

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 KI SAVO – AVODAH ZARA REVISITED

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Throughout Sefer Devarim, Moshe Rabbeinu warns Bnai Yisrael not to stray after *avodah zara*. And he had good reason to be concerned as throughout their history until the destruction of the first Bais Hamikdash, Bnai Yisrael were deeply immersed in idol worship. Even after the dramatic stand of Eliyahu Hanavi against the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, they went back to idol worship. Their kings and “prophets” not only worshipped the idols, they also encouraged all the people to follow suit. From Yerovam of the Northern Kingdom to Menashe of the Judean Kingdom, with few exceptions, all the Jewish Kings were passionately pursuing *avodah zara*.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 64a) explains that there was a special *yetzer hara* to worship idolatry and that the Sanhedrin prayed to Hashem to eliminate it. Thus today we have no inkling of such a desire. However the Chazon Ish points out that their pursuit of idolatry derived from a deep belief in the spiritual and mystical. This occurred when one did not completely believe in Hashem’s absolute control over every aspect of

Creation. He then looked to other spiritual beliefs to understand events and resolve his problems. This was much more than an ideology, it was a deep passion embedded in their psyche. Therefore they were very hard pressed to give it up. Even when the righteous King Yoshiyahu banned all *avodah zara* and sent inspectors to every home, the people hid their idols rather than relinquish them (Eicha Rabba 1:18). Many years later, the wicked king Menashe came to Rav Ashi in a dream and told him that had he been alive in that era, he would have raised his coattails in order to run to worship idols (Sanhedrin 102b).

The Chazon Ish asserts that to a great extent we have replaced idolatry with science and intellectualism. We seek the reasons for events and various phenomena and the resolution of the problems that they cause in the sciences, whether they be biology, meteorology, astronomy, et al. To some extent we have replaced the spiritual *avodah zara* with a physical one because we too have difficulty believing in things that we cannot see

even with the aid of a microscope or telescope.

One who truly believes that Hashem’s will is the ultimate cause of everything, believes that Hashem causes it to rain, or *ploni* to become ill or the volcano to erupt. Although Hashem generally follows “the laws of nature,” in reality nature is no more than a set of axiomatic laws that Hashem created and controls. Therefore, even though we eat to sustain our health, we first make a *bracha* to acknowledge that He provided the food. And after we attend to our hygienic needs, we say *asher yatzar* to thank Hashem for the phenomenal workings of our bodies. And when we take medicine we say, “*Yehi ratzon...* May it be Your will that this action will help to heal me.”

We certainly acknowledge the great advancements of modern science and medicine, but when we leave Hashem out of the picture we demonstrate a lack of Emunah that He is the “*ilas ha’ilos vesibas hasibos* – the cause of all causes.” As we go about our daily pursuits in our very physical world, let us not forget to put Hashem first.

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 BROKEN CAMERA

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha has an allusion to the prohibition of theft. The Torah writes in regard to the declaration made during the birur of maser (Devarim 16, 14) that "I didn't eat from it, B'oni". The Rashbam says that this means "I didn't eat from something stolen". This leads us to the following true story.

Donny was in a dormitory and was preparing to put together a funny outfit for Purim. He put on a tight bathing cap, wore old-fashioned glasses, and wore bathing shorts and flippers. He looked extremely funny, and everyone who saw Donny in the dormitory looked at him and burst out laughing.

Aron was Donny's roommate, and he thought the outfit was hysterical. Aron took out his expensive DSLR camera to take a picture of Donny. "All of our friends need to see this picture, Donny!" Aron said. "You look hysterical, and everyone will love it."

But Donny did not agree. "Please don't take a picture of me like this. I'm not yet completely comfortable looking like this, and I might change my costume."

No, you can't change it, Aron insisted. And really, please let me take a picture. The whole class will really get a kick out of it. Aron picked up the camera to snap the shot. But Donny ran

over to Aron and covered the lens with his hands, preventing Aron from taking the picture. "Please, don't take a picture. You do not have my permission to photograph me like this. I refuse."

But Aron said, "Stop being such a killjoy. It's not a big deal. Everyone will love it". Aron moved to the side to take the shot, but Donny once again covered the lens. Aron moved to another part of the room, and Donny covered the lens for a third time.

However, this time he covered the lens with a little more force than before. When Donny hit the camera, it slipped out of Aron's hand and smashed onto the hard tile floor. The glass of the lens broke, and several broken pieces from the camera shot out across the room and went under the beds.

Aron, the owner of the camera, was furious. "That camera cost more than \$500. You broke it, Donny."

But Donny quietly said, "I knocked it by accident. It was your fault for trying to photograph me when I asked you not to."

Aron retorted, "You may have done it by accident, but you still have to pay me for it. A person is responsible for repaying damages even if the damage was done accidentally".

But Donny replied, "That might be true in general, but not in this case when you did an aveirah when taking the picture of me when I didn't allow you to. I was allowed to stop you, and the broken camera was your fault."

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Does Donny have to pay Aron for the broken camera? Or was this all Aron's fault for taking the picture when Donny repeatedly asked him not to? See Upryo Matok Bereishis 365

Regarding last week's question about poaching away the cleaning lady of another person, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz told us that this is discussed in the Nesivos Hamishpat Choshen Mishpat 237. The Nesivos implies that taking away another person's employee is a form of ani hamehapech becharara, of taking away something that another person intends to use. That is forbidden. The Shulchan Aruch cites an exception, and that is you can hire away the melamed of another person. But only before they made a kinyan, committing to the arrangement. After a kinyan is made on the deal, then you cannot even hire away a melamed of another person.

SUCH NEPOTISM MAKES ME TIRED

Rabbi Paysach Diskind

The following story was written up by Mark Twain in his essay on the Jews that was printed in Harper's Magazine in March 1898. It is a magnificent illustration of Rav Hirsch's reading of 26:17-18.

The German dictionary seems to make no distinction between a stranger and a foreigner; in its view a stranger is a foreigner - a sound position, I think. You will always be, by ways and habits and predilections, substantially strangers - foreigners - wherever you are, and that will probably keep the race prejudice against you alive.

But you were the favorites of Heaven originally, and your manifold and unfair prosperities convince me that you have crowded back into that snug place again.

Here is an incident that is significant. Last week in Vienna a hailstorm struck the prodigious Central Cemetery and made wasteful destruction there.

In the Christian part of it, according to the official figures, 621 window-panes were broken; more than 900 singing-birds were killed; five great trees and many small ones were torn to shreds and the shreds scattered far and wide by the wind; the ornamental plants and other decorations of the

graves were ruined, and more than a hundred tomb-lanterns shattered; and it took the cemetery's whole force of 300 laborers more than three days to clear away the storm's wreckage.

In the report occurs this remark - and in its italics you can hear it grit its Christian teeth ". . . *lediglich die israelitische Abtheilung des Friedhofes vom Hagelwetter ganzlich verschont worden war.*" "Not a hailstone hit the Jewish reservation! Such nepotism makes me tired."


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MAZEL TOV

to the 1st Seder Bais Medrash on beginning its 11th year!
Join Daf Hashavua at the First Seder Bais Medrosh for Meseches Kesubos starting on September 18!

For more information or to register for First Seder, contact RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org or 732-407-3178.

First Seder Weekly Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	Morning Track 1: Shiurim				
9:20 AM – 9:55 AM	Mishnayos Tohoros <i>(R' Chesky Weiss)</i>	Mishnayos Tohoros <i>(R' Chesky Weiss)</i>	Mishnayos Tohoros <i>(R' Chesky Weiss)</i>	Mishnayos Tohoros <i>(R' Chesky Weiss)</i>	Parsha HaShevua <i>(R' Yehoshua Levy)</i>
10:00 AM – 10:40 AM	Gemara Gittin <i>(R' Daniel Baltuch)</i>	Gemara Gittin <i>(R' Daniel Baltuch)</i>	Gemara Gittin <i>(R' Daniel Baltuch)</i>	Gemara Gittin <i>(R' Daniel Baltuch)</i>	Gemara Gittin <i>(R' Daniel Baltuch)</i>
10:45 AM – 11:25 AM	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>
11:30 AM – 12:10 PM	Practical Timely Halacha <i>(R' Mordechai Shain)</i>	The Life and Torah of our Leaders <i>(R' David Gross)</i>	Biur Tefilla <i>(R' Yoel Zeffren)</i>	Sefer Tehillim <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>
12:15 PM – 1:00 PM	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha <i>(R' Uri Greenspan)</i>	

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To sponsor the 1st Seder Weekly, please contact office@firstseder.org.

Gut Shabbos!