



מה חדש
Ma Chadash?
what's new?

A newsletter from Talmud Torah to the parents & students

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30 Kislev

Talmud Torah of
Minneapolis
The Heilicher
Education Center
Barry Family Campus
4330 South Cedar Lake Rd.
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
P 952.381.3300 | F
952.381.3301
www.talmudtorahmpls.org

Multiple Interpretations of the Miracle of Hanukah

Every year I study about the upcoming holidays. This year I came across a lesson by Noam Zion and wish to share some of his ideas with you. I highly recommend his two volume collection called “The Big Book on Hanukkah.”

Rabbi David Hartman has argued that Judaism is a “community of interpretation” rather than a community of common dogma. We tend to re-describe or reinterpret the past so that it is relevant to our own culture and provides some kind of guidance or blueprint for the future. Just as in families, each member experiences and remembers common events from their own perspective and in retelling their “story” feel their version of the event is the authentic one.

The story of Hanukah is a very interesting case in point: all Jews light the Hanukkah candles whether they are secular or religious, whether they live in Israel, Turkey, the Philippines or North America –but we all have different interpretations of the “Miracle” that we proclaim.

Secular Israelis reject the miracle performed by God – they interpret it as the military miracle of the “few against the many” a theme close to their own reality.

The Hasidic Lubavitch Jew sees the world as a battle between Greek and Jew - darkness and light - which is why they are big on displays of the “Public Chanukiya” because Jews bring light to a world in darkness. (Look for our branch of their Chanukiya displayed in the Byerly’s SLP.)

American Jews who try to counter the elevation of Hanukah to compete with Christmas see the holiday as a celebration of a miracle but also as a reaffirmation of religious freedom since the Maccabees fought against the Greeks who were imposing their pagan gods on the Jews.

Every interpretation is both relevant and meaningful. The beauty of it is that approaching the holidays every year can challenge us to choose our own perspective. It is not enough to just light a candle and say we recall the past. Each recollection is an interpretation of that past and we must reflect on the meaning of it “in our days and at this time.”



Top Photo:
Alef Students Sing at the Bet Hanukah Program

Bottom Photo:
Mekhina Bet Students Play Dreidel



The *Ruach* (Spirit) of Hanukah Filled Talmud Torah

Bet students participated in a beautiful Hanukah program on Wednesday and Thursday.

It was evident that they enjoyed learning and sharing their knowledge with all the elementary students and parents who also attended the special program. The *Bet* children lit the *hanukiya*, which was given to us by the IDF soldiers we hosted last year. We dedicated the lights to Gilad Shalit who has been in the darkness of captivity for three years. The students sang the blessings and traditional Hanukah songs. They also recited an original rap, written by teacher, Danny Etedgui. The *Alef* and *Mekhina Bet* students joined in the Hanukah festivities by singing and dancing. Following the program the parents, students and teachers enjoyed delicious *I'vivot* (potato pancakes). Everyone had a fun time. *Toda raba* to our wonderful *Bet* teachers, Carmella Chazin, Bonnie Noyman and Yefet Zadaka! *Yasher Koach* to our talented *Bet* students!



Talmud Torah Reading Clinic

The primary mission of the reading clinic, coordinated by Etta Bernstein, is to improve the reading proficiency of all students. We work with the classroom teachers to determine the needs of each student. After assessment, most students work with reading instructors in small groups. There are many reasons why a student may be given reading instruction in the reading clinic, ranging from specific learning needs to enrichment. Some students work with the reading clinic sporadically in order to keep their skills at the appropriate level; others may work for 2-6 weeks on specific skill increments; others need consistent, on-going support in order to keep their reading skills on par with the class.

Please see the attached fun reading techniques.



College Consultant, Keri Bahar Speaks to 11th Grade *Kehilla* Students and Parents

Eleventh grade *Kehilla* students and parents learned about the college admissions process, thanks to Keri Bahar, of KSB College Consulting. Keri presented information about the timeline families should consider when making college choices, applications and decisions, preparing for and taking SAT and ACT exams, constructing résumés, where Jewish students are choosing to go to college, insights into how colleges choose applicants, financial concerns and more. Students and parents had e-mailed questions to Keri which she addressed during the session. Keri gave a number of beneficial handouts to all participants. Everyone left feeling more comfortable, knowledgeable and well informed about the college admission process.

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Questions or comments regarding the **Ma Chadash**? Email them to schalom@talmudtorahmpls.org

Missy (Tamar) C. Lavintman- Editor
Kimberly Steil- Assistant

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