

From the desk of Rabbi Baumann



Dear Parents,

Erev Shabbos Parashas Shelach 5780

Our second school year of the school year is now completed. Our children learned, grew and developed nicely for seven months. That was productive school year NUMBER ONE. Now is the time to celebrate the end of school year NUMBER TWO!

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in spiritual matters.**

One of the numerous explanations given for why 10 of the 12 spies were so negative about *Klal Yisroel* entering *Eretz Yisrael* (*Parshas Shelach (Bamidbar 13:31)*), was a pervasive fear that their spirituality would decline from the lofty levels they were enjoying in the splendid isolation of the desert, once they would become involved in all the mundane matters of a functioning country. They were weren't aware that these fears were a function of their lack of trust in *Hashem*. Nevertheless, it is not unnatural to fear a change from one's routines and surroundings, especially in spiritual matters.

The changes of the past few months have been an enormous struggle for all of us, and for some students and their families, circumstances were so overwhelming that even if academics and school work were not attainable, their accomplishment is that they are still intact and managing. For the large majority of our children, however, the words that come to mind are resilience and motivation.

Children don't have much of a frame of reference with which to absorb unexpected changes, nor experience with obstacles that their parents and teachers can't solve for them. They were the most susceptible to collateral damage from the pandemic. Our experience, B'H, seems to have shown us that overall, youthful resilience, and the ability of loving teachers and parents to light a fire of motivation in the children, overpowers the challenges.

The children have stayed involved with the lessons. Our children enthusiastically participated in the special school events, and most importantly, they seem to be emotionally strong. In many ways, the adversity of the past months has added a touch of positive seriousness to their heretofore carefree existence. Numerous silver linings are emerging from the clouds that have dominated our horizons for the past months.

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As we enter the summer break time, we should be encouraged by the signs of growth and maturity our children are demonstrating. Summer is the time to strengthen the inner emotional strength of a child. Without school responsibilities, they are free to learn more about themselves and their interests. This year especially, that process probably started early on, during the long days and shortened school responsibilities. Nurture it and encourage it over the summer months.

We hope and pray for a return to 'normalcy'. In the meantime, there is so much that can be accomplished. Let us embrace every opportunity and hopefully, *B'ezras Hashem*, move forward to a normal that is ever greater than before.

Best wishes for a rejuvenating, reinvigorating and healthy summer!

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

P.S. Please see our Suggested Reading List of Parenting Books at ytcte.org/summer-reading. Summer reading is not just for the kids! Suggested additions are always welcome.