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

YOM KIPPUR – TESHUVAH FOR OUR GENERATION

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

Rav Yisrael Salanter (1810-1883) writes that he remembers when the mere mention of the arrival of the month of Elul would cause people to tremble. This trembling inspired the onset of an earnest process of teshuvah. On the other hand, Rav Avraham Pam (1913–2001) observes that the arrival of Elul arouses painful feelings of sadness and morose in many people. They know that Hashem is calling on them to do teshuvah, but they feel there isn't much that they are truly capable of accomplishing. Delving into the Rambam's description of teshuvah also doesn't help to inspire them to rise to the occasion: "How does one confess? Behold, Hashem, I have sinned…before You and I have done such and such; I regret it and I will never repeat it again" (Hilchos Teshuvah 1:1). Quite a tall order – almost impossible! Even if they make some progress during this period, past experience has convinced them that this advancement won't last very long. Where does one who takes the call of this season seriously turn for hope and encouragement?

Rav Pam finds a wonderful approach to this dilemma in the Mishnah at the end of Maseches Yoma (85b) which quotes Rebbi Akiva:

> *Fortunate are you Yisrael… Who purifies you? Your Father in Heaven, as it says (Yechezkel 36:25), "I shall sprinkle pure waters upon you, and you will be cleansed" (Yechezkel 36:25). It [also] says (Yirmiyahu 17:13), "The 'mikvah' of Yisrael is Hashem" (Yirmiyahu 17:13). Just as a mikvah purifies those who are impure, so too Hashem purifies Yisrael.*

Rav Tzvi Hirsch Spector (the Rav of Kovno) explains the two metaphors. The mikvah can only purify a person if he immerses himself entirely in the mikvah. If even one hair is out of the water, the immersion is invalid. This refers to a complete and perfect teshuvah where all sins are rectified – a total makeover. Something far beyond the reach of almost everyone alive in our times.

However, in the case of the purifying waters of the Parah Adumah, only one drop need touch any part of the body. Rebbi Akiva is teaching us that even if we are lacking the mikvah form of purification, there is still very much to be gained by even absorbing one drop of water. Even a tiny resolution of teshuvah can make a very major impact. Think of it, says Rav Pam, one drop of teshuvah not only allows us to reach the hand of Hashem which He extends to us, but it can also create the momentum to go even higher.

Rav Pam also cites a Medrash (Vayikra Rabbah 29:6) which interprets the pasuk, "Tik'u bachodesh shofar" (Tehillim 81:4) which literally means, "Blow the shofar at the moon's renewal." The Medrash notes homiletically that the word chodesh means to renew and the word shofar means to improve (leshaper). One level of teshuvah is to renew – a total makeover. The other is to improve on the Mitzvos that we are already doing. Every person has his Mitzvah in which he excels and which he enjoys doing. We should try to improve these Mitzvos even more, and thereby they will generate the motivation and energy to grow in other areas. "One Mitzvah pulls with it another Mitzvah" (Avos 4:2). Indeed, the Netziv asserts that the pasuk, "And follow the path of your heart" (Koheles 11:9), implies that any Mitzvah that a person is drawn to is the right Mitzvah for his personality.

For our generation, this provides a realistic and more secure path to teshuvah. Rav Pam has taught us that it is the little things that not only count, but actually work.

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.

VERY INTERESTED SEAT-MATE

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

As we approach Shabbos Shuva, also known as Shabbos Teshuva, let us explore a true story about Teshuva.

Rabbi Shiff, a Rebbe who taught in a Yeshiva, was riding on a bus in Eretz Yisrael, while studying from a Mishnah Berurah, a book of Jewish law. As he was studying, a young secular Jewish teenager sat next to him. The teenager turned to him and said, "Excuse me, may I bother you?"

Rabbi Shiff responded, "Sure." The teen was taken by the layout of the Mishnah Berurah and asked Rabbi Shiff to tell him what this book discussed. Rabbi Shiff explained that it was a Mishnah Berurah and detailed what it was about and its background. The teen was very interested. Throughout the duration of the bus ride, they discussed the significance of the Shulchan Aruch and the Oral Torah. They even discussed Hashem and the idea of living a life based on Halacha and improving one's midos. The teen soaked it all up and was extremely interested and eager to learn more. After talking for a while, they finally arrived at their destination, the Tachana Merkazi (Central Bus Station).

The two parted ways and Rabbi Shiff realized that it was time for Mincha and that sunset was imminent. He rushed to a nearby shul and began davening Shemoneh Esrei.

In the middle of Shemoneh Esrei, Rabbi Shiff realized that the teen he spoke to had so much potential and was so interested that he likely could have continued teaching him or perhaps encouraged him to study in Yeshiva. He never got the teen's name or number.

Rabbi Shiff also remembered a concept in halacha where, in instances where a girl was kidnapped and taken to a monastery, it is allowed to even break certain laws of Shabbos to save her. He wondered, would he be allowed to stop in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei to go after this interested young man? If he waited until the end of the davening, the boy would most likely be gone.

Rabbi Shiff found himself grappling with the dilemma: Would he be allowed to stop in the middle of his Shemoneh Esrei to catch up with this young teen? On one hand, it might be akin to breaking Shabbos to save someone's soul, as with the case of someone being kidnapped. But on the other hand, it is not guaranteed that the teen would embrace a Torah life. What do you think?

Regarding last week's question about having a friend call the references to see who was saying less than positive things Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered that this should not be done.

I HAVE A SORE THROAT…

For many years the Agudah of Park Heights had two main baalei kriyah, Reb Moshe Juravel z'l and l'hibadel Reb Izzy Strauss. They would take turns leining; one week Reb Moshe and the other Reb Izzy. One Shabbos morning before davening, the week for Reb Moshe was to lein, Reb Moshe approached Reb Izzy. "I have a sore throat and it will be difficult for me to lien, could you lein in my place?"

Reb Izzy, a well-seasoned baal korei, told Reb Moshe that it would not be a problem. "I have not prepared but I will be able to do it."

After giving a moment of thought Reb Moshe told Reb Izzy that he would like to lein the first aliyah. After that first aliyah the tzibur would already hear that it was difficult for Reb Moshe to lein. He would then step down and Reb Izzy would be called up to take over.

This way, if anyone would have any doubts about Reb Izzy's leining it would be understood and appreciated. Reprinted with Permission from Table Talk.

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.

Shiurim on the Seforim of the Chofetz Chaim

You can now listen to Rabbi Greenspan's shiurim on the Seforim of the Chofetz Chaim on the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation Chazan Hotline:

Phone 718-258-2008
option 1 selection 4

1st Seder

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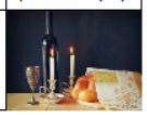
First Seder Weekly Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Morning Track 1: Shiurim					
9:20 AM – 9:55 AM	Mishnayos Kilayim (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Kilayim (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Kilayim (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Kilayim (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Kilayim (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

Gmar Chasima Tova