

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:

- **Monday–Thursday, January 27–30:** Midterm Exams
- **Friday–Monday, January 31–February 3:** Midterm Break
- **Tuesday, February 4:** Second Semester Begins

MAZAL TOVS:

- Mazal Tov to Avital Sobel ('21) on her engagement to Yehuda Bazelon. Mazal Tov to Penina Sobel (11th grade) and the entire Sobel family.
- Mazal tov to Rabbi David and Mrs. Julie Silverman on the recent marriage of their son to Kayla Leiser
- Mazal Tov to Kira Lessnick ('23) on her engagement to Aryeh Schwartz.

ALL THE HOSTAGES

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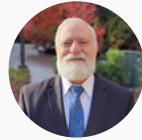
ARE IN OUR HEARTS &
TEFILOS.

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140 OF TEHILLIM AS A ZECHUS
FOR OUR BROTHERS & SISTERS.

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From the Desk of Rabbi Avraham Shapiro

We often speak about the concepts of טהרה and קדושה, purity and holiness. We know that to serve Hashem we need to incorporate both קדושה and טהרה into our lives. How do we accomplish this? What exactly are purity and holiness? Are they two words for the same thing or are they all together different concepts?

The Nesivos Shalom explains that טהרה is a state of purity, and it is attained by keeping away from impure things. Theoretically, in order to reach a state of purity one doesn't need to do anything. All one needs to do is steer clear of impure things. The focus is on סור מרע - keeping away from evil.

קדושה is different. In order to attain a state of holiness, explains the Nesivos Shalom, one must do something. Performing a Mitzvah, davening with sincere kavana, helping someone in need, and working toward coming closer to HaShem are all examples of deeds that can help us bring קדושה into our lives. The focus is on action - עשה טוב - do good.

The question is, as we set our personal path to becoming a servant of HaShem, what should our focus be?

The verse in Tehillim 34:16 states, "סור מרע ועשה טוב" - Turn away from evil and do good. The Nesivos Shalom explains that there are two ways to interpret this Pasuk.

One way to understand this verse is according to the order it is written. You must first turn away from bad and then you will be able to do good. In other words, fear of doing a sin is the first step necessary in the service of HaShem. This will set the stage that will enable one to become holy.

A second way to explain this verse is by reversing the order. That is to say, the end of the Pasuk "do good" is a prescription for how to keep away from evil. If we fill our lives with goodness and good deeds this will keep us away from evil. So the road to Avodas Hashem begins when we immerse ourselves in activities that reflect our devotion to Hashem.

Nesivos Shalom further explains that Menashe, the oldest son of Yosef, represents the idea of טהרה, and Efrayim, Yosef's second son, represents the concept of קדושה.

When Yosef brings his two sons to his father Yaakov Avinu to get a Bracha, he puts Menashe opposite Yaakov's right hand. Yosef wants Menashe to get the blessing from the strong hand because Menashe is the biological Bechor (firstborn). Additionally, Yosef believes the focus in Avodas HaShem is סור מרע - refraining from doing bad things. By living a life of purity, which is what Menashe represents, one will be able to develop into a true servant of HaShem.

Yaakov crosses his hands and puts his right hand on the head of Efrayim. He disagrees with Yosef. Yaakov feels that the first and primary way to serve HaShem is through קדושה - active love and devotion to Hashem. Therefore, he feels that Efrayim, who represents קדושה, should get the blessing from the right side. Yaakov is convinced that קדושה should be the focus in one's journey to Avodas HaShem.

In the final analysis, the Nesivos Shalom teaches that the best way to fulfill our mission is to integrate both קדושה and טהרה into our lives. We need to make every effort to put ourselves in the proper environment that keeps us away from evil and impurity, while at the same time constantly involving ourselves actively in Torah and Mitzvos so our lives will be full of קדושה.

Good Shabbos To All!

Rabbi Avraham Shapiro

This Week at a Glance:

ROSH CHODESH TEVES



Our Rosh Chodesh Heads led us in a beautiful Rosh Chodesh activity, reminding us of our power to spread our light without diminishing our own. As we go through the month of Teves, where we commemorate the Churban, we will do our best to increase the powerful flame of Ahavas Yisrael.

TARYAG IS BACK!



This Tuesday was the kickoff of the Taryag season this year! Headed by Tehila Miriam Schwarzmer and Temima Spotts, the girls are back in full swing learning the Taryag Mitzvos and the lessons behind them with Mrs. Feldman.

IDEcide CHALLENGE CELEBRATIONS!



Over 25 of our girls took on the iDecide tech Chanuka challenge! In celebration of their accomplishments, everyone who participated enjoyed a delicious, custom breakfast at the iDecide cafe! Girls who took on three sets of goals enjoyed a night out at Formaggio! Thank you to Mrs. Birnbaum and our 12th grade for coordinating and planning these awesome events!

Some quotes from iDecide participants:

"I learned that I can live my life without tech being everywhere."

"One thing I learned about myself...is that even when it's hard, I can resist the pull to do something I want to do."

"I learned that I can stick to something!"

"I learned that without so much technology, I was able to enjoy other things even more."

GOOD SHABBOS!