

KOL KADIMA

The Voice of the Memphis Jewish High School

Vol.2 No. 18

12 Shvat, 5768

January 18, 2008

Parsha: Beshalach

Candle Lighting 4:55 p.m.

Havdalah 5:57 p.m.

Mazal Tov MJHS!

*We did very well on our SACS evaluation.
In a few weeks we will officially be an accredited school!!!*

The SACS evaluation committee spent two days at the school this week. They were very impressed with what the school had put together in the short time since it opened its doors 18 months ago. Everyone did a wonderful job: the staff, the parents, the board members and of course the students who really made a strong impression on the committee.

Congratulations!



Our **schedule** for second semester will be effective of Tuesday, January 22. There have been a few minor changes made. Please read the attached letter or check your email for full details.

Upcoming Events

Monday, January 21: MLK day, school is out. Class resumes Tuesday 7:30.

Wednesday, January 23: From 6:30pm -7:30pm at the JCC a **community wide Israeli Tu-Bishvat experience will be held.** It will be a rich program with nice Israeli fruits, musical performances and more. This event is a result of a joint effort of all the Israeli Shlichim, and Rabbis of all affiliations. Please see invitation with details attached.

Sunday, January 27: From 11:00am – 12:45pm MJHS will host **Kesher-Konnections 4: “60 years of Aliya”.** We will mark this event with an ‘Israeli Food and Music Festival.’ It will be lots of fun; come and bring a friend along.

Monday, January 28: **MJHS Night @ Grizzlies!** MJHS students will be the **Grizzlies** guests of honor this night. The students will be on court with the players before the game and then stay for the game.

Past Week Events

Our second annual “**Tu-Bishvat Global Seder**” went very well. Our 9th grade did a good job and their presentation worked just as planned. The school in Milwaukee and in Modi’in did a good job too.

The Efrata School in Jerusalem will plant a tree in Israel in the name of our 2011 class. The class chose to dedicate the tree to Israeli music. The actual planting will be after the Shmita year, which one of its restrictions is planting in the land of Israel.

Todah Raba

To **Mrs. Sally Wender** for organizing and setting up all the meals this week for the SACS committee. They really appreciated it!

To **Mrs. Jerri Rubin** who helped plan the meals, even though she was out of town for Tuesday and Wednesday.

To **Mrs. Julie Nahon** for filling in for Sarah in the front office on Friday. This is not the first time Julie volunteered to help out, and we appreciate it a lot.

Mrs. Lipson, Mrs. Chanin and Mrs. Nahon for driving students to the Tu-Bishvat Seder down town.

This week in Judaic Studies

The 10th graders had their Syum celebration on the 5th book in Bible they completed. The special request for Mrs. Gellman’s famous chocolate cake was fully filled to their satisfaction.

May you celebrate many more Siyums.

In Oral Torah we are continuing with our Modernity and Halacha series. This week we started learning about **abortions**, from the Jewish law and other perspectives. Ask your kids, they will tell you all about it.

Educational corner

This week I'd like to point out something from the Parsha which could be a good lesson to all of us.

Right after the song at the sea, and all of the excitements, Israel needs water. They get to a water source and this is what happens:

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. (bitterness in Hebrew)

And the people murmured against Moses, saying: 'What shall we drink?'

And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. There He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them

The basic question is how could a simple branch of a tree change the quality of the water so easily?

But the real question is obviously, how dare they complain or question Moses and G-D after what they just went through at the Red Sea?

There is a deep, sweet and very true Hassidic explanation of the underlined words in the first verse above: what's the reason they could not drink from the water. The verse tells us simply '**for they were bitter**' - the water was too bitter to drink.

The Hassidic interpretation says no. 'They' refers to Benei-Israel. They couldn't drink from the water since they themselves were bitter!!!

Many times people are so bitter that they can't identify the opportunities that are lying at their feet. It's very unfortunate when someone develops a bitter attitude since he will not be able to see, smell, taste or enjoy any sweetness. And if he doesn't see that the water is sweet and that it has potential to saturate him, he misses the biggest opportunities life can offer.

The cure that G-d suggests is to throw a simple branch in the water. People think that there was some kind of a miraculous solution here, but the truth of the matter was, that it made no real difference. It was only a psychological effect so that they'd be able to overcome that bitterness. Sometimes small changes seem like big victories followed by willingness to taste from the water, to try it out. But we'd never know that it was sweet all along the way.

This could also explain the end of the third verse above: and there He proved them – teaching the nation a very important lesson that all you could gain and all you could experience is out there for you. You must bring the right attitude in order to taste from it.

D'var Torah for 'Beshalach' by Seth Harrison

'Beshalach' is a portion full of amazing stories and most of them were miracles ones. First, leaving of Egypt. Second, splitting of the sea. Third, curing the bitter water with a tree branch. They got the Manna, miraculous bread, which will be their food for 40 years, and then again getting water out from a stone for the nation to drink. The last miracle mentioned in the Parsha is the victory over Amaleck, which also had a miraculous side to it.

The portion starts with leaving Egypt and the Israelites going through the desert. They took the long way because the short way was filled with enemies, and G-d didn't want the Israelites to head back to Egypt.

The question is why don't they have to learn how to deal with enemies? After all they are a nation now?

Another question that came to my mind, why did the Israelites have to have so much protection from G-d while starting off on their journey in the desert?

I think that being a brand new nation was hard because they would always have the urge to go back to Egypt because they were there for so long. A slave develops a slave mentality, which is very difficult to get out his mind. Any difficulty on the way out may be very discouraging for them and naturally they would desire to go back to the known world, where they knew what to expect. Trusting G-d and Moses on this new journey would not be possible if they would be lacking such basic needs as water, food, protection or if they had to face an enemy. After all they were a bunch of slaves and not yet a real nation.

In fact, in the Parsha, when they had water and food shortages, they asked to go but G-d had to perform many miracles to hold the nation together and keep them from turning away from G-d, and lead them in miracles in their first steps as a nation.

Shabbat Shalom

Mazal Tov

To the trees on their birthday this coming week. Tu-Bishvat is the trees new year which we celebrate on January 22.

In Memory of my dear grandmother Ann Styler Z"L who passed away on this day, 7 years ago.