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 – CONFRONTING "OLD AGE"

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

As we study the Megilla, we note how all the major halachic decisions governing Klal Yisrael were made by Mordechai. He told the Jews not to go to Achashverosh's party. He *paskened* not to bow down to Haman despite the enormous ramifications. He ruled that they could fast on Pesach. He told Esther that she was obligated to approach Achashverosh, despite the serious aveirah that she would encounter.

Rav Gershon Ribner wonders why this authority was invested in Mordechai. Although Mordechai was a great Talmid Chacham and a member of the Sanhedrin, he was not the Gadol Hador. The Gadol Hador was Baruch ben Neriah. He was not only the foremost Talmid of Yirmiyahu, he was also a great prophet in his own right. Furthermore, the Gemara (Megilla 16b) states that Ezra did not leave Bavel to return to Eretz Yisrael as long as Baruch ben Neriah, his rebbi, was alive. It would appear that if a man of Ezra's stature felt so subservient to such a rebbi, this is sufficient proof that Baruch ben Neriah was indeed the Gadol Hador.

Rav Ribner rejects the suggestion that Mordechai was entitled to make all the decisions since he was in Shushan, the scene of the whole episode, while Baruch ben Neriah was in Bavel. Rav Ribner counters that since the decisions affected all of Klal Yisrael, Baruch ben Neriah should have been the man to turn to. Furthermore, Daniel, who was a great prophet, was in Shushan, why wasn't he consulted?

Rav Ribner suggests a very remarkable approach to understanding this whole phenomenon. After the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash, Bnai Yisrael entered a new era; an era of galus and a sense of abandonment. When Haman approached Achashverosh with his plan to annihilate all the Jews, the king demurred. He argued that the G-d of the Jews was too powerful: He had wreaked havoc on the mighty Paroh and the entire Egyptian nation and He wiped out the massive army of Sancheirev in one night. Haman responded that their G-d has become old and is unable to wage any battles. Haman pointed to Nevuchadnetzar's destruction of the Bais Hamikdash and the exile of the Jews as proof to this assertion. Rav Ribner explains that even Haman did not believe that Hashem was actually too old to intervene. Rather he meant that Hashem has decided to withdraw and not deter the enemies of His people, as if He were too old.

Rav Ribner suggests that even Yirmiyahu and Daniel felt this way. The Gemara in Yoma (69b) states that although Moshe described Hashem as *Gadol, Gibor veNorah* – Great, Mighty and Awesome, Yirmiyahu omitted *Norah.* How could one describe Hashem as Awesome while the gentiles were carrying on festivities in the Bais Hamikdash? Daniel omitted *Gibor* since Hashem did not exert His might to prevent the gentiles from persecuting His children.

Since Mordechai could not perceive Hashem via prophecy, he was open to learning how Hashem would conduct Himself in this new era of *hester panim* or "old age." When he heard of Haman's decree he did not seek a prophetic vision but ran to consult the Tinokos Shel Bais Rabban – the cheder children. *"Pesok li pesukeich* – recite for me the pasuk that you learned today." The response he heard was, "Until old age I am unchanged and until old age I will carry you. I have made you and I will bear you…and I will rescue you" (Yeshaya 46:4). Thus, Mordechai understood that despite the perception that Hashem was old and no longer displayed His overt Might and Awe, He was fully capable of saving His children - not with the awesome miracles performed in Mitzrayim nor the great might which vanquished Sancheirev's army, but with hidden miracles. Mordechai was just the man to teach us that our salvation is assured in this new age of Hashem's "old age" and that He is still *Gadol, Gibor veNorah.*

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.

BALLOON MARKETING

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha discusses an offering that one brings when repenting after stealing and swearing falsely about it. (Vayikra 5,21) This leads us to the following true story.

Yehuda lived in a large Jewish community. One day he went shopping in the commercial district of his city. He parked his car and went into one of the stores on the block.

After he finished shopping he walked out and saw that every car on the street had a brightly colored helium balloon tied to its mirror. Each balloon said, "Grand Opening Sale At Elchonon Electronics". It was clear that the owner of Elchonon Electronics made the presumption that it was fine to use everyone's mirrors as a platform for his advertising.

As Yehuda came to his car he tried to untie the balloon on his mirror. He felt a twinge of annoyance. "No one asked me if they could tie a balloon on my mirror, '' Yehuda thought to himself. "I wonder if this is stealing. Was he allowed to do that? On one hand, perhaps he is benefiting and is not really causing any damage. But on the other hand, he should have asked before he tied balloons to everyone's mirror."

After Yehuda untied the balloon, he stuffed the balloon in the back seat of his car, figuring that he would give it to one of his children. But then he realized that he had three girls. If only one got a balloon the rest would be jealous. Yehuda then went down the block to the next car with the balloon. "I'm sure it's fine for me to take a couple of extra balloons for my daughters from these other cars," he thought to himself. "It's not like the owners of the cars own the balloons. They didn't make a kinyan (acquisition) on the balloons yet."

But before Yehuda untied the second balloon, he felt a twinge of doubt. Was it ok for him to take the others' balloons? Perhaps they would be annoyed. Perhaps it was stealing from them. But on the other hand, it's not like the owners of the cars made an acquisition on the balloons. Maybe it was fine. So Yehuda went home with two questions: Was it permitted for the store owner to tie a balloon to every car? And was it permitted for Yehuda to take two extra balloons from the other cars on the block? What do you think? See Upiryo Matok Bereishis 145

Regarding last weeks' question about the check for the wedding gift, Rav Zilberstein answers as follows. We have a principle, of Hamotzie Mechaveiro Alav Haraya, which means that if one wants to extract from another, he must first bring proof. In this case, the arguments of the son that the check was a mistake, are not proof, but only an Umdena, (similar to circumstantial evidence). An Umdena does not have the power to extract something from the holder. Therefore the young couple can cash and keep the check.

SPECIAL, UNIQUE INSIGHTS FROM TORAH ON THE ROAD

The study of Torah encompassed the Gerer Rebbe, Rav Simcha Bunim Alter's, entire being. It was the nucleus around which all other facets of his life revolved. Like all talmidei chachamim, he would review orally and dwell on Torah thoughts at all times, even when he was walking or traveling. This was in fulfillment of the passuk, "... and you shall speak divrei Torah when you are sitting in your house and when you are going on your way...."

Rav Simcha Bunim, also known as the Lev Simcha, however, had a deeper understanding of that passuk. According to his interpretation, the actual places where the Torah is studied generates different insights, unique to the place and situation where it was studied. The Torah's intention, therefore, is not simply to command us to speak divrei Torah at all times, which may just happen to include our walking, going to sleep and rising in the morning.

Rather, the Torah is telling us that there is a special mitzvah to speak divrei Torah while walking, while going to sleep and while rising in the morning, because the insights attained at those junctures cannot be attained when one learns Torah in the beis hamedrash. Torah learned while sitting at home has its own unique insights, as does Torah learned while performing other mundane activities.

Therefore, in addition to learning "while sitting in one's house," the Lev Simcha made a point of learning "while going" as well. He gathered insights to his Torah learning which came from his home and Beis hamedrash as well as those that came from his daily walks and other travels.

From The Summit, By Simcha Leib Grossbard, Published By Yeshurun Publications, Reprinted With Permission From Table Talk.

Tehillim – Life Lessons

We will IYH begin Mizmor ט' -- למנצח על מות לבן. Who is לבן? 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 and a Freilichen Purim!