

Contemporary שבת Issues:

- Over the next few months (between now and פסח vacation), you will be preparing and delivering presentations on your assigned topic.
- Your presentation should address all of the issues presented by your topic in a complete and comprehensive manner. **Be sure that by the end of your presentation we know what to do.**
- Your presentation should be creative – use your talents to entertain us while teaching the material. Art, film, power-point etc. are all acceptable, (though realize, that these are all just media – creativity is substantive; a line of text is no more impressive if it bounces).
- While you should focus on reaching a practical result, please explain at least some of your issues to us thoroughly (גמרא, פוסקים etc.) using a source sheet.
- You are to prepare a bullet-point style practical הלכה sheet, of publishable quality (EDIT YOUR WORK), to teach the rest of us how to correctly navigate the potential שבת issues presented by your topic. **Each of your points is to be attributed to the source from which you received it.** This need not be done in a formal footnote, but can be put in parentheses following the point. **This sheet must be submitted to me (for review) at least one class before your presentation.**
- A good place to start your research is on the computer. Googling your topic could be very helpful. You may well find an article, which you can use as a starting point. Then go and look up the sources that it cites, and learn them in the original to construct your shiur. If you are having trouble with this step, please see me, and I will help you find an article.
- Also, there are a number of excellent Sefarim published in English on Hilchos Shabbos, for example: The 39 Melachos, by Rabbi Ribiat, or Shemirath Shabbath (the English translation of the classic שמירת שבת כהלכתה).
- Also make use of the Rabbis of your shuls. **Each student is required to ask her shul Rabbi (in person, phone or e-mail) his opinion on these questions, and include her findings in her presentation.**
- I will be happy to help any of you with your research and am easy to find in person or, of course by e-mail –besserd@maayanot.org.
- You will be choosing your own groups; there will be 8 groups of 3. Once you have your group, decide which topic you want and which date you want. E-mail (at the above address) me your top 3 choices for both the topic and date, AND which (choice of date or topic) is more important to you (as a group). First choice for topic will get last choice for date and vice versa.

Dates for Presentations: 12/9, 12/23, 2/3, 2/26, 3/3, 3/19, 4/2, 4/9

TOPICS:

1. **Topic: Medicine & Life-Saving Issues**

- May one take medicine on שבת? Does it matter what kind? How sick the person is?
- What dispensations (if any) are there of שבת restrictions for sick people whose lives are not in danger?
- What restrictions and guidelines are there for someone violating שבת for פיקוח נפש purposes?
- What are the rules for Jewish doctors and medical students whose program calls for them to work on שבת?
- Can you take medicine on שבת? Does it matter what kind?

2. **Topic: Playing on שבת: Games, Toys & Sports**

- Is it OK to exercise on שבת? Play sports? (Don't just review what we did in class).
- What games, if any present שבת issues (Scrabble? RummyKub? Monopoly? Chess? Timers? Play money? Keeping score?)?
- What toys, if any present שבת issues? (Building toys – Lincoln Logs, Lego etc? Dolls that rattle? Glow in the dark?).

3. **Topic: The Mystery of Muktzah**

- What does muktzah actually mean? What does it not mean?
- What are the different categories of muktzah? What are its rules? (Explain using common examples.)
- Explain the ancillary rules to muktzah (*nolad*, *basis* etc.).

4. **Topic: Getting Ready for Shul**

- Is it OK to brush your teeth on שבת? Your hair? Can you apply gel or hairspray?
- Is washing with soap permitted on שבת? Does it matter what kind of soap?
- Can you apply make-up on שבת? Deodorant? Does it matter what type?
- Is it OK to tear toilet paper on שבת?
- What should you do if what you want to wear still has the tags on it?

5. **Topic: Picking & Choosing – Borer Issues**

- What are the general rules of בורר?
- Analyze some common בורר issues that arise at a meal (Setting up? Eating various foods – fish, nuts/seeds with shells? Chulent or soup for people who don't eat the whole thing? Cleaning up?)
- What are some other contexts that present potential problems of בורר (Clothing? Books? Water filters? Etc.)?

6. **Topic: Food and Drink Issues**

- How can one make hot drinks on שבת?
- How can one have hot food on Friday night? שבת afternoon? Be sure to discuss Platas (hot plates), water heaters, blechs, “kedeirah blechs” and crock pots.
- Can you open bottles on שבת? Packages of food?
- Are there any שבת problems with refrigerators? Ice makers?

7. **Topic: Amirah L'_____**

- Is it permitted to ask a non-Jew to do Melacha for you on שבת? Does it matter what you ask him to do? How you ask him? Why you want it done? Are there any exceptions?
- Is it OK to ask or otherwise encourage a child to do melacha on שבת? In addition to the above questions, does the age of the child matter?
- What is the rule about asking a non-observant Jew? A Jew who has either not yet accepted שבת or has already ended it if you have not? May you ask a Jew to carry for you in a place where you don't use the eruv?
- If someone does melacha when they were not supposed to, may you get benefit from it?

8. **Topic: Reading Material**

- May one read non-Torah material on שבת?
- Is it OK to study for an exam on שבת? Does it matter whether it is Judaic or general studies?
- Can you read magazines on שבת? Newspapers? Does it matter how often it is published?
- Is it OK to retrieve Saturday's mail? To open it? To read it?
- If the hot new book (Harry Potter / Twilight / Hunger Games etc.) was delivered to my house on שבת, may I read it?