



קשר KESHER

פרשת שופטים

Friday 14 August 2026

א' אלול תשפ"ו

Parashat Shoftim and the Sound of Elul at Yavneh ELC

Charlene Orwin, Head of Yavneh Early Learning Centre

As we enter the week of Parashat Shoftim, I find myself reflecting on the powerful lessons this parsha offers our Yavneh Early Learning Centre community. The parsha begins with the instruction to appoint judges and leaders, reminding us of the importance of fairness, responsibility and making thoughtful choices in our daily lives.

While our educators are not judges in the traditional sense, they play a profoundly important role in guiding our children each day. Through patience, kindness and wisdom, our teachers help children navigate friendships, resolve conflicts, make decisions and develop a strong sense of right and wrong. They create learning environments where every child feels seen, valued and respected, laying the foundations for empathy, integrity and resilience.

This week is made even more meaningful as we welcome Rosh Chodesh Elul, the beginning of a month dedicated to reflection, growth and preparing ourselves for the High Holy Days. Throughout Elul, we listen to the sound of the shofar each day, serving as a gentle wake-up call to look inward, reflect on our actions and consider how we can be our very best selves.

Each morning at Yavneh ELC, as the sound of the shofar echoes through our centre, I am reminded of the beautiful way Jewish traditions can be brought to life for young children.

For our children, Elul is not about complicated concepts. It is about learning to say "I'm sorry" when they have hurt a friend, offering kindness when someone is feeling left out, and understanding that mistakes are opportunities to learn and grow. The shofar encourages all of us, young and old, to pause and think about how our actions affect those around us.

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the understanding that forgiveness is not about being perfect. Rather, it is about taking responsibility, showing empathy and having the courage to make things right when things go wrong. Every day, I see our incredible educators supporting children through these important moments, helping them build the social and emotional skills that will guide them throughout their lives.

פרשת שופטים

Shabbat Times



Light candles 5:25pm

Shabbat ends 6:24pm

Parashat Shoftim and the Sound of Elul at Yavneh ELC, continued...

Our children continually inspire us with their capacity for kindness and fairness. Whether they are inviting a friend to join a game, sharing resources, comforting someone who is upset or working together to solve a problem, they demonstrate the very values that Parashat Shoftim seeks to nurture. These seemingly small moments are, in fact, the building blocks of strong character and future leadership.

I am also deeply grateful for our families, whose partnership helps make our community so special. Together, we create a nurturing environment where Jewish values are not only taught but lived. The connection between home and school strengthens our children's understanding of respect, responsibility and caring for others.

As we read Parashat Shoftim and begin this special month of Elul, I am filled with gratitude for our dedicated educators, our supportive families and our remarkable children. May the sound of the shofar inspire each of us to reflect, grow and approach one another with kindness and compassion. Together, may we continue to build a community grounded in respect, fairness and the values that make Yavneh such a special place to learn and belong.

Shabbat Shalom and Chodesh Tov. ❤️





Farewell Tribute to Dr Danny and Rolene Lamm AM

David Fisher, *Head of Administration*

At today's assembly we acknowledged and thanked a remarkable leader, Dr Danny Lamm AM, whose contribution to our community and to Yavneh College has spanned decades — a journey he has shared every step of the way with his wife Rolene, whose own quiet support and partnership have underpinned his decades of communal service.

Danny's record of service is extraordinary. He has led some of the most significant Jewish and Zionist organisations in Australia and internationally, serving as President of the Zionist Federation of Australia, President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, President of the Zionist Council of Victoria, President of Mizrahi Australia, and in senior leadership roles with the Jewish Agency for Israel and World Mizrahi. In 1988 and 1989, as Building Chair, he led the construction of this school, transforming it into the beautiful campus we know today.

Yet those titles tell only part of the story. What has always distinguished Danny is not the positions he has held, but the way he has led — never about status or recognition, but about responsibility: seeing a challenge, accepting ownership, and doing whatever was required to succeed.

One example stands above many others. Danny recognised, long before most of us, that Melbourne would benefit enormously from a Torah MiTzion Kollel. Having helped bring it to Melbourne, he spent decades — with Rolene by his side — raising the funds necessary to sustain that vision. He never simply signed the organisation up to an obligation and moved on; he accepted responsibility for making it work.

That has been Danny's hallmark throughout his leadership: doing the hard work behind the scenes, listening carefully, seeking consensus, standing up for those who needed support, all while keeping one eye firmly on the future.

Danny and Rolene, on behalf of everyone here: thank you for your many years of service, wisdom, and friendship. As you embark on the next chapter of your lives and prepare for Aliyah, we wish you both every happiness, good health and success. May you go from strength to strength, and may Israel be blessed to receive a couple whose lives have been dedicated to serving others.

Melbourne Jewish Book Week and our book club excursion

Shoshi Vorchheimer, *Director of Teaching and Learning*

This term, we are delighted to further nurture that culture of reading through Melbourne Jewish Book Week, welcoming acclaimed authors Anna Ciddor and Erica Frydenberg to the College. Their visits provide students with the unique opportunity to engage directly with accomplished writers, hear about the craft of storytelling and explore the ideas behind their work.

Experiences like these remind students that books are living conversations, connecting us with new perspectives, histories and possibilities.

Our Book Club also enjoyed our excursion to The Avenue Book Store this week, buying books that will be stored in our Resource Centre and recommended during assembly by our book club members!





Intrinsic Morality

Chaim Cowen, Deputy Principal, Head of Jewish Studies

One of my favourite articles is one I found quite by chance whilst researching a sermon back in my rabbinic days. It was an article co-written by husband and wife, Dr Mark and Jo Ann Skousen titled 'Persuasion v Force'. In a nutshell, its thesis was that the ideal society was one in which rules and laws were kept to an absolute minimum, with regulation not stemming from an external authority, but rather from within its citizens. This viewpoint, libertarian in nature, sees values-based education as the key to a moral society. Take smoking as an example; it is not a ban on cigarettes that has caused a steep decline in their usage among Australians over the past few decades, but rather a sustained educational marketing campaign which has taught the average Australian that the risks of smoking far outweigh their momentary pleasure.

The advantage of educating towards morality, rather than simply outlawing that which could be defined as immoral, is that by providing the citizen with ethical autonomy, one enables them to form an intrinsic morality, cultivated and 'owned' by the individual, as opposed to extrinsic morality, superimposed 'from above' by the State. One sees this notion played out when a State lifts a ban on an act or substance. Those for whom the State dictates morality and have never been compelled to discover their own moral compass, feel almost obligated to indulge in the newly permitted matter. Morality is thus dictated by the legislature and shifts with every passing bill and coalition. However, those for whom morality is matter of personal conscience, nurtured through education and study, State law becomes a mere 'outer boundary' of that which is permissible – practices that receive legal sanction, may still be morally repugnant to them.

In the world as it is presently, we cannot rely on intrinsic morality alone. We need a State that exacts penalties upon those whose conduct is outside of certain boundaries. And hence the obligation that one finds at the commencement of our parsha, "You shall set up judges and law enforcement officials for yourself in all your gates" (Devarim 16:18). However, this reality is less than ideal; one needs to be wary that the cost of setting up external safeguards for morality should not be that we feel relieved of the need to develop our own inner moral compass/conscience.



As Jewish people, the Torah provides us many opportunities for establishing intrinsic morality. The values which Torah espouses constantly challenge us to go beyond the laws of the country we live in – obligating us to give to charity, not to charge interest to our fellow Jew, to keep a Kosher diet and refrain from creative work on Shabbat, to name just a few. And it is in this vein that a deeper interpretation of the verse cited above informs us that the term "in all your gates" refers not just to the gates of our cities (which is the literal meaning) but to the gates of our bodies too. The eyes and ears are 'gates', and the content we allow through these passages shape the mind that we develop for ourselves. Our inner world requires "judges and law enforcement officials" – not superimposed by others, but rather dictated by our own standards.

Intrinsic morality is determined by what we say 'no' to in the solitude of our own private spaces; the vulgar, lewd and profane which might corrupt our inner world, but would offend no law in the outer world. It is the discretion we exercise in these matters that form the litmus test of our *menschlichkeit*, demonstrating that our espoused values and ethics have coalesced to form our personal

Preps catch the Gingerbread Man

Loren Pamensky and Nicky Kapul, *Primary General Studies*

Our Prep students turned into master bakers last week. We used sweet icing and tasty treats to decorate our very own gingerbread men. This fun cooking activity was the special hook for our Talk for Writing story unit for Term 3.

Learning Through Action

- We iced cookies to spark big imaginations.
- We talked about what we saw, smelled, and tasted.
- We built strong oral language skills.

What Comes Next

Now, we are rehearsing the story of The Gingerbread Man and learning new vocabulary. We will use actions and spoken words to retell the whole tale together. Soon, we will access our writing toolkit focusing on adjectives, proper nouns and verbs. Then, we will do short burst innovations by using different aspects of the toolkit to come up with our own sentences. Following this we will move into writing our very own sentences about our runaway cookie friend! Initially our writing will be supported through various frameworks and over time become more independent.



Year One Chumash Concert

Sarah Finch, Music And Primary Jewish Studies

This week, our Year One students reached a monumental milestone, performing their Chumash Concert and receiving their very first Chumash!

Receiving a Chumash marks the beginning of an incredible journey. As students learn to navigate this holy text, the Parshiot truly come to life. By building the core skills needed to study directly from the source, our young learners are empowered to take real ownership of their learning, a foundation that will guide them for years to come.

After weeks of dedicated rehearsals, mastering lines, learning songs, and perfecting their stage presence, the students delivered a spectacular show! Every child shone with confidence as their voices filled the room, beautifully accompanied by Morah Shula on the piano. The hall was filled with warmth and pride as parents, family, and teachers cheered them on.

It was an absolute pleasure teaching the children these meaningful and beautiful songs. Beyond their classroom tunes, they heart-warmingly sang Tehillim for our soldiers and performed songs that connect us so deeply as Jewish people across past and present generations.

Seeing each student proudly hold their very own Chumash was a true highlight. We are immensely proud of our Year Ones and look forward to watching them shine as they continue their learning journey.



Farewell Chodesh Av and Welcome Chodesh Elul

Sara Amzalak, Head of Jewish Life and Learning (Primary)

As the month of Av came to an end this week, JLife Primary wrapped up our learning about the Keilim of the Beit HaMikdash. Students who completed their learning booklets received their certificates and prizes, with Year 4-6 participants having a pizza and hot chips party. Kol HaKavod to everyone who participated.

Winners were also announced for the Keilim Model Making Competition. Well done to participants who all received a certificate and prize. Well done to our major prize winners: Mickey and Emma. A in first place. Mahli. K in second place. Eliyat. P and Libby. G in third place. Sammy. G and Eve. G in fourth place and Asher. B and Hershy. E in fifth place.

As we entered the Month of Elul, JLife Primary launched our Elul Campaign at the Rosh Chodesh assembly, with every student receiving a Just Do It – Teshuvah, Tefillah and Tzedakah wrist band. Send in photos of doing Mitzvot with the wrist bands on and be in the running for a major gift voucher. We are also running a Tzedakah raffle – every time a student gives Tzedakah in the month of Elul – they will receive a raffle ticket.

Please remember to also bring honey which will be donated to CCare. We are collecting till September 1st.

Wishing everyone a K'tiva V'Chatima Tova



Honey will be distributed to vulnerable members of our community through C Care in their 'Rosh Hashanah gift bags', ensuring that everyone in our community has the opportunity to celebrate the Jewish New Year.

C Care supports individuals and families experiencing food insecurity and social isolation through personalised, dignified food relief and meaningful connection programs.



ELUL
PARENT-CHILD LEARNING EVENING



**TUESDAY 25TH OF AUGUST
6PM**

 **HAMERKAZ**

 **SIGN UP VIA COMPASS BY 17/8**

 **SANDWICH BAR DINNER PROVIDED**

The Yavneh Academy
תלמידיבנה וחכמיה

Fortnightly Laflaf Sessions
A parsha focus that is personal and meaningful

Join us Friday mornings!

-  **Fridays, fortnightly**
Starting 14 Aug
Through to end of Term 3 (18 Sept)
-  **8:20-9:00am**
-  **VCE Study Centre**
Yavneh Elsternwick Campus
-  **Coffee & cake provided**

Join the Yavneh Academy WhatsApp group

We'll run a weekly poll there.
Sessions run only if a minimum
of 5 people sign up.





Upcoming Dates 2026

August:

Monday 17 – ZFA Conference
Student Free Day (ELC Open)

Mazal Tov

To **Shai Hacham** and Family on his Barmitzva

Condolences

To **Layla Lewis** on the passing of her Grandmother

EMUNAH AUSTRALIA Biscuit Bakers PAREVE

Rosh Hashana Boxes 5787/2026

What's in the box?

Emunah provides a range of life-changing programs that support Israel's most vulnerable children, women and families helping them break cycles of dysfunction and build stable, fulfilling lives.

JNF AUSTRALIA JNF Education

DESIGN A TZEDAKAH BOX

Create a design that shows what Tzedakah + Tikkun Olam + Elul mean to YOU.

Think. Create. Inspire. Give.

ראש חדש אלול

EMUNAH AUSTRALIA

DRAW A SWEET NEW YEAR!

CALLING ALL YOUNG ARTISTS!

Design our 2026 Rosh Hashanah e-card! Create an original artwork celebrating hope, kindness, joy and new beginnings.

The winning design becomes Emunah Australia's official e-card, sent to thousands of supporters across the country.

WIN BOUNCE!
Awesome Entrance Pass (4 tickets for a 60min session)

FREE TO ENTER

- Open to all primary school students
- Unlimited entries
- Original artwork only

Enter today and help make this Rosh Hashanah a little sweeter tinyurl.com/emunahcard26

ENTRIES CLOSE 16TH AUGUST 5PM **WINNER ANNOUNCED 18TH AUGUST**

SCAN HERE

EMUNAH AUSTRALIA

FINDING LIGHT: AN EVENING WITH CHANI LISBON

Inspiring story of resilience, hope and the healing power of humour

DATE & TIME
Wednesday 12 August 2026
7:45pm arrival, 8:00pm start

TICKET PRICE
\$36 Per Person
\$50 Per Couple

Melbourne location to be advised

CLICK HERE TO BOOK TODAY!

ABOUT CHANI LISBON
Chani Lisbon is a stand-up comedian and motivational speaker known for her raw, comedic and inspiring storytelling. Growing up as one of 11 children in a strict Orthodox Jewish family in Los Angeles, Chani's journey includes profound personal challenges, including alcohol addiction. Today, she uses humour, honesty and vulnerability to inspire audiences with a message of resilience, hope and healing.

Queen of the Castle WILSON

JNF Education **Tikkun Olam** REPAIRING THE WORLD!

Design a tzedakah box.

Show us your creativity as we enter the month of Elul and reflect on giving.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

- Include: Full name, Mobile
- Submission deadline: Submit your design by 9th October 2026
- Submit to: education@jnf.org.au

Prize
WINNING DESIGNS WILL RECEIVE THEIR VERY OWN SPECIALISED BLUE BOX WITH THEIR DESIGN.

Bringing KINDNESS, GENEROSITY AND COMPASSION INTO THE WORLD

JNF AUSTRALIA GROWING OUR FUTURE

125 YEARS