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 NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH – LET'S TALK

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

"For this Mitzvah that I command you today is not hidden from you and it is not distant…rather the matter is very near to you… it is in your mouth and in your heart to do it" (Devarim 30:11,14). Most Meforshim understand that this pasuk refers to the Mitzvah to do Teshuva since the previous pesukims discuss Teshuva.

The Torah is saying that Teshuva is accomplished by the means of "your mouth and your heart". It would seem that the process of Teshuva begins in the **heart** with feelings of remorse and a desire to change, and thereafter one turns to Hashem and confesses his sins with his **mouth**. Why does the Torah place the mouth before the heart?

By placing the mouth first, the Torah teaches us a profound insight and a valuable approach to the process of Teshuva. Generally speaking, most of us find it extremely difficult to make lasting changes. We have clung to a certain behavior for various emotional reasons. We can't seem to make realistic commitments to change, since our hearts are filled with misconceptions about what we need or what satisfies us. How can we change what is in our hearts? We must talk to ourselves. Thinking alone to change, even wanting to change is not enough. We must speak with our mouths – to ourselves – why we want to change, how we can change, why our present actions are not only wrong, they are self-defeating.

Indeed, this idea is very much in line with the principle advocated by the Mesillas Yesharim: "The external (actions) arouse the internal feelings." By speaking aloud, we give a new more concrete expression to those ideas that we maintain to be meaningful and true. These words are far more potent than the thoughts that seem to float around in our minds. Rav Yisrael Salanter took this idea even further. He advocated repeating various sayings of Chazal over and over again. Truth be told, we often practice this idea when we want to remember something, such as a name we just heard or a task that we must remember to do. We **say** it over again and again. And we do this even in a situation when there is no push back from our internal feelings or thoughts.

In the emotional state of members our modern-day society this concept takes on even greater significance. Allow me to share the following observation with you. People in general are uncomfortable being alone with themselves. When they are alone they will turn on the radio (or TV) to listen to the news, music, sports, or drama. Today we have wireless phones that go everywhere, so we can call or text almost anyone at any time. For all too many it has become a kneejerk reaction to turn to their phone or the internet. How often have we noticed someone taking out their phone the instant that they have left the premises where others were present. Why can't we be alone with ourselves? Because too much static is going on in our minds and most of it is negative and painful. As long as we entertain these negative thoughts, we cannot build the confidence that is necessary for us to change.

To alter these thought patterns, we need to do something that is more real and powerful than merely thinking positive thoughts, we need to talk to ourselves. It is essential that we verbally contradict and refute all the negative thoughts that have wreaked havoc on the courage that we need to change. We need to reason with ourselves. Or we can repeat adages from Tanach, Chazal or even popular expressions. The words of Shlomo Hamelech in Mishlei (24:16) should resonate with all of us: "Although the Tzaddik may fall seven times, nevertheless he arises." A Tzaddik is not one who never fails, he is one who perseveres!

If words of determination emerge from our mouths, we will discover that sincere thoughts of Teshuva will fill our hearts.

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.

LAST-MINUTE SHABBOS NEEDS

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha we have the idea of "Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Lazeh," that all of Klal Yisrael are "in the same boat," and are responsible for each other. This leads us to the following true story.

Avi owned a small mini-market in a Yishuv, a settlement in the north of Israel. It was a relatively small settlement, and his mini-market was the only one in the area and the only one within a 20-minute drive.

One Friday, two hours before Shabbos, Avi was planning to close the store. Just as he was about to pull down the shutters and close, a person came up to the store. "Please wait, don't close. I need something for Shabbat," the man exclaimed. So Avi waited, and the man came running into the store, saying, "Thank G-d you're still open. It's really a miracle. I don't know how I would manage the whole Shabbat if you were closed."

So Avi said, "Okay, sure. We're happy to help you. What do you need? Is it wine? Is it candles? Challah?" The man replied, "Oh no, I need two packs of Marlboro cigarettes. I can't go the whole Shabbat without smoking."

Avi was taken aback. He had expected the person to be looking for something to enhance Shabbos, not to violate it.

The man saw Avi's hesitation and said, "Listen, my friend. You were given a license to open the supermarket in this Yishuv. You have to address the needs of all members of the Yishuv, not just the religious ones. I want you to sell me the cigarettes. If you don't, I'm going to speak to the administration and make sure that they have your license revoked because you are discriminating against me."

Avi wasn't sure what to do. The man specifically wanted cigarettes to smoke on Shabbat but was threatening to have his license revoked, which could jeopardize his livelihood.

On one hand, how could he give him cigarettes specifically to smoke on Shabbos? But on the other hand, did he have to put his whole livelihood at risk by not giving them to him?

What do you think Avi should do? See Upiryo Matok Shemos Page 436

Regarding last week's question about adopting the girl, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Shemos Page 405) wrote that it was possible that the only reason why they were able to have twins was because they agreed to adopt this girl. It would therefore be very commendable for them to adopt her, if they could, and if it is good for the girl.

I WILL DISCIPLINE HIM THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY!

A bachur in the yeshivah in Adelphia once committed an act of vandalism, and local police officers appeared in the yeshivah to apprehend him.

Rabbi Dovid Trenk heard about it and came tearing out of the beis medrash, running toward the police car. Rabbi Trenk saw the bachur about to be handcuffed, and he drew himself up to his full height and roared, "I am responsible for this boy and you can be sure he will get "what he deserves..."

Rabbi Trenk addressed the officer. "Can you leave him with me and I will take him to the woodshed and discipline him the old-fashioned way?"

The officer looked Rabbi Trenk up and down and nodded. 'Yes," he said, thrusting the boy toward his teacher.

Rabbi Trenk did take the young man with him, leading back inside the building. He lifted him up and... kissed him on the forehead, gently asking, "Tzaddik, why? How could you?"

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

1st Seder

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Pele Yoetz Mussar Sefer

Have you joined the 5-7 minute daily mussar shiur? We are currently learning Pele Yoetz on the topic of Brachos.

Please contact Rabbi Greenspan rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org to be added to the WhatsApp group.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	Morning Track 1: Shiurim				
9:20 AM – 9:55 AM	Mishnayos Peah (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Peah (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Peah (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Peah (R' Chesky Weiss)	Parsha HaShevua (R' Yehoshua Levy)
10:00 AM – 10:40 AM	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Bava Basra (R' Daniel Baltuch)	Gemara Bava Basra (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)	

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

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

Good Shabbos!