



Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy of the Capital District

January 6, 2012

Issue Number 44, Volume Number III

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 16th —
NO SCHOOL!
Martin Luther King Day!

January 20th —
School Wide ONEG

January 22nd—
Dance Festival 10:30 @
Temple Israel

Candle Lighting times for November

Friday January 6th —Light 4:18

Friday January 13th — Light 4:26

Friday January 20th — Light 4:34

Saturday January 7th — End 5:24

Saturday January 14th — End 5:31

Saturday January 21st — End

Dvar Torah on Parashat Vayehi, by Rachel Anisfeld

The popular song goes: *Am Yisrael Chai, Od Avinu Chai*, “The nation of Israel is alive, our father is still alive.” Who is *Avinu*, “our father?” In the song, the word probably refers to our Father God. But the word also picks up on a repeated line in the Yosef story: *HaOd Avi Chai?* “Is my father still alive?” (45:3. See also 43:27). Here the father is Yaakov, and it is Yosef his son asking and asking about whether his father is still alive.

Is Yaakov our father still alive?

Yaakov Avinu lo met. Yaakov our father did not die, is the remarkable statement of the Talmud (Taanit 5b). What? But it says that he died? Well, no. As Rashi points out, the word *met*, dead, is never actually used with reference to Yaakov. The Torah says

simply *Vayigva vaye’asef el amav*, “He breathed his last and he was gathered to his people,” but there is no mention of the normal concluding term used for Avraham and Yitzhak, *vayamot*, “And he died.”

Vayehi Yaakov. And Yaakov lived. So begins the parsha which ostensibly tells of Yaakov’s death. According to the Talmud, then, the parsha is aptly named; in some sense Yaakov never died but continued to be *Vayehi*, to live.

Perhaps Yaakov’s death is like Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai’s feigned death during the siege of Jerusalem in 69 CE. The story is told (BT Gittin 56a) that, in order to get out of Jerusalem and bargain with the Roman general Vespasian to save the rabbinic academy of Yavneh, Rabban Yochanan pretended to be sick and die so that he could get past the guards at the gate in a coffin. His own feigned death symbolized the end of an era of Temple-based religion. Was it a true death for the Jewish people? No. He made sure of this by creating a new life of Torah on the other side, by serving as a bridge figure—like the coffin that crossed the city threshold -- from one era to the next.

Yaakov needed to do the same for his children. Here they were on the cusp of a period of great national suffering in Egypt. Was this a true death? Would Yaakov and his ancestors and traditions die during this period? No. Just as Rabban Yochanan’s death was not real, so Yaakov’s was not. Why? Because the Jewish people are survivors. There can be no death where there is memory, continuity, tradition. The Jewish people survived the destruction of the Temple just as they survived the era of Egyptian enslavement. Why? Because *Yaakov avinu lo met.* Because there is this memory of an earlier period. There is continuity and connection, even across devastating events in Jewish history. There is often seeming death, like Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai’s coffin and like the deaths at the close of the book of Genesis. But somehow the spark is kept alive, the memory is preserved.

Why is *Yaakov Avinu lo met?* Because we remember him. Because we read about him in the Torah. Because we carry him with us across the thresholds of history’s twists and turns, just as his sons carried him across the border between Egypt and the land of Israel. As long as there are Children of Israel, Children of Yaakov, passing on his traditions, then his death, like Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai’s, is never final, but simply a bridge to a new era.

Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy Of The Capital
District Receives
Substantial Support From

Partner Agency of
Jewish Federation
OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK





From the desk of...

Rabbi Rami Strosberg
Head of School

As we begin the year 2012, we look back on all of the blessings of 2011 and hope for the same fortune for ourselves and our families in the coming year.

Interestingly, the Torah portion this week addresses this very idea. Jacob is at the end of his life and finds that the most pressing thing to do is bless his children. A teacher of mine once told me that the source of eternity is one's children and grandchildren. If the next generation is "blessed" and thriving, it ensures the continuity of the Jewish People. We are elevated by the deeds and successes of our children.

For a parent, the greatest fortune is that his or her children be blessed. As teachers, the best blessing is when our students show us their progress and growth, ensuring the transition of our Jewish values and of our institution.

We recently received a letter from a parent who moved out of our area regarding her child's experience transitioning to a new school. The letter reads:

"My son, thank God, is doing well in his new grade - specifically, his reading and writing skills coupled with the confidence to share his own ideas...I have no doubt that his confidence and success is due to the effort and interest that you showed him during his stay at the Hebrew Academy. Many thanks to you and the rest of the staff for encouraging him to do his best."

The success of this child is the ultimate blessing to his parents and to Hebrew Academy. May we continue to see great blessings in our students as the teaching and learning continues to thrive.



COACHES UPDATE!!!

The 7/8 team broke a 3 game losing streak, defeating Woodland Hills 44-38 to even the season record at 4-4. Levi Kovach had some key early baskets, Ari Levy hit 2 key shots down the stretch to bump the lead up to 12 points, and Matt Laniado played solid PG in the 2nd half. This was a good tune up for our upcoming key division game this Sunday @ 515 pm against E. Greenbush.

Coach Richard Drucker.

Upcoming Games

January 8th

HACD @ E. East Greenbush
3:45

January 15th

HACD @ St. Matts
5:15

January 19th

St. Matts @ HACD
7:15

Practice Schedule

7/8 Boys

Sunday- 9-11
Thursday- 4:30-6 Fridays - 2:30 –
4:00

4/5 Coed

Tuesdays - 3:15 – 4:30
Sundays – TBD (to be determined)

2/3 Coed

Thursdays 3:15 – 4:30
Sundays - TBD

5th Grade News

This year the Fifth grade's Torah curriculum is the book of Shemot. This week we discussed God's promises of Redemption to B'nai Yisrael and the elements of slavery versus freedom. In the second book of the Torah, Shemot, Perek Va-Era, Pisukim Vav-chet, (Exodus 6:4) God says:

I will **free you** from the labors of the Egyptians – interpretation: free B'nai Yisrael from physical Slavery.

I will **deliver you** from their bondage – interpretation: deliver us from the physical mind set of being slaves.

I will **redeem you** with an outstretched arm – interpretation: redeem us so we think of ourselves as a free people.

I will **take you** to be my people and I will be your God – interpretation: we will have a special relationship with God and he will take us to be his nation.

I will **bring you** into the land and I will give it to you for a possession – interpretation: only when the Israelites have their own land can they become the special people they are meant to be.

Below are several student's understanding of the lesson.

Medad: I learned that God didn't just free them physically, he also freed them mentally. We learn this from the fact that God uses words that you would think mean the same thing. They can be translated differently, one can mean to be free mentally and the other to free physically.

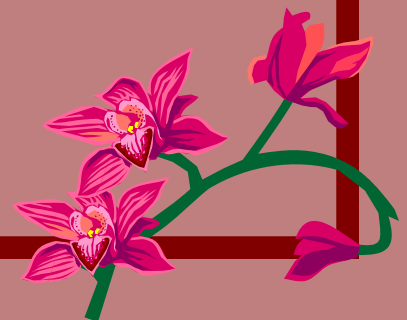
Kira: I learned that being freed from slavery means choices, freedom, and rights. You would have new found freedoms such as religion, speech, and the freedom to be your own person, rather than being owned. You also have choices, rather than being told what to do all the time. You also have rights such as being able to live freely, and peacefully.

Michal: What I learned in this lesson about freedom is that you should always be able to do what you need to do and to follow your customs and beliefs. Nobody can tell you that you can't follow your customs because it's not how they want to live.

Dahlia: I think a possible reason that God had promised five steps of redemption is that God knew that without every step, the outcome would not be complete. Every single promise has its own key element in freedom for the Jewish people. For instance, you can't fully be free of slavery without feeling, and knowing that you are free.

The importance of freedom is incorporated in our yearly Passover Seder, when we drink four cups of wine and we read from the Haggadah these exact verses from the Torah. This year when the fifth graders celebrate Passover, this lesson will enrich and deepen their appreciation of freedom.

**Shabbat Shalom,
Ruti Malka**



HACD News

CONGRATULATIONS KIRA GOLD!!!!



I am pleased to inform you that Bet Shraga student, Kira Gold, 11, won First Place in the 2011 *Yaldah Magazine* Jewish Fiction Contest. The second annual fiction contest received hundreds of stories and was judged by Sonia Levitin, award-winning children's author of more than 40 books. Kira's winning story (8-12 year-old category) will appear in the Winter 2012 issue of the magazine. She will also receive a 50.00 gift certificate to Art Scroll Books. Area newspapers and synagogues have been sent press releases. You should be very proud!

Yaldah was started by Leah Larson Caras, seven years ago, when she was thirteen years old. It is now an international quarterly created by and for Jewish Girls ages 8-14. Yaldah's mission is inspire creativity and leadership and unite Jewish girls of all backgrounds. We are currently accepting applications for the 2012 Editorial Board. We also welcome outstanding submissions of fiction, articles, poetry, and art from Jewish girls ages 8-16.

For more information on the contest and magazine visit: www.yaldah.com



BOOK FAIR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH!

This year's HACD Book Fair will be held on Thursday, February 9th. The HACD Book Fair offers a selection of Scholastic Books as well as a number of Judaic titles for both children and adults, and benefits our school library program. The students really look forward to this fun event!

If you can come and help for a couple of hours (or more!), please contact Jane Shurin at jshurin@gmail.com or 783-5744.

PLEASE! The Book Fair depends on adult volunteers to help set up before the fair and to help students select and purchase books during the fair. We need help on:

Thursday, February 10, 2010 – Purchase day, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Thank You!!!!

Hebrew Academy is now offering tutoring for adults in Hebrew Language.

If you are interested,

please call **Sharon Strosberg** 377-2510.

2011-2012 Shomray Torah Fall Campaign Fund

GOAL
\$200,000

\$175,000

\$150,000

\$125,000

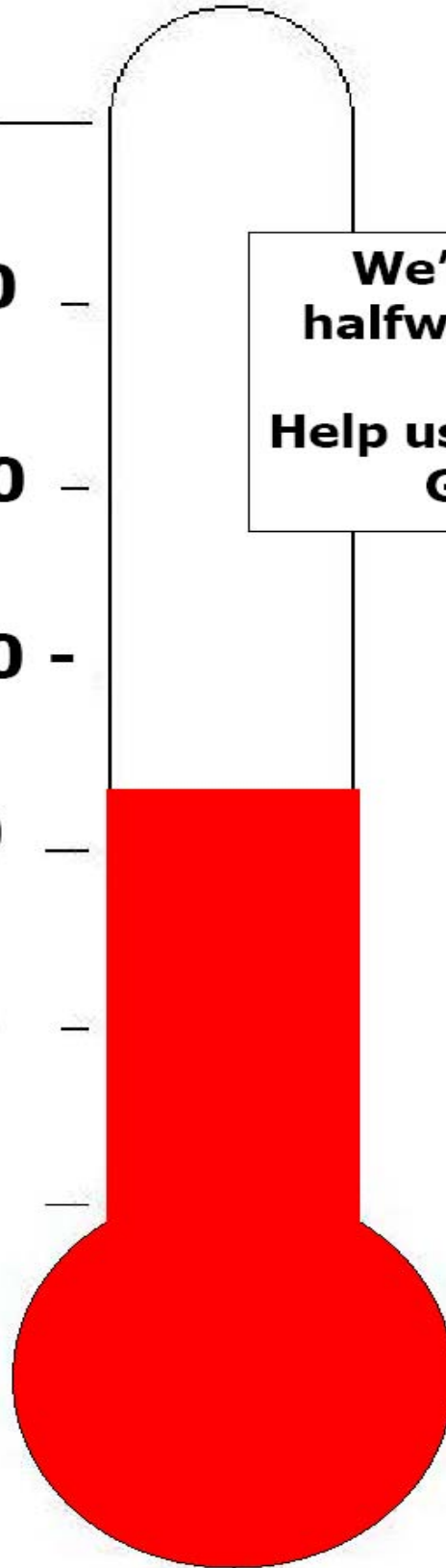
\$100,000

\$75,000

\$50,000

**We're OVER
halfway there!**

**Help us meet our
Goal!**



SHOMRAY TORAH ANNUAL CAMPAIGN DONORS 2011-2012

Todah Rabah to our extended family for your support. We're over halfway to our goal for the fall campaign! Thanks to all who helped at the Phone-a-thon! It was a great success!

Grandparents

Elizabeth and Moshe Anisfeld
Irene Ashery
Mirian Biskin
Sandra and Jerome Goldberg
Felice and David Gordis
Herbert Horwitz
Sedell and Bernard Kamenir
Leo Koppel
Barbara and Howard Levine
Norma Rosen
Florence and Harvey Sharfstein
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Margo and James Strosberg
Ruth and Herbert Swift
Barbara and Harry Ungerman
Dora and Mikhail Zelman

Alumni

Rachel and Jeremy Arcus-Goldberg
Ellen and Jonathan Berkowitz
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Ravin Davidoff
Deborah and Hershel Ellenbogen
Tamar Silton and Jeremy Epstein
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Sophie Friedman
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Joshua M.F. Rubinfeld
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Ariella Segal
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Samuel Segal
Talia Segal
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Wendy and Steven Susswein
Nehama and Lawrence Teitelman

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Morris Cohen
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Arthur Fleischner
Sherry and Marvin Freedman
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Linda and Daniel Hershberg
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Charlotte and Stanley Isser
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Shelley and Stephen Justa

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Gail Kendall
Marta and Mark Koblenz
Sheila and Paul Koppel
Ida Leberman
Estate of Hannah Lorch
Rabbi Beverly and Richard Magidson
Barbara and Edward Orris
Rona and Louis-Jack Pozner
Anita and Ken Rabinoff-Goldman
Ruth and Steven Rich
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Claudia and Mark Rosenholz
Pearl and Harris Sanders
Joan and James Savitt
Barbara and Michael Scher
Ellen and Eric Schwartz
Stanley Segel
Nancia and Kenneth Segel
Roberta and Richard Seiden
Barbara and Les Stein
Joyce and Melvin Toub
Barbara Wachs

Current Parents

Shelly L. Goldman Black and
Johnny Black, Jr.
Ana Sobel and George Bizer
Amy Gingold-Horwitz
Michele Levy and Daniel Greenblatt
Elana and Steven Kamenir
Rachel Anisfeld and Timothy Lytton
Suzanna Randall and
Rabbi Naomi Manon
Jerald O'Brien
Marian Alexander and
Rabbi Dan Ornstein
Tatyana and Benjamin Schwartz
Jane and Arkady Shurin
Chava and Adam Weisstuch

Community

Helene S. Ainspan
Evalyn and Joseph Basloe
Joyce and Sanford Bookstein
Dorice Brickman
Toby and Arnold Elman
Evelyn and Laurence Farbstein
Joanna and Eric Fried
Selma Goldberg
Neil, Jane, William & Estelle Golub
Family Foundation, Inc.
Karen and Gerald Hausler
Michael Kupferschmid
Shirley and Irving Mennen
Jerald O'Brien
Pardus Family Philanthropic Fund
Lois and Richard Rubin
Phyllis Silverman
Gene and Howard Tarler

Names listed reflect those whose payments have been received.

Donations that have come in since Winter Break are not yet listed. Our apologies

SHABBAT SPONSORSHIP

It's with thanks that we acknowledge the Greenblatt Family for their

Shabbat Sponsorship

For Friday January 6th, 2012.

In Celebration Of

Hannah Greenblatt

Happy Birthday Hannah!!



Save The Date!
Grandparents and Special Friends
Day
will be held on the afternoon of
Friday ~ May 18, 2012

The HACD First Graders would like to thank *Joel Phillips* for donating a dictionary for each child in the class. *Joel Phillips* volunteers regularly in First Grade and offered to get the dictionaries when I mentioned that we needed them. His contribution's value will only grow with time, as the students will take these dictionaries with them to the following grades. We appreciate his willingness to help out and thank him for his kind generosity!

Remember to send in your Box Tops!



Shop online through the Box Tops Marketplace and earn more for HACD! www.boxtops4education.com

8th Grade Trip to Israel Fundraiser!



Second Annual Bagel Brunch (after the Dance Festival, January 22)

Please join the eighth grade for bagels and goodies in the downstairs small social hall at Temple Israel. Purchases will benefit the 8th Grade trip to Israel this spring.



And while you are eating...

Learn about **“The Israel Experience”**—the savings account for your child’s trip to Israel. This great opportunity is made available to us by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern NY and is a fabulous way to save for the trip. Board Members will be present to answer any questions you might have.





Exciting
educational programs for
Preschoolers
And
Little Siblings
Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy
of the Capital District

Join the excitement at the annual
Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy

Song and Dance Festival

Sunday, January 22, 2012
10:30-11:30 AM

Temple Israel ~ Albany



Experience Tu B'Shevat with the
Hebrew Academy kindergarten

Celebrate
the environment and ecology
with guest science teacher
Ela Meir

Monday, February 6, 2012
1:30-2:30 PM

Let us know you're coming. Please email Lorraine Arcus at
Larcus@hacdalbany.com

Parent Org.

Shabbat Sponsorship



DATE: Every Friday

WHERE: Each and every classroom

WHY: To celebrate a birthday, honor a teacher, highlight a special day, or *JUST BECAUSE!!*

WHAT: \$36 covers challah and grape juice for the entire school

HOW: Fill out the Shabbat Sponsorship form and bring to the office

It's 2012!! Do you have a special something coming up to celebrate? Do it at HACD!

Questions? e-mail Jodi Eligberg at abbaeema@nycap.rr.com

Community Event Calendar

Daughters of Sarah is looking to update its current mailing list for “Kosher Night Out,” which are full course kosher dinners hosted at the Massry Residence, periodically throughout the year. If you would like to receive early notification of these dinners, please contact Paula Ginder, at 518-724-3400 or ginderp@doss.org to have your name and contact information added to the list.

Thank you!

To put a community wide event in our e-shabbaton, please email a text only version to apiroli@hacdalbany.com by Wednesday.

Look in the coming weeks for our Community News Bulletin featured on our new website!



Torah Magic!

Kids in grades K-3 from all school schools, and their families, are welcome to be with us for Torah Magic!

Torah Magic is a celebration of being Jewish, that we are beginning this year in honor of the writing of Ohav's new Torah scroll in 5772.

Come join the fun on
Shabbat morning,
February 4 and
May 19, at 10:45 AM
in the synagogue
chapel or social hall.



Camp Ramah in New England



Elevate your summer!

Come learn about all that Camp Ramah in New England has to offer, and meet with Josh Edelglass, *Assistant Director*, at the following events on **Wednesday, January 18th**:

11:00-noon -- Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy

Josh will meet with grades K-4 at 11:00 AM and grades 5-8 at 11:30 AM.

5:40-6:00 -- B'Yachad at Congregation Ohav Shalom

Josh will be presenting to the B'yachad students from 5:40-6:00, and will be available to speak with parents before and after.

7:00 -- Informational meeting at the home of
Jodi and Rabbi David Eligberg

298 Hackett Blvd., Albany, NY 12208

Please join us for this in-depth conversation about the Ramah experience!

For more information and to RSVP, please contact:

Josh Edelglass, *Assistant Director*, at joshe@campramahne.org

OR Marci Galinkin at levykins@aol.com

Parents and children are welcome at all events!

www.campramahne.org www.ramahblog.org

