

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 EIKEV – HOW TO MAKE A BERACHA

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

In this week's Parsha we find the Mitzvah of Birchas Hamazon. It is a *Mitzvah Mide'oraysah* – mandated by the Torah. "*Ve'achalta vesavata uveirachta es Hashem Elokecha* – You will eat and you will be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem your G-d" (Devarim 8:10). All the other berachos (with perhaps the exception of Birchas Hatorah) are *Miderabanan* – mandated by Chazal. At the time of a terrible plague, Dovid Hamelech instituted to say one hundred berachos every day. While we are on the topic of berachos, it may be a good time for us to give some consideration to our berachos.

Did you ever eat something and a few minutes later ask yourself, "Did I make a *beracha rishona* before eating it?" or "Did I recite a *beracha acharona* afterwards?" It happens to most of us, if not all of us. Don't panic! The Shulchan Aruch has got your back. (Or you could consult the excellent English sefer "Halachos of Brochos" by Rabbi Bodner.) There is an answer for every scenario. It is so refreshing to be aware that the Shulchan Aruch deals with the foibles of people like us.

However, Rav Yaakov Galinsky finds this scenario rather lamentable. Why? Consider the following story. After the Chasam Sofer gave his daily shiur, he would go to his study to look into the halachic questions sent to him from all over the world. His gabbai would place a plate with a piece of cake on the table next to the Chasam Sofer. Once, the *yetzer hara* got the best of the gabbai and he decided to eat the cake. He was hoping that the Chasam Sofer, who was so immersed in his learning, would not notice.

After the Chasam Sofer had finished his deliberations, he looked at the plate and noticed that the cake was gone. He asked the gabbai what happened to the cake. The gabbai, who was caught off guard, suggested that the Chasam Sofer had eaten it. The Chasam Sofer was adamant. "Impossible! It is true that I really cannot remember if I ate the cake, but I definitely would have remembered if I had recited a beracha."

How regrettable it is that we cannot remember if we said a beracha, but we

certainly remember what we ate. What is the reason for the difference between the Chasam Sofer and us? Rav Galinsky explains that the Chasam Sofer was cognizant of the fact that we were put in this world for one purpose: to serve Hashem. The food we eat and the other activities we engage in are only to enable us to fulfill our true mission in life. We, however, are focused on the physical world and perform the Mitzvos merely to fulfill our obligations to Hashem. In the end, it boils down to our true priorities.

However, for us – even with our world view – there is still another factor to consider. We all know that the world belongs to Hashem – "*Lashem Haaretz umelo'ah* – To Hashem belongs the earth and all that it is filled with" (Tehillim 24:1). If we want to partake of its bounty, we must at the very least acknowledge Him as the Provider of all the food that we ingest and demonstrate our gratitude. We do this by reciting the berachos over the food with concentration and sincerity. If we do, we probably will not forget if we made a beracha.

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.

THE AFULA TRIP

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Last week we shared a story about a man who took a taxi and got stuck in traffic. This week, let's explore a similar story about a taxi, but one that has a very different ending.

Dovid, who lived in Israel, ordered a cab to take him to the city of Afula, which is close to Teveria. The taxi came, and the driver said he would make the trip for a flat fee of 400 shekel since it was a far trip. Dovid agreed.

A short while into the trip, the driver, Benny, began schmoozing with his passenger. "Why are you making this long trip? What are you planning on doing when you get to Afula?" he asked Dovid. Dovid responded that there was a very large shopping center there, and he felt it was worth the trip.

As Dovid spoke, Benny realized that the shopping center that Dovid was talking about had recently closed down. Benny felt torn. He wanted the 400 shekel fare. But he didn't want this kind passenger to make the

long trip for nothing. Benny decided that he didn't want Dovid to travel needlessly.

Benny spoke up: "My friend, I am familiar with the shopping center in Afula. But, unfortunately, it is no longer open. It closed down recently." Dovid was disappointed but grateful that Benny told him before they had gone too far. Dovid asked Benny to please bring him back home.

When they arrived home, Dovid said, "I am so grateful that you gave me this information and saved me from a pointless trip. We had settled on 400 shekel for this trip. So here's your 400 shekel." Benny responded, "But I didn't drive you to Afula! You only owe me 100 shekel, for the time you were in the car."

Dovid felt he needed to pay Benny the entire amount because that is what they agreed upon, and the fact that the shopping center was closed should not affect his commitment. On the other hand, Benny did

not feel right taking that much money for such a short trip.

Benny finally said to Dovid. "I really don't feel comfortable talking the full amount. I will only accept it if you are halachically obligated to pay the full amount."

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Does Dovid owe Benny the full 400 shekels they had agreed upon in the beginning? Or does he only owe him the smaller amount for the actual driving time? What do you think?

Regarding last week's question about the taxi stuck in traffic, Rav Zilberstein answered that the cabby did not have the right to ask for more money than the meter showed. He could not charge for the time he would be stuck in traffic. The nature of charging based on the meter is such that the passenger only has to pay for the time in the car and not for any other complications that might arise

I'M TAKING A BUS, I GAVE MY WORD

When Rav Aharon Kotler first started the Lakewood Yeshiva, he lived in Brooklyn and frequently traveled to New Jersey to be with his students. Rabbi Shalom Shechter was in charge of driving Rav Aharon back to New Jersey from New York.

One day R' Shalom went up to the apartment to take Rav Aharon, but the Rebbetzin was worried. The weather was a bit rainy. It was certainly still possible to drive, and most people would have considered it safe enough to drive in such weather, but still, the Rebbetzin was concerned about driving in the rain. She, therefore, requested that R' Shalom let Rav Aharon off at the Port Authority bus station in Manhattan. Rav

Aharon would take the bus to Lakewood. R' Shalom would pick up Rav Aharon at the Lakewood bus station and bring him to the yeshiva. Of course, Rav Aharon and Reb Shalom agreed to the Rebbetzin's request.

Shortly after they began driving, the weather cleared up. The sun came out. The streets completely dried up. All in all, the driving weather became perfect. What would the next step be?

Reb Shalom assumed that obviously, now that there was no longer any hindrance to driving safely, they would revert back to the original and much less troublesome plan of going by car all the way.

Rav Aharon, however, felt otherwise. "*Ich hub tzugezugt.*" I gave my word to my wife and a word obligates. Rav Aharon insisted on taking the bus because he gave his word to his wife.

After dropping Rav Aharon off at the bus, a remarkable thing happened. Rabbi Shalom's car broke down. He was unable to make it to Lakewood. Instead, R' Shalom had to call Lakewood to arrange for somebody else to meet the rosh yeshiva.

From The Living Mishnas Reb Aharon, By Rabbi Yitzchak Dershowitz. Reprinted With Permission From Table Talk.

Starting Meseches Kesubos!

Join the Daf Hashavua at the 1st Seder Bais Medrash. Learn one daf per week with a scheduled format. Learn at a pace that you can review and learn in depth. We will IY"Y be starting Kesubos on September 18th. To find out more about this amazing Chabura please contact Rabbi Uri Greenspan at RabbiGreenspan@FirstSeder.org or 732-407-3178.

בין הזמנים

First Seder Bain Hazmanim

New zman begins this Monday, August 22, at 9:20 AM. Please check our website firstseder.org for a complete schedule.

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

Good Shabbos!