

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 DEVARIM – WHERE ARE YOU?

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Three prophesized with the expression Eichah: Moshe, Yeshaya and Yirmiya. Moshe said, "Eichah – How can I alone carry your contentiousness, your burdens and your quarrels?" Yeshaya said, "Eichah – How is it that the faithful city (Yerushalayim) has become so unfaithful?" Yirmiya said, "Eichah – How is it that the large bustling city dwells in solitude?" (Eichah Rabba 1:1).

The question "Eichah?" conveys a sense of shock and anguish. Each of these prophets expressed their sense of disbelief and pain when confronted with the tragic state of Klal Yisrael. However, Rav Shimon Schwab discovers yet another connotation of Eichah. The Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 9:19) states that when Hashem confronted Adam Harishon after he had sinned, He said, "*Ayekah* – where are you? Yesterday you followed Me and today you followed the *Nachash* – the Serpent." This means that Hashem told Adam, "I don't recognize you; you have become a different person than the one I knew yesterday before you

sinned." The Medrash (ibid.) notes that *Ayekah* is spelled exactly like Eichah, and Hashem Himself exclaimed, "Eichah" regarding Adam. Similarly, Moshe told Bnai Yisrael that you are so different today from the Bnai Yisrael that stood at Har Sinai with complete unity and devotion. Yeshaya also cried out, "Where is that great city of virtue and faithfulness?" Yirmiya exclaimed, "Is this the [same] city that was called Perfect in Beauty, the joy of all the Earth?"

Both the literal meaning of Eichah – How can it be – and the drasha of *Ayekah* – Where are you – give expression to feelings of grief and disappointment. However, when we take *Ayekah* and we ask it to ourselves we can find yet another message. *Ayekah* – where are we? How far have we strayed? And more poignantly: Why are we still here?

We have explained previously that the process of Teshuva is not to attempt to retrace our steps in an effort to return to exactly where we were. Adam Harishon

could not go back to Gan Eden. And Bnai Yisrael never returned to the glory of the Bais Hamikdosh built by Shlomo Hamelech. The process of Teshuva requires one to forge a new path. So *Ayekah* does not provoke the question, "How do we get back to where we were?" Rather we must ask, "Where do we go from here?" As Chazal have taught, the only way to restore our true level of Kedusha and thereby bring the world to its spiritual destiny is through the advent of the Moshiach.

But how do we bring the Moshiach? Aside from introspection and genuine thoughts of Teshuva, we must earnestly beseech Hashem to send the Moshiach. This can be accomplished by discovering the numerous times that we mention various aspects of redemption in our daily davening and berachos. There are at least twenty-five if you daven three times a day. How many can you find? Okay, now let us all say as many of them as we can very fervently, and wait for our prayers to be fulfilled.

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 PAIR OF PAINTERS

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha the Torah mentions a place called "Di Zahav". (Devarim 1,1) Rashi quotes our Sages that this place was really a silent rebuke for allowing "too much gold" to cause the Jewish people to sin. This is a reference to the fact that the desire for money is a common source of temptation. This leads us to the following interesting true story.

Yitzchak needed his house painted. He opened the Jewish phone book and called a local Jewish painter named Aron and asked for an estimate. After Yitzchak described the house, Aron said it would cost about 1000 dollars. Yitzchak thanked him and told him he would think about it.

Yitzchak then called the next painter in the phone book, called Nachman. After describing his house, Nachman gave a price of 2000 dollars. "I don't understand", Yitzchak said. "I called another painter and he said it would be \$1000, why are you asking for double that price?"

Nachman calmly replied, "I know I am an expert in my field. In my opinion, \$2000 is a very fair price for the job you described to me. But if it is true that someone is offering to do it for \$1000 then I can offer you a discount and do it for \$1800, but I can't go any lower." Yitzchak thanked him and said he would consider it.

Yitzchak then called the first painter, Aron, and asked him to come over to do the paint job. Aron came by the next day with his truck. After looking at the size of the house and fully realizing what the job would entail, Aron said, "I'm sorry, after seeing the house, I can't do this for anything less than \$2500. This is really a big job". Yitzchak told Aron that he was unable to afford that price and they agreed to part ways.

Yitzchak then picked up the phone and called the second painter, Nachman, who had offered to do it for \$1800. But then he hesitated. Yitzchak realized that the only reason that Nachman agreed to give him a price of \$1800 was because he thought

someone else was willing to do it for \$1000. But it turned out that the \$1000 estimate was really fake. Aron was never willing to do the house for that much. Yitzchak wondered if he had to be fully transparent with Nachman and tell him that the other painter was in truth not willing to do it for \$1000. On one hand, the other painter did tell him that price. But on the other hand, if Nachman would be told that the other painter could not honor the \$1000 estimate, perhaps he would charge \$2000 and not \$1800. What do you think? Did Yitzchak have an obligation to tell Nachman the truth about the other painter? See Upiryu Matok Bamidbar Page 128

Regarding the question of the parrot that used profane language, Rav Zilberstein answered that if the store owner was selling the parrot to a religious family, he should have understood that having a parrot that used bad language is considered a major flaw. Therefore the store owner should give a refund and return the money. See Upiryu Matok Bamidbar Page 371.

YOU ARE A DIAMOND POLISHER

Rav Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz, who led Torah Vodaath and helped build torah in America, had hundreds of students. Even though the weekly salaries of educators were less than half of what one could hope to earn as a rabbi, only in a few special cases did Rav Shraga Feivel direct his students toward careers in the rabbinate. "As a rabbi," he told his older students, "you'll be dealing with the balebatim. How much can you do with baalebatim? But if you work with children, you'll have spiritual satisfaction — and you'll be building Klal Yisrael. If American rabbis had used the time spent preparing derashos to educate the children in their shuls, he noted bitterly, they might have accomplished much more.

A Torah educator once informed the Chazon Ish that circumstances had forced him to seek another means of livelihood. "Which field do you propose to enter?" asked the Chazon Ish. "Diamond polishing." But you are a diamond polisher!" the Chazon Ish exclaimed. "What could be more precious than a Jewish child!"

One year at the Torah Umesorah convention, there was a session on the topic, "How do you make your students feel loved?" When Rav Tendler returned from the convention, he said that he thought the time could have been better used for different topics. "Ta," Elisheva asked, "What is the way that you feel a teacher should make the students feel loved?" Rav Tendler, puzzled that she had

even asked the question, shrugged, and said, "Love them." It was that simple!

Rav Shlomo Freifeld valued mechanchim and made sure that they knew just how serious their job was. To a talmid who had just accepted his first position in chinuch, Reb Shlomo said this: "If you are not prepared to do whatever it takes for each individual bachur, to love every single talmid, don't become a rabbi. Become a shochet. It's better to slaughter chickens than bachurim!"

(From The Books, Reb Shraga Feivel, The Chazon Ish, I Am Your Servant, Published By Artscroll Mesorah, and Reb Shlomo Published By Judaica Press. Reprinted With permission From Table Talk.)

NEW- Listen to Rabbi Greenspan's weekly shiurim via podcast. Contact Rabbi Greenspan for details.

First Seder Bais Medrash's Mishnayos Shel Chesed Program

Thank you to all the learners who are currently learning for Sean Tyzler a"h,
Shmuel Zavel ben Yisrael a"h (Yona Zaslow's father), and
Moshe ben Yitzchok a"h (Berel Rapoport's father-in-law).

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Good Shabbos!