

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 BEHAR – HONESTLY

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Our parsha discusses a case where a Jew sold himself as a slave to a non-Jew. The Torah commands us to make every effort to redeem him, lest he be influenced by the non-Jew's behavior. Despite the urgency of the situation, the Torah cautions us to deal honestly with the non-Jew. Rashi explains that cheating the non-Jew would be a *chillul Hashem*. Although there might be some loopholes that one may be otherwise permitted to take advantage of, nevertheless it is forbidden because it would lead to *chillul Hashem*.

Often people rationalize that no one will ever find out about their misdealing with non-Jews. The Torah is telling us: Don't take a chance. How often do such stories come to light and irreparable damage is done. Perhaps this is what the Mishnah in Avos (4:4) had in mind when stating, "Both unintentional and intentional are alike regarding *chillul Hashem*." Avoiding *chillul Hashem* demands considerable forethought.

The Be'er Hagolah (Choshen Mishpat 248:4-5) cites the Rambam who states, "It is forbidden to mislead a non-Jew in monetary calculations... and this is included in [the pasuk] 'It is an abomination to Hashem your G-d all who do this, all who

act corruptly.'" The Be'er Hagolah then adds, "I write this for posterity, for I have seen many who became very wealthy from cheating non-Jews but ultimately failed and all their property was lost, and they left nothing for their children; and many made a *kiddush Hashem* and returned significant amounts of money to non-Jews and became wealthy and succeeded and left a legacy for their children."

I believe there is another aspect besides *chillul Hashem* to consider in regard to cheating non-Jews – even in cases where it might technically be permitted. It is the middah of dishonesty and lying. A bad middah is not the type of thing that one can turn on and off at will. It is a personality defect. That means that one who lies to non-Jews may end up lying to Jews. One who cheats non-Jews may very well end up cheating Jews.

This concept, that a negative action – even when permitted – can become a negative middah, can be found in the Torah regarding an *Ir Hanidachas* – a city in Eretz Yisrael whose inhabitants worshipped idolatry. Although murder is a horrendous aveira, nevertheless, we are commanded to kill the populace of an *Ir Hanidachas*. The Torah concludes this Mitzvah by

stating, "And He will give you mercy" (Devarim 13:18). The Ohr Hachaim explains that the act of killing all these people could create a very cruel nature in a person. Thus, lest such an attitude develop in the heart of those who performed this Mitzvah, Hashem promises that He will imbue them with the middah of mercy.

On the other hand, one who is an "ish emes" – a person of truth – finds it very difficult to lie. However, there are times when we are obligated to lie. Hillel taught that we must say that the bride is comely and gracious regardless of her appearance. However, this should be the exception. The Meforshim say that since Yaakov Avinu was completely *emes*, heeding his mother's directive to deceive his father was a big *nisayon* for him. It was totally out of character. He did it only because his mother insisted.

In conclusion, as the Be'er Hagolah asserted, dishonesty never pays off in the end. Additionally, it breeds a terrible middah in a person and often results in a *chillul Hashem*. The Torah adjures us (Shemos 23:7): "*Midvar sheker tirchak* – stay far away from a false word!"

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 BURN

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the mitzva of keeping Shabbos. This leads us to the following story.

The Frankel family, who had five children, lived in a large Jewish community with all of the expected Jewish social infrastructure. One Shabbos day, Mr. Frankel went off shul. At about 10 AM his 7-year-old Dovi accidentally knocked over the hot water urn. The hot water poured on poor Dov's leg and badly scalded him.

Mrs. Frankel immediately ran to care for Dovi. When she saw the burn she knew it was clearly extremely painful and it may have been a severe burn, but it did not look life-threatening. She reached for the phone to call Hatzolah, but then hesitated for a moment.

Was she allowed to call Hatzolah for an emergency that was very painful but was not life-threatening? Mrs. Frankel

assumed that she could but was not sure. She was about to call Hatzolah again when she envisioned more than a hundred Hatzolah members in the middle of davening, getting disturbed because of her call. If they send an ambulance maybe ten people would break Shabbos to help her poor Dovi who was in extreme pain. Maybe it would be better for her to send the rest of the kids to a neighbor and get into the car and drive Dovi to the emergency room herself. But then she thought of the 30 minutes it would take to drive to the ER. She imagined Dovi in pain all that time. In order to get treatment much quicker and for Dovi to be in less pain, perhaps it would be better to call Hatzolah who might be able to treat Dovi on the spot, or at least drive him to the ER quicker. Perhaps if he is driven in by an ambulance he would have a shorter time in the ER for treatment.

Mrs. Frankel just wasn't sure.

What do you think? In a case where a child is in pain, but likely not in danger of death, was she allowed to break Shabbos to drive to the ER? Even if she could, would it be better for her to drive herself which would minimize the breaking of Shabbos but would take more time, or to call Hatzolah which would disturb more than 100 people on Shabbos, but would take less time?

Regarding last week's question about the matchmaker, Rav Zilberstein wrote that because they never defined what was meant by "Yarei Shomayim" the default would fall to what the man said he meant when he wanted Yarei Shamayim. If to him Yarei Shamayim meant coming to shul on time, then the shadchan would not be able to collect the extra \$2000 from him in court.

IT WAS NOT PROPER TO MAKE THE ATTENDANT WALK ANY FURTHER THAN NECESSARY

Our Torah leaders often had sensitivity in areas that are often overlooked.

When Reb Mendel Kaplan drove into a full-service gas station he always insisted on stopping by the pump nearest to the gas attendant on call. Once he was pressed to explain why he didn't just stop by the first empty pump. Rav Mendel explained that it was not proper to make the attendant walk any further than necessary.

During one period, the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, walked home from yeshiva each day, a twenty-minute walk, accompanied by a talmid. The Rosh Yeshiva would study from a sefer and discuss the subject matter with

the talmid, who held on to the Rosh Yeshiva's hand and directed him along the way.

One day, the Rosh Yeshiva seemed quite strained by the walk and the talmid looked toward each passing car in the hope that someone would stop for them. The Rosh Yeshiva, however, seemed to be studying with added concentration whenever he heard a car approaching.

The talmid finally asked, "Would it not be better for the Rosh Yeshiva to look up when the car passes? Chances are that if a driver would see the Rosh Yeshiva looking at him, he would stop and offer to drive us the rest of the way."

The Rosh Yeshiva replied, "Rabbeinu Yonah states that 'a Jew must not

subjugate his fellow men. If his fear is upon them, or if they are ashamed to violate his word, then he should not command them to do anything that is not in accordance with their will and to their benefit' If a driver were to see me looking at him as he passes by, he might feel obligated to stop, even though he is in a hurry and really has no time to take me. Therefore, I am not looking up, so that only someone who really wants to stop will stop."

From Rav Mendel, By R' Yisroel Greenwald, and From The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, By R' Shimon Finkelman. Published By Artscroll Mesorah, Reprinted With Permission From Table Talk.

Tehillim – Life Lessons

We are learning Mizmor 11 "למנצח לדוד בה' חסיתי". What is the historical time period in which Dovid Hamelech wrote this? What is the message that מזמור יא is teaching us for our everyday life? And more...

Kli Yakar Chabura

The Kli Yakar Chabura will meet Shabbos afternoon at 5:15 PM in Rabbi Greenspan's home, 113 Grassmere Road, Bala Cynwyd.

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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!