



Shmuel Bass

TORAH ACADEMY

of San Antonio

Turkeys, Pumpkins and Thanks



TASA students celebrated Thanksgiving this past Wednesday with a program for all grades to enjoy. Each group painted pumpkins, created two edible candy turkeys, and expressed what they were thankful for. They heard stories showing



the importance of Hakkarat Hatov-Gratitude, and experienced how being grateful and showing gratitude is simple, but goes a long way. After voting for their favorite turkeys out in the hallway, the top four winners were announced. Shaina Altman won first place, Amaia Diric and Mendel Teldon tied for second, and Hadassah Grossbaum took third! Another thing to be thankful for was the perfect weather for all the outdoor activities. What a way to get into the spirit of Thanksgiving!



THE TASA TIMES

TOLDOT
November 20, 2020 - 4 Kislev, 5781
Light Candles at 5:19pm
Issue 6, 2020-21

TADSAW at TASA

For Veteran's Day, Coach Keegan set up a visit with Mr. Bart Sherwood and his service dog, Colonel. They both come from TADSAW, an organization that is all about "Training a Dog, Save a Warrior". They train rescue dogs to be good companions to those who have sacrificed so much for our country. Colonel taught us about how so many are able to continue to have an amazing life even through tough moments. The Colonel also taught a lot of our students how kind dogs can be! "We are so grateful for my amazing friend Mr. Bart, and the Colonel and hope to see them again soon!" Coach Keegan said. TASA Students also took the time to Thank our Veterans for their sacrifice and service and remember them daily.



Match-A-Thon A Huge Success

Matchathon 2020 was Thank G-d a wonderful success thanks to the involvements and dedication of all our parents, staff and board members. In all, 320 donors donated \$106,366.00 to our school, surpassing the initial goal of \$100,000. We would like to thank all the match donors, teams, and administration that made this campaign a huge success. A Special thank you is also in order to Rabbi Levi Teldon who designed and created the media images for this campaign.

Thank you!

What's New TASA Crew!



Coming Soon!!

- * **Thanksgiving Break** - Monday, November 23rd - Friday, November 27th.

FROM THE DEAN'S DESK

The Little Things Parshat Toldot



The week's portion of Toldot opens with the birth of Jacob and Esau and their childhood years. The Torah describes how on the day of Avraham's passing, Yaakov cooked lentil soup for his father Yitzchak who was sitting Shiva (the seven-day mourning period after a loved one's loss). Esav walks in famished and wants to eat. The commentaries explain that this was the day that Esav did some terrible things, including committing murder. It is in this context that Esav says "Pour into me some of that red stuff". Jacob convinces his older brother Esau to sell him the *Bechorah* (the firstborn birthright) for a pot of red lentil soup.

The verse describing how Esav ate states "*Vayochal, Vayeisht, Vayakam, Vayelach, Vayivez Esav Et Habechorah - And he ate and drank, got up and went on his way, and Esav spurned the firstborn birthright*".

As a youngster in the Cheder, I recall the Rabbi teaching this verse in the following way; **Vayochal Vayeisht** - and he ate and drank but did not make a Bracha. **Vayakam**-and he got up, but did recite Birkat Hamzaon (grace after the meal). **Vayelech** -and he went on his way, without kissing the Mezuzah or thanking the host.

For some reason this explanation has stuck with me some forty years later and I have been wondering why. While this explanation is certainly embellished and trying to create a relatable experience and imagery for your students, perhaps there is a deeper message that applies to all of us.

Chinuch Al Taharat Hakodesh (Torah Education) is not based on amassing knowledge or erudition in a specific field. It is based on educating children to value a Torah way of life, take pride in their heritage, and appreciate that every *Mitzvah* and small act counts. Of course, knowledge, erudition, competency in the written Torah, Oral Law, Hebrew, the prophets and so much more, will land you good grades and will help you graduate or receive your

academic degree or Semicha (rabbinic degree). But knowledge alone does not make you a good Jew. Completing academic courses does speak to your commitment and dedication to your faith and G-d. *Chinuch* is so much more.

There is a story told that the great Greek philosopher Aristotle was once caught in a compromising and undignified situation. When asked by his shocked students how he could be involved in that type of behavior, he responded "when I am in the classroom I am Aristotle, now I am just a man". This way of thinking is diametrically opposed to a Torah-way of thinking. For the character and behavior of a teacher is far more important than their erudition or brilliance in study. In fact, the *Baal Shem Tov* (founder of Chassidism 1698-1760) known for his great piety, took great pride in being a teacher's assistant in his younger years. In this capacity he would teach young children to make blessings, sing songs and work on their character traits.

Perhaps the lesson we learn from this novel explanation of the story Yaakov and Esav is, that little things really do matter. Making blessings on our food, thanking Hashem after eating (*Birkat Hamazon*), kissing the Mezuzah, or thanking the host whose meal you have partook in, are all seemingly small and insignificant things. But when you put them together a pattern begins to emerge. The lesson is that the little steps we take, the little Mitzvot we do, the little things that we teach our children, really do have an impact, and shape them to become the people we hope they will become.

Shabbat Shalom!
Rabbi Y. Marrus

