

Schedule of Events

Thursday, February 14: A special guest speaker at MJHS. **Daniel Mendelsohn**, the author of *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million*. This highly acclaimed personal memoir details Mendelsohn's odyssey to learn about the fates of family members who perished in the Holocaust. Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel called *The Lost* "a vast, highly colored tapestry...a remarkable personal narrative, rigorous in its search for truth, at once tender and exacting." In town on a book tour, Mendelsohn will be at Davis Kidd on Wednesday, February 13. We are fortunate that he has agreed to visit MJHS on Thursday. Please see the attached invitation for full details.

Friday, February 15 – Monday, February 18: **School out for President Day weekend.**

Sunday, February 17 @ 7:30pm Symphony Concert at Baron Hirsch: Come enjoy the Belz-Parker Artists Ascending Concert Series. Please see the attached flyer for full details.

Past Week Events

Monday, February 4: The parents and staff celebrated the success with SACS. Following the celebration, Dr. Beebe addressed his program "Learning & Study Skills for Teenagers".

This program actually started this week. The 9th grade group, which meets on Tuesday afternoon, missed their first session due to the Tornado Alert.

Friday, February 8 We had a special Kabbalat-Shabbat **Challah baking experience** at the school. Students and Staff got to prepare Challah for Shabbat and take it home with them. Please let us know how they tasted!!!

Todah Raba

To Ms. Malkin and Ms Belz for preparing the desserts for Monday evening's party.

To Mindy Lipson, Pam Malkin and Pam Thomas for driving the students to the JCC.

To Ms. Malkin (again) for driving the students to BSSS today to participate in their Kabbalat Shabbat.

Educational corner by Ms. Joan Traffas - History

February Magic

I got married the day after a blizzard. The February wind whipped and lashed and howled all through the day and long into the night. The blizzard banked snowdrifts against barely recognizable buildings, made roads impassible to all but the most determined, and caused shivering animals to huddle in the tree-sparse pastures. But the next morning was the most glorious I had ever see before or since. The trees were sheathed in ice crystals refracting the dawn's first light into prisms of brilliant colors; the air was fresh and crisp and I nearly burst my lungs trying to inhale so deeply and hold it in forever. And the sun was bright and warm. No coats, jackets or sweaters were necessary as we walked along the frozen ruts of country roads. The sounds of the snow crunching beneath our feet and of a cow bellowing a low soulful call to a wayward calf were music. I witnessed the world reborn. That moment will never come again. It was Magic.

There is another magic, though, that February offers. This is the month that many students find themselves in love with learning. There is something in cold long nights that serves as a petri dish for that special type of magic that converts a student into a scholar. Dormant wonder stirs students to listen, to question, and to read. No longer are these affected students content with being idle or passive. Barriers fall away and sparks fly as they glow with new appreciation. By now they get the drift of school. By now they have been tumbled, tossed, and polished. And the sheer beauty of their potentiality begins to show through. Touched by this transformation they reject stale apathy and realize learning is fun. They understand that we are all linked together in a mutual symbiotic relationship and share the common goal of their success.

Indeed, February is the month for lovers. And lovers find joy and excitement in staying open to discovery and adventure. A wise man once said, ‘whether you think you can or think you can’t—you are right.’ So burn with curiosity, learn and never be filled; never grow bored or weary. That is wisdom; that is success; that is love.

This moment is magic and will not come again.
Awaken!

Adar 1 and Adar 2 by Elana Malkin

Yesterday we had Rosh Chodesh **Adar Aleph** (1). Why do we have two months of Adar this year?

The Jewish calendar is based on the lunar system, which is 354 days a year and that’s 11 days behind the solar year, which is 365 days a year.

The Torah tells us our holidays Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot, which are based on the Jewish lunar calendar, have to be in a specific season. Passover has to be in the spring when we start the harvest, Shavuot has to fall at the end of the harvest season, and Sukkot has to be in the beginning of the fall when we gather the fruits. Therefore we have to match our lunar calendar to the solar calendar, which determines the season, to make sure that the holidays fall on the proper season as required.

The solution that the Chachamim found was to add a month every 2-3 years to the Jewish calendar. The calculation is the following: every 19 years the lunar calendar is 210 days behind the solar calendar (11 days per year). To match it up we add a single month on to 7 years out of a cycle of 19 years (210 days). The average is a leap year every 2-3 years. The month we duplicate is the month of Adar since it’s the last month of the year on the Jewish biblical calendar

All the laws of Purim and Purim celebrations are in the second Adar.

Shabbat Shalom

D’var Torah for Parshat Terumah

From Rabbi Avi Weiss

THE MEANING OF THE CROWNS ATOP THE ARK, TABLE AND ALTAR

The Torah informs us that the Ark (Aron – Exodus 25:11), the Table (Shulhan – Exodus 25:24) and the Altar of Incense (Mizbeiakh Miktar Ketoret – Exodus 30:3) were all decorated with rims. Why is this so?

It can be suggested that each of these appurtenances

corresponds to different roles of important personalities. (Yoma 72b) The Ark relates to the Torah scholar, as the Torah was actually contained in the Ark itself. The Table symbolizes the prosperity of our people best represented by the Ruler. And, the Altar reminds us of the Priest as he offered incense upon it.

Each of these individuals plays important roles and each has a distinct challenge. The Torah scholar must be careful not to allow his knowledge to lead him to arrogance, to feeling superior over other less learned Jews. The King, the most influential of individuals, must be careful never to use his power to take advantage of his subjects. And the Priest may never permit his important religious position to be used as a platform to abuse others.

It is no wonder that the Hebrew word for rim is *zair*. On the one hand, *zair* comes from the word *zar* which means “alien”. In other words, the Torah scholar, King or Priest could pervert their important roles, thus alienating themselves from God’s way.

But, as Rabbi Shmuel Bornstein of Sochaczew in his *Shem Mishmuel* writes, *zair* intersects with the word *Nazir*. The Nazirite is one who achieves a high level of spirituality by dedicating life entirely to the service of God.

Thus, the goal of the Torah scholar, the King and Priest is to direct all energy to holiness. To see to it that the rim at the top of these objects is manifest in the spirit of *Nazir*. In this sense, the rim around can be viewed as a crown, a symbol of royalty nobly turning one to God.

Note, that in Ethics, the rabbis speak of three crowns, the crown of Torah, the crown of the priesthood and the crown of kingship. Not coincidentally, they correspond to the Ark, the Table and the Altar in the Tabernacle. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the rabbis conclude that the most important crown is the crown of a good name (*shem tov*); in their words, “but the crown of a good name is greater than them all.” (Avot 4:13).

The challenge is to infuse the three objects in the Tabernacle, representative of these three major roles in Judaism with the critical dimension of a good name. In *Shem Mishmuel*’s words: “Each of these three great gifts to the community of Israel—Torah, Kingship and the Priesthood—needs special attention to insure that they are used only for holy, rather than self-seeking purposes. The crown on the Ark, Table, and Altar represent this constant need.”

Shabbat Shalom