



Shmuel Bass

TORAH ACADEMY

of San Antonio

BO

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6th & 7th Gemorah - Talmud Class



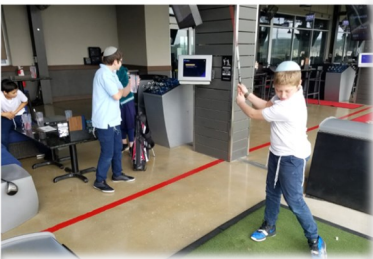
Hi everybody, welcome to our 6th and 7th grade *Gemorah/Talmud* class. Over the school year, we have been *Shtieging* (growing) in our studies, as well

as, honing our skills of analyzation and inference. We have also been working on learning Aramaic words used in the *Gemorah*. As of this week, we have learned over 80 words so far!

"I've been so impressed with the accomplishments of my students, that this past Tuesday we headed to Top Golf to honor all their hard work. I hope that we can continue to Shtieg together throughout the year, and keep exercising our minds and reaching new heights", shared Rabbi Moshe, middle school Judaic Studies teacher.

Kindergarten Open House

Yesterday we had a pleasant visit here at TASA from future Kindergarten students. Mrs. Belka & Mrs. Endzweig gave them a warm welcome as well as our current kindergarteners and enjoyed some reading time and fun activities, including snacks for part of the morning. We are excited to see them join our TASA Community.



What's New TASA Crew!

D'VAR TORAH

Parshat Bo - Blindsight

The *Eser Makot* (ten plagues) are perhaps one of the most fascinating parts of the Exodus from Egypt. From preschool age children to grown adults, we imagine what these plagues were actually like. In our Torah portion of Bo, we read of the final three *Makot* (plagues) that afflicted the Egyptians; locusts (*Arbeh*), darkness (*Choshech*), and the plague of the first born (*Makat Bechorot*).



When discussing the plague of darkness, the Torah explains that the plague lasted six days. Three days of a deep and penetrating darkness, and then another three days of darkness so severe that the Egyptians could not even move around. They were essentially prisoners of darkness. The obvious question is, beyond the physical and emotional discomfort, what was the purpose of the *Choshech*? One possible explanation is that Hashem wanted them to feel what it was like to be prisoners. Rashi (Troyes, France 1040-1105) comments that there were some Jews that were wicked and didn't deserve to be redeemed. In the commotion and plague of darkness they perished. G-d was essentially "covering up" the death of these wicked individuals.

I have always been bothered by this explanation of Rashi. Why can't we just call it as it is? Why shouldn't we perhaps amplify the negative behavior and deeds of these individuals and broadcast the following message "when you do bad things, you get punished"? Why the need to "cover up" or be discreet about it?

Some commentaries explain that Hashem didn't want the Egyptians to scoff and say "look Jews are dying as well, they are no better than us". But perhaps there is a more basic message for us as parents and educators. The message is simply don't accentuate the bad. When we look at our children, students, parents, spouses and peers, very often we see things that we don't like. Sometimes it is a specific behavior or character trait. Sometimes it can be a personality flaw or a specific mannerism that drives us mad. In our minds, these flaws or things that we don't like, become the sum total of the person in our own minds. We become like "prisoners" and are only able to see the negative instead of also seeing the many positive qualities the person possesses.

This then complicates our ability to love and educate the person or provide constructive criticism, because it is all through the prism of judgment and negativity.

The lesson of *Makat Choshech* (plague of darkness) is, it's okay not to focus on the negative. Sometimes it is even necessary to overlook some negative character traits and focus on the positive, in order to achieve redemption.

Am Yisrael Chai! Shabbat Shalom
Rabbi Y. Marrus



Coming Soon!!

- * **February 5th** - Vision & Hearing Screening by Dr. Daniel Lascu
- * **February 10th** - Tu b'shvat, Special Program
- * **February 12th** - 100th Day Of School!
Dress like your future old self
- * **February 17th** - Presidents Day / No School



Blended Classes

While Mrs. E was busy meeting with all of the excited incoming kindergartners, 1st & 2nd grade TASA students were able to have a lesson with their 4th & 5th grade buddies. The 1st and 2nd graders each read their story to their assigned buddy. After finishing their reading, everyone had the opportunity to write about their stories as well.

2020 - 2021 Students Welcome!

- ⇒ **Enrollment for new & returning TASA students for 2020-2021 School Year is Now Open!!**
- ⇒ **Register before March, 20th and save \$160.00 p/child.**
- ⇒ **For more information you can log into our website at: <https://www.torahacademysa.com/admissions/admissions-process/>**