



Parshat Shemot January 8 2021

The Week in Review

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White Plains, NY

SAR

On Thursday, we marked the solar new year with a student-organized potluck dinner - everyone cooked soups, pastas, cheesecake, and much more! The potluck was followed by Seder Erev, a chaburah from Sarah Ben-Nun, and mishmar from our very own Maya Jubas.

We were so lucky to have the entire Midrasha including the Israeli and Darkaynu programs together for a restful, lovely Shabbat with lots of inter-program (according to all the rules :)) Zmirot and Shiurim!

On Motzei Shabbat, our madrichot planned an awesome cupcake wars competition!

On Sunday, we had a fantastic day of regular classes!! Woohoo!!!!

Monday was another great regular-classes day, plus the huge privilege of hearing from Ilana Kurshan, the author of If All the Seas Were Ink. She spoke to us about her personal journey with learning Daf Yomi - So inspiring!!!

On Tuesday, along with our regular classes, we participated in our various Chessed activities in groups, including packing food for families in need, tutoring children in the neighborhood, and baking for Lone Soldiers and people in quarantine with Darkaynu #tizkulemitzvot

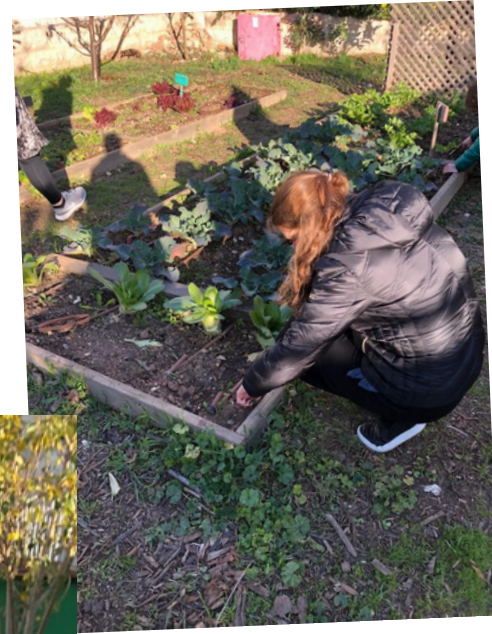
On Wednesday, along with regular classes, Magen David Adom came to Lindenbaum and ran a blood drive! #tizkulemitzvot

On Thursday, after our regular morning shiurim, we had the opportunity to hear a shiur from Rav Brander and later, had ML's Annual Emunah Panel, and had the zchut to hear from our very own faculty members about their experiences with Emunah- so inspiring! Later, we had an incredible Mishmar about the Mikveh experience with Dr. Naomi Marmon Grumet of the Eden Center.

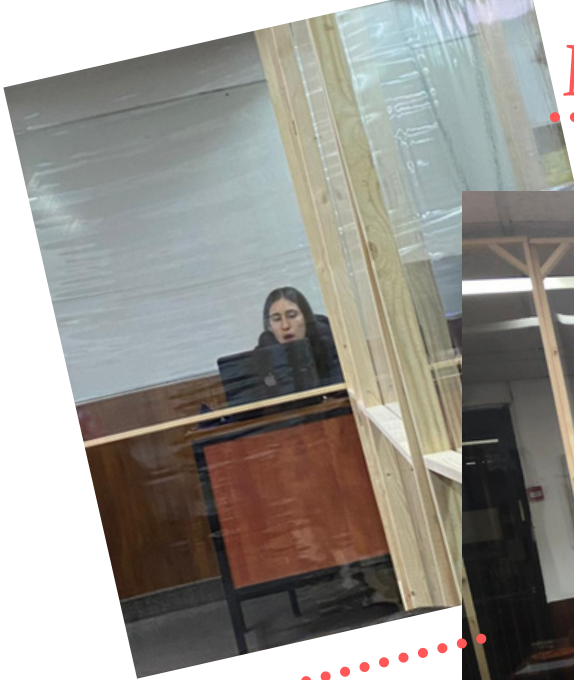
We're so looking forward to our Shabbaton with Darkaynu and all the amazing programming ahead!!! Can't wait!!



Volunteering in the Community Garden



Mishmar with Maya Jubas!



Guest speaker Ilana Kurshan, author
of "If All The Seas Were Ink"



Cupcake Wars with Madrichot!



Teaming up with Darkaynu to make pancakes for Amlat students in bidud



Shiur Klali with Rabbi Brander



Annual Emunah Panel!

Pantry Packers



D'var Torah from our Students

Rina Metzger
São Paulo, Brazil



In this week's parsha we meet the leader who will guide Bnei Yisrael until the end of chumash. Living in modern days and witnessing democratic elections, the expectation is to hear candidates promoting how they are the best fit for leadership positions.

However, with Moshe we find the exact opposite. In fact, several prakim of parshat Shemot revolve around Hashem's explaining Moshe's role and mission and Moshe's listing the many reasons why he is not the man for the job. In truth, Hashem doesn't give any clear indication why Moshe is the chosen one, He just acts as if it's a given.

That's not always the case with every leader. For instance, if we look at this week's haftarah we find Yirmiyahu (Yirmiyahu 1:4) saying how Hashem has told him that from the moment he was being carried by his mother, He had already sanctified Yirmiyahu as a prophet. Moshe doesn't get such an announcement.

In fact, when he asks Hashem, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Yisrael out of Mitzrayim?" (Shemot, 3:11), God's response is that He shall be with Moshe – which by no means is a direct answer to what he had asked. However, looking closely to Moshe's life story, we might get a sense of what Hashem meant by His response.

Moshe didn't have a traditional upbringing, and he embodies the idea of being a stranger. He was a stranger in Pharaoh's palace, for he was adopted. He was a stranger in his family's house for he was not raised there. He was a stranger among his people for he didn't endure the same sufferings. And he was a stranger in Yitro's house because he was from a different land.

His feeling of separateness becomes evident when he names his first son as Gershom: “For he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land” (Shemot 2:22). This concept of being a stranger will later come up several times in the Torah. A considerable part of the Jewish moral system is based on the idea that we were strangers in Mitzrayim and therefore we should be even more careful and kind with the strangers among us, because we know what it means to feel displaced.

Moshe knew firsthand the feeling of being an outsider. He knew the hardships and struggles intrinsic to being different. So when he asks God, who is he to go to Pharaoh and to take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, Hashem doesn't respond because, in a sense, his question already contains the answer he needs.

His two conflicting sides – being a son of the palace and a son of the enslaved – allowed him to learn how to successfully manage his life around those who didn't see the world like he did or even didn't acknowledge him as their equal. He could talk and be heard as both “one of them” and as an outsider. The leadership spot was no doubt a challenging position, but one Hashem clearly wouldn't entrust to anyone else.

Moshe knew adversity, and he knew very well what it is to stand alone, firm in his beliefs however uncomfortable it may be – and that's what makes him a great leader. And in a comforting way, Hashem reminds him that even though he is being tasked with a difficult mission, he won't be facing it alone: “Certainly I will be with you” (Shemot 3:12).

In strange times as the one in which we are living, may we have the strength to rise and extend our hands to the strangers in need and may we all answer, like Moshe and so many others did, with the word hineni – here I am

Shabbat Shalom!

