

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 CHAYA SARAH – JUST THINK ABOUT IT

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“One who pursues tzedaka and chesed will find life, righteousness and honor” (Mishlei 21:21). The Medrash Rabba (Bereishis 58:9) applies this pasuk to Avraham Avinu who performed chesed by burying his wife Sarah. Rav Sholom Schwadron asks why the Medrash chose this particular deed to demonstrate the chesed of Avraham. Wouldn't any husband have done the same for his wife? Moreover, the Gemara (Kesuvos 46) states that a husband is obligated to provide a burial service for his deceased wife. Does this deed truly demonstrate Avraham's chesed? Rav Sholom explains that there is a profound message in this Medrash. Actions that we take for granted can constitute the greatest chesed when they are performed with the specific intention of fulfilling the Mitzvah of gemilus chasadim. Avraham, who lived and breathed chesed, performed every act of kindness – even those that we take for granted – for the sake of the Mitzvah of chesed.

Rav Sholom cites a remarkable story regarding the Chofetz Chaim. The druggist in Radin was a secular Jew who was totally irreligious. The Chofetz Chaim, with the intent of reaching out to him, entered his store while he was preparing his medications, and no customers were present. He approached the druggist with great warmth and began to utter his praises. “Your place in Olam Haba is very enviable. You perform so many Mitzvos of chesed and literally save hundreds of lives by providing

your medications to many sick people who might otherwise die.”

The druggist was quite taken aback by the great sage's words. “I don't understand; this is the way I make my living and I get paid very well for my services.”

The Chofetz Chaim replied, “You are entitled to make a living and deserve to be paid. But if you will also have in mind the great chesed that you are doing, you will be rewarded for saving the lives of so many of your customers.”

The druggist took his words to heart and began to attach thoughts of kindness to every prescription that he filled, and took even more interest in the welfare of his clients. Gradually he began to identify with his religious clientele, and this provided the momentum for him to move toward an observant lifestyle.

Rav Meir Tzvi Bergman adopts the same perspective of chesed as Rav Sholom and explains a different Medrash. The Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 58:7) cites a pasuk in Mishlei (28:22) “One who is overeager for wealth has an evil eye; he does not realize that he will end up lacking.” This applies to Ephron who took an exorbitant payment for the sale of Meoras Hamachpeila and “ended up lacking” as symbolized by the Torah deleting the letter vav

from his name. Rav Bergman asks, “What did Ephron actually end up losing?”

He explains that Ephron was entitled to receive payment for his field and even make a handsome profit. However, it was his over eagerness to gain great wealth which demonstrated that it was all about the money and showed that he had no interest in the chesed that he was performing. Thus he lost the great zechus of providing the eternal resting place for the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. People who continue to this day to visit and pray at this site would have been forever indebted to Ephron. The name Ephron without the vav has the gematria of 400. By deleting the vav the Torah implies that all Ephron was left with was the 400 Shekalim.

The message for us is very far-reaching. Every person who, in the course of earning a living, provides a service to people, is constantly doing acts of chesed; but only if he bears this in mind. Every parent, spouse and child perform numerous acts of chesed daily for their families. The breadwinner, the meal maker, the laundry folder, and the one who takes out the garbage are accumulating unfathomable shares in Olam Haba for gemilus chasadim – as long as they focus on the chesed they are doing. Just think about it!

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

HOLY WATER

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion discusses how Rivka gave water to Eliezer and his camels. This leads us to the following true story of powerful water.

Yoni, a rabbi from Eretz Yisrael, was hired by a congregation in Paris to be their rabbi. Yoni moved with his young family to this new congregation. It was a mixed congregation with varied levels of observance.

On the first week of his job, a couple came to Rabbi Yoni with a problem; they were experiencing marital disharmony, problems with shalom bayis, and were constantly getting into arguments. One would say something hurtful, the other would lash back, and it would create a cycle of disharmony. They came to Rabbi Yoni for advice on how they could restore their shalom bayis.

Rabbi Yoni recalled a teaching from the Talmud (Bava Basra 160b) which addresses how a Cohen gives a divorce. It was done with a Get Mekushar, a tied-up divorce document which has multiple folds and each fold was tied. The purpose of this was to create a pause between the desire to give the divorce and the actual delivery of it, and this would give the husband more time to reconsider. (This was only done for Kohanim who could not remarry their wives after they got divorced.)

Rabbi Yoni turned to the couple and said, "I want to give you some advice based on the secrets of the Torah. Take this bottle of water. It is holy water

that is blessed and has the power to restore shalom bayis. Whenever you get into an argument and want to say something harsh, that's fine. But first, pour from this bottle of water, fill a cup of water, boil the water, and then drink the boiled water. After you drink the boiled water, say what you wanted to say. Then, the other person, whenever you want to respond, that's fine – first fill up the water, boil the water, drink the entire cup, and then say what you wanted to say. Please try this for a month and then come back to me."

The couple came back in a month and said, "We'd like to buy another one of your holy water bottles. It actually worked, and our arguments have really decreased. Rabbi Yoni said that it was free of charge. He gave them another bottle of this holy water, and sure enough, after a few months, the couple's marriage was restored, and they had an incredible renewed relationship.

This couple shared their experience with other couples, and soon, other couples started coming to Yoni to buy his holy water. Yoni would say the same thing and give the water for free. Word quickly spread around the city that Yoni was a miracle worker, a Mekubal, a Kabbalist, who distributed this special holy water that could save marriages.

While Yoni saved many marriages, he became increasingly uncomfortable with this role. He knew it was a bit of a farce calling him a miracle worker;

he was simply creating space between stimulus and response, a pause between the desire to be angry and the response. He knew he wasn't warranted in being called a miracle worker. There is a Talmudic teaching (Yerushalmi, Shevi'is 10:3) that if one knows only one Masechta (Tractate) and he is being honored for knowing two tractates, it's important for him to disclose that he knows only one. The reason for this is because he is benefiting from the honor of the Torah when he does not deserve it.

So, Rabbi Yoni had the following question: Should he make an announcement that the water was not actually special and had no holy powers, and that it was simply a psychological tool to create a space between stimulus and response? Or should he not do that because if he did, it might disrupt the shalom bayis in the homes, as people might feel they were tricked? Also, he was not purposely trying to benefit from the honor of the Torah as being known as a miracle worker. He was torn about what to do. What do you think? See Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page 109

Regarding last week's question about the hotel, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Vayikra, page 117) wrote as follows: It was permitted for the gentleman to invite others into his room; however, he has a responsibility to pay for the additional fee for the extra people.

HERE ARE YOUR STUDENTS!

Rav Shlomo Rothenberg, the Rosh Yeshiva of Mountaindale, was once attending a wedding, and Rav Nosson Wachtfogel noticed him. Rav Nosson called him over and said, "I want to tell you something about your rebbi, Rabbi Yehuda Davis. Half of the Torah in America is because of Rabbi Davis!"

What did Rav Nosson mean? Rav Shlomo Rothenberg would explain. One summer, Rabbi Davis, who was from Baltimore, took a group of about ten boys to an old resort outside of Baltimore and learned Maseches Sukkah with them. When Sukkos was drawing near, they built a sukkah applying all they had learned during the summer.

Around that time, the Telshe Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Elya Meir Bloch, who had just escaped from war-ravaged Europe, came to the United States. Rav Elya Meir had a strong desire to reestablish Yeshivas Telshe on American shores. He was looking for serious bachurim with whom to start the yeshiva but found his search to be unsuccessful, because of the lack of bachurim who were willing to devote themselves to serious learning.

Rav Elya Meir expressed surprise upon seeing Rabbi Davis's American bachurim learning with great diligence. Rav Elya Meir's concerns reached the ears of Rabbi Davis. "Where will I find talmidim with which to establish Yeshivas Telshe?"

Rabbi Davis had the answer. "Here are your talmidim!" he announced to Rav Elya Meir, referring to the ten bachurim with whom he had learned in Baltimore over the summer. And with that, by Rabbi Davis giving away his students, the great Telshe yeshiva was founded in Cleveland, Ohio.

Subsequently, because of this episode, when Rav Elya Meir would meet Rabbi Davis, he'd stand up for him and proclaim, "Er is der meysesed fun Telshe! The true founder of Telshe yeshiva is Rav Yehuda Davis!"

From You Made My Life! By R' Nachman Rothenberg, Published By Israel Bookshop, and Reprinted With Permission from Table Talk.



Daf Hashavua
Mesechta Kesuvos Daf 62 (יב)

Dirshu Amud Yomi
Gemara Brachos
You can join the Amud Yomi Shiur at 11:15 a.m. and learn an Amud per day. This shiur has been added to the schedule as a zechus for Acheinu Bnai Yisroel! We are currently learning Brachos Daf 15B (יט).

Navi Shiur
Join us for an interactive Navi Shiur on Seder Yirmiyahu Monday and Wednesday 12:45-1:15 given by Rabbi Baruch Lichtenstein.

Mishnayos Shel Chesed

We are working on putting together a new Mishnayos group of all of Shas Mishnayos. This group will serve as a zechus for Acheinu Bnai Yisroel. Please join now and show your support! To sign up for a Mesechta, please contact
Rabbi Greenspan
rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org
or Rabbi Aryeh Silver
rabbisilver.firstseder@gmail.com

To register for these shiurim or any of the learning opportunities, please contact Rabbi Greenspan at rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org or 732-407-3178. To sponsor the 1st Seder Weekly, please contact office@firstseder.org.

First Seder Weekly Schedule					
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Morning Track 1: Shiurim					
6:20 AM –	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)
6:50 M, Th 6:55 Tu, W, F					
9:20 AM – 9:55 AM	Mishnayos Demai (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Demai (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Demai (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Demai (R' Chesky Weiss)	Parsha Hashvusha (R' Yehoshua Levy)
10:00 AM – 10:40 AM	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)
10:45 AM – 11:15 AM	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)
11:15 AM – 11:50 PM	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)
12:00 PM – 12:40 PM	Practical Timely Halacha (R' Mordechai Shain)	The Life and Torah of our Leaders (R' David Gross)	Bir Tefills (R' Yoel Zeffren)	Sefer Tehillim (R' Uri Greenspan)	Pele Yoetz followed by Shemias Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim Hashkafa - Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)
12:45 PM – 1:15 PM	Navi Shir Sefer Yirmiyahu (R' Baruch Lichtenstein)	Pele Yoetz followed by Shemias Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim Hashkafa - Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	Navi Shir Sefer Yirmiyahu (R' Baruch Lichtenstein)	Pele Yoetz followed by Shemias Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim Hashkafa - Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	

Good Shabbos!