

# Shaarei Tzion



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פרשת וארא

Week ending January 8, 2016

Candle lighting 4:30

## Parsha Points

“וידעתם כי אני ה' אלקיכם... והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ”

“And you shall know that I am Hashem your Lord... And I will bring you to the land”

It is difficult to understand that on the one hand Hashem promised entry into the holy land to the generation that came out of Egypt, yet that entire generation perished during the forty years of wandering in the desert. A closer look at the text reveals the answer. The redemption and exodus from Egypt were heralded with the following four expressions of freedom, *vehotzaisi* (and I will bring out), *vehitzalti* (and I will deliver), *vega'alti* (and I will redeem) and *velakachti* (and I will take). The fifth expression, *vehavaisi* (and I will bring you) is the promise of entry into the land. This expression, however, does not follow immediately after the four expressions of freedom, being interrupted by the expression *veyadatem* (and you shall know that I am Hashem) in the abovementioned verse. It is as if to say that the coming into the land is contingent on *veyadatem*. Without this knowledge of Hashem, you will merit only the redemption, but not entry into the land. And thus, when they sinned, they forfeited the promise of “I will bring you to the land,” for without *veyadatem* there is no *vehavaisi*.

Ohr Hachaim taken from *Torah Treasurers*

## The Week in Review

Rabbi Gutman's 5<sup>th</sup> grade has, בס"ד, finished 1½ blatt of גמרא. The enthusiasm toward this new גמרא is palpable. The boys are mastering their גמרא skills, understanding to whom the גמרא is bringing a proof and then appreciating how these proofs are later brought into question. They are doing all of this while perfecting the skills of reading and punctuating the גמרא properly. Many students have asked the upcoming questions of the גמרא before they even learned them, and others have been able to give the answers that the גמרא gives before learning them. The classroom has evolved into a miniature בית המדרש of budding תלמידי. The boys are now looking forward to showing other talents they possess as they prepare to act out the story that they most recently learned. May we all reap much נוחה from all of our תלמידי!

After spending much time learning about nutrition, the second grade boys are well equipped to make healthy food choices. As an exciting culmination to this unit the boys spent time creating their very own placemats. Each boy chose his favorite food and constructed a four line paragraph which explained how this particular food benefits his body. Then the boys learned how to set a table by placing their writing on a plate and adding cutlery to the placemat. The second graders can't wait to bring them home after they are laminated.

Last Friday, the girls school staff benefited from an informative and eye-opening Professional Development workshop given by master presenter, Mrs. Zipora Schuck. Entitled “Lost. Late. But not Lazy,” Mrs. Schuck led a thought-provoking conversation about students in the “syndrome-mix” of ADHD, learning disabilities and/or executive functioning disorders. By teasing out the salient features of a child's challenges, and designing a hands-on coaching approach, every child's skills can be strengthened. The morning provided fresh impetus and an action plan for teachers to help their struggling students move past these hurdles.

In Mrs. Friedman's 5th grade Social Studies and Vocabulary class, the girls are quite the talented thespians! They have been amazingly entertaining while putting on skits using their vocabulary words. Everyone roars with laughter as they perform and then the audience has to guess the vocabulary word. They have become acquainted with parts of the microscope, positions on a baseball field, various roles in a play and different jobs needed to run a political campaign. Learning is loads of fun here in 5th grade!

In 6<sup>th</sup> grade science in the girls' school, Miss Spetner and the girls have just completed their unit on simple organisms and are looking forward to embarking on their next exciting unit of study: Astronomy! The girls had a chance this week to present their “Be a Disease Detective” reports on selected infectious diseases. The presentations were informative, well-researched, and helped them gain an awareness of the tremendous gift of our immune system!

Meanwhile, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade science class completed their unit on cells and heredity. Their last topic was a section on genetics, which brought with it much fascinating classroom discussion. The unit entailed a “Paper Pet Project” in which the girls modeled the inheritance of genes in a family of (very cute) arts-n-crafts pets. They began the next unit on chemistry this week with a lab to discover the properties of various white powders. We are looking forward to this exciting unit!

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade was treated to a fascinating presentation about lasers by Dr. Weinstein and Dr. Pappas. They brought some lasers to our classroom and showed the girls different interesting properties of laser light and how they are used. Thank you Dr.

Weinstein and Dr. Pappas for giving of your time to do this presentation for our class.

## Preschool Jottings

The preschool teachers joined on Friday morning, January 1<sup>st</sup> for an outstanding presentation from Mrs. Geula Zamist. She serves as an Early Childhood Consultant in Caldwell, NJ and has taken her school on a Reggio inspired journey. She shared with us the benefits of the Reggio approach to learning and offered realistic ways for us to implement this approach in YST Preschool. Foremost in our minds now, as we continue through the school year, is how to incorporate these ideas and methods into our curriculum.

The most popular word associated with the letter כ is the word כשר. Morah Mimi's class took a trip with her children to Shoprite searching the shelves for foods that we know are Kosher. They were introduced to the manager of the Kosher Experience section, who showed them Kosher symbols. The children sketched what the different Kosher symbols look like using their handy clipboards. Morah Rochel and Morah Faige's class set up a Kosher Market in their classroom. The children brought in empty boxes and containers of food to help stock the shelves. They too, observed and studied the symbols that indicate this item is fit for us to eat!

There was very fascinating *Parsha* time in the nursery classroom this week. What is a *makkah*? How and why were the Jewish people spared? Why did *Pharaoh* insist on keeping the Jewish people in *Mitzrayim*? The children learned and enacted so many different parts of this week's *Parsha*...jumping frogs were certainly the most popular!

Our language curriculum, now focused on health and hygiene, gave us the opportunity for two special activities this week. We made our own soap. Hidden in each soap piece is a sparkly sequin, so as the children scrub their soaps, they will reveal the sparkle! We also made our own pictures using small papers of all different shapes. Each child designed their picture in their own unique way, but they all have one thing in common – it reminds of us one way we keep ourselves healthy. Come check out the new display and be amazed at how little minds can think and create!

## FYI

- **Save the Date! February 7<sup>th</sup> for the Father/Son Brunch.**
- Girls' After School Program make-up dates:
  - Tues: Coding - Jan 12
  - Wed: Miss Benny's art class - Jan 20
  - Thurs: Gymnastics II & Gotta Run - Jan. 14
  - Miss Benny's art class - Jan 14, 21 & 28
- **Six Flags Read to Succeed 2016 is here!** Earn free tickets to Great Adventure! Prea1a to 6<sup>th</sup> grade who read and log a minimum of six hours over the next few weeks. The **Student Reading Log** needs to be submitted to your child's teacher no later than **Feb 24, 2016**. Happy reading!
- **Note Time Change:** Pirchei and Pirchei Beis Medrash will be from 3:15 to 4:15 at the Agudah. There will be a minyan for Mincha before Pirchei at 2:50.
- **THERE IS NO BNOS MALKA THIS SHABBOS!**
- The Edison/Highland Park gown Gemach, L'iluy Nishmas R' Yitzchok Ben Binyomin, is open for business! The Gemach houses a wide selection of gowns for children, pre-teen, teens and adults. Please note the Gemach is still looking for donation of gowns in very good condition. Tax deduction is given and pick up of the gowns can also be arranged.
- Due to a Social Hall rental on Sunday, Women's Israeli Dancing at Etz Ahaim will be held this Motzei Shabbat, January 9 at 7:00 p.m. instead. All women and girls are invited. Dance costs \$10/per session (Rutgers students 1/2 price \$5) made out to Daughters of Etz Ahaim.
- **Shiur for Men:** Shovavim Project presents a two part review shiur on halachos of Taharas Hamishpacha to be given Wednesday, Feb. 10 and Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 8:00 PM by Rabbi Miodownik at Congregation Ahavas Achim. All married men welcome. For more info, please contact Lynn Hanfling dodcdad@aol.com

- Rabbi Yisroel Weiss' shiur for men and women on the Parsha, with a focus on Emonah and Bitachon each Wednesday night at 8:30 PM at the Shenkman's residence, 26 Leslie Street.
- Mrs. Miri Cohen's Parsha class meets Thurs. at 10:00 AM sharp at Riki Samel's house. Please call the hotline to confirm at 206-666-8911.
- Mrs. Leah Drillman's Shimiras Haloshon class: Mon, Jan 11 at 7:30 PM at the home of Ellen Smith, 407 North 8th Ave., Edison.
- Rebbitzin Eichenstein's classes for women: Tefillah class on Sun, Jan 10 at 10:00 AM at the Agudah; Parsha class on Mon, Jan 11 at 8:00 PM at Cong. Ohr Torah.
- SenPlus evening shiur for post secondary girls meets on *Sunday evenings*. Please call the hotline to confirm at 732-841-1885.
- Please join the *Tehillim* hotline by calling 401-694-1602 at 8:45 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. Follow the prompts and enter access 4625 followed by the pound key. The *Tehillim* is said as *z'chus* for *refuah sheima* for community members, who are ill. Following the *Tehillim*, we will be learning from the *sefer* Growing Each Day. If you would like to volunteer to lead a night of *Tele-Tehillim*, please contact Adina Pruzansky 732-339-0780.

## Mazel Tov!

- Mr. & Mrs. Moshe Feuer & family upon Shira's Bas Mitzvah
- Mr. & Mrs. Yosef Crystal & family upon Chavi's Bas Mitzvah
- Rabbi & Mrs. Levovitz upon the marriage of their grandson

## The Writer's Corner

For a unit on “בני המשפחה”, the girls in כתר ד' each chose a person in their family to write about. Enjoy Ahuva Waltuch's essay about her great grandmother.

### הסתבת רבה שלי

הסתבת רבה שלי היתה אסתר. האחות שלי בשם שלה. היא נפטרה כשאני הייתי רק בת שלש שנים. היא היתה האמא של הסבא שלי. האבא שלי נסע לראות אותה כשהיא היתה חולה. אני אוהבת את השרשרת שלה כי יש השם שלה בעברית עם אותיות גדולות. אני מתגעגעת אותה. ואני רוצה לראות אותה.

### BULLETIN BOARD

- **Shabbos afternoon, Jan 9<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00PM - AY WOMEN'S LEARNING PROGRAM** - Dr. Yisroela Joran will speak on the topic of “Achdus and the coming of Moshiach.” at the home of Janet Rivenson, 19 Price Drive. All women and girls high school age and older are invited to attend.
- **Wed, Jan 13 - 8:00 PM - A Women's Night of Challah Baking** - Come enjoy a night of making challah and learning about the mitzvah of “Bare your Friend's Burden with your Friend” with Rebbetzin Eichenstein at Sheri Degani's house, 10 Cleveland Avenue. Event is free – just bring a bowl and a bag of flour Please RSVP to Sheri at sheridegani@yahoo.com or 732-937-6823 by Mon, Jan 11.
- **Motzei Shabbat Jan 16 - 8:30pm - Rosh Chodesh Group** at Sara Scott's house - 22 Cellar Road. Open to all women. Join us and bring a friend. Featured Speaker - Miri Cohen!! Come say tehillim, learn and socialize too! Greet new faces and smile at familiar ones. Call Vicky with any questions, 732-991-1296.
- **Sun, Jan 17 - 9:30 a.m. - The Highland Park Community Kollel 8th Annual Breakfast** celebrating the Kollel's Decade of Torah, Avodah & Gemilus Chasodim. will כ"ה take place at Cong. Ohr Torah 48 Edgemount Rd. The Guest Speaker will be HaRav Lipa Geldwerth Shlit" a, R'M at Yeshiva Torah Temimah & Rav, Congregation Kol Torah.
- **Motzei Shabbos, Feb 6 - 8:15 PM - Park Milkvah Event** - Cooking demonstration and food tasting with Victoria Dwek, renowned cookbook author. This event will be held at the home of Yael Kamelhar, 22 Perry Rd. The cost of the event is \$25. Space is limited. For reservations, please email Esther Posen at eposes@optonline.net. For more information, please call Lynn Hanfling at 732-777-0225
- **Sun, March 6 - 9:30am - Bikur Cholim of Raritan Valley Annual Event** at the Pines Manor in Edison. The Guest speaker will be Rabbi Eli Mansour, Guests of Honor will be Dr. Barry & Susie Wolf and the Hotline Committee.

## המקום ינחם...

We regret to inform you of the petira of the father of Mr. Fishel Erps. Mr. Erps will be sitting Shiva in his home, 2 Blossom Street, Edison until Thursday morning.



## YST Tech Talk Report

Our Annual Technology Event for the parent body of Yeshiva Shaarei Tzion this past Sunday received raving reviews. It was, of course, in large part due to our guest speaker, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, שליט"א, who, for over an hour, kept his listeners engaged and connected. Rabbi Twerski painted a picture of changing times, going back to when he was a child until the present, emphasizing that what were appropriate parenting strategies before, may not necessarily be so now. Bringing us up to the present with the inherent problems and dangers of the Internet, Rabbi Twerski's message was that although filters are essential, they are not enough. Only one's close attachment to "ד" can ensure his safety and success as a Torah Jew in these times. Specifically, he strongly recommended that parents learn מסילת ישרים (Path of the Just) with their children, the classical *mussar sefer* whose study and imbuing of its values can help to ensure what every Jewish parent would want from his/her children: closeness to "ד" and a life full of Torah and מצוות.

May we all merit to bring up such children, and to build homes whose foundations are steeped in purity and sanctity.

### Cybersafety – The Rules of Engagement

Rabbi Leiter opened by reiterating a main point of Rabbi Twerski's presentation: It's never too early to start educating our children. For example, if from a young age we inculcate the ideal of לא מצאתי, לגוף טוב יותר משתיקה, then we can hope that as teenagers they won't belong to 7 different WhatsApp groups. If we raise them with a sense of basic *mentschlichkeit*, then they will hopefully not send curt or hurtful text messages.

Rabbi Leiter then shared the results of an informal "focus group" that he conducted earlier in the day with three young men. He asked them to share their feelings about technology and the value of the evening's program, and received the following responses:

1. "So my parents will probably take my phone away for a month like last time they went to a school technology event. Then they'll give it back and nothing will really change."
2. "I wish my parents would give me some guidelines. But what I really need most is something else to do with my time – some other good outlets."
3. "Not a big deal – technology is not a big issue for me."

Rabbi Leiter shared that he knows the parents of the 3<sup>rd</sup> boy to be heavily involved parents who carefully monitor their children's engagement with technology. Some discussion followed regarding the nature of this involvement, specifically how much can we control our children's use of technology. Some of the suggestions that were put forth:

1. Identify with your child by relating personally to their struggles. For example, if your child would rather watch a video than work on a book report, you might say: I also sometimes want to procrastinate, and it's hard to do what you have to do rather than what you want to do.
2. Keep children busy and productive. Boredom is dangerous!
3. Teach children self-discipline. Help them realize that we never have everything we want and if we try to, we'll never be satisfied. For example, if child is clamoring for 10 more minutes on the computer, you might say: You know that when those 10 minutes are up, you'll just want another 10. Teach them to feel good about saying no to their תאוות.

One big issue raised was the difficulty of allowing our children to do research online for school reports. While this seems to be a necessary requirement, parents felt that there was no way to safely ensure that children wouldn't unintentionally be exposed to inappropriate images in the process. A parent noted

that even the K9 filter can be easily set to turn off the "safe browser." One parent mentioned a possible solution: setting up a Google Account for the child with parental controls. These controls are tailored to the age of the child and can be set by the parents, so for example, they can restrict images altogether.

Another issue raised was the difficulty sometimes presented by grandparents who do not subscribe to the parents' ideal of limiting technology use. It can be difficult to stop grandparents from allowing the children to play with their devices and at times they may purchase devices for the children that the parents don't approve of. Ultimately, one parent pointed out, it's difficult for us to make changes for our children if they are not motivated from within. Ideally, the children should "own the problem" and feel on their own that they would be better off with less involvement. (Definitely ideal, but unrealistic, according to most of the parents.)

### Screen Time & Play Dates

Mrs. Didi Deitcher led a focus group on playdates and screentime. She highlighted the idea that every family has to define its own boundaries and then communicate those boundaries. This communication includes:

A) Communication between parents: This would be a phone call to the parent whose home your child is invited to before the playdate (ie: 'I would like for my son not to watch movies at your house' or 'I do not allow my son to play video games'). Mrs. Deitcher advised defining specifically what screentime means to you - what is okay with you and what isn't. Although some parents expressed the hesitation that such communication between parents can be viewed as insulting, it was agreed that this can be said in a respectful, unoffensive manner and can become the norm. One parent raised the point that the purpose of playdates is to promote healthy social interaction, and screentime during playdates defeats that goal.

B) Communication to your children: Clearly define what your rules are for screentime at a friend's house (ie: 'you may not go on the internet at a friend's house', or 'you may not use the computer at all' or 'you need to check with me before watching a video'). Mrs. Deitcher stressed that parents need to take a leadership position in parenting. She also noted that by making the phone call to a mother before a playdate, your kids get the message that you care.

### Screen Time vs. Family Time Maintaining a Balance

Rabbi Landau first and most important discussed what is valuable family time? True family time would consist of a considerable amount of time when no attention is being paid to any form or shape of a device and eye contact is being made between the members of the family present. He presented an A through G list of important things to remember when discussing this topic:

**A** – all devices are equal. None are more or less important or influential when talking about disconnecting.

**B** – be a role model

**C** – "see" – eye contact made with the family members being spoken to.

**D** – disabling devices

**E** – educate yourself and be involved

**F** – full view of the child with his device/computer

**G** – give them 2. Limit the recreational time on a device to 2 hours a day maximum.

Rabbi Landau gave fascinating statistics of children who performed differently after having had a significant respite from their devices. The most impactful moments in a child's day is when he/she wakes up in the morning, before he/she goes to bed at night and when he/she is being picked up/dropped off at school. Parents should evaluate and reevaluate...where are their devices at those crucial points of the day?

### When Should My Child have a Device of His/Her Own?

Yeshiva Shaarei Tzion was honored to have Rabbi Steven Miodownik take part in this important evening. Rabbi Miodownik set the tone for the evening by introducing Rabbi Twerski and then served as an insightful facilitator for the important conversation of "When Should My Child have a Device of His/Her Own."

The following ideas were discussed:

1. Age appropriateness depends on each particular case.
2. Association that Bar/Bas Mitzvah and having one's own device is a wrong message.
3. Sometimes parents like being their kids' friend. This could be especially harmful in making decisions relating to a child's use of technology.
4. When a cell phone is given to child, parents must stress the importance to still have face-to-face communication.
5. Stress the importance with your child of how easy it is to severely hurt another.
6. There was a study done of 2 groups of teenage girls who were exposed to trauma. In one group the girls spoke to their mother, whereas in the other group they texted their mothers. In the group that texted, stress was not relieved as much as in the other group.

### The Who, What, When, Where & Why's of Usage Monitoring

The Focus Group of "Who, What, When Where and Whys of Usage Monitoring", chaired by Rabbi Nechemiah Gottlieb, enjoyed a relatively large group of participants. One of the points mentioned was that it certainly is necessary to be sure that one has the best filters for his equipment, and the TAG office (732-730-1824) should be contacted for this purpose. However, with all of that, there is no guarantee that children won't be adversely affected by the internet access in their home, for nothing is foolproof. If one has to have it, for whatever reason, then one should be sure that it is as safe as possible.

Another point mentioned was that children should not have their own personal internet devices, even if the internet is blocked. It beckons to the child to try and get around it, something that children have been found to be quite successful at doing.

An additional point brought up was that giving a set time (i.e. 8:00-8:30) is more effective than giving a time limit (i.e. ½ hour.) Also, Rabbi Gottlieb emphasized the necessity of our homes being "fun" places to be. Our children should love their homes, not feeling the need to go somewhere for excitement. In conclusion, Rabbi Gottlieb mentioned in the name of Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon, שליט"א, that if we do all we are capable of doing to protect our children, then we have the right to daven that "ד" will give us success, and keep our children from harm.

### Screen Time and Social/Emotional Development in Children

Rabbi Binyamin Segall, the boys school guidance counselor, discussed the screen time and the social interaction of children. The group explored healthy and fun activities that could replace screen time as the only way for children to spend their leisure time. The group discussed the impact on children when parents are rigid and the struggle parents experience in decreasing and monitoring what children are watching. The group explored the need to know your child and explored possible reasons for their interest in increasing screen time. Perhaps they are struggling academically or socially and are looking to numb out their feelings. Participants shared their personal struggles with smart phones and expressed the need to model to their children responsible action when engaging with technology.