



Derech HaTorah of Rochester

The Path of Respect and Excellence

3"02

January 25, 2024
ט"ו שבט, פרשת בשלח, תשפ"ד

Calendar

Fri., Jan. 26-Mon., Jan. 29-Midwinter Weekend Break- **No School**
Fri., Feb. 16 - Mon., Feb. 19- Presidents Weekend- **No School**
Mon., March 4- Spring Conferences/Staff Dev.- **No School**
Thurs., March 21- Taanis Esther- 1 pm Dismissal
Mon., March 25- Shushan Purim Break -**No School**

From the Principal

Dr. Lea E. Goldstein

This week, as we celebrated Tu B'Shevat and we'll lein Parshas BeShalach, the connections between planting trees, nurturing human life and inspiring hope are fascinating. A famous story is taught in the Gemara (Ta'anis, 23a): "One day Choni was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked, 'How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit?' The man replied, 'Seventy years.' Choni asked him, 'Are you certain that you will live another seventy years?' The man replied, 'Just as I found the world full of carob trees planted by my parents and grandparents, so will I plant for my children.'"

As parents, we provide the roots for our children. We ground them with foundations of security and stability. Just as the nourishment and strength of a plant depends on its root system, so, too, our lives are sustained and supported by our "roots". We care for our children and grandchildren, our precious saplings, and watch them grow. However, we realize that we may not merit to see the fruit of their future branches. We can only daven for the bracha of seeing our children blossom and mature.

The great question that children always ask me, when we are giving out fruit and talking about growth, is why Tu B'Shevat is always in the winter. I tell them that it marks the turning point from the harshness of winter to the hint of spring, and that in Israel, it's when the sap begins to rise and buds begin to form. The deeper message, I think, is that trees represent the idea that even when something looks terribly bleak and looks like it has no future, we should not give up. "Yeshuas Hashem keHeref Ayin" – Salvation from Hashem comes in the blink of an eye – and even when we see hopelessness, He is already waking up the sap in the trees. For this reason, Tu B'Shevat is celebrated in the dead of winter.

Similarly, in the parshios leading up to BeShalach and Yetzias Mitzrayim, things looked hopeless for the Jews in Mitzrayim. Finally, with miracles and wonders, they were redeemed. Then, again, in this parsha, they arrived in Marah, and "they could not drink the water, for it was bitter," (Shemos, 15:23).

Once more, things were hopeless. There were millions of people in the desert with no food or water. Hashem then showed Moshe a tree and told him to throw it into the water to make it drinkable, perhaps as a subliminal message to the nation, meaning, "Don't give up. Don't worry about the desert. Things look bleak now, but the salvation from Hashem comes in the blink of an eye." Hashem provided a beacon of hope, a piece of a tree. By throwing it into the waters "וישקה לתוך המים" (Shemos, 15:25), He miraculously sweetened the bitterness - "וימתקו המים" - demonstrating that when everything looks bleak, desolate and hopeless, we should realize our situation can improve rapidly. Rebirth, renaissance and renewal are real and are a gift from Hashem.

One more thought on trees and life lessons: Trees are complex and multifaceted. A tree is an astonishing natural resource that gives, but it demands patience for it to grow, work to prune it and harvest fruit, and strength to chop wood and build homes. It requires a commitment to the future through understanding that we must always be planting more. It represents rootedness and connectivity; which are antidotes to despair, helplessness and bitterness.

Tu B'Shevat reminds us of our role as "gardeners" for our maturing and blossoming children. It prompts us to remember that beneath the barren landscape and the seemingly endless winter, a quiet promise of budding life pulses, whispering of a verdant season to come.

Some ideas excerpted from: <https://www.torahmusings.com/Digest.php> and https://adathisraelsf.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=567&catid=24&Itemid=141

Fun & Learning at DHR



Middos Mention...

- ...Dovid helped Rabbi Balgley put away all of the books and notebooks after class. Wonderful! 🌟
- ... Naamah cleaned up all of the paint from her table- all by herself. How helpful!
- ...Meira's friend was sad because she lost a glow bracelet, so Meira gave hers to her friend to make her feel better. How kind! 🌟

Benching Superstars....

Yehudis Balgley	Batya Bashary	Yosef Brea	Ephraim Burger
Zelda Deitch	Elka Deitch	Yisroel Kosow	Rikki Lagunov
Rochel Lehrer	Meir Leib Shulman		Leah Nochomovitz
Nosson Vogel	Olivia Wettstein		Levi Yaras
Zalman Yaras	Moshe Zargary		



A Trip to RMSC & Strasenburgh Planetarium!

Mrs. Polatoff's 2nd grade class had a wonderful time at the RMSC and the Strasenburgh Planetarium! A special thank you to Mrs. Polatoff for organizing and driving for this field trip and to our other wonderful volunteer drivers, Dr. Matthew Hirschfeld, Mrs. Talya Brea, Mrs. Chayi Vogel!



Mazel Tov to...

...Mrs. Miriam Mammon! Her excellent new article about teaching Social-Emotional skills was just published!! So impressive!! Here is the link: <https://www.cojds.org/2024/01/10/using-social-emotional-learning-to-transform-the-school-and-its-families/>
...Reuven and Bracha Lowy on the birth of their new son Zevi!
...Mrs. Ribakow's 4th grade girls and Rabbi Caro's 3/4 Boys finished Parshas Vayeishev this week! Mazel Tov!

5th-8th Boys at the Rochester Sports Garden

The middle school boys had an inspirational seuda shlishit at the Balgley's house. They enjoyed a delicious meal, sang zmiros, played games and then enjoyed a very special Havdalah. Thank you to R' Aaron Silbergleit for his words of inspiration! On Sunday evening, they went to the Rochester Sports Garden to play indoor soccer, it was lots of fun and a great bonding experience. The boys loved the jam-packed weekend of fun and inspiration!



School Choice Week!



Thank you to ...

...the Flink family for their wonderful gift to all DHR staff members for Tu B'Shevat.
...Ben & Chava Bashary for sponsoring last Friday night's Chavrusa Learning!

