

MA CHADASH?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR SHALOM TORAH ACADEMY OF CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

A Message from Our Principal

Dear Shalom Families,

We conclude a busy week of standardized testing and look ahead to the last stretch of the school year, which has so much excitement in store!

Our curriculum is enhanced with field trips that deepen students' understanding of units they have been studying this year, as well as provide new opportunities to broaden their horizons and gain from new experiences.

Preschool: (Nursery, Pre-K, Kindergarten) On Thursday, May 11th, our youngest students will visit the Historic Longstreet Farm in Holmdel! During the guided tour, they will learn about how farms operated in the early 1900s. They will have a chance to feed and pet the animals and explore. After the farm, the preschoolers will be able to play on the exciting playground at Holmdel Park!

First and Second Grade: On Wednesday, June 14th, our first and second graders will be taking a trip to the Camden Aquarium! They will discover the wonders of underwater life, and learn about marine environments and the aquatic creatures that inhabit them. With over 15,000 aquatic species, our students will enhance their knowledge of habitats and animals.

Third Grade: On Tuesday, May 30th, our third graders will be visiting the Historic Village at Allaire, in Farmingdale NJ. Students will participate in a guided tour where costumed interpreters will walk students through an 1836 village highlighting what daily life was like at that time. Students will stop at a Schoolhouse, Blacksmith Shop, Carpentry Shop, Manager's House, and General Store. Students will also be taking a train ride on the Pine Creek Railroad, an excursion tourist train that operates on a 3 ft. narrow gauge track right near the historic village.

Fourth Grade: On Tuesday, May 16th, our fourth graders will be traveling to the capital of our state. In Trenton they will visit the State House and participate in a "Make-a-Law" program, and truly experience the process of an idea becoming a law and how the government works.

Fifth and Sixth Grade: On Tuesday, May 16th, our fifth and sixth graders will visit the Liberty Science Center! The interactive exhibits will give students an opportunity to engage hands-on with so many different concepts that they have been learning about, as well as so many new topics! The students will then have the opportunity to relax a bit at Liberty State Park before returning back to school.

Seventh and Eighth Grade: On Wednesday, May 17th, our seventh and eighth graders will travel into New York City and visit the Tenement Museum in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Seeing the way that immigrants in the early 1900s experienced life, with insights from educators that develop the conversation to current topics surrounding immigration, is a fascinating experience that ties right in to our middle school's social studies curriculum.

We have so many exciting opportunities still in store for this year, as we make each and every day count in Shalom!

Have a wonderful Shabbos,
Mrs. Hoberman

Parsha Lesson

Pirkei Avos- True Honor Rabbi Eli Meir Kramer

Background

In the first Mishna of this week's perek (chapter), Ben Zoma (*Shimon ben Zoma- was a contemporary of the great Rabbi Akiva, he lived in Eretz Yisrael in the era immediately following the destruction of the 2nd Beis Hamikdash. He was referred to as Ben Zoma due to his dying at a young age and childless*) teaches us the following 4 lessons and insights into life:

1. Who is wise? One who learns from all people.
2. Who is strong? One who conquers his evil inclination.
3. Who is rich? One who is happy with his lot.
4. Who is honored? One who honors others.

Question

What is Ben Zoma teaching us? He seems to be taking terms and words that people use to describe one type of person and then merely redefining them to mean something else!

It may be true that it is a good thing to learn from all people and to conquer one's inclination and to be happy with one's lot and to honor others. But how can Ben Zoma say that if one learns from all people HE is wise? Someone who has wisdom is wise, whether he learns from all people or not!

Similarly, someone who is strong is strong. Someone who is not strong is not strong. Someone who conquers their evil inclination may be impressive and worthy of praise, but how can Ben Zoma call this person strong? He is seemingly merely re-assigning a term used by everyone to connote real strength onto this other, albeit praiseworthy, characterization! Ditto for one who is happy with their lot. This is very obviously and clearly a praiseworthy character trait, but that is not what anyone would call someone who is wealthy! Someone who has a lot of money is someone who is wealthy!

And, perhaps the most puzzling of them all, is the final one. Who is honored? One who honors others. How does this make sense? The person who honors others is a source of honor for others- not honored themselves! And while, again, this may be a nice thing to do, this does not mean that this person is honored!

What is Ben Zoma doing here in this Mishna other than using words and terms we use to refer to one thing and re-assigning them in order to encourage other more favorable character traits that Ben Zoma would recommend someone adopt? What is the deeper message and insight that Ben Zoma is teaching us?

Answer

Rabbeinu Yonah explains that in fact Ben Zoma is sharing with us very deep and piercing insights into the world that most people miss.

One who is wise is one who learns from all people. NOT people who seem to be very smart and have a lot to say. They may know a lot of information, they may seem to be very smart and wise. But do they really understand that which they know? Is what they know clear, understood and truthful by them, and therefore reliable, and has therefore transformed their thinking and judgement? Or is their accumulated knowledge merely a tool of theirs to foist themselves over others and a way to 'look' smart, but is not well understood by them, and they are therefore not able to make proper judgement with the knowledge they have and more akin to the proverbial 'books on the back of a donkey'?

Ben Zoma teaches us- want to know how to discern between the real thing and the fraud? Does the person who possesses this knowledge learn from everyone? It is impossible for someone to really understand that which they know, to inculcate the knowledge they have into their being and for them to not have such a love for it that they will accept it and 'hear it' from anyone and everyone, regardless of their stature. If this person is someone who doesn't 'deign' to listen to those who are 'lower' than they, that is a clear sign that this person's knowledge and 'wisdom' is a fraud.

One who conquers his evil inclination is strong. NOT someone who is physically strong. You see, Rabbeinu Yonah explains, there are two parts to a person- their physical body and their spirit. When it comes to physical strength, which is what people generally associate with being a 'strong person', that is quite insignificant and not what is special and unique about a human as a person!

The physical body of a person, put up against other animals of the world, is quite insignificant- regardless of how strong the person may be compared to other people. It would be akin to an ant boasting that he is 'strong' because he is stronger than other ants! When it comes to the spirit however, that is where a person is unique and that is where their 'humanity' shines forth.

In other words, to speak of a person as being 'strong' really makes no sense in the physical manifestation of strength as humans are quite physically weak. However, if you want to know what makes this PERSON a strong PERSON, that is the strength and force of the spirit.

The therefore of this proper perception of the aptitude and assessment of people is that people who assess people as being strong based on their physical strength are led to believe that people who are physically stronger are the people who will live longer, accomplish more, win wars and fights with other people, etc. But in truth, that is not true. Someone who possesses true strength, strength of the spirit which is what makes them uniquely a 'person', that is someone who will live longer, accomplish more, win wars and win in their jostling with other people. The person who relies on their physical strength to get them through may seem to have, at times certain advantages, the truth is that they will lose to those of strong spirit their physical strength will let them down and disappoint them.

One who is happy with his lot is rich. NOT someone who seems to have a lot of money. How? When someone assesses a profitable business someone cannot look only at the revenue of the company, they must also assess their expenses! If a company is bringing in \$1 billion every year, but they have expenses of \$1.1 billion every year, that is a very poor company. On the other hand if another business brings in only \$500,000 every year and has expenses of \$100,000 every year that is a far more valuable, and rich, company.

The same applies to people. Someone who makes \$500,000 every year and spends \$600,000 every year, or needs \$600,000 every year, is really quite poor- as in they will have very little money! On the other hand, if someone only makes \$50,000 every year and spends only \$30,000 every year, they are far richer- as in they will have much more money!

One who honors others is honorable. NOT necessarily someone who is only honored. How? Someone who appears to be honored by others and is the recipient of honor, can lead an observer to question- is that true, real honor or is it flattery? Do those that are honoring this person just 'want to get something' from this person they are honoring? Or perhaps, it is that the people that are honoring this person are really fearful of this person and don't honor him, but merely behave in a manner which wouldn't arouse something they are fearful of?

True honor, real honor, is the outward expression and manifestation of others thinking highly of someone. Do these people that are honoring this person really think highly of them, or are they merely acting the part for some other ulterior motive?

However, when someone honors other people, in a real way, when they think highly of them and treat them in a manner which is consistent and stems from that high appreciation that they have for them, those people will receive in response real, true honor from the people they honor. Why? Because if the person from whom I am receiving honor, if the person who thinks highly of me, is someone who themselves is someone worthy of real honor, then the honor I have received is more meaningful! It is coming from an honorable person! The outcome is that for purely selfish motivations and reasons those who you honor, who you think highly of, will want to think highly, will want to honor, you!

For other people who aren't as selfishly motivated, they will also honor you and think highly of you- in appreciation and as a thanks for you thinking highly of them!

Chinuch Lesson

There are so many lessons that one can learn from these deep insights of Ben Zoma, I would however, like to focus on the last one, Ben Zoma's insight into honor.

Thinking highly of someone, and acting towards them in an authentic way which is an outgrowth of these good thoughts that we have of that person, is nothing less than the source of life and goodness to that other person. For someone to walk around scorned and thought lowly of by those around them is to destroy the person and set the stage for them to behave in a way consistent with low and despicable behavior. Conversely, if we can think highly of people, not in a flattering and false way, but rather in a real way of seeing the good in them and conveying that to the other person, this has the power and potential to completely change and turn around someone's life.

In the life story of every great person there was someone in their developmental years who really believed in them- thought highly of them and saw them as being an honorable and 'good person'. Be it a parent, a grandparent, a teacher, a mentor, etc. someone in their life saw them as being truly good in a real and profound way.

What a source of goodness and life we can be for those around us! What an amazing wellspring of positivity and encouragement we can be for our children, our family, our friends and our acquaintances by having a 'good eye', an eye trained to see the good in those around us, and behave authentically towards others with that 'good eye' setting the stage. And, Ben Zoma tells us, the ultimate beneficiary of this goodness will be us, ourselves, as those around us believe in us and see the good in us, thereby encouraging our further success and accomplishment.

A Highlight from our Judaic Studies Department

Morah Chavi Lapan and the 7/8 Grade Girls

The seventh and eighth grade girls have been busy accomplishing as we head towards the end of the year!

We celebrated our siyum on Parshas Va'eschanan, (סיים פרשת ואתחנן) after spending much time this year on this monumental Parsha, which includes the עשרת הדברות (the Ten Commandments) and שמע (Shema). Because our learning is never really complete, we are already making serious headway into the next Parsha in Chumash, Parshas Eikev!

We are also busy preparing for the end of the school year, with eighth graders moving full-steam ahead to complete their yearbook.

It's hard to believe that we are almost at the end of a wonderful year of growth and success, both in the classroom and out!



A Highlight from our Judaic Studies Department

Morah Esther Klugman and the 1st Grade Class

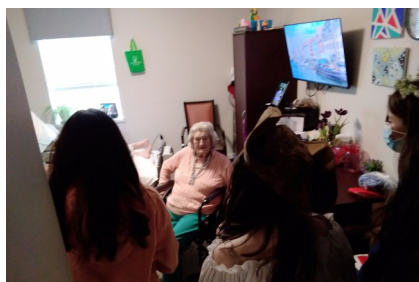
The First Graders are great Chumash learners. We are learning about the six days of creation of the world. This week, we made a mini celebration since we finished learning all the Pessukim about the first day of creation. On the first day, Hashem created light and dark. We made our own black and white cookies, to look like light and dark. We had so much fun smearing the cream and enjoyed the yummy treat. We are now moving along in the Chumash to the second day of creation. Wow!



A Highlight from our General Studies Department

Miss Chaya Leiter and the 7/8 Grade Classes

Throughout this year, the 7th and 8th grade students have had a special opportunity to continue to partake in the "Better Together" Program and connect in meaningful ways with senior residents in The Jewish Home at Freehold. On various occasions, the middle school students had a chance to engage in conversation with the residents and to do fun activities together with them. They engage the elderly in discussions about what their childhood was like, memories of different Holidays, and about Israel, to name a few topics. The 7/8th boys had the opportunity to go on Yom Hashoah and partook in a meaningful commemoration of this dark period in Jewish history and listened to residents reminisce memories of fellow Jews who tragically lost their lives in the Holocaust. Last week, the 7/8th grade girls visited The Jewish Home and presented to the residents with an interactive display about Israel, focusing on 4 holy cities of Eretz Yisroel (Israel) doing an activity connecting to each place. This is a great opportunity for the students to practice their communication skills and connect to the seniors in our community. It truly brings out a very special side of our students and brings joy and hope in our future to the seniors. We, at Shalom Torah, are so fortunate to be involved in such a special mitzvah and opportunity!



Tuesday, May 9	Lag BaOmer
Thurs.-Fri., May 25-26	Erev Shavuot/Shavuot - No Sessions
Monday, May 29	Memorial Day - No Sessions
Tuesday, June 13	Early Childhood End of Year Event
Wed.-Thurs., June 14-15	Eighth Grade Graduation Trip
Monday, June 19	Eighth Grade Graduation
Wednesday, June 21	Last Day of School for Students - 1:30 pm Dismissal



Bella Schaulewicz - May 7
Nathanel Ilizirov - May 9



Mazel Tov!

Great job to our students who passed Kriah levels this week!

Level One:

Olivia Cohen
Moriyah Chen
Sarah Khaimova
Maya Zelig
Raffi Stratton

Level Two:

Avital Benseev
Jacob Weisman
Yakov Nadoff

Level Three:

Yakov Stamler

Level Four:

Michael Baruchov
Sareena Berger
Tziporah Kramer

Level Five:

Mimi Rosenfeld

Attendance Policy:

Reporting Student Absences: If your child will be absent from school, please email attendance by 10:00 am. Include the reason for the absence.

Dismissal Changes: To make a change for dismissal, emails must be sent to attendance before 3:00 pm (12:00 pm on Fridays)

attendance@shalomtorah.org



Passed Level 2

Eli Agarunov
Rebecca Estupinan
Elnatan Itzhaky

Passed Level 3

Hannah Estupinan
Sareena Berger
Michael Baruchov
Moshe David Stamler

May School Lunch Menu

Monday, 5/8	Tuesday, 5/9	Wednesday, 5/10	Thursday, 5/11	Friday, 5/12
Mac & Cheese, Sliced Vegetables	Lag BaOmer Lunch For Students & Staff	Hash Brown Potatoes, Scrambled Eggs, Veg. Soup, Sliced Vegetables	Bagel (choice of Egg Salad, Tune or Cream Cheese), Vegetable Soup, Israeli Salad	1 Pizza Slice
Monday, 5/15	Tuesday, 5/16	Wednesday, 5/17	Thursday, 5/18	Friday, 5/19
Baked Ziti, Garden Salad	Bagel (choice of Egg Salad, Tune or Cream Cheese), Vegetable Soup, Israeli Salad	Fish Sticks with Rice, Vegetables	Cheese Quesadilla, French Fries, Sliced Vegetables	1 Pizza Slice
Monday, 5/22	Tuesday, 5/23	Wednesday, 5/24	Thursday, 5/25	Friday, 5/26
Penne ala Vodka, Garden Salad	Sicilian Pizza, Vegetable Soup, Sliced Veg.	Fish Sticks, French Fries, Israeli Salad	Erev Shavous No School	Shavous No School