

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 VAYEIRA – DO IT HASHEM’S WAY

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

“For I have loved [Avraham] because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the Derech Hashem – way of Hashem, doing justice and charity” (Bereishis 18:19). Hashem’s love for Avraham was predicated on the fact that the way of justice and charity which he promoted was Derech Hashem.

This pasuk emphasizes that there is a Derech Hashem to administer justice and to perform Tzedaka. All nations have some form of legal system and judicial structure. However they do not contain absolute dictums. They are merely based on the human values that the people ascribe to. More often than not, people change their minds – frequently on not much more than a whim – as to what is considered appropriate and what is not.

Similarly, when it comes to performance of Tzedaka, and acts of chesed in general, nations and societies each have their perception of what is appropriate. These protocols are merely human based ethics, predicated on social norms and individual preferences. They vary from place to place and from time to time. However, for us the “children” of Avraham, there is only one immutable way of performing Tzedaka and chesed: the Derech Hashem.

Although we may perceive various societies or certain people as maintaining a very sensitive and appropriate standard of chesed, they are really fraught with inconsistencies and hypocrisy. Take Lot as an example. He possessed a very keen sense of the need to help others. His hachnasas orchim rated five stars. However, at what cost? He was ready to offer his two daughters to the angry and bestial mob in order to protect his guests.

Let us consider Avimelech, the Philistine king. He professed to have performed chesed with Avraham (see Bereishis 21:23), yet he might very well have killed Avraham, had he known that Sarah was indeed his wife and not his sister. Avraham makes this point very clearly to Avimelech. “(I told you that Sarah is my sister) because I said, ‘There is no fear of G-d in this place and they will kill me because of my wife’” (Bereishis 20:11). When civility and concern for others is based on man-made laws and mores, the whole system can be compromised at the drop of a hat.

When a society creates a legal system or an ethical standard of behavior that is not based on Derech Hashem, its values are not absolute. In truth, they are, for the most part, self-serving. The laws and social etiquette merely help to

advance a self-centered agenda or to serve as a way to mollify their collective conscience. They ultimately will turn to accommodate what is practical or convenient for the government or its people. This said, it is not too difficult to comprehend how a highly cultured nation like Germany or a well-mannered nation like Japan could commit acts of bestiality and cruelty without even a prick of their conscience.

Unfortunately, however, we have witnessed the same type of hypocrisy within the ranks of the Jewish people. Jewish movements, which claim to be protecting and conserving Torah laws and values and even those who actually profess to be Orthodox, have jettisoned not only many Halachos in the Shulchan Aruch, but have also renounced whole sections of the written Torah. Ultimately, like all the other counterfeit movements, they will self-destruct due to their myriad of inconsistencies.

The only true and viable system is the absolute and never changing Derech Hashem which Avraham Avinu transmitted to his progeny and which we are commanded to teach to ours.

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.

JEWISH HOSPITALITY

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzki Weiner

This week's Torah portion discusses the extraordinary kindness and hospitality of Avraham and his family. This leads us to the following beautiful true story.

The Schwartz family lived in Haifa. They traveled to Yerushalayim for a wedding with their five children. They enjoyed the wedding, staying late into the evening. Ready to head home, they left the hall only to be met by a snowstorm. Realizing that they wouldn't be able to drive back to Haifa because of the snow, they sought a hotel for the night.

At the first hotel, they informed the clerk of their need. Checking his computer, he replied, "I'm very sorry, but we have no availabilities." Left with no other choice, the family continued their search. It was cold outside; they hadn't anticipated the snow, and their kids were restless and cold, having no coats with them. At the next hotel, the manager immediately told them they had no vacancies. The father pleaded, "Please help us. Our kids are freezing, and we can't make it home because of the snowstorm." The manager sympathized but said they genuinely had no rooms available.

A man in the lobby, named Avi, overheard their situation. He approached and offered, "I have an extra room for you." Curious and grateful, they followed him. On the fifth floor, he opened a door, handed them the key, and said, "This is my room. It's extra for me. I hope all your kids are comfortable. Enjoy your stay." The family was stunned by Avi's generosity and thanked him profusely.

In reality, Avi didn't have an extra room. Recognizing the family's need, he had given up his own. Now without a room, he wrapped himself in his coat, found a corner in the lobby, and slept there for the night.

Come morning, Avi discovered the family had already departed. Preparing to check out, he realized a potential issue. Was it even right for him to offer his room to another family? If he rented a room, was it permissible for him to sublet it to another?

There was another issue. In Israel, the cost of a room often increases with the number of occupants. With two adults and five children, the room's fee would have been higher than for just

one person. Avi pondered: Did he have an obligation to inform the hotel and offer to pay the difference? Or perhaps one can argue that because he did not benefit from the room, it was not his responsibility to pay for the difference but rather the kind family who used it.

Avi grappled with these questions: 1. Did he have the right to lend out his room in the first place? 2. Was he obligated to offer to pay the difference, or was the onus on the family who occupied the room? What do you think? See Upiro Matok Vayikra 116.

Regarding last week's question about how to hold the Torah, Rav Zilberstein (Upiroy Matok Vayikra Page 402) wrote that the most respectful option would be to place the Torah on the back of a person, on top of a tallis. Rav Zilberstein cites the Chida, who writes that there is a custom on Tisha B'Av to read the Torah on someone's back. So in this case, even not on Tisha B'Av, when there is no bimah available, this would be the most respectful option.

VISITING PRISON ON THE VERY LAST DAY

Reb Dovid Feinstein was vigilant about davening in the yeshiva and usually tried arranging his travel schedule around the scheduled tefillos in the yeshiva.

One day in March of 2020, he asked a close talmid to please drive him to a federal penitentiary four hours from New York. They left at dawn in order to make it for visiting hours, the Rosh Yeshivah davening in the car, b'yechidus, for him, the ultimate act of sacrifice. He did not know the prisoner, but he had heard his story.

The inmate had been fighting with another person and accidentally took his life. Following the horrible crime, the family of this prisoner had cut off ties with him and he languished in prison without any visitors, or even mail or phone calls from the outside world.

A person cannot exist without hope, and the thought of this prisoner and his hopeless existence allowed Reb Dovid no peace. He needed to go visit him, sit with him, and let him know that someone cared. The Rosh Yeshivah was ninety years old, carrying the burdens of

many, but there was a lonely Jew who needed a friend.

The very next day the first wave of Covid restrictions were implemented across America, and the prison was closed to visitors. Reb Dovid had made it just in time to speak words of encouragement and impart hope to the prisoner.

(From Reb Dovid, By R' Yisrael Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah and Reprinted With Permission from Table Talk.)

Daf Hashavua

Mesechta Kesuvos Daf 61 (אז)

Announcing two new shiurim!

Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara Brachos

You can join the Amud Yomi Shiur at 11:15 a.m. and learn and Amud a day. This shiur has been added to the schedule as a zechus for Acheinu Bnai Yisroel! We are currently learning Brachos Daf 12A (בא).

Navi Shiur

Join us for an interactive Navi Shiur on Seder Yirmiyahu Monday and Wednesday 12:45-1:15. The shiur will be given by Rabbi Baruch Lichtenstein.

To register for these shiurim or any of the learning opportunities, please contact Rabbi Greenspan at rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org or 732-407-3178

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First Seder Weekly Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Morning Track 1: Shiurim					
6:20 AM –	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara
6:50 M, Th 6:55 Tu, W, F	(R' Uri Greenspan)	(R' Uri Greenspan)	(R' Uri Greenspan)	(R' Uri Greenspan)	(R' Uri Greenspan)
9:20 AM – 9:55 AM	Mishnayos Demai (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Demai (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Demai (R' Chesky Weiss)	Mishnayos Demai (R' Chesky Weiss)	Parsha HaShevuah (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 – 11:15 AM	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Mishna Berurah (R' Uri Greenspan)
11:15 AM – 11:50 PM	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)	Dirshu Amud Yomi Gemara (R' Uri Greenspan)
11:50 AM – 12:30 PM	Practical Timely Halacha (R' Mordechai Shain)	The Life and Torah of our Leaders (R' David Gross)	Blur Tefilla (R' Yoel Zeffren)	Sefer Tehillim (R' Uri Greenspan)	Pele Yoetz followed by Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim Hashkafa -Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)
12:35 PM – 1:15 PM	Pele Yoetz followed by Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim Hashkafa -Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	Pele Yoetz followed by Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim Hashkafa -Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	Pele Yoetz followed by Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim Hashkafa -Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	Pele Yoetz followed by Shemiras Haloshon from the Chofetz Chaim Hashkafa -Parsha (R' Uri Greenspan)	

Pele Yoetz Mussar shiur

In this 5 – 7 minute shiur, we are currently learning about the importance of Brachos! For men and women; please contact Rabbi Greenspan to join.

Mishnayos Shel Chesed

We are working on putting together a new Mishnayos group of all of Shas Mishnayos. This group will serve as a zechus for Acheinu Bnai Yisroel. Please join now and show your support! To sign up for a Mesechta, please contact Rabbi Greenspan rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org or Rabbi Aryeh Silver rabbisilver.firstseder@gmail.com.

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

Good Shabbos!