



Parshas Nasso

Hadlokas Neros 8:26 p.m.



Pre-K

א-ב סיום



מזל טוב  
Pre-K!

**Important Dates**

**Friday, May 25:** 4:10 pm dismissal

**May 27-28:** No School

**Tuesday, May 29:** 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Yedios Keloliyos Trips!

*Don't be late!*

**Sunday, June 3:** Sunday morning program 8:45 am-12:15 pm

**Monday, June 4:** Pre-K Zman B'Yachad 11:30 am

**Shabbos, June 9:** Mechanchim Kiddush at Torah Academy

**Sunday, June 10:** Sunday morning program 8:45 am-12:15 pm

**Sunday, June 10:** Kindergarten Graduation & Siddur Party 10:30 am

*Thank you for supporting  
Torah Academy!*

### *A Torah Thought from Rabbi Idstein...*

The idea of being a king conjures up fantasies of unmitigated power and an existence surrounded by every pleasure and luxury imaginable. Every whim is immediately fulfilled and every desire is instantly met. Who could possibly be happier than a king? The Torah teaches us that there is a voluntary, temporary status that a man or woman can accept upon themselves, the status of a “Nazir.” Characterized by a theme and spirit of moderation, this unique spiritual state of holiness results in three restrictions: a) not to consume any grapes or any derivations thereof, including wine; b) not to cut any of his hair; c) not to contract any ritual impurity through a human corpse.

In explaining the restriction on ritual impurity, the

Torah states “for the crown of his HaShem is on his head.” The Ibn Ezra elaborates on the meaning of the verse as follows: “All of mankind is enslaved to the pleasures of this world. Only the one who is free from desire is considered a true king, with a royal crown upon his head.” How remarkable! True kingship is not marked by dominion or wealth, but by self-control and moderation, illustrated by the vows of temperance taken by the Nazir.

We may not be able to attain the riches of a king, or be vested with royal power. We are, however, able to adorn ourselves with a “crown” of “true kingship” through a measure of self-control and restraint.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

*Rabbi Idstein, Menahel*

### **Bike Safety Reminders**

- It is wonderful to see all the bikers that come to school daily now that the weather allows it! However, we ask that all parents provide locks for the children to lock up their bikes during the school day. Torah Academy cannot be held responsible for damage or theft of bikes, nor can we allow them to all be kept inside.
- We also ask that all parents insist that their children wear helmets and review with them basic rules of riding their bikes in the street. We have been getting calls about children who are not as careful as they should be while driving to and from school. Thanks for your cooperation!

## **The last session of Homework Help will be Monday, June 4th.**

### • *Mr. Cleary's Corner*

Summer reading...we all want our kids to do it, but often times, by July, we are out of reading materials or perhaps we have exhausted ourselves by trying to get our kids to actually read. A couple of things happened this week that may be helpful to others when it comes to the sometimes challenging aspects of summer reading.

My 5th grader is out of books. We have packed up most of our books and he didn't want to read “Lessons From Baseball” that I had on my coaching shelf. The next day, Rabbi Idstein came into my office all excited about a book he had ordered from [www.thriftbooks.com](http://www.thriftbooks.com). They sell books, new and used, and it's super easy to order. I was excited for him! That night, my son, Porter said, “Dad, I still don't have a book.” Bing!! Into my head pops Rabbi Idstein's excitement and I ask Porter what he wants and I got on my phone and headed to [www.thriftbooks.com](http://www.thriftbooks.com) and order the two books he wanted plus one for my daughter in order to get free shipping. The point is this, don't miss out on opportunities for your kids to read. Porter has found an author he

likes, so we will keep going with that author until he stumbles upon something else. Also, Rabbi Idstein usually gets excited for good reason!

I have shared several times my daughter is a struggling reader. With sports in full gear, our reading time has decreased significantly. She needs to be reading, but she struggles and doesn't necessarily love it. This week, in a meeting, we were talking about the benefits of books on tape. Bing!! Another idea pops into my head. I need to be getting her audiobooks to fill in for me and my lack of reading with her! Audiobooks are extremely beneficial, especially to students who may have difficulty with reading. I could even listen with her (which would actually result in me falling asleep)!

Summer reading does not have to be a set structured time, but it does need to be done. We will be testing again in October next year and we don't want to see a “summer slide.” Seize the opportunities you have this summer to have your children reading. Car time, plane time, rest time, night time, during rainy days, and any other time you can...have your kids reading.

*Mr. Cleary, General Studies Principal*

Mazel Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Eli and Sara Markowitz on the birth of a baby boy. May the bris take place b'ito u'vizmano. Mazel Tov to grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Eugene and Tzipi Weinberg and Mr. and Mrs. Motty and Chani Markowitz and great-grandmother Mrs. Debbie Weinberg.



Mazel Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Pinchus and Nechama Idstein on their daughter Sarah reaching the age of bas mitzvah. May they see much nachas from all their children.

Congratulations to Amanda Rose Halek on graduating Magna Cum Laude from the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, with a degree in music education on May 19. After graduation, she plans to live and teach in Milwaukee.

*We apologize if we inadvertently omitted your simcha or gotten the details wrong!  
To share news with the editor please call 952-285-8603 or email [office@torahacademymn.org](mailto:office@torahacademymn.org)*

## Yedios Kelolios Corner

The Outstanding, Fabulous, Stupendous, Excellent, Marvelous, Magnificent, Superb, Fine, Wonderful, Exceptional Yedios Kelolios trip is this coming **Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>**. We are looking to a fun and rewarding day for all the hard work that the students put in this year to earn this trip.

All Permission Slips and Waivers should be handed in as soon as possible!

**Check email; for any further updates about the trip.**

### Dress Code Reminders!!

- The School Dress Code requires knee high socks for girls and ankle socks for boys. Now that the weather is nicer, we ask that all parents help us in uphold the dress code.
- Additionally, many students are still wearing sweatshirts to school. While we allow other sweatshirts for playing outdoors during the winter, it is not necessary to wear thicker, bigger and warmer sweatshirts at this point in the year. We respectfully ask parents to help us enforce the dress code by not allowing their sons or daughters to come to school in non-uniform sweatshirts.

**Scholarship applications were mailed to all parents who requested them on their reenrollment form.**

If you did not receive yours, please contact Mrs. Ebstein at [shaynab@torahacademymn.org](mailto:shaynab@torahacademymn.org) or 952.285.8624.

**Camp Ruach** applications are now available in the school office.

*Torah Academy extends its condolences to Mrs. Lili Khabie on the loss of her husband and to Dr. Vico Khabie, Dr. Nissim Khabie, Mrs. Fiji Simon, Mr. Daniel Khabie, & Mr. Benjie Khabie on the loss of their father, Mr. David Khabie, David ben Chaim a"h.*

*Torah Academy extends its condolences to the family of Mrs. Marsha Raviu a"h.*

*May the Omnipresent console you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.*

## CLASSROOM CLOSE-UP

### 6th Grade Girls Judaic Studies ~ Miss Mandelbaum

You sit down at your computer and open up Word. What's in front of you? A blank document, in Times New Roman 12-point font, no spaces between lines, and one-inch margins on all sides. The default setting.

In sixth grade, we learn what to make as our default setting: recognition of HaShem and our responsibility of internal growth. We train ourselves to recognize the Yad HaShem by beginning the day with our HP (Hashgacha Pratis) journals. We have a moment to write down a brief story or thought of a time when we felt the Hashgachas HaShem that day. We have a running sign-up sheet for storytellers reserved for Friday. During Yimei Sefirah, we took turns reading a



Bein Adam La'Chaveiro tidbit each morning to help improve this area. Journals are returned to our desks and then we make our way to our "stage" (the back of our classroom) where Bi'ur Tefilla song-dances are performed.

Now that we have stretched and warmed up, we are ready to begin!

**Chumash/Milim** is a highlight of our day; we start with an interesting hook, a milim card run, or with some questions to whet our palate for today's lesson. Chumash skills such as decoding words, understanding Rashis, reading the Rashis, figuring out the questions and answers of Rashi are all incorporated into our lesson. The "Know it in your sleep" program made all forms of assessment scores soar. Keep earning those "z's!"

There's not a moment to waste in Kitah Vav; even transition times are utilized for learning by singing our ongoing list of Pesukim and Mamarei Chazal that we put to a tune.

**Lamed Tes Melachos** is an extremely important and relevant subject for all of us. We learn how to "Disconnect in order to Connect." We follow the same format each week to help learn the "do's and don'ts" of Shabbos. Any further questions are to be directed to your LOR. We can't wait to show you our beautiful scrapbooks very shortly!

**Bi'ur Tefillah** is yet another most practical and useful subject. Aside from the song-dances we practice each morning, we learn the deeper explanations for various tefillos. We did a unit on K'rias Shema and are now working on one for bentching. Filling out the F.F.T (Food for Thought) at the end of each bracha helps us have in mind specific kavanos for that bracha.

Fridays bring along a special subject – **Igeres HaRamban**. We learn how to better our middos through the teachings of the Ramban in his letter to his son.

But the most special part of sixth grade is... the Bas Mitzva performance at the end of the year. We can't let out all the details quite yet – we'll keep you in suspense until June 11<sup>th</sup>!

The default setting of growth has changed our perspective on every aspect of our lives. Not only has it changed our perspective, it has changed our actions, ourselves, and because of that, others.

So, as we near the end of sixth grade, we are prepared to leave with the realization that every small step man takes in his internal growth is truly one giant leap for mankind.

Keep up your fabulous work 6G!

### 6th Grade Girls Judaic Studies ~ Mrs. Botnick

Welcome to *Kita Vav*! We start off our day heading upward with Shir Hamaalos, the 15 songs from Tehillim that were sung by the Leviim on the steps leading up to the Bais Hamikdash. We have been singing a different perek every few weeks and are now up to the 14<sup>th</sup>. The English introduction helps the girls grasp the meaning of the perek.

The next subject is Kriah which we do every day no matter how busy we are with our other subjects. The consistent practice pays off and the girls have become noticeably stronger as we near the end of the year.

The rest of the morning is divided between Navi and Yahadus.

In Navi, we have been learning Shmuel Alef, from Chana's beautiful tefillah, (which we sing every day and know by heart), though Shmuel's inspiring leadership, and now to the beginnings of Malchus Bais David. We start off Navi

*continued on page 5*

## CLASSROOM CLOSE-UPS (CONTINUED)

with our famous “Navi Know it” Cards, which have questions and phrases from the previous day’s lesson. This is a fun and competitive way to reinforce what we have already learned, and the girls particularly enjoy it. A special emphasis has been made throughout the year on finding the “נבואה שהוצרכה לדורות” —the special message just for me that is in every perek of Navi.

In Yahadus, the focus is on becoming familiar with the rhythm of the Jewish year and learning all about the Yamim Tovim. Every month we learn a song that was specially written to express the lessons that we will learn. We sing this song together every day during that month and this way the spirit of the YomTov is captured in a way that is easy and fun to remember. We learn the Dinim, Minhagim, and lessons of the special times of the year, and we fill in a blank calendar of every month. This helps the girls feel at home with the flow of the Jewish year.

Every girl has experienced real growth this year and is on the way to becoming Bnos Yisroel who act and feel as true daughters of the King. I will miss them next year!



## CLASSROOM CLOSE-UP

### 7th Grade Boys Judaic Studies ~ Rabbi Pam

By all accounts, the year our boys transition into young men is seventh grade! Most of the boys become Bar Mitzva during this school year and therefore much of what we do is focused on preparing these young B’nei Torah to be equipped with the skills and the drive to succeed as they enter adulthood.

The centerpiece of the day is of course Gemarah class. Gemarah is the lifeblood of all Torah study and is therefore the most important skill a young man must acquire. Being that Gemarah requires the mastering of many different skills, our morning class always focuses on Gemarah but varies from day to day in structure. Somedays we spend the morning introducing a new concept or Halacha, followed by new Talmudic terms we must familiarize ourselves with. Other days we focus strictly on learning the text inside, working through difficult Aramaic words and phrases. Great emphasis is placed on the study and the mastering of Rashi’s commentary. Yet on another day, the focus may turn to critical thinking, trying to fully comprehend the steps and logic of the Talmud. B”H, the boys are all blessed with bright minds, and it is not unusual for a sharp question to be posed by one of the students. Trying to resolve the question then becomes a project for the entire class and a “Bais Medrash” scene then unfolds much to the delight of the Rebbi! The Thursday night Mishmar program affords the boys the privilege to delve into a topic or question discussed by Tosfos or other miforshim (commentators). This hopefully whets their mental appetite for the vastness which is the “Yam Hatalmud”—the vast and endless waters of the Talmud.

The second half of our morning class is dedicated to a variety of topics including Halacha, Chumash, and Parshas Hashavuah. In Chumash, as in Gemarah, the class is challenged to be able to develop the skills necessary to learn Chumash on their own. Halacha class covers the halachos of the upcoming Yom Tov as well as other areas of Jewish law. Friday’s class is reserved for a Dvar Torah on the weekly parsha to be shared at the Shabbos table.

Our classroom is always exciting, with a high-energy atmosphere!

Watching young boys come in in September and blossom into young men as the months go by is a marvelous experience. Spending my mornings with the future of the Jewish people, having a small part in their development into Bnei Torah and Ba’alei Middos, is a privilege I am endlessly thankful for!

## THE VIEW FROM THE CLASSROOM

### Torah Tot 16-Month Olds

Morah Basheva has a barn... come join us as we learn about farm animals and their sounds!

Mrs. B. Weinberg & Mrs. Rotkin

### Torah Tot Two Year Olds

Our caterpillars have arrived! Ask us about it! We love watching them all day!

The letter Vav taught us vatranus (giving in), which we are really good at using in our class.

Have a good Shabbos.

Mrs. Goldberger, Mrs. Goldberg, Miss Weinberg, & Miss Miller

### Torah Tot Three Year Olds

During circle time the children have been sharing how much fun they had on Shavuuous--with cheese cake, guests, playing quietly so Tatties could sleep and the like. It's their new favorite Yom Tov. We're continuing our learning of Pirkei Avos. Ask us about looking inside a box (person etc.) rather than just at what is on the outside. There may be some wonderful surprises waiting inside.

Mrs. Fishman, Mrs. Lynn, & Mrs. Chodos

### Pre-Kindergarten

Mazel Tov!

We celebrated our learning the Alef-Bais with a siyum on Thursday! We played our favorite Alef-Bais games and sang all our Alef-Bais songs. We ate special Alef-Bais cookies and enjoyed other treats as well!

Mrs. Heisler & Mrs. Rapoport

### Kindergarten

The kindergarteners have been working in math on adding and subtracting money. They love pretending that this money belongs to them. The Construction Zone is constantly busy, with the children making and building objects. We finished a unit on living and non-living this week. It has been a great week.

Ms. Haase & Mrs. Hechtman

### First Grade

Hope everyone had a wonderful Yom Tov! I cannot believe how close we are to the end of the year. We will be picking up the pace in Chumash for the next few weeks. We also started our Ivrit unit on mishpacha (family).

Have a good Shabbos,

Mrs. Herron

Yesterday, the first graders went on a field trip to Westwood Nature Center. They studied spring plants. We were treated to a puppet show, and we went on a scavenger hike. Thank you to Betzalel's dad for helping out!

Mrs. Singer

### Second Grade

It is great to be back with Kita Bais. Thank you Miss Prero for doing a fantastic job teaching the girls. As the school year nears the end, we are surely making the most out of each afternoon. In Chumash, we learned the greatness of the Hachnasas Orchim that Avraham performed. Ask us for some examples!

We were introduced to "ה הידיעה" as we came across the word העץ. What was special about that specific tree?

In Ivrit, we can write Hebrew sentences that include pronouns, nouns, and verbs! Looking forward to an exciting Yedios Keloliyos trip א"ה.

Stay tuned for details about our siyum on Parshas Lech Lecha.

Mrs. Rothstein

In a yearly tradition going back longer than I have been at Torah Academy ...(!) my second grade students were gifted with their very own set of *Chumashim*—a special gift from Mrs. Bertha Kutoff and family.

No doubt, many of you remember the day that *you* received the same gift as a youngster at Torah Academy! *Boruch HaShem*, this beautiful tradition continues. May *HaShem* bless Mrs. Kutoff with many more years of *gezundt* and the opportunity to make so many *talmidim* feel so special!

Rabbi Heisler

This week, the second graders took their final spelling test of the year. We began a new chapter book, *Jenny Archer, Author*. A few students are working to finish their AR goals before the June 8<sup>th</sup> deadline. In math, we have been working on fractions.

Mrs. Singer

### Library Announcement



Last day for book checkout is  
**Friday, May 25th**

All library books are **DUE**  
**Friday, June 1st**

Class library times will  
continue through  
**Friday, June 8th**



**Rabbi Idstein's Sayings from this week:**

- Success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out!
- Your best teacher is your last mistake!
- Patience is not about waiting – its about the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting!
- It's not who are you that holds you back – it's what you think you aren't!

**Third Grade**

Mazel tov to the third graders upon finishing their third parsha of the year! This week we finished Parshas Vayeitzei! While learning about Megilas Rus, the third graders saw how dikduk makes a HUGE difference. Ask a third grader for details.

Have a great Shabbos,  
Rabbi Friedler

The third graders began the exciting math skill of long division this week! We have also been working on the important skill/learning target of working independently. In science, we took a look at minerals and rocks this week.

Mrs. Halek

**Fourth Grade**

This week we reached another milestone in 4B! We completed the mishnayos of Maseches Megillah which includes the denim of Bais Knesseth and the laws of Krias HaTorah. Congratulations to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade boys upon this accomplishment.

Rabbi Waxman

**Fifth Grade**

We finished learning "Az Yashir"—we are halfway to knowing the translation by heart!

Congratulations to our class for winning the national Yesodei Halashon raffle!

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Mrs. Lichtman

I was soooo proud of my *talmidim* as they shared their *Divrei Torah*—in the form of a review of the eight *p'rakim*

of *Mishnayos Bava Kamma*! This, of course, happened on the first day of *Shavuos* at Keneseth Israel and on the second day of *Yom Tov* at Bais Yisroel. May they always give all of us much *Torah Nachas*!

Rabbi Heisler

It's great to be back at school, and even though it is a short week, there is a lot to do... We had a great time last week with our Shavuos cheese balls! After finishing our Science foldable, we are reviewing in preparation for a test. Vocabulary matching cards are helping us remember all those definitions, while the girls are hard at work preparing a Math Review and Test on Perimeter, Area, and Volume to be used for many years to come, IYH. With the War of 1812 coming to a close, Doon and Lina braving dangerous wolves, and some fascinating lessons on how food manufacturers entice us to eat food (ask a Fifth Grader for some examples!), it's been a full and interesting week! Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Mrs. Gross

**Sixth Grade**

How can an animal's mouth be in a different property than the rest of its body? If you can't figure it out, just stop one of the sixth graders, and they'll be sure to tell you! By the way, when we see a "Ta Shema", what are we supposed to ask ourselves? You can go to the same address for the answer!

Have a great Shabbos!

Rabbi Lichtman

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**The 2017-2018 Torah Academy yearbooks  
are now available for purchase!**

The yearbooks are \$20 each and "in stock" now. Please indicate if you would prefer a book that features the 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls **OR** the 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys as we have two different editions for sale this year. The rest of the pages in the yearbook are the same.

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

# of copies with 8B \_\_\_\_\_

# of copies with 8G \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a check made out to Torah Academy or cash (exact amount) for the total.

**Seventh Grade**

What criteria might make it easier for Melech Edom to say yes to Moshe’s request? What concept of Derech Eretz did we learn? Keep up the consistent work of filling out the Navi final packet!!

Mrs. Engelson

I hope you all had an enjoyable Yom Tov! We kept everyone in high spirits with working on beautiful Pirkei Avos dioramas. Each one is so unique, creative, and detailed! Stop by to check out these creations displayed in the hallways.

Keep up the great work!

Miss Mandelbaum

**Eighth Grade**

Mrs. Greenberg’s eighth grade girls had a Yom Iyun in preparation for Shavuos. They listened to a shiur on Megillas Rus while enjoying some milchig Shavuos delicacies. >>*Pictured to the right are some 8G students decorating flower cookies with “ROYAL icing”.*

Mrs. Greenberg

Learning with the eighth graders on Shavuos night was a wonderful experience! Many boys joined as we learned a fascinating “sugya” (topic) which pertains to Shavuos and the accepting of the Torah. We learned many interesting ideas, and the boys asked great questions!

Have a great Shabbos,

Rabbi Friedler

**MS Language Arts**

I can’t believe, with field trips and their graduation trip, I only have a few days left with the 8th grade. They will spend their time practicing their graduation speeches. The 7th grade is working on their reading reflection.

Mrs. Hechtman

***Mazel Tov to the on-time raffle winners for May 23***

Yechiel Kutoff

Eli Friedler

Sara Miriam Kvasnik

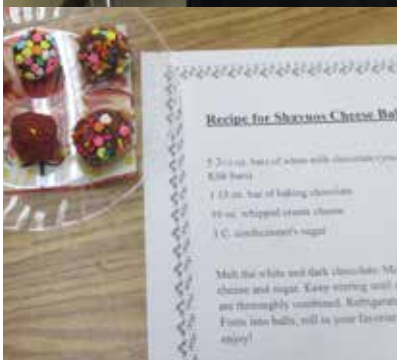
Ari Oman

Batsheva Smith

Liba Ancier

Moshe Ebstein

Bracha Zahtz



**5G made Cheese Balls for a Shavuos class project**







***Please join with us!***

The parents of  
Bais Yaakov of the Twin Cities,  
the Yeshiva of Minneapolis, &  
Torah Academy

are sponsoring a Kiddush in honor of  
all their children's Rebbeim, Moros, and teachers.

**The Kiddush will IY"Y be on Shabbos,  
June 9, at Torah Academy.**

**What a tremendous opportunity to show our gratitude  
to the people who give selflessly to  
our children every day.**

**Please make it a point to attend!**

***Sponsorships are still available***

Please contact Mr. Maier Kutoff at [maier.kutoff@gmail.com](mailto:maier.kutoff@gmail.com)  
or Mr. David Schulman at [dschulman@shapco.com](mailto:dschulman@shapco.com)

**Sponsored in memory of Devorah Leah bas Yaakov Eliyahu~Mrs. Debi Breningstall a"h**



## The Kolenu Parsha Page

### ***Did you Know?***

(Facts and Insights into the Parsha that you and the family might not have known – enjoy!)

- If there are only Kohanim in Shul, and there are more than ten of them, ten of them remain in their seats and the others go up to recite Birchas Kohanim. (OC 128:25)
- If a Nazir & a Metzora come upon a Meis Mitzva, the Nazir is supposed to defile himself. (Rambam)
- A Megillas Sotah may not be written at night! (Sotah 17)
- If there is no peace, all other blessings are worthless – that is why it concludes the Birchas Kohanim. (Kli Yakar)
- The Mitzvah for the Kohanim to bless the Bnei Yisrael begins with the words: "Ko Tevarchu..."—"In this way you shall bless..." The gematria of the word "Ko" is 25; the word "Bracha" occurs 25 times in the Torah, and the word "Shalom" also occurs 25 times. Therefore, Bircas Kohanim begins with Bracha and ends with Shalom. (Ba'al HaTurim)

### **Torah Riddle -**

❖ Which number appears 4 times in one posuk in this week's parsha?

*Answer can be found below the Tefilla Insights!*

### ***Tefilla Insights –Birchas Kohanim!***

\*Outside of Eretz Yisroel, the Kohanim only "duchin"—bless the people—on YomTov. The Mishna Brurah says that during the week, the extra time would cause a loss of work time, and even on Shabbos, people's minds are filled with concern for their livelihood. That is why we don't duchin on Shabbos and weekdays.

\*The Shulchan Aruch (OC 128:12) describes the special positioning of the hands and fingers of the Kohanim when they bless the people with the Birchas Kohanim. The Ateres Zekeinim quotes the Zohar that states that it is prohibited to position one's fingers in the position used by the Kohanim for Duchining. The only ones who are permitted to do so are the Kohanim while they are duchining or learning how to do so. The Ateres Zekeinim writes that those that do so arouse the wrath of the evil forces and thereby bring trouble upon themselves.

Answers – The Number 12 in Perek Zayin, Posuk Pay Zayin.

# chosen words

## Personal Growth

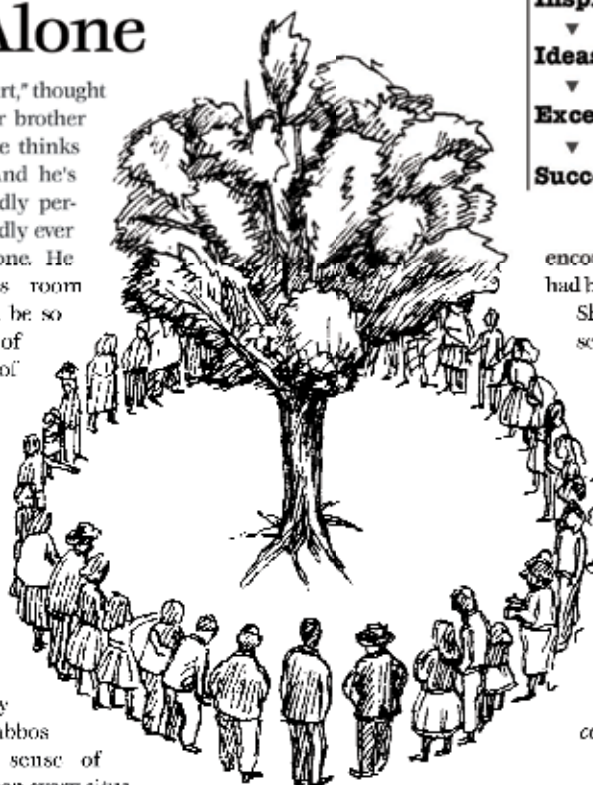
### You Alone

"Yaakov is smart," thought Yaakov's younger brother David. "His rebbe thinks he's a genius. And he's got a nice, friendly personality too. Hardly ever fights with anyone. He even keeps his room clean. Dad must be so much prouder of him than he is of me." From Dad's point of view, however, David was just as great a source of pride. He didn't get A's in school, but he could fix anything that broke. His singing undoubtedly made the Shabbos cable, and his sense of humor helped keep every situation in perspective. David didn't realize it, but he filled his role in the family just as successfully as Yaakov did.

For Hashem's children, too, the qualifications for being a worthy son or daughter often seem beyond the average person's reach. One can understand that Hashem glories in the sounds of a Torah scholar's learning, that He relishes the saintly acts of the righteous, but what can an ordinary person do to reach those levels?

The Torah issues a pre-emptive argument to anyone who believes its precepts to be far above their abilities. "For this thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to do it." It's a blanket statement, no qualifications or conditions attached. Hashem equips everyone with his own way to win his Father's wholehearted love.

The Chofetz Chaim once



"Every Jew is equidistant from the Tree of Life."

## Effective Prayer

### Yaakov's Voice

"So Yaakov drew close to Yitzchak his father, who felt him and said, 'The voice is Yaakov's voice, but the hands are Eisav's hands'" (Bereishis 27:22). The Midrash elaborates on this verse, explaining that when Yaakov's voice is lifted in prayer, the hands of Eisav will not dominate.

During the Gulf War in 1991, when Israel was under Scud missile attack from Iraq, one Israeli described the power of Yaakov's voice to overcome the acts of Eisav's hands. The man, with his entire shul, had spent a day fasting and praying, sounding the shofar and circling the shul with the Torah. At the end of this arduous day, the siren

## Torah Tools for Personal Growth

### Inspiration



### Ideas



### Excellence



### Success

encountered a young Jew who had become a communist. One Shabbos before shalosh scudas, the Chofetz Chaim sent for the young man and convinced him to join the others for the meal. The Chofetz Chaim then spoke about the Tree of Life that Hashem had planted in the center of the Garden of Eden. Looking at the young man, he explained: "It was put in the center to show that it

*continued on back*

## Better Relationships

### Beloved

Heaven holds a blessing that everyone wants, yet it is possibly the most elusive of blessings. That is the blessing of "chein," which means "grace." A person with chein has a pleasantness about him that makes him likable. Chein turns a person's life into a long series of wonderful, happy encounters, yet it is a G-d-given gift that a person cannot manufacture for himself.

However, the Chofetz Chaim says, a person can draw an additional measure of this quality from Heaven by engaging in acts of kindness. That, in combination with Torah learning, is the key to augmenting one's endowment of chein.

If friction with others is a problem in a person's life, one way to tackle it is by undertaking a chesed with the goal of meriting the blessing of chein. For every human being, the warmth and friendship of others is a life-sustaining gift, and it need not be elusive. One can grasp this gift and enjoy it for a lifetime, simply by embracing the trait of kindness.

### Shabbos Table Discussion:

Does the Chofetz Chaim *continued on back*



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Adapted from "More Shabbos Stories," by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, with permission from Mesorah Publications

# On Second Thought

Someone asks for a favor. It may seem like a small favor, or it may appear from the outset to be a big favor, yet it's something you're willing to do. So you do it, and as often occurs with favors, it grows six heads. The ride you were willing to provide now turns out to be a ride for the passenger's friend as well, who lives just a few blocks out of the way. But there's a garbage truck slowly making its way down that block, which costs you an extra 20 minutes. Then the friend—an elderly lady—begins to feel a little queasy. Terribly queasy. You pull off the highway and follow the sign to

the nearest rest stop. You buy the lady a cold soda and sit by her side as she recovers her composure. After a half an hour you resume your journey in the midst of what has now become rush hour. You've missed your appointment, but you press onward hoping the client will see you two hours late. You begin to deeply regret having said "yes" to this favor in the first place.

"And remove the Satan from before us and from behind us," says the prayer in the Maariv service. "Before us" is an obvious place for the Satan to situate himself. There he can lure us onto the wrong road and block our progress down the right road. But what

**"What harm can Satan do standing behind us?"**

harm can he do standing behind us? It is there that he demolishes the good we already have managed to do by causing us to regret having done it. "Why did I take these ladies with me?" the driver in the story is bound to think. Yet a good deed has been done. Why taint it with regret?

**Shabbos Table Discussion:**

Does regretting the favor negate its value as a mitzvah?

—C.C.H.F.

## Beloved

*continued from front*

seem to simply be saying that if you do nice things for people, they will like you? What is the difference between that and acquiring *chein*?

*Adapted from "Loving Kindness," by Rabbi Fishel Schachter, a project of Mesorah Publications and the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation*

## You Alone

*continued from front*

isn't any closer to me than to you. Every Jew is equidistant from the Tree of Life—from bringing life by serving Hashem."

*Adapted from "Changing Golus to Geulah," a lecture by Rabbi Ephraim Wachsman for the Worldwide Tisha B'Av Event, 2002, a project of the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation*

## Dedications

לע"נ  
דבורה בת יצחק הלוי ע"ה  
נ.ל.ב.ע. ט' סיון

Dedicated in loving memory  
of Dorothy Shindler Lane  
By Judy Z. Lane and Jerry Lane

•  
לע"נ חיים וחיאל מיכל בן  
רפאל פיינזעל שניאור ז"ל  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

*We gratefully acknowledge our generous sponsors for making this publication possible.*

# A Note of Joy

A young man from an illustrious family was faltering in his commitment to Torah. His father sent him to the famous Mirrer Yeshiva in Lithuania. When the son returned home a year later, he was a changed person, happily engaged in his spiritual life.

"Can you tell me something specific that brought about this change?" the father asked his son.

The son knew the answer. There were two instances: One was at the end of the Shavuot morning prayers, after an entire night of learning. The whole yeshiva sang Adon Olam together, and joining his voice to this song sent the young man's soul soaring. The second occasion, equally uplifting, was the singing and dancing of all the young men together on Simchas Torah.

Singing touches the soul in a way that little else can. The family that finds ways to put song into the air—at the table, in the car, even while doing chores—finds a way to put joy into their children's hearts.

**Shabbos Table Discussion:**

Why do you think singing had the power to reach this young man?

*Adapted from "Raising Roses Among the Thorns," by Rabbi Noach Orlowek, with permission from Feldheim Publishers*

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