



CALENDAR

Monday, Sept. 19th

Tuesday, Sept. 20

**Meet the Teachers Night
K-4 7pm**

Wednesday, Sept. 21

Soccer practice 3:15-4:30

Thursday, Sept. 22

Friday, Sept. 23

Soccer Practice 2:15- 3:30

Candle Lighting times for September/October 2011

Friday, September 16th– Light 6:47pm	Saturday September 17th- End 7:45pm
Friday, September 23rd– Light 6:34pm	Saturday September 24th– End 7:32pm
Friday, September 30th— light 6:22pm	Saturday October 1st —End 7:20pm

Ki tavo, “When you arrive” in the land. What happens when you finally arrive at your longed-for destination, when you are full and fulfilled, when you have conquered and settled the land, and reaped the first harvest of your labors? What happens when you prosper and succeed? The parsha begins and ends with this sense of arrival, *ki tavo* at its beginning, and *vatavo’u el hamakom hazeh*, “When you have arrived at this place” (29:6) at its end. What happens when we arrive? How are we to deal with success?

The answer: Be joyful. The parsha begins with three ceremonies, all of which have explicit or implicit commands to be *sameach*, “joyful.” When you bring your *bikurim*, your first fruits, to the priest, the Torah says, *Vesamahta*, “And you shall enjoy all the bounty that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you” (26:11). When you tithe your produce, the Torah tells us you may not eat it when you are in mourning, implying that joy is the

necessary companion to tithing. Also, when the tither proclaims: “I have done just as You commanded me” what he means to say, according to the midrash, is: *samachti vesimachti bo*, “I have enjoyed and caused others joy through it [the tithed produce]” (Sifre Dvarim 303). Finally, in the ceremony marking Israel’s arrival in the land, the Torah tells us to “rejoice before the Lord your God,” *vesamachta lifnei Hashem Elokekha* (27:7). “When you arrive,” when you reap your harvest, one of your primary obligations to God is to enjoy yourself, to take joy in your prosperity.

That isn’t hard, you say. It is easy to be joyful when you are prosperous and successful. Ah, but the Torah is not so sure. The second half of the parsha deals with the *tochachah*, the “rebuke,” a detailed description of the horrific calamities that will befall the people should they disobey God’s covenant. And what is the cause of such calamities? “Because you would not serve the Lord your God in joy and gladness over the abundance of everything” (28:47). People are capable of having everything and still not being joyful and glad.

Why? First, there is the question of whether one feels that he has in fact “arrived,” that he is satisfied and prosperous, that he has an abundant harvest. No one has a perfect life. There are problems and difficulties, illnesses and set-backs. Sometimes we lose sight of our essential blessedness amidst all the focus on these problems. We keep thinking tomorrow is the day we will arrive when in fact, we are already there, already full of blessing and abundance.

Second, we are too busy to be joyful. All of life’s little “blessings” take an immense amount of work. The more blessings – both at home and at work – the more stress, the less emotional space there is to be joyful.

Third, we feel too guilty to be joyful. We look at Jewish history, perhaps at our immediate ancestors’ suffering, and also, at the current suffering of others in the world, and we have survivor’s guilt. We feel we have no right to our blessings, our security, our comforts and our prosperity; we are not joyful, but quietly nervous and uncomfortable with our abundance.

And so the Torah teaches us that *ki tavo*, “when you arrive,” *simchah*, “joy,” is an obligation. Not a nice, pleasant option, but an obligation, a command. To receive gifts and not enjoy them is a slap in the face of the giver. Enjoy your blessings and share them with others. As the tither declares, I have experienced joy and caused others joy. *Samachti vesimachti bo*.



Administrators Corner

Rabbi Rami Strosberg

Head of School

When children are born, the only viable form of survival is through their dependence and self-ish nature. Without dependence on someone else, typically a parent, a baby would be hungry, soiled, naked, and uncomfortable.

As children age, assuming their basic needs are met, they soon develop a sense of autonomy, and independence. Our kindergarteners who once needed to be dressed and spoon fed can now put on their own shoes, albeit sometimes on the wrong feet. Our second graders who once needed help reading can now read to us- in Hebrew and English. Our seventh graders whom we used to hire babysitters to watch, now work with our Kindergarteners through our buddy program. Kids who we used to “shush” in synagogue are quickly becoming bar and bat mitzvah and leading us in Shabbat services.

While all of this growth and all these milestones seem to just happen naturally and without too much thought, there is nothing natural about children being selfless. It was not long ago that they needed and wanted us for everything. Taking feels much more instantly gratifying than giving, because it more quickly meets one's needs.

In our fast-paced society, growing is something that is a given, but giving is taken for granted. We, as parents and educators, are responsible for transitioning our children from the literal “the more you give the less you have” to the value of “the more you give, the more you have.”

In the month of Elul, we prepare ourselves for the most holy, important days on the Calendar - Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. These days are so pivotal that we are instructed to use the entire month before to ready ourselves for their impact. We reflect on who we are as people. We recognize the gap between where we come from and where we are going. Through prayer and reflection we recall that there is someone above, and that the world does not revolve around us. We focus less on the petty and more on the profound. Through reflection, we realize that all of the good things that we have in life are blessings, not entitlements.

May we be blessed with a meaningful and productive month of Elul!

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Rami Strosberg

News From the Admissions Office

Lorraine Arcus ~ larcus@hacdalbany.com

Events Coming this Fall to Bet Shraga ~ Invite Your Friends

Monday, October 10, 2011

Open House

Incoming Kindergarten Students and Parents
9:00-11:00 AM



Students in Grades K-6 are invited to
BRING A JEWISH FRIEND TO SCHOOL



Spend the Day ~ Monday, October 10, 2011

Welcome to the Bet Shraga Class of 2020



Madelyn and Amy



Shoham and Zohara



Eliana and Dov



Layla and Asher



Lia and Jason



Elijah and Tani



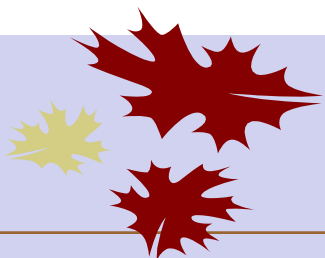
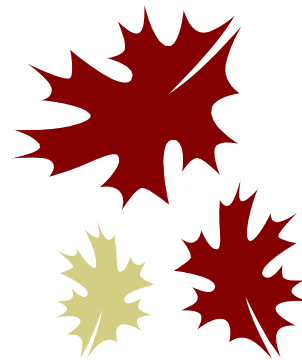
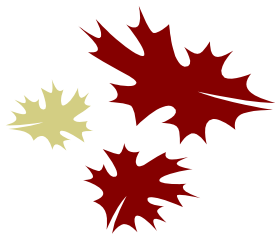
Toby and Josh



Ami and Zvi



Ella and Ayelet



WHO: YOU!!!!!!
WHAT: 20 MILE BIKE RIDE (round trip)
shorter rides available
WHEN: SEPTEMBER 25TH AT 9:00 AM
WHERE: THE NISKAYUNA BIKE PATH
2545 RIVER ROAD NISKAYUNA NY 12309
(BLATNICK PARK)

**WHY: TO RAISE MONEY FOR
BREASTCANCER RESEARCH**



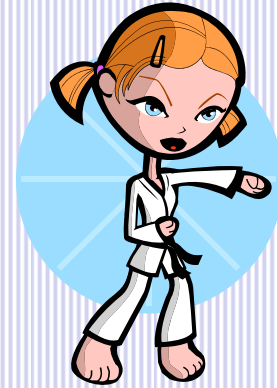
IF YOU ARE ABLE TO ATTEND THIS EVENT PLEASE CONTACT US VIA E-MAIL
Jlevine6@nycap.rr.com

Community Event Calendar

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!





KARATE KIDZ

**With Master Lou Papa
15 years US Budokai
3 Years with PAL Program in Albany Schools**

For Ages 6 to 12 years old

**September 11-October 24 – Fall Session 1
(Continues through 2011-12 School Year)**

Sundays and Mondays

4:45 to 5:45 pm

JCC Auditorium (Fitness Studio, backup)

**Program will consist of Competition in the following skills:
Sparring, Various Forms, Self-Defense Moves, and Bo techniques**

**Participants should come dressed in
Sneakers, Sweatpants or Shorts, and T-Shirt or choose to purchase Karate Uniform (gi)
Belts will be supplied**

Cost: \$95 per child

**To Register:
Contact Andrew Katz, Director of Youth Services
518-438-6651 x 113 or AndrewK@saajcc.org
www.saajcc.org**

Announcing Camp Ramah in New England's First-Ever Ramah Family Day!

We hope you'll join us for a fun filled **Ramah Family Day**, a free program open to all current or prospective Ramah families, on Sunday, September 25th from 12-4pm.



Ramah Family Day will feature a taste of the Ramah experience:

- Climbing on the Alpine Tower
- Creative arts projects
- Boating
- Sports options
- Outdoor (campfire) cooking
- *Rikud* (dancing)

Tours and information sessions for prospective camper families

A Kosher BBQ lunch will be available for purchase, or families are welcome to bring their own picnic. RSVP requested (but not required). Camp Ramah in New England is located at 39 Bennett St., Palmer, MA 01069. For further information or to RSVP please contact Ben Greene, Director of Year Round Initiatives, at beng@campramahne.org.

Come study at the new

Open Bet Midrash of Albany

Fun, meaningful, creative communal Torah study in an honest, open environment.

No previous knowledge required. Both men and women welcome.

Meeting time: 7:30-9:30 PM once a week, day to be determined.

Facilitator: Dr. Rachel Anisfeld, who writes the weekly parsha blog “[Parsha Thoughts & More.](#)”

Pilot Session: Come try it out! Tuesday, October 4 at 8:00 PM at my home, 148 Milner Ave, Albany. Please let me know if you plan to attend: ranisfeld@nycap.rr.com, 489-5756

Cost: \$275 for the school year

The program is affiliated with the [Elul Bet Midrash program](#) based in Jerusalem, a Torah institute dedicated to the study of classical texts and creative responses to Torah.