

Congregation Shir Shalom

D'var Torah Overview

Rabbi Marcus Burstein z"l and Rabbi David Reiner

Our Rabbis taught: Studying Torah is like entering an orchard, a PaRDeS.

PaRDeS (“orchard”) is understood as an acronym for the words:

P'shat—“Plain meaning” ~ **Remez**—“Clue” ~ **D'rash**—“Explanation” ~ **Sod**—“Secret”

First, read your *parasha* to understand the . . .

P'shat – the **plain meaning** of your text.

- **Part 1:** *Write two simple paragraphs, one summarizing the entire portion (2-3 sentences) and one summarizing the verses you will be chanting (3-4 sentences) in your own words. Tell us why you chose the verses you chose to chant.*

Then you look for the . . .

Remez – the **clue** in the text that will help you formulate a *Dvar Torah* . . .

- **Part 2:** *Find a teaching or commentary from a famous Jewish scholar. Share that teaching and then tell us why you chose it and why you agree or disagree with it. Teachings can be found in your Torah portion book.*

Now you are ready to write your. . .

D'rash – an exploration and **explanation** of the meaning of the text, both for you and us.

- **Part 3:** *Write your own d'rash (explanation) focusing on one part of your parasha. This is a continuation of the previous assignment.*

Finally, it's time for the . . .

Sod – the personal (**secret**) meaning of becoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

- **Part 4:**
 - 1) *What does becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah mean to YOU?*
 - 2) *What have you learned about becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah from studying your parasha? How does the experience connect to your Torah portion?*
 - 3) *Tell us about your mitzvah project(s), and how/ if they connect to your Torah portion.*
 - 4) *Is there something meaningful that you would like to share from a recent Jewish book you read? If so, tell us about it.*
 - 5) *BRIEF thank-you section to conclude (150 words maximum).*

The entire *D'var Torah* should be less than 1000 words.

**Please bring three printed copies of your latest draft to all meetings.
Drafts should be typed (Garamond, 14 point) and double-spaced.**