

# 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 SHOFTIM – YOU BE THE JUDGE

*Rabbi Shlomo Caplan*

Life is made up of a succession of decisions. From the cradle to the grave. From daybreak until nightfall. From home to work. From store to store. What to eat, what to say, what to do, what to buy. Whom to trust, whom to believe, whom to vote for, whom to marry. When to get up, when to go to sleep, when to buy, when to sell. When to talk, when to listen.

Many decisions are made without any forethought. They may be the result of habit or subconscious calculations. They may arise from a desire for self-indulgence or self-aggrandizement. However, a decision that is premeditated is based on contemplation and evaluation. Chazal refer to the mental process which leads to our decisions as judgments. The Gemara in Berachos (60a) explains why Leah called her daughter Dina. "When Leah judged herself she said, 'Twelve tribes are destined to emanate from Yaakov. I have already borne six, two were borne by each of the handmaidens. That makes ten. If [the child that I am carrying] is a male, my sister Rachel will not even have as many children as each of the handmaidens.'" Leah prayed that the fetus

should miraculously become a female whom she named Dina, derived from the word *din*, alluding to her 'judgment.' Leah made a difficult decision. It was based on her remarkable judgment. All decisions arise from some form of judgment: a subconscious judgment, a snap judgment or thoughtful deliberation. The more aware we are that our decisions are the result of our judgment, the more control we will have over them and the better the outcome.

It is from this perspective that Rav Moshe Feinstein interprets the following pasuk: "Judges and officers shall you appoint for yourself in all your cities..." (Devarim 16:18) Although the obvious meaning of the verse is to appoint judges to govern all the cities, the term "**for yourself**" implies a different connotation. You must make yourself a judge and an officer over yourself. You must view all your decisions as judgments – judgments which must be in conformity with the Torah's laws and values. In this context, the Torah states: "Do not pervert justice" - to do what is obviously wrong. "Do not show preference" -

to consider yourself an exception to the law. "Do not take a bribe" - to be bribed by your desire for pleasure or honor. "Righteousness, righteousness shall you pursue."

The Mesillas Yesharim states that there are two steps necessary for one to oversee his conduct: "He must first determine what is the true good that one should choose and the real evil from which one should flee. Second, he should discern if his actions are good or evil... and he should not perform any action without weighing it on the scale of this determination."

Hashem has appointed us to be judges of ourselves. This does not refer to judging ourselves as a person. Leave that to the Ribono Shel Olam; only He can make such an evaluation. This refers to the decisions that we make regarding the way we behave. We must constantly judge all our actions and words. Not merely our conscious actions, but also our subconscious and habitual actions must also be brought under our scrutiny. If we will fulfill our responsibilities of judgeship, we can be much more confident about how Hashem will judge us.

**YOU CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD**

To find out how, please visit [firstseder.org](http://firstseder.org) or speak with Rabbi Greenspan

## FAKE SNAKE

*Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner*

This week's Torah portion opens with the importance of establishing courts to adjudicate disputes. This leads us to the following true story.

One day Ari went outside and saw a large venomous snake in the grass in his backyard. He was terrified of snakes and his wife and children were even more terrified. Ari quickly ran inside and opened the local Jewish phonebook and called the exterminator to come remove the snake.

The exterminator came with all of his equipment and was prepared to catch the snake. Suddenly the exterminator

laughed out loud and picked up the snake with his hands. It turned out that it was a very realistic looking but rubber snake that had been left there by the neighbor who threw it over the fence from his yard and forgot it there.

The exterminator turned to Ari and said, "I'm happy that this ended well. We have a policy that every time we drive out we charge a minimum of \$100. I still expect to be paid". Ari felt silly that he had to pay for this, and he wanted his neighbor to pay instead because he had left the snake in his yard.

When Ari brought it up to Yaakov, his neighbor, Yaakov said, "I don't think I have to pay for this. It's true that I accidentally left the snake there, but you should have been more careful before you called the exterminator".

What do you think? Does the neighbor have to pay for the cost of the exterminator? See Hebrew Veharev Na Volume Two Page 149

Regarding last week's question of the laptop that was left outside, Rav Zilberstein wrote in a similar case that it seems that the repairman would not be liable.

### UP TILL NOW WE LEARNED DAF ALEPH

After the Holocaust, the Satmar Rav learned with a ragtag group of survivors in America. He invited them to learn Meseches Brachos with him. He would start at 7 o'clock and talk with them about their families, their work, and other personal but ostensibly mundane matters. At 8 o'clock he would look at his watch and say with surprise, "oh vei iz duch shpeit (it's late) perhaps we will begin tomorrow".

He would do this every day, for a year. The people in the class loved his

conversations, and really gained from them, but they wondered why he put up the same charade every day.

Finally after a year the Rebbe looked around at his group of students. Instead of seeing a ragtag group of broken survivors, he saw a group of confident young men whose lives were beginning to rebuild. He then began the class by saying the following:

Biz yetz huben mir gelernt Daf Alef - up till now we learned Daf Aleph. Itzter

lumer lernen Daf Beis. Now let's begin to learn Daf Beis.

Why is the first page of the Gemara Daf Beis? Because the Daf Aleph is the page on which one has to prepare himself to begin. One has to transform to become a confident and healthy person before he can go to the next page.

Based on Touched By A Story, By Rabbi Yechiel Spero. Reprinted with permission of Table Talk.)

### First Seder Bais Medrash's Mishnayos Shel Chesed Program

When a Jew passes away, they can no longer perform mitzvos or get closer to Hashem. By arranging learning for the soul of a departed family member or friend, their soul can be elevated. As their loved ones, it is within our power to help their neshamos (souls) ascend ever higher.

To join the over 200 learners or bring an Eternal Merit to a loved one, please contact Rabbi Greenspan or [rabbisilver.firstseder@gmail.com](mailto:rabbisilver.firstseder@gmail.com)

**1st**  
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For more information or to register for First Seder, contact Rabbi Uri Greenspan at 732-407-3178 or [RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org](mailto:RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org)

**Good Shabbos!**