

Discussion Group Orientation

Where: <http://www.VirtualYeshiva.com> ~ Noah Chat Room

When: Thursday Evenings ~ 8pm - 10pm EST, 7pm– 9pm CST, 5pm – 7pm PST

Format: Open Discussion – participation is encouraged but not required, everyone has the freedom to participate according to their level of comfort.

Our Goal: To continue to research and rediscover “The ancient path of Biblical Prayer and Service” in Light of Torah as it applies to us so that we may fulfill the will of our Creator as Biblically mandated.

Why?: “Those who cannot remember the past rarely have lasting hope for their future.” Rabbi Berel Wein “It is history that preserves men and nations from loss of memory, from loss of spiritual identity” J. Jacobs, excerpted from *The Pentateuch and Haftorah's* by J. H. Hertz.

We are required to know all the details of the laws that pertain to us, and how to apply those laws in our lives. We are not studying to determine what Halacha is, but to determine how the “righteous” in the generations leading up to Sinai would have lived, what they did to be considered “righteous” in their times, How did Torah apply then, how does it apply now, and how will it apply in the future after the final redemption?

Recommended Texts:

Stones Chumash

The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, J.H. Hertz

Mishnah Torah; Laws of Kings, Rambam

The Divine Code, Rabbi Moshe Weiner

Service From The Heart, Okbns Press

Selected Portions of Nachmanides Commentary on the Torah, Vol.1-4

Perkei D'Rebbi Eliezer, Vol. 1-2

Other Acceptable Sources:

1. Any Orthodox or Rabbinically approved Commentaries, Lecture Notes, Articles, websites etc....
2. Note* Be sure to verify the website's persuasion, making sure to only bring Orthodox sources to the discussion group.
3. Any Information shared or presented to the group must include your reference.

Discussion Room Rules:

Every one is welcome to join us and participate with these guidelines being adhered to:

- Proselytizing will result in immediate removal.
- We are not here to attack xians or Islam/Muslims or any other known faith or religion. Although, it should understand that we will discuss Torah as it applies to Righteous Gentiles (Observant Noahides) and that may at some point step on someone's toes (even ours).
- Participation is encouraged but not required, everyone has the freedom to participate according to their level of comfort.
- In order to create an atmosphere conducive to learning, our posts need to stay on topic during the class; we can visit before or after.
- Questions that pertain to the topic can be posted at any time and are encouraged
- The last part of our discussion will be open for honest and sincere questions should people of other persuasions have any.
- We are not here to discuss other noahide groups and/or what we think about others.
- This is "neutral" ground, meaning that everyone is welcome and will not be ridiculed, demeaned, or attacked.

- Any one who does so will be warned once, muted or removed from the group.

This is subject to updating as the need arises.

Please review below our class etiquette:

One of the most common concerns people voice about the online environment is the challenge of being limited to the written word. However, there are limitations in all mediums. I'm sure we have all said something we wished we could take back. In this medium, we have the benefit of thinking before we "speak" (post) and committing ourselves to a statement that is incorrect - or insensitive.

Just as our society has rules of conduct which govern our interactions with one another in the face-to-face (f2f) environment, so, too, does the virtual community have rules of conduct for our electronic interactions. You are, no doubt, familiar with the word *etiquette* - in the online environment, we use the term *netiquette*.

Effective communicators are attentive to tone of voice and body language (visual cues) in f2f interactions. We need to also be attentive to those areas in our virtual interactions. The fact that we are not in a f2f environment does not eliminate the need for us to be mindful of the tone of our messages ("Respond to me as soon as possible" sets a different tone than does "Please respond to me as soon as possible.") as well as their visual appearance ("PLEASE CALL ME" is viewed differently than "Please call me.")

Other recommendations include

- **Stay on topic.** While discussion is encouraged in our classrooms, rambling and off-topic conversations are not conducive to a quality learning experience.
- **Questions are wonderful and welcomed. Remember to be respectful.**
- **Maintain professional and respectful dialogue at all times.** Just as you shouldn't drive when you are angry, you should not send responses when you are mad at someone.

- **Avoid the use of all caps.** (IT'S LIKE SHOUTING!) You can do it occasionally for strong emphasis, but only for individual words.
- **Recognize that we are "talking" with one another, not "writing to" one another.** Despite the fact all of our communications are in writing, it doesn't mean all of our writings are "formal" writing assignments. Despite that informality, we should still make the effort to transmit messages that are readable and understandable.
- **Contribute your efforts to building a collaborative learning environment.** Be positive in your approach to others and careful about your words. Since we cannot see each other, it is hard to tell if you are bashful, bored, sarcastic, or just kidding. I expect you to be kind to one another. You are not in competition for grades. You are here to learn.

Online classroom is a collaborative learning environment - and that is best accomplished in an atmosphere in which each participant feels respected and valued. Our ongoing efforts to improve our communication skills in this environment are an important part of ensuring that atmosphere for everyone.

We hope to see you there!

Pam

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