

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:

- **Sunday, January 26:**
Attention parents: Check your email for a survey regarding next year's calendar
- **Monday-Thursday, January 27-30:** Midterm Exams
- **Friday-Monday, January 31-February 3:** Midterm Break
- **Tuesday, February 4:**
Second Semester Begins 8 AM
- **Thursday, March 13:** Taanis Esther - 3:15 dismissal
- **Friday, March 14:** Purim - No School
- **Wednesday- Thursday, March 19-20:** Simcha Retreat - details TBA

MAZAL TOVS:

- Mazal Tov to Mordy and Daniella (Leff, '14) Flamm on the birth of a baby girl!

ALL THE HOSTAGES

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ARE IN OUR HEARTS &
TEFILOS.

PLEASE CONSIDER SAYING PEREK
140 OF TEHILLIM AS A ZECHUS
FOR OUR BROTHERS & SISTERS.

SUPPORT TEMIMA: DAY OF LEARNING

Sponsoring a Temima Day of Learning gives you the opportunity to support Temima and honor or commemorate your loved ones.

See our website for more details.



From the Desk of Rabbi Avraham Shapiro

Every Temima student knows that the amygdala is the part of the brain that is the center of human emotions. She also knows that the brain's frontal lobe acts as the brain's final control center.

Hence, a person who has trained himself or herself properly uses the reasoning, planning and problem solving attributes of his or her frontal cortex to supervise the emotional responses that originate in the amygdala.

This is one of the first and foundational lessons that ninth graders are taught as part of the SIP curriculum that was developed by Mrs. Feldman and is presently being taught by Mrs. Wohlfarth. In this class the importance of striving to internalize the idea that your intellect should be in control and do all it can to ensure that your emotions manifest themselves in a productive way is discussed, analyzed and hopefully internalized.

Too bad Pharaoh didn't attend this class. Let me explain.

In this week's Parsha Vaera we begin to learn about the saga of the "Ten Plagues". For each of the first five plagues the sequence of events is the same. Moshe asks Pharaoh to "Let My People Go". When Pharaoh refuses, Moshe tells him a plague will be sent to fall upon on Egypt. Pharaoh ignores Moshe's warning, the plague comes, Pharaoh begs Moshe to ask Hashem to stop the plague and promises to let Am Yisrael leave Egypt. However, after the plague stops, Pharaoh "hardened his heart" (i.e. his amygdala takes over) and refuses to let Bnai Yisrael go.

When the sixth plague descends on Mitzrayim the sequence of events is basically the same with one important difference. This time, and for all subsequent plagues, HaShem, seemingly, takes away Pharaoh's freewill and He hardens Pharaoh's heart.

Imagine if Pharaoh had sat in on Mrs. Wohlfarth's class and learned about the physiology and psychology of the human brain. He would have been logical and kept his promise to let the Jews leave Egypt. Theoretically, this would have prevented a lot of destruction.

The Ibn Ezra echos this way of understanding in his comment on Shemos 7:3 ואני מקשה לב פרעה "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart.." Explains Ibn Ezra, "One could ask, If HaShem hardened Pharaoh's heart, how can we say he sinned (and should be punished)? The answer is that HaShem gives man wisdom and intellect so man can control his nature and prevent wrongdoing".

In other words, Ibn Ezra is bothered because it seems unjust for HaShem to hold Pharaoh accountable for enslaving the Jewish People and refusing to let them go. This seems unfair because at the time of the sixth plague HaShem seems to have taken away Pharaoh's freewill by hardening his heart.

The Ibn Ezra counters and explains, HaShem only affected the emotional faculties of Pharaoh. HaShem did, in fact, make it more difficult for Pharaoh to set the children of Israel free. However, Pharaoh never lost his ability to let his intellect control his emotions and do the right thing. So, in the final analysis, Pharaoh was responsible for what happened and deserved to be punished.

Let's hope that as we live and grow, we will develop both our minds and our hearts to the fullest and utilize them in our own best interest and in the service of HaShem - even when we face challenging times or events. During such difficult times, with resolve and self training, we will, hopefully, not lose control over our emotions and turn to anxiety, panic or fear, rather, we will do all in our power to have our minds control and channel our emotions so we will do the right thing and fulfill the will of HaShem.

Good Shabbos To All!

Rabbi Avraham Shapiro

This Week at a Glance:

CHOLENT



We came into school to the smell of a delicious cholent that had been cooking all night. That's the way to go into Shabbos! Thank you to our Chessed heads!

SIYUM



Mrs. Birnbaum's 10th-grade Chumash, 11th-grade Navi, and 12th-grade Kisvei celebrated a semester's worth of Torah learning with a Siyum this week. They enjoyed a delicious brunch and reflections on their learning.

SNOW DAY



On Tuesday afternoon we were pleasantly surprised when it began to snow. Oh, the excitement of half an inch of snow on a school day!

DIZZY WRAP UP



We received an envelope full of letters from the students that we performed for in Jacksonville. It was so rewarding to see how our show made such an impact on countless children

GOOD SHABBOS!