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 YISRO – IT'S A PLEASURE

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Hashem instructed Moshe to introduce the Torah to Bnai Yisrael, and He told him exactly what to say. In this presentation, Moshe tells Bnai Yisrael "And now if you will listen to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all nations" (Shemos 19:5). Rashi notes the significance of the word "now" and explains, "If **now** you will accept it, it will be pleasant to you in the future, because all beginnings are difficult." It appears that Rashi is saying that only beginnings are difficult but afterwards it becomes easy. However, Rashi states that it will become pleasant, not easy. Pleasant is not the antonym of difficult. Obviously, Rashi is telling us that the goal is not necessarily to make it easy. Rather, the more pleasant our *avodas Hashem* becomes, the less difficult it will feel.

A person who is committed to grow in *ruchnius* constantly encounters new challenges and is compelled to deal with more and more difficult situations. However once he has made this commitment and has dedicated his efforts to serve Hashem, he will find it becoming more pleasurable and the hardship of the difficulties will become less burdensome.

Rav Noach Weinberg would point out that many people make a major mistake. They believe that the opposite of pain is pleasure. This is not true. The opposite of pain is no pain. On the contrary, pleasure and pain work in harmony. If you tell someone to run around in circles as fast as he can, he will become totally exhausted very soon. However, if you give him a basketball and provide him with some competition, he can go on and on breathlessly, even with a pounding chest. The pleasure blurs the pain, by making the whole experience very enjoyable.

Nowhere in Yiddishkeit is this principle more evident than in the study of Torah. At first a person will find it difficult. The words may be hard to understand, and the concepts may seem inscrutable. The questions are complex, and the answers are often very difficult to comprehend. But as one forges forward, the process begins to become captivating and even exhilarating. He looks forward to proposing or hearing a good question and finds joy and pleasure when he discovers a brilliant answer.

Someone once asked Rav Aharon Kotler if it is true that one who totally supports a Torah scholar will receive an identical share in Olam Haba as the scholar that he suppoted. Rav Aharon assured him that it was absolutely true. The questioner responded, "So, I can stay all day at work making money and never need to step into a *beis medrash* to learn." Rav Aharon replied, "Yes, but what will you do for your Olam Hazeh?"

A similar approach can be applied to keeping Shabbos. When one starts observing Shabbos, it presents an abrupt change in lifestyle, foregoing many activities that one takes for granted. Additionally, he may find the laws of Shabbos very difficult to master and fulfill. But ultimately the pleasure and the spiritual tranquility that Shabbos bequeaths makes it more than worthwhile.

Another example of this phenomenon is davening. It is very difficult to have proper *kavanah* when praying; it takes a great deal of effort and intensity. However, when we succeed in davening with fervor and focusing on the *berachos* of the Shemoneh Esrei, the pleasure that we feel is incomparable.

It may very well be true that *"Es iz shver tzu zein a Yid* – it is difficult to be an observant Jew;" but there is also no greater pleasure!

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.

CAN I, IF HE CAN'T?

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the importance of honoring our parents. This leads us to the following true story.

Chaim's father was very severely wounded in one of Israel's wars. Due to his injuries, he lost both of his arms. Chaim would come to his father's apartment daily to care for him and ensure he ate and was taken care of. One day Chaim slept over at his father's apartment and for some reason was unable to go to shul for Shachris. He planned to daven in his father's home.

He took out his tefillin to begin davening but hesitated. His father was unable to put on tefillin because of his injuries. Would it be disrespectful to put on tefillin in front of his father if his father is unable to do it himself? Chaim thought to himself that we have a similar precedent when it comes to wearing tzitzis in a cemetery. One is not permitted to wear their tzitzis outside of his clothing at a cemetery. It is seen as mocking the dead, who cannot put on tzitzes and cannot do the mitzvah. Perhaps Chaim is not allowed to do the mitzvah of tefillin in front of his father, who cannot do it? But on the other hand, perhaps one can argue that the father gets joy when his son performs the mitzvah. Therefore, perhaps it is not a problem at all to put on tefillin in front of him. This question was brought before Rav Zilberstein.

What do you think? See Upiryo Matok Shemos 152

Regarding last week's question about the tefillin found by a shady merchant, Rabbi Zilberstein wrote that the tefillin can be presumed to be stolen, and therefore he was allowed to do what he did to rescue the tefillin from someone who does not own it. Regarding the question of whether they can be worn because we don't know who wrote them, Rav Zilberstein answered that if it is checked by an expert and they are found to be kosher, we can assume that a Jew made the tefillin. Regarding whether the tefillin can be kept, Rav Zilberstein wrote that he should put notices in the local shuls that tefillin were found, and in the meantime, the finder can use the tefillin."

THE SHAAGAS ARGEH'S OPINION CARRIES GREAT WEIGHT IN HEAVEN

By Torah law, an animal that is mortally wounded either through birth defect, disease or injury is deemed a treifah and may not be eaten. There is a question whether a particular lung defect renders the animal a treifah; Beis Yosef (R' Yosef Karo, author of Shulchan Aruch) rules that it does not, while Rama (R' Moshe Isserles) disagrees. Ashkenazic Jews generally follow the opinion of Rama when he and Beis Yosef disagree. However, with regard to this disagreement, one Ashkenazic gaon ruled according to Beis Yosef. He was Rabbi Aryeh Leib Gunzberg, legendary author of Sha'agas Aryeh and one of the eighteenth century's greatest Torah geniuses. His p'sak (ruling) in this matter caused quite a stir among Ashkenazic Jews. Nevertheless, the Jews of Volozhin, where the Shaagas Aryeh served as Rav, faithfully followed his opinion. Years later, when the Shaagas Aryeh's famed disciple, Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner, became Rav of Volozhin, he continued to follow his rebbe's ruling.

In Volozhin, there once lived a man who suffered from a lung disorder identical to that which was the subject of the disagreement between the Beis Yosef and Rama. The man decided that his condition would benefit from the pure and rarified air of Switzerland and he began making plans to move his family there. One night, the man's father, who had died some years before, appeared to him in a dream. "My son, I have come to warn you not to leave Volozhin. The illness from which you suffer is rendered life threatening by the Rama -— and his ruling is followed by almost the entire European Jewry, including the Jewish community of Switzerland. It is only in Volozhin that the Rama's opinion is not followed, for it is there that the great Sha'agas Aryeh served as Rav, and it is he who ruled that this illness is not terminal. The Shaagas Argeh's opinion carries great weight in Heaven. Just as the animals in Volozhin with this defect are deemed kosher and not mortally ill, so too, you are deemed capable of living many more years. However, if you move elsewhere, where the Sha'agas Aryeh's ruling is not accepted, you will die within the year."

The man canceled his plans to move. He was never cured of his lung disorder, but he lived into his eighties.

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Daf HaShavua **Chabura is learning Kesubos Daf כב**

Have you joined the new Mussar shiur? We are learning the sefer "Pele Yoetz". Please contact Rabbi Greenspan to join the daily 5 minute shiur.

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

1st Seder

A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

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' Dovid 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)*	

Good Shabbos!

Maharal Shiur **will not be meeting this Motzei Shabbos**

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 also listen to archived shiurim from the Sefarim of the Chofetz Chaim of Ahavas Yisroel, Kavod Shamayim, Sfas Tamim, Zechor L'Miriam.