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 SHEMOS – RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Hashem appeared to Moshe at the burning bush and said, "I am the G-d of your father, the G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitzchok and the G-d of Yaakov" (Shemos 3:6). However, Moshe hid his face for he was afraid to gaze toward G-d. The Gemara (Brachos 7a) relates that Moshe was rewarded for his fear of gazing toward Hashem, but he was also punished for it.

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains what appear to be two contradictory consequences of the same action. Due to Moshe's great humility, he felt that he was not ready to perceive Hashem with such clarity. Humility is a very extraordinary trait and Hashem demonstrated his approval by rewarding him. However, Moshe erred because such opportunities to rise to spiritual greatness should not be forsaken. Humility should never prevent someone from growing spiritually and achieving what he is truly capable of. Therefore, he was punished for failing to avail himself of this momentous opportunity to connect with Hashem.

Rav Moshe cites the Gemara (Sotah 22a) that a Talmid Chacham who is qualified to make halachic decisions and refrains from doing so is held accountable for shirking his responsibility to the *tzibbur.* Furthermore, even if there are those who disagree with him, once he has given due consideration to their objections and is still convinced that he is right, he is not permitted to back down. (See Sanhedrin 7b.)

Due to his humility, Moshe resisted Hashem's exhortation to confront Paroh and redeem Bnai Yisrael from bondage. He questioned his adequacy to fulfill this mission. "Who am I that I should go to Paroh and that I should take Bnai Yisrael out of Mitzrayim?... I am not a man of words…for I speak with difficulty" (Shemos 3:11,4:10). However, Moshe would ultimately recognize that there is no contradiction between humility and greatness. Indeed, he was the greatest prophet, the greatest leader of Bnai Yisrael and the most humble person who ever lived.

We find a similar phenomenon with Rebbi Akiva. While Rachel the daughter of Kalba Savua saw his remarkable potential, Rebbi Akiva himself was not convinced. Only after he had seen a droplet of water penetrating deep into a rock, did he conclude, "If water can penetrate a rock, then certainly Torah can penetrate my heart" (Avos D'Rebbi Nosson 6:2). Eventually, Rebbi Akiva became one of the greatest Tanna'im and also demonstrated great humility when he told his 24,000 students, "My Torah and your Torah belong to her (his wife Rachel)."

Very often, humility – real or feigned – prevents people from utilizing their talents and skills to achieve their true potential. However, Rav Avraham Pam maintains that in many cases the real obstacle is fear of failure. One may have talents to be successful in the field of kiruv, but is afraid to try. Another may have skills of elocution but is afraid to stand up before an audience to deliver inspiring speeches. And there are those who could be very successful teachers who never enter a classroom.

Each of us has our own unique talents, skills and personality which were provided to us by the Ribbono Shel Olam. We are expected to develop them to their fullest potential and utilize them in the service of Hashem.

You can bring a zechus refua shelaima for Sandy Bruck - Shalom ben Tila Leah – and for all who need a refua sheleima 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.

RESPECT TO THE KING

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, Moshe is sent to speak to Paroh and ask him to free the Jewish people. Our Sages teach (see Rashi Shemos 6,13) that Moshe was commanded to speak to Paroh in a respectful way. Moshe was commanded to show respect to the Malchus, to the Kingship, even though Paroh was a very wicked person. This leads us to the following true story.

Yair was a businessman. He lived in Eretz Yisrael, but traveled often to Jordan for business. Jordan is one of the few Arab countries that has a peace accord with Israel. One day Yair was in Jordan and bought something in an open market. The vendor handed Yair the change. The change included a bill worth 50 Jordanian Dinar. All of a sudden, therewas a strong gust of wind, and the bill flew out of Yair's hand. The 50 Dinar bill was being blown down the street. Yair raced after it, as he didn't want to waste his money. Finally, to prevent the bill from blowing any further, he stuck his foot out and put his foot on the 50 Dinar bill.

After stopping it with his foot, he bent down and picked up the bill, and put it in his pocket. Yair turned around to go back to his hotel, but he was stopped by a frowning Jordanian police officer. "What is the problem," Yair asked the officer. The police officer said. "You just broke the law." Yair was surprised. "What do you mean, sir?"

The officer said, "You broke the law. You showed disrespect to our king, King Hussein. King Hussein's face is on the 50 Dinar bill and it is a crime in Jordan to show disrespect to our king by stepping on a bill that has the king's face on it. Because this is your first time, we will let off with just a fine. You now must pay a 1000 Dinar fine. If you are ever caught stepping on a bill again, you will be jailed. Without any other recourse, Yair paid the fine. He never made that mistake again. He was not going to step on a Jordanian bill again and show disrespect.

A while after that happened, Yair was back in Eretz Yisrael. He was holding a sefer, and in the sefer he had a photocopy of a page of Gemara. All of a sudden, there was a strong burst of wind and the page of Gemara flew out of his sefer and began to tumble down the street. Yair had a strong flashback to his incident in Jordan. He ran after the page, and his impulse was to step on the page of Gemara to prevent it from tumbling down the street further. He felt that if he didn't step on it, it might fall into a curb gutter and get lost forever. As Yair was about to step on the Gemara page, he had the following thought.

He knew that he would not step on a bill in Jordan, because it would disrespect the Jordanian king. Why should he treat Hashem any differently? Perhaps he should not step on the Gemara to show respect to Hashem. If he would not step on a Jordanian bill, but he would step on the Gemara maybe he would be showing Hashem less respect than the king of Jordan.

We are not sure what Yair did in practice at the moment, but he brought this question to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? If Yair would not step on a Jordanian bill, would he be allowed to step on a page of Gemara if that would be showing Hashem less respect than he would show for a human king? See Upiryo Matok Shemos page 87

Regarding last week's question about the cat and the bird, Rav Zilberstein answered as follows. Since the domestic cat does not need to kill the bird to survive and can find food elsewhere, either from people, or garbage, etc, one should chase away the cat to show rachmanus on the bird. Rav Shimon Sofer even wrote that such a cat has a category of a "Rodef." However, if the prey was a pest, like a mouse, which can cause harm to people, then the cat should be allowed to kill it.

"AS LONG AS THERE IS EVEN ONE JEW IN THE WORLD WHO DOESN'T HAVE FOOD TO EAT, I CAN'T LIVE THAT WAY"

Abraham Axelrod, the late deputy-mayor of Jerusalem, once related the following anecdote:

I once chanced to be standing near Rav Aryeh Levine during a funeral at the Sanhedria cemetery. After the grave was filled, he said to me with a smile "Many times people have tried to persuade me to move to larger, more comfortable living quarters; and I have refused. "Come and see", he continued, as he motioned to the grave. After his long life on earth is over, a man is brought from his home, to here. For me, the move, the transition will not be hard, because between my room and here the contrast is not so very sharp. But when a man has grown accustomed to living comfortably in a splendid home, how hard it will be for him at the end of his days to move his 'residence' to this small bit of space . . ."

The furnishings in Rav Aharon Kotler's apartment were the epitome of simplicity and austerity. The rabbi was the leader of the generation, the greatest Jewish leader of his time. The entire Jewish world in America and Israel was led by him. Yet his apartment was furnished with old chairs that didn't match. There was an old worn-out couch in another room. Rabbi Chaim Epstein said, "It is a pity we can no longer see his apartment; it would have been a lesson for generations." So why didn't Rav Aharon buy new furniture? Rav Aharon said, "as long as there is even one Jew in the world who doesn't have food to eat, I can't live that way."

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1st Seder

A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

Maharal Tiferes Yisroel Perek For men
Motzei Shabbos
8:45 PM
At the Fox Residence
329 Linden Lane
Shiur given by
R' Uri Greenspan

***Daf HaShavua* is learning Kesubos Daf 18**

First Seder Weekly Schedule

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

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

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

Gut Shabbos!