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 TAZRIA -- WHITEOUT

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

This week's Parsha discusses the *halachos* of *tzaraas*. The Ramban explains that *tzaraas* is not leprosy but rather a spiritual illness with physical manifestations. One type of *tzaraas* is identified by a white splotch on one's skin. A person who discovers such a blemish must go to a Kohein who will determine if it is halachically *tzaraas.* If it is indeed *tzaraas,* the Kohein will declare him *tamei* (impure). However, if subsequently the *tzaraas* spreads over his entire body, the Kohein will then declare him *tahor* (pure). "*Kulo hafach lavan tahor hu* – it has turned completely white, it is pure" (Vayikra 13:13).

This Halacha is quite enigmatic and many Meforshim attempt to explain its rationale. Rav Shlomo Wolbe suggests that we refer to the Gemara in Sanhedrin (97a) to better understand this Halacha: "Rav Yitzchok said, 'Mashiach ben Dovid will not come until the entire government turns to heresy.' Said Rava, 'Where is this found in the Torah? It has turned completely white, it is *tahor* '" (Vayikra 13:13). Why would Mashiach come when things get even worse?

Rav Wolbe cites a Rashi regarding the *meraglim* – the spies who returned with a negative report about Eretz Yisrael. The *meraglim* said, "We arrived at the land to which you sent us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey" (Bamidbar 13:27). Rashi explains that the *meraglim* prefaced their disparaging remarks with this compliment because any falsehood that is not accompanied by some truth cannot endure.

Rav Wolbe goes on to explain that evil, like falsehood, is devoid of any substance and value. An evil regime cannot succeed without professing some worthwhile ideals and morals. However, when a government or a society becomes so corrupt that anything goes, its basis for acceptance by discerning people loses all credibility. It will self-destruct. When this happens all evil disappears and that is why Mashiach will certainly come if the entire government turns to heresy. This then is the symbolism and mystical reason why *tzaraas* which covers the entire body is *tahor.* Even impurity cannot exist unless it has some attachment to purity. Complete impurity, like falsehood and heresy, does not have the capacity to endure.

A similar phenomenon occurs when an individual hits rock bottom spiritually. The Medrash Rabba on Parshas Toldos (Bereishis 27:27) relates an astounding incident. When the gentile aggressors wished to ascend the Temple Mount, they feared to enter the Bais Hamikdash. Therefore they sought out a Jew who would go into the Bais Hamikdash first. They turned to Yosef Meshisa and said, "You go in first and whatever you bring out you may keep." Yosef Meshisa entered the Bais Hamikdash and brought out the Golden Menorah. The gentiles told him, "It is not appropriate for an ordinary person to use [such a magnificent object]. Go back in and whatever you bring out you may keep." Yosef refused, "It is bad enough that I have angered my Creator once. Should I anger Him yet a second time?" When Yosef Meshisa realized that even the gentiles had no respect for him, he lost any rationalization for his own behavior.

Whether we consider a democratic government with absolutely no moral compass, a totalitarian regime which waves a totally baseless and false banner of legitimacy over a cruel warpath or an Israeli coalition of Islamists, atheists and religious-pluralists that show little concern for our Jewish legacy, we are tempted to say *kulo hafach lavon tahor hu.* Indeed, is Mashiach knocking on the door?

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.

USING HER EQUIPMENT

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha, Tazria, talks about the miraculous skin ailment tzaraas. Our Sages teach that in addition to the sin of Lashon Hara, negative speech, Tzaraas can also come because of Tzaras Ayin, stinginess and miserliness. This leads us to the following true story.

Penina was a successful portrait photographer. One day she was invited by Chaya, the owner of a popular playgroup and daycare center to take pictures of all of the children in the daycare. Penina came to the playgroup with all of her photography equipment, including lighting, softboxes, and a brand new heavy cloth backdrop. The backdrop was stunning. It was a scene of trees and grass next to a blue lake. The backdrop looked like it was 3d, so when a person took a picture in front of the backdrop it looked exactly like they were in front of a gorgeous lake.

Penina set up the photography equipment in a designated room that was out of the reach of the children. She took pictures of all of the children, and was ready to go. As she was finished, Chaya mentioned to Penina that 5 of the children were absent that day, and asked if it would be possible for Penina to come back the next morning. Penina looked at her schedule and realized that she was open the next day. "It's not a problem. I can come back tomorrow. Because it's the end of the day, would it be ok if we leave the photography equipment set up the way it is, and leave it for the shoot tomorrow?

"Of course", Chaya said. Penina left and prepared to come back the next day. After Penina left, Chaya admired the photography background scene. It was really pretty. She had an idea. She had a niece who just turned bas mitzva, she would love pictures near that backdrop. Chaya called her niece and she was thrilled. She quickly came over, and Chaya took a bunch of great pictures on her own camera in front of the professional backdrop. Chaya was happy and her niece was even happier.

The next day Penina came back to photograph the last few children. After she finished the job, Penina began to pack up the equipment. As she was packing up, Chaya nonchalantly said, "Penina, I want to thank you so much for leaving the backdrop here last night. My niece came over and I was able to take such beautiful pictures of her. Here, look at these pics".

But Penina reacted in a way that Chaya did not expect. "Hmm, you mean you used the backdrop while I was gone? In that case, we will have to add $250 to your invoice. You see, I rent out my equipment, and that is what it costs to rent out this backdrop. You might not realize it, but this backdrop is actually very expensive, and custom made"

"What do you mean you are going to charge me for using the backdrop, I didn't even touch it. How can you charge me?" Chaya replied. If you look at our website, that is what we charge for this equipment rental. If you used the equipment, I'm afraid I will have to add that to your bill. It doesn't matter if you touched it or not, you used my equipment. This equipment is always used without touching it.

Chaya felt that it was not fair to charge her if she didn't even touch the equipment and just took a picture of it behind her niece, but she agreed to pay if that is what the Halacha required. This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Does Chaya have to pay for taking a picture in front of the backdrop? See Upiryo matok, Bereishis 149

Regarding last week's question about the security camera, Rav Zilberstein writes that the neighbor would not be obligated to share the footage for free, and he has a right to ask his neighbor to share the costs of the system.

"THEY COULD NOT ALL SATISFY THEIR HUNGER WITH ONE LOAF OF BREAD"

During The First World War, thousands of Jews were uprooted from their homes. Whole families were forced to move into single rooms in others' homes or into public buildings. The conditions were extremely hard. Organizations were created to deal with the hardships and alleviate the suffering of the many distressed, often penniless refugees.

At that time, the rabbanim and community leaders held a meeting which Rav Chaim Soleveitchik also attended. The topic of discussion was how to better help the refugees who had poured into every neighborhood in the city. They were suffering greatly from lack of supplies, some even going for days without proper food.

One of the rabbanim took the floor and asked, "Why are we only talking about the physical needs of these people? What about the fact that many may be without talleisim and tefillin. We should raise money to provide them all with these as well". Those present nodded their heads, wondering why they had not thought of this as well.

However, Rav Chaim spoke up and dismissed these questions, insisting that they focus primarily on providing food. Rav Chaim said, "All of the refugees could fulfill their obligations sharing one pair of tefllin. But they certainly could not all satisfy their hunger with one loaf of bread".

From The Brisker Rav, By R' Shimon Yosef Meller, Published By Feldheim. Reprinted With Permission From Table Talk.)

Tehillim – Life Lessons

We will IYH begin Mizmor 10 "למה ה' תעמוד ברחוק". What is the historical time period in which Dovid Hamelech wrote this? What is the message that י מזמור is teaching us for our everyday life? And more…

Kli Yakar Chabura

The Kli Yakar Chabura will not meet this Shabbos.

Dirshu Mishna Berura Shiur

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Good Shabbos!