

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 – TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED

The Mitzvah of Bikkurim is the ultimate display of *hakaras hatov*. It entails the farmer selecting his very first fruit of the season from each of the seven species enumerated by the Torah. He arranges them nicely in a basket, brings them to Yerushalayim and presents them to a kohein in the Bais Hamikdash. He then recites the formula prescribed by the Torah expressing his gratitude to Hakadosh Baruch Hu for all that He has given him.

Rav Chaim ben Shlomo of Chernovitz (Be'er Mayim Chaim) explains by way of a *mashal* how this procedure and declaration bond one to Hashem and make him worthy of even more blessings from Him.

A father presents his son with a beautiful gift, perhaps a Toyota Camry. The wise son realizes that in reality his father owes him nothing and therefore perceives the uncalled-for present as a demonstration of the father's love for him. Overcome by this gesture, he gushes forth with praises for his father's graciousness and avers that he has no words to fully express his gratitude. The father is so impressed by his son's sincere appreciation for the gift that his feelings of love and admiration for his son continue to swell.

However, if the son is a fool, he might be disappointed. After all, he was really expecting a Lexus, loaded to the gills. He takes whatever

he gets for granted, as if it is coming to him. Instead of gratitude, he feels frustration. Instead of forcing out even a lame "thank you", he presents his father with a frown. This relationship is going nowhere but down. The wise son can anticipate more graciousness and generosity from his father, but the foolish son shouldn't expect more gifts any time in the near future.

The moral is clear. Hashem owes us nothing. Any kindness He accords us is truly a "freebie". Therefore, we constantly express our gratitude to Hashem, from the Modeh Ani in the morning to Modim in Shemoneh Esrei to Nodeh Lecha in Bentching.

The formula recited when presenting Bikkurim to the kohein begins with "*Arami oveid avi*" – the story of Yaakov's escape from Lavan, continues with the slavery in Mitzrayim and the Exodus, to the acquisition of Eretz Yisrael, up to the moment of the presentation of the Bikkurim. This conveys to us the full magnitude of our *hakaras hatov*: Since we realize that Hashem owes us nothing and all that we have is a result of His graciousness and love for us, nothing that He ever did for us is forgotten or taken for granted. We just cannot thank Him enough.

Thus, when a person picks the very first fruits of his new crop, wraps it up in the form of a beautiful present, embarks on the long trip to

Yerushalayim and presents it to the kohein in the Bais Hamikdash, he demonstrates how much he appreciates His graciousness and concern. This inevitably results in Hashem's love and admiration intensifying toward him and He will gladly shower even more blessings on him.

This concept is certainly a message that we can all "take home". The countless physical, material and spiritual gifts that Hashem constantly bestows upon us boggle the mind. The Chofetz Chaim, who davened a very long Shemoneh Esrei, was once asked what lofty ideas he contemplated that took him so long. He replied that he really did not have any deep thoughts. "However when I get to Modim and I consider all of the things for which I have to thank Hashem, I get carried away." We too, when reciting Modim, should try to conjure up at least some specific things that we must thank Hashem for.

This idea has particular significance for us as we approach the Yomim Nora'im when we beseech Hashem to inscribe and seal us for a good year. Have we behaved like the foolish son who feels entitled and takes all of Hashem's bounty for granted? Or have we demonstrated to Him how grateful we are for the all the kindness and love that He has showered upon us until now? Certainly this is one of the most powerful ways to ingratiate ourselves with Him and thereby elicit His great love and compassion.

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.

PRICE MATCHING

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha makes a reference to the prohibition of theft. The Torah says that in the declaration one makes over maaser, he says, "I did not eat 'beonei' from it". Devarim 26,14. The Rashbam says that Oni means that "I did not eat from anything stolen". This leads us to the following interesting story.

Avraham once went into a Jewish-owned appliance store. He saw a dishwasher that he liked and asked the owner for the price. "It's \$600", Elazar, the store owner answered. "\$600, that seems like a steep price to me", Avraham countered. Elazar replied, "The truth is this machine is the newest model and it is top of the line. \$600 is actually the cheapest you can find for this model. But I will make you a deal. If you can find this model at any other local store for a cheaper price, I will match that price and take off an additional \$100! Avraham was intrigued by the challenge and told Elazar that he had a deal.

About a week later, Avraham walked into a competing appliance store. Sure enough, he saw the exact same dishwasher. Looking at the price

tag, Avraham was pleased to see that the listed price was \$480. Avraham quickly took a picture of the price tag and went to Elazar's store. "Last week we made a deal and look what I found", Avraham said. "The same machine is going for \$480". Elazar looked at the picture and shrugged. "A deal is a deal", he said. "I will be totally honest that I'm surprised at the price, but I will honor my deal. You can take it for \$380, \$100 less than their price. Avraham was delighted that he was able to get such a steep discount of \$380, all the way from \$600. He saved \$220.

The machine was delivered to Avraham's home and everything seemed fine. A short while later, Avraham walked into the second appliance store. He saw his dishwasher there and was surprised to see a price tag of \$600, just like it was in Elazar's store. Avraham inquired about the price to the owner. "Wasn't the price \$480"? "Oh, last week we had a once-a-year anniversary sale. Everything in the store was 20% off for a week. But these are our normal prices.

Avraham now felt that he had a dilemma. The cheaper price of the dishwasher was not a regular price, but a special unique promotion. He wondered if he had the right to keep the \$220 that he saved, or was he obligated to return it to Elazar. On one hand, Elazar said that if he found a cheaper price, he would match it, and give an additional discount. But on the other hand, this wasn't the normal price of the machine, it was just a special promotion. What do you think, did Avraham have the right to keep the money that he saved? See Upiryo Matok Shemos Page 222

Regarding last week's question about the Lojack, Rav Zilberstein writes that if it would not be a question of life and death, then one is not allowed to save himself with the property of his friend, and he could not give over his friend's car to save his own. (If taking the thieves off the streets would be a matter of life and death then it would be permitted.) However, because he used his friend's Lojack to save his car, he should pay his friend for a third of the cost of the Lojack.

"ARE YOU ENJOYING THE LEARNING? NOW I WILL GIVE YOU A BERACHAH"

The famed philanthropists and baalei tzedakah, the Reichmann brothers, once scheduled an appointment with Rav Shach to ask for guidance regarding which tzedakos were to be given priority. Rav Shach considered this to be very important, as there were large sums of money involved.

There was a man who came at the same time as the Reichmann brothers, requesting that Rav Shach see him for a brief moment to give his son a berachah. Rav Shach allowed the man to enter his room for just a moment, but he remained with them for one and a half hours while the Reichmanns patiently waited outside. By the time the father and son left, Rav Shach apologized but was too tired to meet with the Reichmanns.

His children were surprised by Rav Shach's decision to keep the boy so long. "Couldn't the Rosh Yeshiva

have asked the father to wait for a half-hour, after the meeting with the Reichmanns?" they asked.

Rav Shach answered as follows. "The father only requested that I give the son a berachah to have a desire, which he currently did not have, to learn Torah. I learned with him for an hour and a half until I saw that he was enjoying it, and I saw the simchah in his eyes. "Are you enjoying the learning?" I asked him. "Yes," he responded. "Now I will give you a berachah!"

Rav Shach had devoted an hour and a half of his limited physical strength so that a young boy could find enjoyment in learning Torah. This is what was more important than meeting with the Reichmann brothers.

Rav Yosef Tendler added to this story: "It is seemingly difficult to comprehend why Rav Shach

made important people, who are baalei chesed and strengthen Torah, wait while he brought a young boy geshmak in learning. I thought that the explanation is as follows: The Shelah HaKadosh says that the obligation to be mikarev rechokim is derived by a kal vachomer from the prohibition of standing by while your friend's blood is spilled. If one must save someone's body, he certainly must save his soul. The body is only for Olam Haze, whereas the soul is eternal! Someone who does not enjoy learning will waste his life, as words of Torah are our lives. Rav Shach therefore felt that speaking with the boy took priority.

From [I Am Your Servant](#), By Rabbi Akiva Tendler, Published By Artscroll Mesorah page 284. Reprinted with permission from [Table Talk](#).)

This month's learning has been dedicated by the Matityahu family in memory of Mordecai ben Natan and Dorit Rivkah bas Menachem Mendel a"h.

Listen to Rabbi Greenspan's weekly shiurim via podcast!

All [Mesillas Yesharim](#) and [Halichos Olam Mishna Berura](#) shiurim are now being uploaded! For complete podcast information go to

<https://jewishpodcasts.fm/rabbiurigreenspan>

1st
Seder

A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

NOW IN OUR 10TH YEAR!

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

Good Shabbos!