



Stellar Education for Every Jewish Child

ואהבת... וואהבת

Feb. 22, 2019 17 Adar I, 5779

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Winter After School Activities

What's Cooking?!

In our newest afterschool club, we are having a wonderful time learning all about cooking and baking – making everything from chipwiches to hors d'oeuvres to fruit pizza and baked apples, and learning how to delicately crack our eggs and turn chop meat into hamburger patties. (And the best part is we get to eat all of our creations!)



Candle Lighting

Friday, Feb. 22
5:38 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 23
Shabbat ends
6:42 p.m.



Saturday, Feb. 23
PCL Program
7:15 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 26
What's Cooking?!
3:45 - 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 27
Computer Coding
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.

Soccer
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.



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Thank you to the Gruber family for donating art supplies.

Winter After School Activities

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Soccer

In soccer club, the kids have learned striking, passing, dribbling, defense and control. A big favorite is the “number game” - a 1 on 1 soccer game where we use our newfound skills without the help of a team, helping to perfect skills individually.



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Winter After School Activities

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Coding

The RTA computer coders have continued throughout the year developing their proficiency in Scratch—the programming language developed by M.I.T. The students made a special project for Chanukah, and are now busy preparing their Purim coding project!



RTA Basketball

Iron-Blue Lions Super Season

It happens almost every year. A few eighth grade players from the basketball team graduate and some of the remaining players and fans think that the team will not perform as well the next season. A few even wondered if the RTA Iron Blue Lions would win any games without their former star players.

What those worriers forget is that all the other teams also lost a few starters due to graduation and that our remaining players are a year older and therefore, taller, stronger, faster, and more experienced than the season before.

Everyone stepped up their game and the Iron Blue Lions achieved an amazing record of 7-2 against our private middle school opponents. For the first time ever, this included games versus Jewish schools in Norfolk and Baltimore.

Season in Review

Game 1 vs St. Bridget's Bulldogs, W 22-20

What a game! We were winning 5-4 after the 1st quarter, it was tied up 8-8 at the half, we were losing 16-15 after the 3rd quarter, and there was a 20-20 tie after the 4th quarter. This was our only overtime game of the season, and it was Gavriel Rakofsky who scored the winning basket and had a game high of 12 points. Rookie, Eliyahu Francis scored 5 points in his debut game. While we don't keep stats for this category, Shmuel Follick got several important rebounds this game and each game of the season.

Game 2 vs Waldorf Gnomes, W 29-12

Our opponents were shorthanded with several players out due to illness and that was one factor leading to our blowout victory. Daniel Gunzburg, Jeremy Levin, and Gavriel each scored 6 points.

Game 3 vs Waldorf Gnomes, W 24-22

This time, the Gnomes had a full squad of players and they pushed the Lions to the limit. In the second half, they outscored us 16-8, but we held on to our first half lead, to squeak out the victory. Gavriel led the way with 10 points. Aharon Bart made both of his first quarter free throw attempts.



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RTA Basketball

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Game 4 vs Toras Chaim of Norfolk, W 35-22

A highly anticipated match-up against the Jewish school from Norfolk turned into a breakout game for Avi Greene. Avi dominated the 2nd quarter with an unprecedented 12 points. You read that right - 12 points in one quarter. Wow!! Add to that, the two three pointers he made, and that's a career high of 18 points. Gavriel contributed 12 points, with two three pointers of his own. One of the Toras Chaim players, # "00" scored 14 points.

Game 5 vs Montessori, L 27-21

With starting point guard Gavriel out due to illness, the offense didn't come together until the 4th quarter, where the Lions mounted a furious comeback, scoring 13 points in that frame. Alas, it was not enough. Montessori's attack was led by # "30" who scored 16 points. Ephraim Francis scored 6 points (including going four out of four on free throws) and Dovid Aronowitz had 5 points.

Game 6 vs Ohr Chadash Academy, L 31-25

In the road game in Baltimore, we had the odds stacked against us. Two Iron Blue Lions (Eliyahu & Zalmi Mayer) didn't make the trip and two who did (Gavriel & Jeremy) were suffering from illness and only played very limited minutes. Avi & Jeremy each scored 6 points. Rookie, Daneel Olihenco scored the first shot of his career. Team manager Yehoshua Gunzburg made his debut as a player in this game.

Game 7 vs St. Bridget's Bulldogs, W 32-18

For the rematch of the season opener, everyone was ready for another close, hard fought game. That was not to be, as the Lions blitzed the Bulldogs from the beginning, as we outscored them 11-2 in the first quarter and never looked back. Gavriel, who scored 9 of those 1st quarter points, finished with 13 points. Jeremy scored 8 and Avi had 7, including making all four of his free throws.

Game 8 vs Waldorf Gnomes, W 29-17

After two previous wins against the Gnomes (one easy, one by only two points), who knew what to expect? What we got was a game where the Lions methodically outscored the opponent by a little bit in each quarter, to end up with a comfortable victory. Jeremy led the way with 11 points, followed by Gavriel's 8 and Daniel's 6 points. Waldorf had one player, # "00" who carried the load for his team with 15 points.

Game 9 vs Toras Chaim, W 29-21

The Lions closed out the season with a road game in Norfolk. Avi & Zalmi didn't make the trip for this rematch from game 4. We started off slowly, falling behind 6-2 after the first quarter, but rebounded to take a 12-10 lead by halftime. Gavriel took over the 4th quarter with 8 points to seal the win. He had 12 points total and Dovid was next with 6 points.

Thus, ended a great season for the Iron Blue Lions, under the leadership of Coaches Todd Weinberg, Rich Lehman, and Avi Gunzburg. Thanks to the Timekeeper, Rabbi Baruch Sherman and the Scorekeeper, Basya Gunzburg.

As far as the 'post season' goes, the Dad's Game photos and article should appear next week and the 2nd Annual RTA/YVA Combo Game is scheduled for Monday, March 4th @ the JCC.

See you there and make it an Iron Blue day!!

- Submitted by Keith Rakofsky

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RTA Basketball

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RTA Basketball

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Parsha Points

Each week we feature an article on the weekly Torah portion.

Ki Tisa (Exodus 30:11-34:35)

Do Miracles Really Matter?

We've all either said it ourselves or heard someone else say it: "If only G-d would appear and show me some miracle, then I would truly believe and serve Him." This is what we sincerely think would be our reaction to a wonder or sign from Heaven.

But would it?

We are familiar with the story of the Golden Calf. The Jewish People heard G-d Himself, without an intermediary, speak and gave them His Torah. G-d also informed them that Moshe is His trustworthy prophet and that anything Moshe says in His Name should be accepted as G-d's word. Moshe then ascended to the top of Mount Sinai to receive all the details of the Torah. Moshe told them he would return in 40 days. When, according to their mistaken calculation Moshe tarried, they formed an image of a Golden Calf and worshipped it.

Despite the fact that many commentaries understand that the original golden calf was not actual idol worship but rather, it was a sin of using a forbidden image as an inspiration or focus for prayer and service, the question still remains: How could the Jews possibly commit such a transgression just 40 days after receiving the Torah? Shouldn't the impact of hearing G-d speak have lasted much more than 40 days? How is it that we human beings are able to disregard a clear inspiration and wondrous appearance by G-d?

The answer is that we are resilient in both a positive sense and in a negative one. Experiences that affected and moved me today may last a couple of days but will always wear off. I may have heard a motivating speech on controlling anger and I may really think that from now on I will control my anger. But we all know that given a week, that speech's effects will be largely lost.

Have we ever been to a moving, tear-filled funeral? Don't we leave the funeral vowing to appreciate life more and aren't we sure that we are going to tell our loved ones how much we love them every day of the rest of our lives? Yet, usually our resolutions do not last more than a day or two. Of course, this tendency applies in a positive sense as well. We are able to bounce back from negative experiences soon after we encounter them. But our emotional elasticity haunts us whenever we are trying to maintain inspiration and growth. We might call this the 'What have we lived through lately' syndrome.

And this syndrome destroys the impact of even miraculous events. It is not true that, "If only G-d would appear and show me some miracle then I would truly believe and serve Him." Unfortunately, the spiritual stimulus does not usually last. We learn this most succinctly from Eliyahu HaNavi, Elijah the Prophet.

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Parsha Points

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In the Haftorah for this week, we learn how Eliyahu challenged the idolatrous ruler, King Achav to a "competition" which would take place in front of the entire people. The worshippers and false prophets of the idol, Baal, would offer sacrifices and pray to Baal and Eliyahu would offer sacrifices and pray to G-d. Whichever one would answer with a fire consuming the sacrifice would be accepted as the true G-d.

This proposal was accepted and a fire came down to consume only Eliyahu's sacrifice and not the men of the Baal. All of the people saw this and proclaimed, "Hashem, He is the G-d! Hashem, He is the G-d!" Eliyahu then destroys the false prophets of the Baal. In addition, Eliyahu brings forth a miraculous rainstorm that ended a prolonged drought.

King Achav reports back to his wife, the equally evil Queen Izevel, thoroughly dejected. It seemed that Eliyahu has defeated them and their idolatrous practices. The Jewish People would give up the service of the Baal and only serve G-d. This threatened Achav and Izevel's entire hold on their kingdom! Then a most curious thing occurs. Seemingly incongruous, Izevel sends a messenger to Eliyahu saying, "Tomorrow, I am going to kill you." Eliyahu receives the message, reacts by running into the desert and is ready to give up. He requests that G-d take his soul. He wants to die.

What is going on here? Did Eliyahu actually think that Izevel would have an epiphany? Izevel was the epitome of evil. Surely, Eliyahu could not have ever hoped to change her idolatrous ways. In addition, Eliyahu has been running away from her his entire life and never gave up his mission of removing idolatry from the Jewish People. Now, he is ready to give up? Didn't he just perform a wondrous miracle which transformed the entire Jewish nation?

And how do we explain Izevel's actions? Doesn't she realize that the chips are stacked against her now that Eliyahu has successfully and miraculously defeated the worship of the Baal? And if indeed she does not care about public opinion but simply wants to murder Eliyahu for the nuisance that he is to her, why doesn't she kill him today? Why does she say that she will only kill him tomorrow?

It seems that Izevel was sending the following message: "Eliyahu, you think you have defeated me? You performed a grand miracle for all to see. Today I can't touch you. But TOMORROW I'll kill you and nobody will say a word. For just one day your miracle will work. That's how effective your miracle is."

Eliyahu had thought that the Jews' reaction to his monumental miracle would be grandiose change. He assessed the Jewish national soul and felt that finally they would repent as a result of his very public miracle. But then Eliyahu hears Izevel's message and realizes that her assessment is more accurate than his. This new miracle would not be viewed differently than the standard reaction to miracles. The power and inspiration of miracles does not permanently last and it won't now either. Yes, Izevel is right. Eliyahu is then ready to give up for he feels that there is nothing more that he can do to help transform the Jewish people.

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Parsha Points

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We think that if the world saw miracles it would be a different world. But it would not. It would be the exact same world. Miracles do not change people. We remain with our ability to rebel and sin a short while after the miracle's effect wears off.

Judaism is not based upon the performance of miracles. Maimonides writes (Mishna Torah, Yesodei Torah, Chapter 8) that Moshe did not perform miracles in order to prove the truth of his prophecy. He (as a messenger of G-d) took water out a stone because the Jews were thirsty. He brought manna from heaven because they were hungry, etc. We believe in the Torah's truth only because G-d appeared Himself at Mount Sinai and told us that it is true.

We are aware that inspirations fade. Yet we still desire to gain something permanent when we are inspired to change. We don't want to waste the inspiration. So what can we do?

Here's a key. When we are motivated to change, we must think of some small, slight area in which we can grow. If we take on something too overwhelming and drastic, then it is all the more likely to fail. We should take, for example, the area of prayer, and accept upon ourselves to recite an additional short section that we never said before. Or we can choose the area of Torah study and learn for an extra few moments per day. We can decide to perform an extra act of kindness daily, or just smile at one person every day. There are thousand of small things we can do to change subtly. Of course, the long-term goal is to increase amounts and levels of change but we must start slowly if we are to change at all.

So when the next inspiring event occurs in our lives, we can be realistic: Don't expect the inspiration to last forever.

Make just a small change.

Over a lifetime, these tens and tens of changes will produce the transformation we are all looking for.

Adapted with permission from the award winning website, www.aish.com.