

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 CHUKAS – A DOUBLE STANDARD

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

The Mitzvah of the Parah Adumah (the red heifer) is the most enigmatic of all the Mitzvos. The Torah tells us to slaughter a completely red cow, burn it and mix its ashes with pure spring water. This mixture is to be sprinkled on someone who came in contact with a dead person thereby purifying him from *tumas meis*, a severe state of impurity produced by contact with a dead person.

The enigma that Chazal point to is that although this wondrous solution can remove *tumah* (impurity) from one who had come in contact with a dead body, however it causes all those involved in its preparation to become *tamai*. So what is it – a purifier or a contaminant? It appears to be the ultimate contradiction. It is the quintessential *chok* – esoteric Mitzvah.

Rav Moshe Feinstein asks, “Why does the Torah refer to the Parah Adumah as “*chukas Hatorah*” – the *chok* of the Torah – and not the *chok* of the Parah Adumah?” He answers that this contradiction is emblematic of an apparent contradiction in the way which we are to employ our *middos*. We are instructed to be abundantly humble and not to pursue honor. On the other hand, we must be careful not to impinge in any way on

another person’s honor and to actually lavish praise on him.

The Mishnah in Avos (5,10) states that a pious person says, “What is mine is yours and what is yours is yours.” This too is a contradiction in terms. If you are entitled to keep what is yours, shouldn’t I be entitled to keep what is mine? You can take my possessions but I can’t take yours? We are expected to be very forgiving and free with our own money, but we must be careful not to avail ourselves of even a small amount of someone else’s property.

We are expected to have *bitachon* that Hashem will provide for us and therefore we need not resort to extreme measures to secure our welfare, but we cannot invoke the middah of *bitachon* when it comes to someone else’s problems. We are adjured to go out of our way and make every effort to help someone in need.

Thus the *chok* of Parah Adumah does not just apply to the laws of *tumah* and *tahara*. It is *chukas Hatorah* – a type of *chok* which applies to the entire Torah. What may make me *tamei* may make you *tahor*. What is right for me may not be right for you.

This idea can be applied even more broadly. If Reuven gives \$100 to Tzedaka he may be quite generous, while for

Shimon it might be outrageously stingy. If Chaim learns one hour a day he has fulfilled his obligation of Torah study while for Yankel it might be totally unacceptable. If Rivkah spends \$5000 on a summer vacation it might not be inappropriate but for Rachel it would be outrageous.

The Gemara (Bava Metzia 83a) relates that Rabba bar Bar Chana hired workers to transport barrels of wine for him. They broke some barrels and he sought to extract compensation from them. However the workers complained that they are poor, and they were famished since they had not eaten all day. Rav paskened that Rabba bar Bar Chana should pay them. When he inquired of Rav if this was indeed the halacha, Rav responded, “Yes, [as it is written] ‘And you shall keep the paths of the righteous’” (Mishlei 2,20). Obviously Rav felt that despite the fact that Rabba bar Bar Chana had a legitimate claim, he was expected to hold himself to a higher standard.

How often do parents hear their children lament, “But it’s not fair”? The answer could be, “It is fair, it is just not identical.” If they still don’t get it tell them, “It is the *chukas Hatorah*. It is the enigma of Torah and it is the enigma of life.”

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 NEIGHBORS

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha we learn about the danger of anger (anger is one letter short of danger). Moshe is punished because he became angry at the Jewish people. This leads us to the following true story.

The Kleins had ten children and lived in a four-bedroom apartment in Israel. They lived on top of an elderly couple, named the Weinbergs. The Klein children were lively and rowdy. Sometimes a bit too rowdy. Occasionally when the Klein children would move chairs or furniture at night past 11PM, they would hear banging from the Weinberg's downstairs, reminding them to quiet down. The Weinbergs tried their best to ask the Kleins to be careful not to make noise so late at night, but the children did not always comply. The relationship between the Weinbergs and Kleins was tense but cordial.

One night at about 11:30, one of the Klein children accidentally knocked over a small bookshelf. It fell to the floor of the apartment with a huge crash. Mrs. Weinberg, who lived right below it, was sleeping. The loud bang jolted her from her sleep. Mrs. Weinberg was elderly and she had a heart condition. After waking up, extremely startled from her sleep, she immediately started to feel chest pains. Mr. Weinberg called the ambulance and they were rushed to the hospital.

The doctors did all that they could but sadly Mrs. Weinberg suffered a major heart attack. She

passed away the next day. Mr. Weinberg and his family sat shiva. The Kleins of course came to visit them during shiva. But secretly Mr. Weinberg held the Kleins at least partially responsible for his wife's death. It was their carelessness and rowdiness that caused the heart attack, he believed. After the shiva, Mr. Weinberg moved out of his apartment and moved into an assisted living community. He put his apartment on the market for sale.

A man named Mr. Frankel was interested in purchasing the apartment and made an offer. Mr. Weinberg was pleased with the offer and they were close to closing the deal. But then the Klein family from upstairs got wind of the fact that Mr. Weinberg was looking to sell his apartment. They were ten children crammed into a relatively small apartment and if they could purchase the apartment right below it, they could attach the two apartments and it would be a huge relief for them.

Mr. Klein approached Mr. Weinberg and begged him to consider selling the apartment to them. Mr. Weinberg's face flushed with anger, with the following silent thoughts rushing through his head. "The reason why I'm moving is because you caused my wife to have a heart attack.

I hate your family. You caused my wife to die and now you want to inherit her apartment?"

Quickly calming himself down, Mr. Weinberg told himself that he should not act that way. Not selling them the apartment would be an act of nekama, an act of taking revenge. That was forbidden. In addition, Mr. Weinberg knew that there is a halacha of bar metzra, that one should give priority to selling land to the neighbors before selling it to another person. Would he have to sell it to them even though he resented them? Mr. Weinberg wondered to himself if he had to sell it to the Kleins, or if he refused, would that be considered taking revenge.

What do you think? See Upiryo Matok Bereiheis Page 268

Regarding the question about the vacation rental that did not have mezuzahs, this question was asked to Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l. Rav Cham answered that "perhaps" the guest had to pay for the rental even though he did not stay because of the missing mezuzah. However Rav Chaim qualified this by saying that it is a "Tzarich Iyun". This is because there is a side to say that a Jew does not stay in a home without a mezuzah, even when there is no technical obligation because it does provide protection..

THE GREATEST NACHAS I HAVE IS TO GREET A TALMID WITH HIS TALMIDIM

It might well be the final picture of the beloved Rosh Yeshiva. His talmid, Rabbi Boruch Brull of Baltimore, had come to Lakewood with a group of talmidim, having scheduled the visit with Reb Boruch's rebbi, but now, their host, Rav Schneur Kotler, appeared so ill, so weak and weary.

Nevertheless, Rav Schneur welcomed them as planned and somehow managed to spend 45 minutes with the group,

greeting each boy individually, asking their names.

The Rosh Yeshiva was in too much pain to stand up, or even shake their hands. At the end of the special audience Reb Boruch apologized to Rav Schneur for bothering him with the visit. "Had I known the pain that the Rosh Yeshiva was in, I would not have come".

Rav Schneur looked at him pointedly, "The greatest nachas I have is to greet a

talmid with HIS talmidim, and you would want to take that from me?"

Shortly thereafter Rav Schneur was taken to a hospital in Boston where he niftar. The talmidim he created and their talmidim and now their talmidim continue giving the Rosh Yeshiva nachas.

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Mishnayos Shiur

The daily Mishnayos shiur is currently learning Taharos. You can join us Monday through Thursday from 9:20 to 9:55 AM

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.

Dirshu Mishna Berura Shiur

Have you joined the Dirshu Mishna Berura shiur??? Start today!

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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.

מזל טוב!

Mazel tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Uri Greenspan and Mr. & Mrs Sholom Brickman on the marriage of their children Shana to Daniel Brickman!

Good Shabbos!