



כוכב הצפון

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE HEBREW ACADEMY

EDITOR: MICHELLE RUTTA

IN OUR HEARTS

A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Dr. Jeffrey Kobrin

This week I remembered a friend I haven't seen in many years. Tzachi Ben-Tov joined my second grade class in 1977; he was a classmate till sixth grade. Each year we would get a number of Israeli kids in our class as their diplomat parents came to New York for various government appointments. They would often know little to no English; we were not, I'm not proud to say, always so nice to them. These kids, we thought, were different. They didn't know how to dress like we did, what books, TV shows and music we were talking about, or what games we played at recess. We therefore were not as welcoming as we should have been.

The second of this week's two parshiyot, Kedoshim, has some fifty-one mitzvot. One is not to hate another person "in your heart:" lo tisna et achicha bi-levavecha. Rabbi Zalman Sorotskin in his Oznayim LaTorah notes that in Hebrew, this sentence is a little clunky. If the hate is in your heart, he notes, it should say lo tisna bi-levavecha et achicha. (This makes much more sense in Hebrew.) Why this word order?

We often dislike those, explains Rabbi Sorotzkin, who are our brothers (or sisters). Those who are similar to us make us feel uncomfortable and sometimes even jealous of what they have achieved. We tell ourselves that we dislike them, but we really are burying our own feelings of inadequacy.

By fifth grade, Tsachi Ben-Tov was literally playing Romeo in our class play of Romeo and Juliet. But before middle school began, Tzachi's family moved back to Israel and we lost what little connection we had. That is until years later. In September 1997, I learned what had become of Tzachi: he had become a doctor and an army medic and had risen to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Yitzchak "Tzachi" Ben-Tov was killed on September 4, 1997 when his naval commando unit was attacked during an operation in Lebanon. This week of Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut seem the right time to tell his story once again.

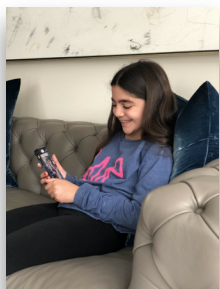
If we would purge our negative feelings, Rabbi Sorotzkin explains, we would realize that those we dislike are actually our achicha bi-levavecha, they are our siblings: they have the same goals and the same values that we do. This is key advice at a time when we have been cooped up for so long and we sometimes bicker over the least significant issues. This is not only a lesson for us now stuck in our homes, but for us all when we return to school and to work. This week we shared dozens of experiences together, united over our love for the State of Israel and those who have sacrificed for and built it. Zoom allowed us to join with people from the Great Neck Synagogue, from White Plains, from the NSHA High School, from Grow Torah, and even current and veteran shlichot from Israel. The unity aspect of our programs was remarkable, and I once again thank all those who put them together.

Recognizing our brothers and sisters for what we all share can be yet another silver lining for us all. May we hold onto it.

Shabbat Shalom.

FRIDAY NIGHT CANDLE LIGHTING: 7:34 PM הדלקת נרות:**SHABBAT ENDS: 8:43 PM** זמן הבדלה:**Parashat AchreiMot Kedoshim**

We've made a lot of history at North Shore Hebrew Academy in the past few weeks and today was no exception. Our middle school students began their day today with the celebration of North Shore Hebrew Academy's first virtual Bat Mitzvah. Sixth grader **Eden Amini** marked the occasion of her Bat Mitzvah during the middle school virtual tefillot by sharing a thoughtful D'var Torah with her classmates, teachers and family. When asked about Eden's simcha, Rabbi Acobas said, "We are so thrilled to be



sharing this important simcha virtually together with Eden and her family. It is also so special to be able to recognize the important chesed work that Eden was involved with as a way to add even more meaning to this occasion."

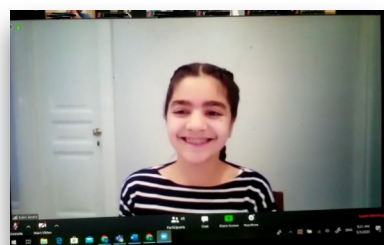


While Eden shared words of Torah with her classmates today over Zoom, Eden and the Amini family have been planning for this simcha for a long time through working on an incredible chesed project. Eden explained, "I knew I wanted to do a chesed project that was

connected to Israel. My parents and I discussed a lot of options to see which one moved me the most. We came across an amazing organization called **OneFamily** whose mission is to help families whose lives have been affected by terrorism. One of the programs OneFamily offers is a Bat-Mitzvah twinning project, where I got to know an amazing girl my age named Tamar whose father was a police officer and was injured in a terrorist attack. He is unable to work so the family is now in need of financial assistance. I wanted Tamar to experience what so many girls my age experience and often take for granted, a Bat-Mitzvah celebration. I was able to raise \$600

from friends and family by having them participate in a virtual zoom Zumba dance party. For every dollar I raised, a friend of my family gave two dollars, so the total amount raised was \$1,800. This was enough to cover the Bat-Mitzvah celebration expenses for Tamar's family. I am grateful to all my friends and family for helping make this happen!"

Eden's words this morning echoed through the homes of our middle school students as she spoke about this week's parsha - Acharei Mot - Kedoshim. "In Kedoshim we are first introduced to the mitzvah of לרעהך כמוך. Loving your neighbor as yourself seems easy, but is actually a difficult commandment to follow because it goes against human nature to care about a stranger as much as you care about yourself. By going against our human nature we are applying the greatest gift Hashem gave us, which is free will. We have the ability to make the world a better place by pushing ourselves to love our fellow man. For example, following the recommendations of doctors and scientists during the Coronavirus pandemic will help keep others safe, even those we don't know. This is a true act of love for our fellow man." Eden taught us all an important lesson for



these unprecedented times.

When asked about how she felt about not being able to celebrate her Bat Mitzvah as planned, Eden shared, "I'm upset

that I cannot celebrate my Bat-Mitzvah with my friends and family. I would love to dance with my friends, my parents and my grandparents. But I'm also learning from this experience that it's important to make sacrifices in order to keep those around us healthy and safe." Mazel Tov to Eden and the Amini Family!

****If your family would like to celebrate a simcha that may have already passed or that is scheduled for before summer vacation, please reach out to Rabbi Adam Acobas at aacobas@nsha.org. The middle school has live davening on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and we would love for your child to share a D'var Torah in honor of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah, or to organize a chesed event for their classmates to participate in over Zoom. Please reach out to lweinstein@nsha.org if we can spotlight your child's simcha, some of their words of Torah and share their chesed project, in this newsletter as well.***

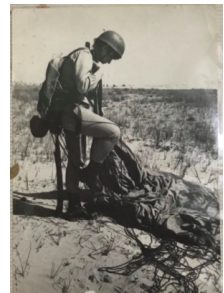
Brought to you by: Morah Miriam Behnam, Morah Gilit Bessalely and Morah Adina Galai

Our first grade students jumped right back into our learning after Pesach and we were excited to begin focusing on Yom Ha'Atzmaut which we celebrated this week. We learned about the State of Israel and all of her miracles and enjoyed sharing items and experiences related to Israel as well. We talked about the significance of the flag and of Hatikvah. We especially loved seeing everybody's handmade flags. We continue our learning of our Ariot language curriculum and our students are very excited to be starting to master the script letters and expanded vocabulary. The first grade students are doing beautifully in their new classes including their twice weekly small group Hebrew reading lessons, our weekly Parashat Hashavua shiurim and live tefilla Zoom sessions. It is a highlight of our days connecting with our students and we are so proud of all of their hard work during the remote learning program.

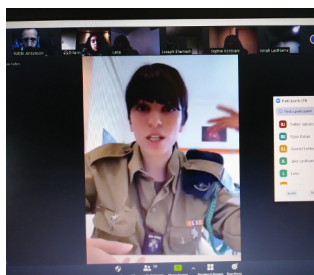


YOM HAZIKARON AND YOM HA'ATZMAUT WITH #NSHA ANYWHERE

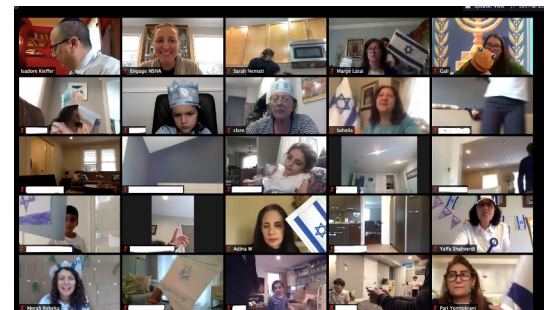
This was the first year we have held a family tekes commemorating **Yom HaZikaron** and it was a special opportunity to observe this day together as a community. We heard the incredible story of our very own NSHA hero, **Morah Ziva Meraz**. Known to all as our beloved Kindergarten teacher, Morah Ziva has an incredible family history of serving the State of Israel. Morah Ziva's family encompasses three generations of IDF paratroopers. Her father, Colonel Tuvia Aryeh, was killed in a special IDF mission in Africa. Morah Ziva recounted her experience and sense of responsibility as a member of the groundbreaking first female paratrooper unit in the IDF and described her son's service as a paratrooper as well.



Yom Ha'Atzmaut is one of the most highly anticipated days of the year for our students and it was a priority for the NSHA team to make sure that our students had a chance to celebrate as they always do. Our celebrations began with a beautiful musical Hallel together with Chazzan Yitzy Spinner. Our younger students joined the Great Neck Synagogue minyan and our middle school students joined the NSHAHS minyan. In addition to all of our class time learning about this exciting holiday, we enjoyed some beyond the classroom special programming too! In a



NSHA first time experience, all four of our Early Childhood grades joined together for a Zoom parade and singalong with Mr. Kieffer. Kindergarten students were challenged to a grade wide Kahoot! and our Pre-K students took a special trip to Israel. Many of our EC Morot dressed up as El Al flight attendants and IDF soldiers.



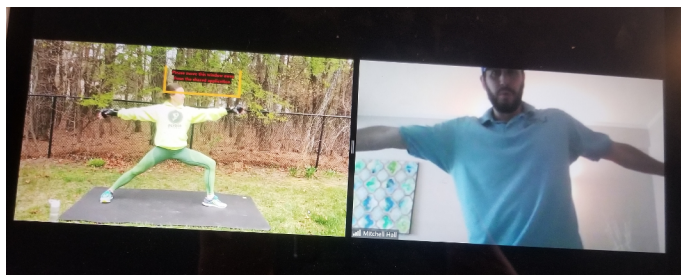
Our elementary school programming was centered around three core values:

- 1) Connecting to our history
- 2) Strength and bravery
- 3) Love of the land



In our first session, **Tamar** and **Oriya**, our Bnei Aviva Shlichot, joined us from Israel for Kahoot! trivia to test our knowledge of Israel past and present. **Coach Hall** led an intense IDF bootcamp where we trained with the intensity of soldiers. Finally, we were especially excited

to be joined by Farmer Sara from Grow Torah where we learned about Israeli innovation in agriculture and the parallels between working the land and working on ourselves. It was a great preview to the exciting Grow Torah program that awaits us when we return to NSHA!



Our **middle school students** enjoyed special programming in their Lashon classes and we received

lots of pictures of their homemade pitot that they created with their families. We could almost smell the delicious Israeli aromas!



When we joined together for Remote Ruach with **DJZJ Jon Zar**, we had a great time singing, dancing and rocking to our favorite Chagiga songs. We also announced the winners of our social media Yom Ha'Atzmaut challenges! We wrapped up the day with sweet blue and white treat making demos by **Sadie Hakimian**.

While we couldn't be together in person to celebrate, the day truly felt like a communal celebration of the miracle of Israel, NSHA style!

YOM HA'ATZMAUT INSPIRATION

Download the Benjamin and Rose Berger Yom Ha'atzmaut To-Go® 5780 from Yeshiva University – <http://www.yutorah.org/togo/haatzmaut>.

This issue of Torah for Yom Ha'atzmaut includes the following articles from members of the YU Israel Kollel in Jerusalem:

- **The Torah of Redemption:** Eli Weinstein
- **Contemporary Korbanos: Issues and Opportunities:** Tzvi Goldstein
- **Stories of Return:** Jacob Lazaros
- **Gishmei Bracha:** Eitan Rozenberg
- **Actualizing Prophecy: Man's Obligation or God's?:** Isaac Selter
- **The Powers of a Jewish King:** Effie Wagner

SPOTLIGHT ON: MIDDLE SCHOOL CHUMASH

Morah Jansenson's 6th grade Chumash classes (6C,6A) have just completed their study of the Mishkan and the Kohanim. They learned about the structure of the Mishkan and how it served Bnei Yisrael after the sin of the egel. They also learned about the Kohanim and their unique job as representatives of Bnei Yisrael. They also served as teachers of Torah and Halacha and were responsible for bringing the Jewish nation closer to Hashem. As formal representatives, they had to wear a special white uniform that included the avnet, knit from 24 colorful strings. The Kohen Gadol wore four additional garments that made him stand out. This unit concluded our study of Sefer Shemot and we are looking forward to beginning our study of Sefer Bamidbar.

Morah Aviva Smus' Chumash Class Our **7C Chumash class** has been learning פרשת חוקת אדומה. After studying about the symbolism of the פרשה אדומה, the students learned about the famous story of מי מריבה in which Moshe hit the rock instead of speaking to it. There are many opinions as to why Moshe hit the rock if he wasn't commanded to do so. Rashi explains that at first Moshe did speak to the rock but when the rock did not bring water, he assumed that he should hit the rock just as he did (in chumash Shemot) at מסה ומריבה. According to the Rambam, Moshe hit the rock out of anger. He spoke to the people in a furious manner, which was improper for one whose behavior would be watched and emulated.

Points for discussion:

What is a חוק? How is it different than a מצווה?

What's an example of a חוק in your everyday life?

According to משה הדרשן what national sin does the פרשה אדומה atone for and how?

What is a kiddush Hashem and how is that concept connected to the story of מי מריבה?

How can we best control our actions when we feel ourselves getting angry?

Rabbi Gabriel Jansenson's Chumash Class In our **7th and 8th grade** Chumash classes we studied Parashat Kedoshim and learned about the mitzvot of orla and neta revai. The mitzvah of orla teaches us that the fruit of a tree cannot be eaten or used in any way during the first three years growth. Neta Revai are the fruits that grow during the fourth year in the life of the tree. These fruits must be eaten in Jerusalem as the way of thanking Hashem. The prohibition of orla also applies outside of Israel and is still observed today. In class discussions we learned how are we able to buy and eat fruit in America which was imported from Israel, without knowing whether the fruit was grown in an orchard owned by Jews. The Halacha explains that when there is a doubt about orla fruit in Israel its consumption is prohibited (for that reason the Rabbanut keeps a record of the fruit orchards in Israel). However orla fruit found outside of Israel may be consumed.

Rabbi Simon Basalely's Chumash Class Our **8A Chumash class** has been continuing our learning of Parshat Kedoshim on zoom. This week we have been studying the prohibition of לא תאכלו על הדם - which literally means not eating on the blood. Rashi explains that the Torah is prohibiting eating a korban before the blood is sprinkled on the altar and eating an animal before its spirit has left it. Both prohibitions demonstrate the need for patience in life. We can't always have whatever we want whenever we want it. Perhaps this is a good opportunity to discuss social distancing and explore the areas in which we have had to develop patience over the course of the last few weeks. We hopefully can take this newfound patience and take it with us even after our current experience.

D'VAR TORAH: PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM

By Rabbi Simon Basalely

Although originally recorded two weeks ago in Parshat Shemini, Parshat Acharei Mot begins by mentioning the passing of Aharon's two sons, Nadav and Avihu. The Torah records in the original mention of the story that their sin was bringing an אש זרה - a foreign fire into the משכן. I have always been perplexed by the story of Nadav and Avihu. Rashi records earlier in Sefer Vayikra (10:3) that Nadav and Avihu were great men - even greater than Moshe and Aharon in their stature. What could have brought them to this state of bringing an אש זרה - a foreign fire - to the משכן?



The Midrash in Vayikra Rabba (20) lists numerous additional suggestions as to what exactly was the sin of Nadav and Avihu. One opinion in the Midrash is that they rendered Halachic decisions in front of their teacher Moshe Rabbenu. Another opinion is that they are the individuals described in Shemot (Perek 24) “who had a vision of G-d and ate and drank.” The Midrash explains that they took pleasure from the Shechina in a mundane state like one who sees his friend while eating and drinking. Perhaps we can find a link between these two explanations. Rabbi Yair Kahn suggests that many of their failures can be connected to one theme – religious presumptuousness. Nadav and Avihu took the religious experience for granted without taking heed of the boundaries which it dictates.

One should not be mistaken – Nadav and Avihu had reached great religious stature and legitimately so, but their great love for Hashem burst forth without regard for proper boundaries. The Netziv in his commentary on the Torah explains that the *אש זרה*, the foreign fire which Nadav and Avihu brought, was actually this passion for serving Hashem which was misplaced. Although love for Hashem is precious in Hashem’s eyes, it may not be expressed in a way which He didn’t command. The love must be tempered with reverence and restraint. It was specifically because of their elevated religious stature that they lacked the appropriate awe and reverence when approaching the presence of Hashem, the sanctuary of Hashem and the teachers of Hashem’s Torah. Their strength was their weakness and their greatness was their downfall.

We find ourselves, as well as almost the entire Jewish world, in a state of physical distance from the sanctuaries of Hashem: our Batei Knesset, Batei Midrash and our Yeshivot. As many of us saw on the media even the Kotel plaza often lays bare in this difficult time. We hope and pray that we can soon return safely to our shuls and schools. As we prepare to return, perhaps we can use this distance as a break to refocus how we relate to these holy places. Have we acted in ways in which we demonstrated that we were overly comfortable in these places? Did we act and teach our children to act in these places with the proper reverence that a *בית אלוקים* – a house of G-d – deserves? It is a wonderful thing to have the religious accomplishment which goes along with having a feeling of comfort in our religious places, but we must be careful not to fall into a state of over-comfort and overconfidence with our presence there. Our holy places provide us with the opportunity to meet Hashem in a place of special Divine presence, but they must be treated with the reverence such holiness deserves. I look forward to seeing all of you back in our places of prayer and places of learning very soon. Shabbat Shalom.

NSHA’S FIRST VIRTUAL “POEM IN YOUR POCKET” DAY!

By Lisa Weinstein

“Poem in Your Pocket” Day was celebrated virtually by North Shore Hebrew Academy yesterday for the very first time. Started in 2002 by the mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, it’s a day to celebrate poetry - the words and imagery of a poem, reading poems, and reciting them to others. During my 16 years as a classroom teacher and then school leader, this was always one of my favorite days of the school year, and when I joined the North Shore Hebrew Academy community this past fall, I learned that Mr. Sigal felt the same way!



We decided to put a unique spin on “Poem in Your Pocket” Day this year since we’re all at home, instead of at school, and solicited the help of our students and faculty to share their favorite English or Hebrew poem with us - in a photo of the poem chalked on their driveway or sidewalk or recited on a video. Some of the poems chosen were silly and fun. Shel Silverstein is definitely a popular poet amongst our North Shore Hebrew Academy family, while others spoke to the unique moment that we’re all living in.

Mayah, Dann, Lea and Adam Rosenweig chalked the Hebrew words:

"זוה הזמן שלך לזרוח ולדעת ולגעת בהכל"

לטרף את העולם, לא תפחד ליפול"

"And it's your time to shine and to know and to touch everything, To devour the world. Don't be afraid to fail."

What a beautiful message to hold on to as we experience these unusual and unprecedented times!

Blown away by the response from our community, the poems were curated into a Happy "Poem in Your Pocket" Day! video and shared with our community yesterday. We hope that the images and cadences of these words in English and Hebrew inspired you, and that you enjoyed seeing and hearing the voices of our community, students and teachers from our Early Childhood program through Middle School, as well.

If you haven't seen the video click here!

FROM THE DESK OF ELANA HELFGOTT:



We hope you are all healthy and safe. It has been wonderful connecting with everyone via zoom. We miss seeing you and your children in person. Never did any of us think that we would have to create online

instruction for such young children. I would like to applaud my E.C. faculty for quickly learning new skills and responding to this situation with professionalism, enthusiasm and grace. I would also like to thank Morah Adina for her attention to detail. Her help training our faculty on zoom was essential. We could not have accomplished all that we did without her help and expertise.

We thank you, our parents, for all of your patience and assistance at home and for helping us create smooth transitions for your children to adjust to this new reality. Last but not least, all of this would not have been possible without the help of Andy Sandler, Abby Weiss and their teams. We appreciate their tireless efforts to get us up and running during this difficult time. I continue to work with an amazing team of administrators, Rabbi Kobrin, Mr. Sigal, Rabbi Acobas, Abby Weiss, Rachel Spinner, Lisa Weinstein and Lisa Guggenheimer, who meet every day via zoom to plan accordingly, respond to feedback and redirect. Thank you for your feedback each day and your tireless efforts.

It was heartwarming to hear from so many of you last week about your Pesach holiday and specifically about your Sederim. While for us this was a much different Pesach than we envisioned, I was so happy to hear about

how prepared your children were despite teaching them in a different manner. Our E.C. teachers worked hard to ensure every child was prepared appropriately and that each child had a chance to make a Haggadah at home via our zoom sessions.

We hope that you enjoy the phone calls from your child's teacher and that you are also enjoying the special programming that our E.C. faculty has created for you per grade. I have personally enjoyed all of the virtual zoo trips, caterpillar workshops, pajama parties, baking sessions and read alongs with you. We are also enjoying Mr. Kieffer's music sessions and onegs as well as Mr. It's science class. Morah Nadine and Morah Debbie are also busy with enrichment classes on zoom. We are thankful for their creativity as well during this difficult time.

Now that we are back from our Pesach break, we are working hard behind the scenes to make sure we continue to provide your child with the same quality curriculum as always. We are busy preparing for Shavuot, Lag B'omer and End of the Year celebrations. Our E.C. faculty is working hard to create meaningful contingency plans for possible End of Year Celebrations on zoom in case we are unable to open school. We will be in touch with you as we have more information.

Wishing you all health and safety during this trying time. I pray that we will be able to see you all in person very soon. Shabbat Shalom.

All my best,

Elana Helfgott



CONGRATULATIONS to the winners of the NSHA PTA Yom Ha'Atzmaut T-Shirt Contest!



Take Your Seat at ONE TABLE

A NSHA Cookbook Project

Please save us from another night of mac & cheese!

What's your (or your kids') favorite weeknight dinner?

We are continuing our work on our NSHA One Table Cookbook. Please let us include your family's favorite traditions and recipes. Please email recipes to PTA@NSHA.ORG

One School. One Table.



PTA HELPFUL LINKS:



Click [here](#) to shop on Amazon via our AmazonSmile link - a portion of your purchase will benefit NSHA.



Join the PTA "All Hands On Deck" WhatsApp Chat to be in the loop! Contact Marla or Sadie to be added.



PTA Dues Remember to pay your PTA Dues including teacher Chanukah and End of Year Gifts at www.nsha.org/ptadues



Click [here](#) to register your Shoprite card and a portion of your purchase will benefit NSHA.



PTA Uniforms: Click [here](#) to purchase NSHA uniforms throughout the year.



You can now submit PTA payments via Venmo (No Venmo payments accepted for Uniform orders): @nsha-pta .