

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 MATTOS MASEI – THE LOVE HATE RELATIONSHIP

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Hashem commanded Moshe Rabbeinu, "Take vengeance for Bnai Yisrael against the Midianites; afterward you will be gathered unto your people" (Bamidbar 31:2). Rashi points out that the soldiers did not go willingly. This teaches us how dear the leaders of Klal Yisrael are to their flock. Before Bnai Yisrael were informed of the imminent death of Moshe, there were times that he was afraid that they might stone him. Yet when they heard that his death would come shortly after the Midianite war, they hesitated to participate lest their actions hasten the death of their dear leader.

How can we explain these mixed emotions; did they hate Moshe or did they love him? The Steipler Gaon explains this phenomenon based on the *mashal* of Rav Yisrael Salanter. A father has a son who has disappointed him greatly and their relationship has become cold. At the same time, he has a student who is his pride and joy – he is both scholarly and pious. He shows far more love and appreciation on his student than he does on his son. Yet, when a sudden danger presents itself, threatening both his son and student, he runs first to save his son. While his love for his son is usually muted and totally undetectable, subconsciously there is a

latent and more powerful love for his dear son. Here too when Bnai Yisrael were frustrated, they expressed their resentment towards Moshe, however in a deeper and more profound sense, they were aware of his true greatness and his real concern for them. They did indeed realize that his demise would be a great loss to the entire nation.

While Rav Yisrael Salanter focuses on the contradiction between one's conscious and subconscious mind from a human perspective, Rav Moshe Rabinowitz suggests that this dichotomy between perceptible love and latent love can also help us understand Hashem's relationship with us.

In the Shema which we recite daily, we are commanded to love Hashem with all our hearts and souls. From where can this love emanate? What can be the motivation for this love? Rabbi Akiva Eiger suggests that the answer can be found in the conclusion of the *beracha* just before the Shema: "Who loves His people Israel." If He loves us, then surely we could and should love Him. But does He really love each and every one of us? The *pasuk* in Mishlei (6:16) states, "Hashem hates these six and the seventh is the abomination of His soul: a haughty

eye, a false tongue..." The Gemara in Pesachim (113b) lists another three whom Hashem hates.

The answer can be found in the Gemara in Kiddushin (36a) which cites the following dispute: Rabbi Yehuda states, "When you behave like sons (of Hashem) you are called sons, but when you do not behave like sons you are not considered sons." Rabbi Meir asserts, "Either way you are considered sons." The Gemara goes on to explain that according to Rabbi Meir they may be "foolish sons", "heretical sons" or even "idolatrous sons", nonetheless, there are still referred to as true sons of Hashem. The Rashba (Vol. 1, Responsa 242) states that we *pasken* like Rabbi Meir.

It may be true that superficially Hashem hates certain people because of their atrocious or rebellious behavior and that may even reflect itself in the way He acts toward them. However, when push comes to shove, they are all still His sons. That means that Hashem does indeed retain an unconditional love for them. He cares about them and their holy *neshamos*. Therefore He longs for them to do Teshuva and is prepared to welcome them with open arms.

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.

REMOVING HER NAME

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about Nedarim, making vows. Making a pledge to give tzedakah to a shul is a form of a vow. This leads us to the following true story.

Akiva Berger, a successful businessman, was married to Shira. They had several children. One day he decided to donate the paroches, the special curtain in front of the Torah in a new shul. The paroches was beautiful. The front of the paroches was embroidered, in Hebrew, "Donated by Akiva and Shira Berger, as a merit for the refuah shelaima (complete recovery) for all the sick among the Jewish people". The paroches looked beautiful, and both Akiva and Shira were very proud of it.

A few years passed and sadly Akiva and his wife needed to get divorced. After a while, both Akiva and Shira remarried.

One day Akiva was in shul and realized that the paroches said that it was donated by him and his ex-wife. He was no longer married to Shira, and it was embarrassing to him to have his ex-wife's name next to his.

He asked the gabbai if they might be able to remove his ex-wife's name from the paroches. "How can you do that?" the gabbai pushed back. "When you added her name, you gave her that zechus. How can you take that away from her?" But Akiva argued that he paid for the paroches, and he didn't want his ex-wife's name on it anymore. "I only added her name to it because I was married to her. I am no longer married to her, so I do not want it to be on anymore".

The gabbai was unsure what to do and brought this question to Rav Elyashiv. What do you think? Can Akiva say that he only added her name to it, assuming he was married to her? Or do we say that once he gave her the zechus, he can't take it back, just like one can't take back a present that he gives? See Uprियो Matok Bereishis Page 298

Regarding last week's question about the books, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered that the Jewish publisher should pay once again for the expedited air shipping. Regarding the issue of what the seforim store owner should do with the books, Rav Berkowitz said that they should be discarded and not sold to another bookstore.

INCREDIBLE EMPATHY

A talmid (student) of Rabbi Dovid Trenk was trying to get a child into school, but it was proving difficult. After several tries, he learned why the administration was hesitant to accept the young boy. They had learned that the father sometimes wore blue jeans, a look they associated with a different approach than the one they were trying to imbue in their talmidim. They were kind, but firm, and suggested that he "apply to a school more in line with his lifestyle." The father felt badly, and he shared his anguish with his rebbi, Rabbi Trenk.

A few minutes later, Rabbi Trenk stood at this talmid's door, carrying an envelope. Inside was a picture, an old black and white shot of a teenage boy with a big smile. It took

the host a moment to realize what he was looking at – "It's Dave Trenk, age seventeen," said Rabbi Trenk proudly, "in jeans, he's wearing jeans, do you see?" And then Rabbi Trenk turned and he was gone, because while he couldn't get the boy into the school they had wanted, he could put things in perspective and give them a reason to smile and feel good about themselves.

A young Lakewood father passed away suddenly, and the levayah (funeral) was painful and heart-wrenching. Speaker after speaker addressed the son of the niftar, who was a struggling teenager, telling him how he would have to rise up to the occasion and continue in his father's way.

Without being asked, Rabbi Trenk jumped up after one of the maspidim and gave a derashoh of his own. "The niftar had a zechus, what a special young man he left over; what a great boy, I know how he learns, how he davens. His father was so proud of him and he is so proud of him and he will be so proud of him."

Rabbi Trenk hugged the new orphan and sat down, his message complete.

(From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah, Reprinted with Permission of Table Talk).

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.

Good Shabbos!