February 9, 2024
30th of Sh'vat, 5784

Shalom Torah Academy
OF CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

Candle lighting: **5:07 pm** (Morganville)
Havdalah at **6:16 pm**

# Ma Chadash?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR SHALOM TORAH ACADEMY OF CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

## A Message from Our Principal

Dear Shalom Families,

Another exciting week in Shalom is drawing to a close! Our school continues to bustle with the joy of learning, and the novelty of the many programs and activities that keep things fresh and interesting!

**Yedios Klalios**

Building our students' general knowledge about all things Jewish is just "out of this world"! Our solar system themed program is off to a great start. Every grade level has specific facts that they are learning, through songs, chants, and activities. The bi-weekly quiz is a way to show we know, and students earn prizes for mastering each level's facts…use your flashcards and keep on studying! Parents, please note: This is an extra program and is not intended to be stress-inducing. If you see that your child is having difficulty with the amount of content, please let the teacher know so that it can be adjusted.
Looking forward to making our way through the "YK Solar System"!

**Technology Initiative**

Parents are encouraged to join the upcoming event this Tuesday, February 13th. Mr. Tom Kersting will be addressing the crowd about the effects of technology use on children. Kersting is a psychotherapist who is the author of the book *Disconnected*, has appeared on the Today Show, Good Morning America, and Fox News numerous times. Our goal with this speech is to open the conversation as a school community regarding the technology use of our children, and how best to join together to ensure that we are helping our children be responsible and safe with their technology use.
Our exciting schoolwide program will encourage our students to get busy and active, all tech free. Tech-Free Tuesdays in Shalom begins the following week…stay tuned for contest details.




**Upcoming Milestone Events**

The joyous songs of practice are flowing out of our first grade classroom, as they prepare to receive their chumash, and from our kindergarten class as they get ready for their first siddur! We could not be more proud and excited for them, and we look forward to sharing these milestones with parents and families. Please see the back of the newsletter for dates and details.

Wishing you a wonderful Shabbos,

Mrs. Hoberman

# Parsha Lesson

Rabbi Eli Meir Kramer

## **Mishpatim -** *Justice= Peace and Tranquility*

*For this year's Parsha Lesson I will be applying the lesson that can be derived from the Dvar Torah to the world as we know it today.*

## Background

This week's parsha, which translates to mean 'laws', predictably, discusses many different laws- specifically those that pertain to interpersonal relationships and dealings. The Torah discusses all sorts of law- criminal, civic, commercial, etc. in great detail. How should Beis Din (*Jewish court*) punish someone who murders? How should Beis Din address someone being injured by someone else? In this week's parsha there are the myriad laws regarding property damage and one's property (animals) damaging someone else or something else.

Our Torah is not merely a book of religious practice but rather it is an instruction manual for life, given to us by the Creator of the world, Hashem Himself. Hashem gifted us with the Torah in order to give humanity direction as to how to arrange society and enact laws which will lead to peace and tranquility.

One of the most well known of the laws in this week's parsha, and very descriptive in a 'nutshell' of the Torah's values and rules about interpersonal conduct, is the law of 'an eye for an eye' (*21:4*). While it is true that this law is almost universally misunderstood, as the Gemara explains (*This doesn't mean blinding someone else who blinded you. Rather it means a monetary payment equal to the value of how much more a seeing person would be worth more than one who cannot see– when being sold as a slave*), it is nonetheless a good snapshot of what Biblical justice and rules are all about: making sure, to the best of our ability, that there is fair and equal justice for one's interpersonal misdeeds.

## Question

Ghandi, famously derided this law by saying 'an eye for an eye, making the whole world blind.' While this quote of Ghandi is silly- even the literal interpretation of the Torah would have only one blinding someone else being blinded, thereby not spreading any further than to those who themselves did injustice, his sentiment of peace and forgiveness are appealing and 'lofty'. What is wrong with such 'high-minded' and peaceful ideals?

Why would the Torah, written by a loving and kind G-d, have such rules such as murdering one who murders someone else, and not allow for Ghandi's high minded forgiveness and graciousness? In many respects the 'liberal' ideas of society seem to be so much more kind, peaceful and proper. How is a peace loving and Torah abiding Jew to understand these seemingly 'harsh' laws?

## Answer

The Sefer HaChinuch explains that in truth these 'harsh' rules which govern interpersonal conduct and dealings, are the foundations for a peaceful and harmonious society. With the rules of the Torah, which recognize the nature and essence of man, people can live peacefully side by side with each other.

Absent the rules of the Torah, the Sefer HaChinuch says, society would not be able to function. People would kill each other and there would be mass chaos, violence and suffering. The 'harsh' rules are needed in order to keep order and peace in society. Seen in this light, the rules of the Torah are in fact the *most* peace-loving and the *most* kind.

## Lesson for our world

The foundational basis for crime and discontent in society is people who are not angels, but rather the fusion of a lofty and great soul with an animalistic body. Such people are jealous of others, have desires and lusts for things which others have, are selfishly determined to further their own wants and react violently to anyone getting in their way. Such people require the fear of the law in order to not act on their worst instincts. A world in which such laws are unnecessary is a denial of reality.

Besides for this reality, which is part and parcel of even the most perfected people, who still have an animalistic body with urges and instincts which affect their behavior, the irony of the people who espouse such high-minded rhetoric is quite revealing: Why would the justice of 'an eye for an eye' be thought of to 'make the whole world blind'? Because such people look at justice as 'revenge'. In a world where those who are in charge of law and order are vengeful people, then the whole world will be made blind.

However, one must wonder, why is it that people look at those meting out justice as being vengeful? Isn't it a good thing for people to get the punishment that they so rightly deserve? Isn't meting out justice, honestly, a good thing? Not if one believes that this world is the be all and end all and that the ultimate maxim of life is to 'eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you will die.' In such a world view, one's wants and whims is the purpose of life. As such, one who is depriving another of indulging their wants is the ultimate evil! The irony is that such a denial of G-d and an afterlife is what produces the worst jealousy and all of its results: stealing, violence, murder, etc.

As we see all around us, a society which is devoid of a strong government with an empowered police force to enforce law and order, is one in which anarchy and chaos will quickly reign. Those who oppose such strong consequences and 'heavy handedness' make their case with all sorts of different high-mindedness and appeal to the uplifted nature and loftiness of the human soul- which is capable of such ideals. However, what they don't address is the animalistic nature which resides in each person waiting for a reprieve from consequence to indulge its whims.

Such people are advocating for a society which will bring untold suffering and misery to those in it. They are the ultimate 'useful idiots' and agents of evil.

## A Highlight from our General Studies Department

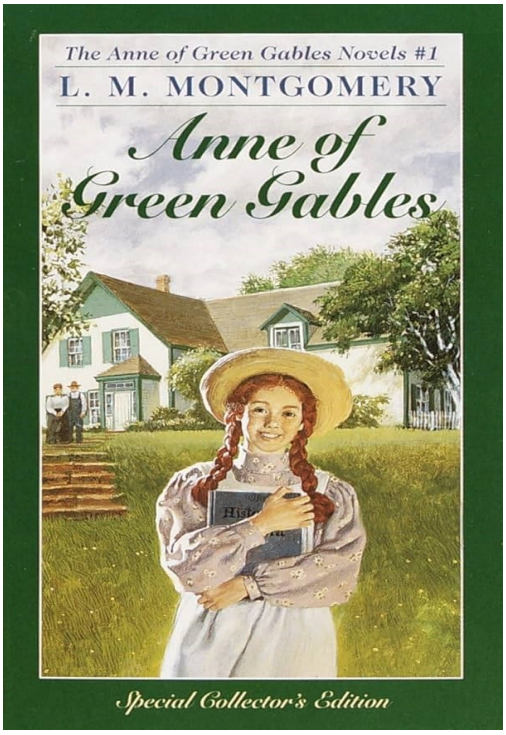
Mrs. Ayala Kutcher and the 7/8 Grade Girls

Our Seventh-Eighth Grade girls are working creatively and industriously during ELA.

They are descriptive writing engaging Memoirs about their Melave Malka Performance experience, using their Graphic Organizers to organize their ideas. Some of the writing skills they are focusing on is that of using “bold beginnings” as well as weaving in sensory details to create a meaningful writing.

The students are enjoying their total immersion in the timeless novel, Anne of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery. They read and act out various parts of the novel while analyzing the piece in different ways to learn from the author's skills. They are also engaged in discussing and writing about the contrasting personalities and behaviors of the protagonists. Their chapter summaries are forming a lovely takeaway for them to keep as well.

Some of the writing elements we are focusing on are similes, metaphors, flashbacks and flashforwards and assonance and personification. Check out our student written bulletin board on Thematic Elements across from our classroom!




## A Highlight from our Resource Room Department

Ms. Chaya Littman

10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... Blast off!!

Though the winter drags on, life is never boring in Shalom!

We have just launched our exciting Yedios Klalios program headed by Mimi Rosenfeld and Rivkah Sokol... right into outer space! We are all hard at work, using our flashcards to practice the information that was introduced in school. We are so excited to move from planet to planet as we pass levels and accumulate knowledge.

We are looking forward to an exciting game show when we reach our destination!










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|---|---|
| Monday, February 19 | Presidents' Day - **No Sessions** |
| Tuesday, February 20 | First Grade Chumash Celebration at 9:30 am * **Please Note the Change of Date** |
| Tuesday, February 27 | Kindergarten Siddur Play * **Please Note the Change of Date** |
| Friday, March 8 | Second Marking Period Ends |
| Friday, March 15 | Report Cards Send Home |
| Tuesday, March 19 | Parent Teacher Conferences - **Early Dismissal at 2:45 p.m.** |
| Friday, March 22 | Purim Carnival |




Moshe Saada - February 13
Yosef Saada - February 13




**Passed Level 3**
Noah Weissman




## Help Us Plan!

Register for
the 2024-2025 school year!

The online form is now available on Gradelink.com
Contact Mrs. Rifkin for any questions or for assistance at 732-536-0911 ext. 102




## Mazel Tov!

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

**Level One:**

Ruby Rozenberg

**Level Two:**

Hallel Gilad
Noah Weissman
Hannah Estupinan

**Level Three:**

Dalia Badach
Daniel Khaimov

**Level Four:**

DovBer Lustgarten

# February School Lunch Menu

| Monday, 2/12 | Tuesday, 2/13 | Wednesday, 2/14 | Thursday, 2/15 | Friday, 2/9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mac & Cheese, Sliced Vegetables | Bagel (choice of Egg Salad, Tuna or Cream Cheese), Vegetable Soup, Israeli Salad | Sicilian Pizza, Sliced Vegetables | Hash Brown Potatoes, Scrambled Eggs, Vegetable Soup, Sliced Vegetables | 1 Pizza Slice |
| **Monday, 2/19** | **Tuesday, 2/20** | **Wednesday, 2/21** | **Thursday, 2/22** | **Friday, 2/23** |
| **Presidents' Day No Sessions** | Penne ala Vodka (contains no alcohol), Sliced Vegetables | Pizza Bagel, Sliced Vegetables | Fish Sticks, Rice, Vegetables | 1 Pizza Slice |
| **Monday, 2/26** | **Tuesday, 2/27** | **Wednesday, 2/28** | **Thursday, 2/29** | **Friday, 2/30** |
| Baked Ziti, Sliced Vegetables | Falafel Sandwich, Israeli Salad, Vegetable Soup | Cheese Quesadilla, French Fries, Sliced Vegetables | Rotini in Alfredo Sauce, Vegetables | 1 Pizza Slice |