



Newsletter



TAKE A PEAK AT OUR WEEK

י' אדר פרשת תצוה תשפ"ו / February 27th, 2026



Out in the Community

Our BSA students spent the week preparing for Purim by getting in the holiday spirit with our spirit week and sharing that joy with the greater community. The week began with creativity from our 5th- and 6th-grade girls, who designed colorful Purim decorations for the JCC, including festive masks and signs. The week continued with the 7th-9th grade girls putting the finishing touches on their signs and Purim lettering in preparation for the JCC carnival this Sunday.

Our boys wrapped up the week in a meaningful way by visiting the Morris Mertz Café for older adults. During their visit, they shared words about the story of Purim and the mitzvot that accompany the holiday, creating a special moment of learning, connection.

Spirit Week

Students had an incredible time dressing up this week in the days leading up to Purim! Each day featured a fun theme, including Twin Day, Color Day, Fairy Tale Day, Dress Like a Teacher Day, and Wacky Friday. Take a look at all the excitement and creativity—and be sure to turn to page two for a complete collection of photos showcasing all the fun!



Spirit Week





Mishloach Manos Exchange



Beis Hamikdash Presentation

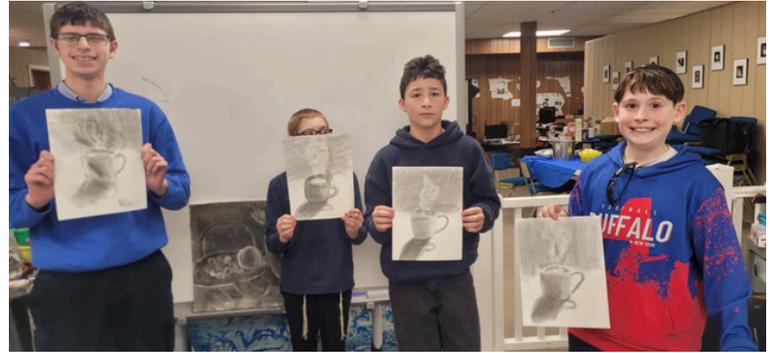


Our Annual Hamantashen Bake Sale



Art Class

In art class this week, students decorated masks, completed watercolor projects, created Purim baskets out of clay, and worked on still-life pencil sketches.



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Early Learning at BSA

Kindergarten



Pre-K



Chag Purim Sameach from the cutest clowns!

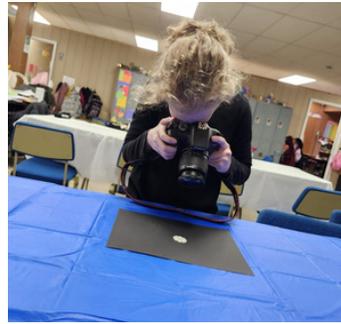
Toddler Class



Baby Room



Smiles for Miles



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Parsha Questions

1. What did Moshe ask the people to make for the menorah? (Olive oil)
2. Which part of the oil could be used for the menorah? (The first drops)
3. Who lit the Menorah? (The Kohein Gadol)
4. How many articles of clothing did the Kohein wear? (4)
5. How many articles of clothing did Kohein Gadol wear? (8)
6. What did the Kohein wear on his feet? (nothing)
7. What did the Kohein Gadol wear on his forehead and what color was it? (Tzitz and it was gold)
8. What did it say on it? (Kodesh L'Hashem)
9. Did the Kohein and the Kohein Gadol have the same hat? (No, the Kohein Gadol's hat was flat and the Kohein's hat was pointed.)
10. What beautiful piece did the Kohein Gadol wear in the front that attached to his apron? (The Choshen)
11. How many stones were there on the chosen? (12)
12. What was written on the Choshen? (The names of the 12 Shevatim)

From the Desk of our Principal: Dr. Leiter-Itzkowitz

Ahavas Yisrael: The Key to Our Redemption

At Beth Shalom Academy, we speak so often about building strong students, strong families, and a strong community. But at the heart of everything we do is something even deeper: Ahavas Yisrael — loving another Jew simply because they are a Jew.

Chazal teach us that the reason for our long exile was *sinas chinam*, baseless hatred. And if that is the cause, then the cure must be the opposite: *ahavah she'einah teluyah b'davar* — love that is not dependent on anything. Love not because someone earned it. Not because they agree with us. Not because they are easy to love. But simply because they are part of us.

“Love for no reason” means loving someone even when we feel we don’t “owe” them anything. Even when the situation does not obligate us according to the letter of the law. It means loving beyond calculation. Loving beyond logic. Loving even when we struggle to see the merit.

The Rambam teaches that in life we should generally take the middle path. But when it comes to loving another Jew, we are asked to go to an extreme. Even if we have tried to judge favorably and still feel challenged — we continue to love. That is true Ahavas Yisrael.

Without getting specific, I want to share that I spent a great deal of time this week consciously working on exercising Ahavas Yisrael with our students. It is not always easy. Leadership is not always easy. And especially when dealing with members of a community — emotions, expectations, and differing perspectives can make things complicated. But this week reminded me that Ahavas Yisrael is not simply a feeling that appears on its own; it is an *avodah*. It is a discipline. It is a decision we make again and again.

And at BSA, we are making that decision. We are consciously putting in the effort to choose Ahavas Yisrael — in our classrooms, in our offices, in our conversations, in working with members of our broader community, and in working with other schools. We understand that unity does not happen automatically. It is built intentionally.

In a school environment, this message feels especially urgent. Children are watching how we speak. They are absorbing how we react. They are learning whether differences divide us or strengthen us. If we remove even subtle traces of negativity and replace them with visible, active love, we are not only shaping kinder students — we are actively preparing the world for *Geulah*.

There is a beautiful insight brought about the name “Yishai,” the father of David HaMelech. The letters of Yishai can represent *Yachad Shivtei Yisrael* — together, all the tribes of Israel. When we stand together, united in love, that unity “gives birth” to David — to Melech HaMashiach. Redemption is not born from power. It is born from unity.

Every single Jew carries within them a spark of Mashiach. The Torah hints to this in the verse, “A star shall shoot forth from Yaakov.” That star refers to Mashiach — but it also refers to every one of us. Deep within each Jew is a level of the soul called *yechidah* — the point that is completely one with Hashem and completely one with every other Jew. That place has no division. No labels. No hierarchy. Just oneness.

When we practice Ahavas Yisrael, we reveal that deepest level. And when we reveal the *yechidah* within ourselves and within one another, we hasten the revelation of Mashiach — the collective *yechidah* of our people.

Perhaps this is why we begin each morning by saying, “I accept upon myself the mitzvah of ‘Love your fellow as yourself.’” It is not just a personal resolution. It is a daily act of redemption. Just as unity prepared us to receive the Torah at Har Sinai, so too unity prepares us for the “new Torah” that Mashiach will reveal — a deeper, more illuminated understanding of Torah.

Hillel taught: “Love the creations and draw them near to Torah.” He did not say love the scholars or the righteous — but love the creations. Simply because they are Hashem’s creations. And by loving them, we draw them — and ourselves — closer to Torah, and ultimately closer to the final *Geulah*.

There is also a powerful lesson from Pinchas and Eliyahu. Pinchas was known for zealotry. Eliyahu declared, “I was exceedingly jealous for Hashem.” Yet Hashem gave Pinchas a covenant of peace and appointed Eliyahu to attend every *bris milah* — to witness the enduring commitment of the Jewish people. His zeal was transformed into love. The ultimate messenger of Redemption is not the one who criticizes, but the one who sees the good.

There is a place for being demanding — but it must be directed inward. When it comes to others, especially the most simple Jew, we are called to love. Simple Jews are cherished by Hashem like a beloved child. Their sincerity and simplicity often reach heights we cannot see.

As I reflect on our BSA family — our students, teachers, parents, and friends — I am reminded how powerful this mission is. Every act of patience in a classroom. Every thoughtful conversation between parents and staff. Every time a child chooses kindness over conflict. These are not small moments. They are sparks of Mashiach.

We often speak about preparing our children for the future. But perhaps the greatest preparation is teaching them how to love without calculation. To look at another Jew and see not competition, not difference — but connection.

If baseless hatred brought exile, then baseless love will bring Redemption.

Have a wonderful Shabbos

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Featured Student of the Week

My name is Elana Binstok. I have lived in Kingston my whole life and began coming to BSA when I was in Pre-K. I enjoy my friends and my teachers, and my favorite classes are art, math, and science. I am learning piano in music class and was able to use my new skills in chesed class last week at Elan Gardens. Some of my favorite hobbies include singing and doing art. One of my favorite memories at BSA is the first time I met Morah Bracha.



Week Ahead

- Monday: Dismissal at 12/ HS Zoom
- Tuesday: No School/ Happy Purim!
- Wednesday: Late start at 10am/
Shushan Purim carnival at 1:00
Open to the Community
- Thursday: Back to our uniforms!
- Friday: Shabbos Party!

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Students of the Week



Tehila has been so strong in math and English and incredibly helpful to her peers.



Adi is always so respectful, responsible and has a nice thing to say to her peers and teachers.



Rivka Edelson was incredibly helpful this week, especially with the high school bake sale, and was a positive addition to the week at BSA.



Rivka exemplified kindness this week and had wonderful participation in all of her classes.

Daveners of the Week



Mazal Tov Nina!



Mazal Tov Shaindy!

Wishing Everyone a Relaxing and Enjoyable Shabbos!

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