

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

SUCCOS – PURSUING TESHUVA WITH LOVE AND JOY

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

How often have I heard the following questions! Why, immediately following Ne'ilah, do we say in the Maariv Shemoneh Esrei, "Help us to return to you with a complete Teshuva"? Haven't we been doing Teshuva for the past 25 hours? Haven't we recited the viduy confessional ten times over the course of this holy and pure day? Furthermore, why are we "klopping" our hearts and pleading, "Forgive us our Father for we have erred; pardon us our King for we have willfully sinned"? What sins did we commit between Ne'ilah and Maariv?

Rav Shimon Schwab asks an additional question. The great and righteous men of the Anshei Kenesses Hagedola, who composed the Shemoneh Esrei, mandated that everyone recite the two berachos for Teshuva and forgiveness. Surely in that era there were many righteous people who did not sin every day – and certainly not three times each day! What was the rationale for such a mandate?

Rav Schwab answers all of the questions by citing the Gemara (Yoma 86b) which states that teshuva mi'yirah, motivated by fear of retribution, changes one's intentional sins into unintentional sins. However, teshuva mei'ahava, motivated by love of Hashem, turns intentional sins into merits. Rav Schwab explains that teshuva mi'yirah may relieve us of any punishment,

but the sins have not been eradicated. Since the sins still exist this type of Teshuva doesn't fully repair our relationship with Hashem. We have distanced ourselves from Hashem and teshuva mi'yirah, reflecting merely concern for ourselves and our fate, cannot change this. It is only teshuva mei'ahava, which expresses our love of Hashem, that has the power to draw us closer to Him.

Thus the order of the first three middle berachos of Shemoneh Esrei reflects our desire to elevate our Teshuva to a level of ahava. The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 10:6) writes, "The love [of Hashem] depends on the degree of wisdom: if a little, a little; if a lot, a lot." This is what we pray for in the beracha of Atah Chonein. Next we say Hashiveinu to ask Hashem to help us achieve a teshuva sheleima – a complete Teshuva. Finally we say Selach Lanu to remove the sin entirely so that we can continue to draw closer and closer to Hashem. Thus, after Ne'ilah, when we have achieved a teshuva mi'yirah, a Teshuva motivated by fear of retribution, we still pray in Maariv for the ahava level of Teshuva and forgiveness.

Rav Meir Tzvi Bergman cites the Rambam (Sefer Hamitzvos M.A. 3): "[Hashem] has commanded us to love him, by thinking and contemplating His Mitzvos, His statements and His deeds until we have some

comprehension of Him, and derive the ultimate pleasure from this comprehension. This is the obligation of love." Rav Bergman suggests that true pleasure is what joy is all about. The Rambam teaches that love of Hashem is the pleasure of knowing Him, ergo love of Hashem is true joy.

With this approach, he explains another statement of the Rambam (Hilchos Lulav 8:15) which discusses the Simchas Bais Hasho'eiva: "The joy that a person experiences in the performance of a Mitzvah and the love of Hashem who commanded it is a great service [of Hashem]." Why does the Rambam, in describing the Simchas Bais Hasho'eiva in the Bais Hamikdash, insert the concept of love of Hashem? Because love of Hashem and joy in doing His Mitzvos are one and the same.

According to Rav Schwab's approach of the need to seek teshuva mei'ahava immediately after Yom Kippur, we now have a new understanding of why Succos, Zeman Simchaseinu – the time of our joy, follows on the heels of Yom Kippur. It is through the joy of Succos that we grow in Ahavas Hashem and thereby continue in our constant pursuit of teshuva mei'ahava.

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.

WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

On Succos we enjoy delicious foods in honor of Yom Tov. It is not uncommon that after Yom Tov, people try to lose some of the weight that was gained. This leads us to the following true story.

Yaakov was overweight and he tried his very best to lose weight and keep it off permanently. He tried dieting, calorie counting, and intermittent fasting, but to no avail. He lost weight but he quickly gained it back.

A friend of his told him to ask his doctor about bariatric surgery. This is a category of several types of procedures that involves changing the size of the stomach or changing its ability to absorb calories.

Yaakov thought it was a good idea to look into and made an appointment with his doctor to discuss it.

Yaakov met with the doctor. His doctor weighed him at 210 pounds. The doctor said that Yaakov's insurance would cover the surgery if he weighed over 230 pounds. Because he was not close to that weight, the surgery would cost Yaakov thousand and thousands of dollars.

Yaakov went home disappointed. But on his way home, he had an idea. All he had to do was gain another 20 pounds and his insurance would cover the surgery for free. He would simply load up on carbs and pasta for a few weeks and he could gain that extra 20 pounds in no time. But then he hesitated. Was it permitted for him to purposely gain 20 pounds in order to become eligible for the surgery? It was likely that the directors of the insurance company would not cover the surgery if

they knew that he purposely gained weight in order to get the surgery.

Yaakov decided to send this question to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein. Was he permitted to purposely add the 20 pounds in order to reach the threshold where the insurance would cover all of the costs? When Rav Zilberstein got this question, he asked it to his father-in-law Rav Yosef Elyashiv. See Upryo Matok Beresishis Page 400

Regarding last week's question about the Rav who davened for both sides of a din torah (court case), Rav Zilberstein wrote that it is permitted to daven that both balei din (both litigants), have hatzlacha (success). One will win the money that belongs to him and one will win by not violating the severe prohibition of theft.

"IF A SOLDIER IS TOLD TO SING AND TO REJOICE, HE DOES THAT. AND HE DOES IT WITH ENTHUSIASM."

The Yeshiva of Slabodka was founded by Rav Nossan Tzvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka. For Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah the bachurim were in the yeshiva. The Simchas Torah celebrations began with all the Bnei Yeshiva gathered together before the Alter joined them. They would begin with singing joyous songs reflecting the festive mood of Simchas Torah. After a short while the Alter would join them and with his arrival they would halt their singing. Once it became quiet, the Alter would speak, sharing his thoughts and then the singing would continue.

Rav Moshe Reuven Finkel, the son of the Alter, who married the daughter of Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, the Rosh Yeshiva of Slabodka had moved to Eretz Yisroel to join the yeshiva in Chevron. In 5676 (1925) word had reached Slabodka before Succos that Rav Moshe Reuven was very ill. By Shmini Atzeres there was a rumor that a telegram had arrived from Eretz Yisroel that Rav Moshe Finkel was niftar.

That Simchas Torah when the bnei yeshiva gathered together in anticipation for the Alter's

arrival they decided that they would not sing, out of deference to the tragedy of the Alter's son's passing. When the Alter arrived he realized that the festive mood was absent. He got up and presented the following thought.


The gemara in Eruchin tells how the angels ask HaShem why His people do not recite Hallel on Rosh Hashana. HaShem responds to them that on the day when the books of life and death are open they need not recite Hallel before Me. Tosfos, the commentary, points out that evidently, the angels do recite Hallel even though they, too, are being judged. If they do not recite Hallel because of the judgment, how can they expect the Jewish people to recite Hallel. Tosfos, therefore concludes that the prayers of our Rosh Hashana davening should reflect that the angels recite Hallel.

The Alter then asked the bachurim; "In our yeshiva, however, the Rosh Hashana prayers reflect that the angels do not recite Hallel. If so, how can the angels expect that we should recite Hallel when they do not? Just as they do not recite

because of the books of life and death, so it is a day of judgment for the Jewish people as well." The Alter then told the bachurim; "The answer is that although the angels cannot be expected to recite hallel on their day of judgment, but the Jewish people are HaShem's soldiers. If a soldier is told to sing and to rejoice, he does that. And he does it with enthusiasm. Therefore the angels ask why are the Jewish people not reciting Hallel, are they not your soldiers? To this HaShem responds that since I am in the mode of judging it is not necessary for there to be singing and rejoicing." And then the Alter concluded "Although my son passed away, today is a day for us to rejoice with HaShem's Torah. A soldier sings and dances when it is appropriate. Today is appropriate to rejoice, so let us rejoice."

As told by Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky zt'l to Paysach Diskind. Reprinted with permission from [Table Talk](#).

First Seder Weekly Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Morning Track 1: Shiurim					
9:20 AM – 9:55 AM	Mishnayos Tohoros (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Tohoros (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Tohoros (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Tohoros (R' Chesky Weiss)	Parsha HaShevua (R' Yehoshua Levy)
10:00 AM – 10:40 AM	Gemara Gittin (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Gittin (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Gittin (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Gittin (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Gittin (R' Daniel Baltuch)
10:45 AM – 11:25 AM	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah + 5 minutes of Mussar (R' Uri Greenspan)
11:30 AM – 12:10 PM	Practical Timely Halacha (R' Mordechai Shain)	The Life and Torah of our Leaders (R' David Gross)	Biur Tefilla (R' Yoel Zeffren)	Sefer Tehillim (R' Uri Greenspan)	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)
12:15 PM – 1:00 PM	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa - Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	



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

Gut Shabbos

Chag Sameach

Bein Hazmanim /Intersession

is from October 4-23. We will resume the regular schedule on Monday, October 24th.

For more information or to register for First Seder, contact

RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org

or 732-407-3178.