

# 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 BO – HARD HEARTED

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Come to Paroh for I have made his heart and the hearts of his servants hard so that I can put these signs of Mine in his midst'" (Shemos 10,1). The Medrash (Shemos Rabba 13,3) records the following discussion. Rabbi Yochanan said, "From here (this pasuk) an excuse can be deduced for the heretics to say, 'It was not possible for us to do Teshuva.'" Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish responded, "Let the mouth of the wicked be sealed... HaKadosh Baruch Hu warns him two or three times, and [when] he does not repent he closes his heart...so too [in the case of] Paroh, Hashem warned him five times and he paid no heed. HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to him, 'You have hardened your heart, [therefore] I will add impurity onto your impurity.'" Rav Eliyahu Dessler (Michtav Mei'Eliyahu based on the Maharal) explains that Chazal tell us that when a person sins and repeats the sin, it feels to him as if it is permitted (Kiddushin 20:1). This is because a person only commits an aveirah willingly if a *ruach shtus* (a spirit of insanity) possesses him. When the sin is repeated over and over again, the *ruach shtus* takes over. This is the impurity that is referred to by the Medrash. According to this approach,

Paroh himself was responsible for his ultimate inability to do Teshuva. Therefore, Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish asserts that the wicked really have no excuse, and they have only themselves to blame for their inability to do Teshuva.

In Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer (Chapter 43) it states that Paroh did indeed do Teshuva at the time of the splitting of the Yam Suf. "Hashem saved him in order for him to declare His might as it says, 'However, for this have I let you endure in order to show you My strength and so that [you] may declare my Name throughout the world'" (Shemos 9:16).

The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 4:5) enumerates five sins for which it is very difficult to do Teshuva due to the constant repetition of these *aveiros*: *rechilus* (gossip), *lashon hara*, anger, inappropriate thoughts and associating with people who are a bad influence. He concludes by saying that although the Teshuva is quite difficult, it is still possible.

Often we know that we are doing the wrong thing, but we feel that we can't help ourselves. Certain *aveiros* and bad *middos* have become so ingrained that we "can't" stop. Nevertheless Chazal tell us that Teshuva is always possible (Yerushalmi

Pei'ah 1:10). So how do we break the cycle? Where do we begin?

We begin with prayer. The Gemara in Berachos (10a) relates that there were ruffians in the neighborhood of Rabbi Meir who were causing him much aggravation. Rabbi Meir prayed that they should die. However, his wife Beruria told him that instead he should pray that they should do Teshuva. Rabbi Meir took her advice, and indeed they did Teshuva. When everything else fails daven to Hashem. (Or perhaps, everything else fails when we don't daven to Hashem.) Even when we feel that we can't take the first step, we say to Hashem, "Bring us back to You and [then] we will return" (Eicha 5:21). But we should not stop there. We should be as specific as we can as to what we need help with.

The next step is inspiration. "If your enemy is hungry feed him bread" (Mishlei 25,21). The enemy is the *yeitzer hara* and the bread you need to feed him is Torah. While any Torah will help, the study of Mussar is the most potent and effective weapon. For example, to stop speaking *lashon hara*, learn *sefarim* dealing with Shemiras Halashon.

Once we've taken these two steps, we are well on the road to Teshuva.

You can bring a zechus refua shelaima for Sandy Bruck - Shalom ben Tila Leah – and for all who need a refuah sheleima 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 SHWARMA INCENTIVE

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

In this week's Parsha, the Torah talks about the mitzva to eat the Korban Pesach, which was roasted lamb, along with matza, unleavened bread, and maror, bitter herbs. This holy mitzvah was to eat a wrap filled with roast lamb and herbs. This holy wrap leads us to the following story.

Ari was the owner of a large and successful kosher supermarket in Israel. Over the years, he tried many different incentive programs to increase customer loyalty. He tried giving out gift cards after people spent a certain amount of money. He tried a program where money was donated to a cause of their choice after they spent a certain amount. He tried giving out frequent flyer miles. However all of these incentive programs were not nearly as successful as Ari had hoped.

One day Ari had an idea. He set up a falafel and shawarma stand in the front of the store. A large sign announced that everyone who spent 200 shekels would get a free falafel or shawarma with unlimited toppings and salads.

The smell filled the store and the area outside the store. To Ari's delight, the incentive program was a huge success. It brought more sales than ever before. He was delighted at the huge surge in sales. But his joy was tempered with feelings of doubt. Ari understood why this particular campaign was successful. In fact, that was the reason he thought of it. People were spending so much more with this campaign because they were coming to the store with the intention of eating lunch or dinner after they shopped. They were shopping on an empty stomach with the intention of eating the delicious shawarma or falafel right after.

He was familiar with a 2015 study by the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management, cited by Forbes Magazine, that when people shopped when they were hungry, they tended to spend much more. The whole purpose of offering the large meal incentive was to ensure that people came to shop hungry. And because of that, people were unwittingly spending much more. Ari was not

sure if this incentive was Glatt Yosher, perfectly ethical.

On the one hand, he was not telling them to spend the extra money; they were spending money of their own free volition. Also, any store can do it, so it was not necessarily unfair competition. But on the other hand, he was subtly tricking people into spending more. Perhaps that was wrong. Ari had this question sent to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? According to the Torah, is this incentive program permitted? See Upiro Matok Shemos Page 130

Regarding last week's question about giving a friend a heads up that he is being observed by a potential father-in-law, Rav Zilberstein answered as follows. If the young man is able to put on his best behavior, that means he has the potential to act that way. Therefore it is permitted to tell him that he is being observed. It would be best to add, "I hope that you have the good middos that the man is looking for."

## "TAAVAH CANNOT BE MEHADRIN"

We know that "Pride of The Farm" makes delicious ice cream. But did you know that there is a fascinating backstory to this?

"Pride of The Farm" was established by Rabbi Yosef Tendler, whose commitment to Cholov Yisroel was encouraged by Rabbi Aharon Kotler of Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, NJ, a town that, at that time, faced challenges in procuring Cholov Yisroel milk.

When Rabbi Tendler relocated to Baltimore in the early 1960s, he remained devoted to the stringencies of Cholov Yisroel. His firsthand experience compelled him to establish the Foundation for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Torah Laws and Customs, Inc., more commonly known as "Pride of the Farm". His mission was lofty. He sought only to help others by distributing high-quality dairy products with uncompromising kashrus standards to areas lacking reliable Cholov Yisroel. All proceeds of "Pride of the Farm"

sales, after covering the costs, were allocated to promote the advancement of Torah education and practice.

At the request of a close family member, Rav Tendler made a special run of Cholov Yisroel ice cream as a one-time project. Others heard about this, and asked that he start mass-producing ice cream for the public. Rav Tendler felt that he should not do this, since his aim was to supply the community with Cholov Yisroel as a halachic stringency. Ice cream is simply taavah (pursuit of materialism) and didn't fit into the Milk Fund's mission. However Rabbi Moshe Heinemann advised Rav Tendler that if he didn't supply the ice cream, people would not be careful to use Cholov Yisroel in any other products either. Rav Tendler accepted this argument. Although Rav Tendler agreed to produce the ice cream, he printed, "See Tosafof Kesubos daf kuf daled amud aleph, which says pray that Torah should penetrate your

innards, and pray that delicacies should not penetrate your innards." He had to eventually drop those words, since people were apprehensive, taking them to mean, "Kosher - but!" Nevertheless, he was careful to print only the word kosher, not mehadrin, since, as he said "taavah (pursuit of pleasure) cannot be mehadrin."

Meir Perlmutter tells about the time, around 1990, that Rav Tendler came to Ner Yisrael with a recently purchased used car. But a few days later Rav Tendler was back to his old station wagon. 'When questioned, Rav Tendler admitted that he had thought he had a handle on gashmius (materialism), but when he realized that he was having too much enjoyment from the new car, he returned it.

From I Am Your Servant, By Rabbi Akiva Tendler, Published By Artscroll Mesorah, Reprinted With Permission From Table Talk.

Maharal Shiur will not meet this  
Motzei Shabbos.

Daf HaShavua Chabura is  
learning Kesubos Daf 20

We will IY" H begin learning the  
sefer "Pele Yoetz" (Mussar) this  
week. You can join the  
WhatsApp group to receive a  
daily 5 minute shiur.

To sponsor the 1st Seder Weekly,  
please contact  
[office@firstseder.org](mailto:office@firstseder.org). For more  
information or to register for First  
Seder, contact  
[RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org](mailto:RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org)  
or 732-407-3178.



## Weekly Schedule

Join us for one class or all the classes. You can make a schedule that works for you!

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:20am - 9:55am	Mishanos Seder Tohoros (R Chesky Weiss)	Mishanos Seder Tohoros (R Chesky Weiss)	Mishanos Seder Tohoros (R Chesky Weiss)	Mishanos Seder Tohoros (R Chesky Weiss)	Parshas HaShovta (R Yehoshua Levy)
10:00am - 10:40am	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)
10:45am - 11:25am	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)
11:30am - 12:10pm	Practical Timely Halacha (R Mordecai Shani)	The Life and Torah of our Leaders (R David A. Gross)	Blur Tetilla (R Yoel Zeffren)	Sefer Tehillim (R Uri Greenspan)	Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim/Hashkafa Parsha (R Uri Greenspan)
12:15pm - 1:00pm	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)	



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### Sifrai Chofetz Chaim

Shemiras Haloshon from  
the Chofetz Chaim - Have  
you joined the daily shiur?  
You can listen via  
WhatsApp, podcast or  
online! You can listen to  
archived shiurim from the  
Sefarim of the Chofetz  
Chaim of Ahavas Yisroel,  
Kavod Shamayim, Sfias  
Tamim, Zechor L'Miriam.

**Good Shabbos!**