

"WHERE THE AX HITS THE WOOD"

Issue 2

WHERE TO LEARN

The goal of this series is to discuss down to earth ideas that will make learning happen. The place you learn has a major influence on your interest in learning or whether you will continue learning once you start. This publication discusses the pros and cons of the different places you may learn

in.

Note: Mentioned below are scenarios referring mainly to significant sessions of learning.

BEIS MIDRASH

Learning in a Beis Midrash is the most optimal. Since the place is ideal for learning it is not expected to cause conflict with your learning.

A Beis Midrash is the best place to find ample seforim, possibly a chavrusa, a place that is always available and generally will have a fraction of the distractions that you may experience in other places. It has an atmosphere of learning which for some is crucial to their learning experience. The above is perhaps the main reason that Chazal and the Rebbeim specifically state that learning take place in the Beis Midrash. Aside from all these reasons, there is also other advantages to learning in a Beis Midrash, however here we are focusing on optimizing the learning itself (vs. the effect on the community and other advantages).

SHUL

A regular shul is the next best option (I say regular shul because some shuls also make an effort to include learning in their primary agenda). The only advantage that it has over a separate Beis Midrash that you don't have to change locations before and or after davening (if that is when you are learning). However it does come with many common disadvantages; davening going on at the time you are learning can be quite disturbing to you and you may even be disturbing those davening (especially when learning with a chavrusa). Also the times that the shul are open are often limiting. Many shuls are missing basic seforim needed for learning, and some even show displeasure when electricity is being burnt due to learning (especially when it is only a few individuals).

HOME

Learning at home for many is an oxymoron. The bills on the table, the tugging child, the work waiting all over the place and all the other disturbances make learning at home almost a novelty. In the words of the Rebbe Rashab "he thinks he will learn at home but he ends up wasting his time".

For some learning at home is easy because it is quiet and at times it is possible to control the environment and not get disturbed.

In conclusion – if you ever thought learning was not practical – rethink where to learn.

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