umesorah convention and shared the following thoughts.

In 1981 America was absorbing many Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and they were resettling in many Jewish communities across America. Reb Yaakov felt very strongly about the responsibility that the local communities had in welcoming them and their children to Torah and her ways.

Regarding this responsibility there were two points that he wanted the audience to recognize. His first point was that our Sages teach us that the entire world is worthy of being created for just one tzaddik. Even if there is no other worthy person other than this one tzaddik, HaShem would still bring the world into existence. This was learnt from the final verse of Koheles. He explained that even if all our efforts in welcoming the newly arrived Jews will yield just one child who will become a ben Torah, it is worth all the effort we expend.

His second point was astounding. He said that even if we only succeed in stopping a Jewish child from marrying out, we have accomplished tremendous things. Why? Because when his children grow up, they will be 'tiknokos she'nishb'u' like Jewish children who were captured by non-Jews and never learned that they are Jewish.

To quote Reb Yaakov; "When Eliyahu Hanavi will come to announce Moshiach's arrival, it will be in their merit; they will be the perfect tzaddikim, they did nothing wrong. They will be finer Jews than we. Those who protected this child from intermarrying will be credited for that. Reprinted With Permission From Table Talk.

Tehillim – Life Lessons

The connection of Mizmor 9 with Amalek. The Chida tells us how to be victorious over Amalek. Join over 1600 participants and learn the meaning, depth, historical context and practical lessons of each Perek. Please contact RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org to join.

Kli Yakar Chabura

The Kli Yakar Chabura will meet Friday night at 9:15 PM in Rabbi Greenspan's home, 113 Grassmere Road, Bala Cynwyd.

Dirshu Mishna Berura Shiur

We just started siman ח, Hilchos Tzitzis. Always a great time to join!

1st Seder

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NOW IN OUR 10TH YEAR!

To sponsor the 1st Seder Weekly, please contact office@firstseder.org.

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

Good Shabbos!