

THE WEEK IN WORDS



February 5, 2015

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טו שבט תשעה

פרשת יתרו

CALENDAR NOTES



FEBRUARY 6 – RABBI YOSSI HEBER DAY.

TEACHER WORK DAY. NO SCHOOL.

FEBRUARY 10 – PRE-K TRIP TO YOUNG AT ART MUSEUM

FEBRUARY 16 – PRESIDENTS DAY.

DISMISSAL AT 12:00 NOON.

GOING, GOING, GONE!



We invite you to go through our lost and found to see if you can claim any item before we donate them to the local *Gemach* (The Community Closet). Please stop by before Friday, February 13 to claim your missing items.

TU B'SHVAT TREATS

Delicious trays of luscious fruits were distributed to, and enjoyed by, the entire student body in honor of *Tu B'Shvat*. *Thank you to the Parents' Association for providing these treats and especially to Mrs. Shifra Sharfman for purchasing and preparing the exquisite trays. Once again this year, Mrs. Sharfman eagerly volunteered to undertake this project and the results were (as always) spectacular and delicious! Yasher Koach to the entire Sharfman crew!*





Principal
Rabbi Kalman Baumann

Director
Mrs. Talia Levine

Early Childhood Consultant
Mrs. Naomi Bloom

Erev Erev Shabbos Parashas Yisro 5775

Dear Parents,

Today's parents have a difficult time with the fifth commandment – "Honor your Father and Your Mother." (*Shemos 20:12*) That is not to say that there is anything necessarily deficient in the way they treat their own parents, rather today's challenge lies in parents properly training their own children to act respectfully and honorably toward them – the children's parents. There are many reasons for this, and it behooves us to understand the root of the problem, to address it squarely and successfully.

We first need to understand why it is important for children to honor and respect parents: 1) It is a Torah command. 2) Children and all people do well with clear limits and boundaries. A parent who is an effective authority figure in a child's life brings stability, confidence and security to that child's existence. 3) A long-term loving relationship is best served when parents and children have clearly delineated roles within the family and vis-à-vis each other. 4) For every *mitzva bein adam lamakom*, Hashem gave us also a *mitzva bein adam lachaveiro*. Children learn to show honor and *kavod* to Hashem through giving honor and *kavod* to their elders.

So what's the problem? Why do so many children disregard their parents' instructions and wishes? Why are so many parents reluctant to put their foot down and authoritatively redirect their children to appropriate behavior? I believe three factors stand out. We are unfortunately casualties of modern-day Western values and outlook. The modern perspective doesn't nurture self-esteem; as supposed descendants of apes, random outcomes of a random universe, we can't have much purpose or value. In our heart of hearts we feel – "who am I?" that another human being needs to show honor and reverence to **me**? We parents think we are just regular people and we are downright uncomfortable demanding respect from our little ones. Another factor is that we live in a world of unchecked equality. The pendulum has swung so far from the days of princes and peasants that we have trouble asserting ourselves over 3 year olds!!

Furthermore, the value of cultivating relationships has been so exaggerated out of proper proportion that other values such as truth, independence and fairness have taken a back seat. Today's parents will seemingly go to any length to preserve their relationship with their children. To cause one's child to be angry at the parent is, in their minds, jeopardizing the entire connection between parent and child and therefore to be avoided at all costs. Is it any wonder then that the proper *chinuch* for *Kibud Av V'Em* is almost non-existent?

If we were to examine the three factors delineated above we would notice a common denominator – they are each about the parent. The parent's feelings, the parent's fears and the parent's discomfort. This is the root of all failures in parenting. If one is concerned about how this affects **me**, how it impacts **me**, how it distresses **me**, then you've left no space in your brain and heart for the question – how does this impact on **my child**, how comfortable is this for **my child**, how important is this for **my child**.

Paraphrasing *Rav Simcha Wasserman zt'l* who was describing the factors that differentiate between a teacher or parent who succeeds or fails to effectively connect to a child: "You can think about how you (the adult) feel or you can think about how I (the child) feel, but you can't do both at the same time." Obviously – we must think about how the child truly feels. Even if they tantrum and outwardly express feelings of anger and resentment, their true, inner feelings are – please be consistent, please project self-confidence in your rules, please act in my best long-term interests.

This requires serious, honest introspection inside the inner chambers of your own heart. Is it possible you're too focused on how your children and their issues impact **you** and not focused enough on **what does my child need**? With this one change in mindset, parenting becomes a whole new opportunity for truly molding greatness within our own four walls, and for raising a generation of children who know how to properly fulfill the 5th commandment.

Best wishes for a *Shabbos* attuned to the word of Hashem, aware of our inner motivations and focused on the needs of our loved ones,

Rabbi Kalman Baumann

WEEKLY WRAP-UP

