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 ACHAREI MOS – AFTER A FASHION

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

"Do not perform the practices of the land of Mitzrayim in which you dwelled and do not perform the practices of the land of Canaan to which I will bring you; and do not follow their *chukim*. Carry out My *mishpatim* and preserve my *chukim* to follow them; I am Hashem your G-d" (Vayikra 18:3-4). While *mishpatim* are laws for which we can readily understand their reason, *chukim* are esoteric laws which do not have a rational explanation – such as the prohibitions of wearing *shaatnez* and eating *chazir.* We understand that Hashem in His infinite wisdom can ordain *chukim* because they have deep spiritual significance. However what kind of *chukim* would rational people of other nations make? If they don't make sense, why do them?

Rav Yerucham Levovitz suggests that the *chukim* of other nations may refer to modes of behavior like fashion and styles. Whether they be clothing, home furnishings, cars or even food, their style really has no rational basis. Often a designer will create a style which catches on, and for no reason other than peer pressure people just have to have it.

One day sushi is the rage, the next day it's exotic dips. One day it's baggy pants, the next day it's tight pants. One day it's crocs and the next day it's slides. And don't forget eyeglass styles. Why must we change the frames every time we get a new prescription?

Last year we decided to replace the non-functional blinds in our bedroom. We looked at some styles and picked a nice set of window shades. Recently, someone told us that they were no longer in style. To us it made absolutely no difference. As far as we're concerned, the old, dated shades look fine.

Although we live in a society where the consumer is somewhat limited in his choices to styles that are prevalent, we must remember that styles and fashion are truly senseless – real *chukim*. We should not let ourselves become infatuated by the latest vogue. We must also teach our children that modesty and dignity are the real criteria for clothing for both men and women. We don't need to read up on the latest fashions when we buy home furnishings. And we can keep our old glasses frames which will be back in style soon enough.

Peer and societal pressure are a potent reality that cannot be ignored. The Rambam tells us so in Hilchos Dai'os (6:1): "There is an intrinsic tendency of a person to be drawn towards the attitudes and actions of his friends and associates and to conduct himself according to the ways of the country in which he lives." So, what is the antidote? We need to create an equal and opposite peer pressure to draw us toward Torah values and behavior. Indeed, like-minded people who think for themselves and reject a 'monkey see monkey do' attitude will be able resist being drawn toward senseless *chukim.*

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 CHICKEN ORDER

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

You might have heard that there is a chicken shortage now. This has been caused by a combination of the disruption caused by the pandemic, the disruption caused by the Great Resignation, as well as an outbreak of avian flu. This leads us to the following true story that happened in Israel.

Eli lived in a close-knit neighborhood. One day before Yom Tov an email went out that people in his neighborhood were creating a group to make a bulk order of chicken. By joining as a group they could buy chicken at wholesale prices and save a significant amount of money. Soon, more than 50 families joined up to make this bulk poultry order. The chicken was going to be picked up from a processing plant that was about 45 minutes away. They needed someone with a vehicle big enough to pick up all the chicken.

Eli owned a 15-seater Ford Transit. Yaakov, an organizer of the group order, approached Eli and asked if he would be open to making the pickup. "Would you be able to pick up the order? If you do so, we will pay you 1000 shekels for your time and effort. It would also be a huge favor for all of us." Eli agreed. He could use the extra money and was also glad to help. "Oh, one other thing, would it be okay if you lay out the money with your credit or debit card, then when we come to pick up the chicken we will each pay you?," Yaakov asked. Eli realized that this was a huge ask, but he agreed to this additional request.

Soon after, Eli emptied his van of all of the seats. He drove to the chicken plant and the workers filled his van completely with all of the chickens. In a short time, Eli was on his way back home to bring the chickens to the members of his group bulk order.

But on the highway, a police cruiser noticed that the passenger van was packed with boxes. It did not look typical to the officer, and the officer flashed his lights and ordered Eli to pull over. Eli was unconcerned because he knew he had nothing illegal in his car.

The Officer opened the van and saw all of the chickens. Where is the refrigeration system in this van?", the officer asked Eli. Refrigeration? This is a regular van that I use every day for carpool. I don't have any refrigeration. Well, the department of health requires that a poultry shipment needs to be done in a refrigerated vehicle. I'm afraid I will have to give you a citation and confiscate this food.

But I was just picking up the chicken for my neighbors, I am not selling it. I didn't know about this law, I'm not a retailer, I'm just a regular citizen. The officer said, "That is a good excuse, and perhaps the judge will be lenient on you. But in the interim here is your summons, the hearing is tomorrow." To Eli's horror, the officer proceeded to confiscate the van and all its contents.

Eli went to the hearing the next day. The judge seemed sympathetic and said, "Since this is your first time, rather than the 1600 shekel fine, I will cut it in half. You need to just pay an 800 shekel fine". By the time the proceedings were over all of the chickens were no longer edible. Eli called Yaakov the organizer and shared this tale of woe.

"Yaakov, I layed out all the money for the chickens, I laid out 10,000 shekels. I need to be reimbursed for that. I also was promised 1000 for my time and effort, I need to be reimbursed for that. I also need to be reimbursed for the 800 shekel fine.

Yaakov was very sympathetic but thought out loud. "This is really a frustrating situation. We are dealing with three separate claims. Hmm, regarding the 10,000 that you laid out, you are asking for all of us to pay 10,000 for chicken we never got. The truth is we paid you to make the delivery so you are a paid watchman, a shomer sachar. A shomer sachar is responsible to pay if it was lost or stolen. I wonder if we have an obligation to pay you. Regarding the 1000 for the delivery, I wonder if we have to pay you because we never got our delivery. And regarding the fine, you were the driver so perhaps that is your responsibility. I'm not saying we won't pay, I'm just wondering if we really have to.

Eli heard Yaaov's argument but strongly felt that he should not be left responsible for the 10,000, because it was totally out of his control. For the 1,000 he felt he did the job as best as he could. And for the fine, again it was out of his control, and in addition, they all were in this together and they should share the responsibility to pay the fine.

Eli and Yaakov agreed to ask a Rav and do whatever the Torah requires them to do. This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Should Eli be reimbursed for the 10,000 for the chicken? For the 1,000 for his work? For the 800 for the fine? See Upiryo Matok Bereishis page 181

Regarding the question about the Pesach appeal, in an identical case (only difference was that it was not for Pesach needs) Rav Zilbershtein decided that the poor friend had no obligation to pay his $100 pledge. The reason is because he only pledged these funds for the poor person whom the appeal was being made for. Since that person was himself it is considered a neder b'taous, a mistaken pledge and is therefore non-binding.

"JUST GO TO YOUR KINDERLACH. IT WILL BE OKAY."

If there was an opportunity to do good for someone, Rav Dovid Trenk grabbed it. One morning, Reb Dovid waited on line in a crowded Lakewood supermarket. The harried-looking woman ahead of him on line took a phone call from her babysitter, who was screaming in a voice audible to the other customers, "I need to leave, I can't stay here anymore, I'm not watching the children for one more minute. They are out of control. You had better get home."

The woman froze, panicked. It was almost her turn, and she needed the groceries in her house, but she was worried about her children. "Just go," came a voice from behind her, "just go to your kinderlach. It will be okay."

A few minutes later, Reb Dovid pulled up at her home, carrying in the boxes he had packed himself, leaving her not just with the grocery order, but with words of chizuk and encouragement.

From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah, Reprinted With Permission From Table Talk.

Tehillim – Life Lessons

We will IYH begin Mizmor 11 "למנצח לדוד בה' חסיתי". What is the historical time period in which Dovid Hamelech wrote this? What is the message that מזמור יא is teaching us for our everyday life? And more…

Kli Yakar Chabura

The Kli Yakar Chabura will meet Shabbos afternoon at 5:15 PM in Rabbi Greenspan's home, 113 Grassmere Road, Bala Cynwyd.

Dirshu Mishna Berura Shiur

Have you joined the Dirshu Mishna Berura shiur??? Start today!

1st Seder

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NOW IN OUR 10TH YEAR!

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

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

Good Shabbos!