



קשר KESHER

פרשת בראשית

Friday 9 October 2026

כ"ח תשרי תשפ"ז

The Gift of Responsibility

Shula Lazar, Principal

Welcome back to Term 4! I hope everyone had a meaningful and simcha filled Sukkot!

As we begin again with Parashat Bereishit, returning to the opening chapters of the Torah, it seems an appropriate moment to return to first principles. For those parents who have not had the dubious pleasure of sitting in my office discussing their child's lateness, uniform, missed work or questionable decision-making, I thought I might share one of the educational principles that sits at the heart of how I think about children and schools.

I believe deeply in student agency. I do not mean student-led learning. That's a load of hooey. I believe, and science believes, in knowledgeable teachers teaching explicitly, setting high expectations and leading learning.

What I mean by student agency is something more fundamental: children need to develop the understanding that their choices matter, their actions have consequences, and they have the capacity to choose differently next time. We, adults and children (and yes, young children too) are not victims of circumstance, rather we have the ability and responsibility to be drivers of our lives and our successes. (and victimhood is not a Jewish concept!)

That is why accountability matters so much. When a child makes a poor choice, there is often a temptation, usually born of love, to explain it away. They were tired. They were stressed. Someone else upset them. They forgot. They had a lot going on. They did not mean it.

And sometimes all of those things are completely true. But that's not the point.

Explanation cannot become the removal of responsibility.

פרשת בראשית

Shabbat Times



Light candles 7:13pm

Shabbat ends 8:12pm

The Gift of Responsibility, continued...

Every time we tell a young person that their behaviour was really the inevitable product of their circumstances, we take something away from them. We diminish their agency. We inadvertently tell them that things happen to them and that they are only the passengers in their lives, not the drivers.

This week's parsha, Parshat Bereishit, offers an extraordinarily powerful alternative.

Before Kayin kills Hevel, Hashem speaks to him. Kayin is angry and distressed. Hashem does not deny his feelings, but he challenges Kayin to control them.

הֲלוֹא אִם תִּיטִיב שְׂאֵת, וְאִם לֹא תִיטִיב, לִפְתּוֹחַ חֲטָאת רִבְעָ... וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל בָּהּ
ב
"If you improve, you will be uplifted. But if you do not improve, sin crouches at the door... yet you can rule over it."
(Bereishit 4:7)

What Hashem is saying to Kayin is that he needs to engage in tikkun atzmi, the work of improving oneself. Kayin's Achilles heel is that he allows his emotions to drive his actions. Hashem does not tell him that he should not feel angry or jealous. He tells him that he has the capacity, and the responsibility, not to be ruled by those feelings.

What an extraordinary message to give someone in a moment of anger.

Hashem does not tell Kayin that he must not feel jealous. He does not pretend that the darker parts of human nature do not exist. Quite the opposite. חֲטָאת רִבְעָ, they are crouching at the door. Anger, jealousy, frustration, impulse and resentment are real.

But then come perhaps the most important words: וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל בָּהּ, you can rule over it.

Your emotions are real, but they do not have to rule you. Your impulses are real, but they do not get to make your decisions. Your circumstances may explain something about your behaviour, but they do not remove your capacity to choose.

In this case, the message is about controlling our emotions, but it applies far more broadly. Learning dispositions, reacting with kindness when someone has hurt us, persevering when work is difficult, meeting a deadline, arriving on time, owning a mistake, these are all choices. We may not always control the circumstances in which we find ourselves, but we can learn to control how we respond to them. And the more we teach children that they have that capacity, the more agency we give them over the people they become.

That is agency.

And that is one of the greatest gifts we can give our children.

Sometimes holding a child to account can look less compassionate than excusing them. But when done properly and with warmth, it is the clearest ways that we can show a child that we believe in them. When we say to a student, "That was not good enough, and I expect better from you," what we are really saying is: I know you are capable of better.

We do our children no favours if we prepare a world in which every deadline moves, every lateness has an explanation, every uncomfortable consequence can be negotiated away, and every difficult emotion excuses poor behaviour. Eventually, they will enter a world that will expect them to show up, to work hard, to meet commitments, to treat others properly and to get the job done. Even those fortunate enough to work for themselves will still have colleagues, clients, families and communities who depend upon them.

Much is said about how we should prepare children for an uncertain future. AI is transforming our world at extraordinary speed. We do not know what many of our students' jobs will look like, or indeed which jobs will exist. But some things are remarkably certain.

The future will still need people who can work hard. People who keep their word. People who arrive when they say they will. People who can persist when something is difficult. People who can hear criticism without collapsing under it. People who can regulate their emotions, repair mistakes, take responsibility and try again.

These qualities are not old-fashioned. In an unpredictable world, they may be more valuable than ever. Those remarkable people on the Flydubai flight were clearly imbued with this gift of responsibility: they knew they had to step up, and their first thought was not whether they could, but that they should. That is the kind of person we want each of our children to become, while davening that they never have to face such a situation.

The poet William Ernest Henley famously wrote, "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul." Our language is different, and far older: וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל בָּהּ.
You can rule over it.

That is what I want for our students. Young people who understand that they have the capacity to choose, to repair, to grow and to become better. So when we hold our children to high standards, when we ask them to be on time, to complete what they have committed to, to own a mistake or to do better next time, know what sits behind it.

It is not because we think less of them. It is because we think so very much of them. And perhaps the day to be concerned is the day we stop holding them accountable, because that would mean we had stopped believing in what they are capable of becoming. May that day never come!

Shabbat shalom
Morah Shula



Bereishit – The Importance of Finishing What We Start

Noah Epstein, *Head of Jewish Life and Co-Curricular*

As we read through the days of creation at the beginning of the Torah, a clear pattern begins to emerge. At the end of each day, Hashem observes what He has created and declares:

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים כִּי טוֹב

And Hashem saw that it was good.

This pattern remains consistent, with one notable exception: on the second day, this phrase is completely absent, whilst on the third day it appears twice. This deviation from the otherwise consistent repetition demands our attention and surely has something important to teach us.

Rashi explains that the phrase וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים כִּי טוֹב is absent from the second day because the work of that day was not yet complete. On the second day, Hashem created a separation between the upper waters and the lower waters. However, it was only on the third day that He caused the lower waters to gather together, making space for dry land and thereby completing the process that had begun the previous day. This explains both why the phrase is absent from day two and why it appears twice on day three: once for the completion of the previous day's work, and once for the new creations of the third day (the earth and everything that grows from it). Rashi concludes his commentary with a powerful observation:

וְדָבָר שֶׁלֹא נִגְמַר אֵינוֹ בְּמִלּוּאוֹ וְטוֹבוֹ

Something that remains unfinished has not yet attained its full goodness.

In our lives, we are constantly faced with the temptation to settle for 'good enough' – to complete 96% of a task, but not necessarily see it all the way through to the finish line. In response to this tendency, Rashi draws our attention to the second day of creation, the only day that did not receive the description of 'טוב', precisely because its work remained unfinished. The message is a powerful one. Whatever challenge, task or mission we undertake, we are called upon to embrace it wholeheartedly and see it through to completion. It is not enough to simply begin something with enthusiasm; we must also have the determination and perseverance to finish what we started.

This idea is reinforced by a later episode in Tanach, where Bnei Yisrael are credited with bringing Yosef's bones out of Egypt and burying them in the Land of Israel. Rashi notices something strange about the text – it wasn't Bnei Yisrael who took Yosef's bones out of Egypt, it was Moshe! However, since Bnei Yisrael were the ones who ultimately completed the task by burying Yosef (as Moshe was unable to enter the Land), it is they who receive the credit for the entire mitzvah. Even when someone else has undertaken the bulk of the work, there is something uniquely significant about being the one who brings it to completion.

With the new year upon us, and new adventures, challenges and experiences ahead, may we all be blessed with the determination, perseverance and strength to follow through on our commitments, to finish what we start and to never underestimate the importance of seeing a task through to its very end.

Shabbat Shalom!



A Special Milestone for Year 4: Completing the Shemoneh Esrei

Michelle Sharp, *Primary Jewish Studies*

Over the past two terms, Year 4 have been working hard to learn how to properly recite the full Shemoneh Esrei. This week, we celebrated their wonderful achievement with a special celebration. The pride and excitement on the students' faces were truly wonderful to see!

Our learning journey began by discovering the history and significance of the Shemoneh Esrei. The Talmud refers to the Shemoneh Esrei simply as Tefillah, "The Prayer," because this is the central part of our daily davening in which we praise Hashem, ask Him for our needs and express our gratitude.

The students learned that the three daily Tefillot were established by Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov and correspond to the daily Korbanot that were offered in the Beit Hamikdash. They also discovered why the prayer is called Shemoneh Esrei, meaning "eighteen", because of its original eighteen blessings, even though today it contains nineteen blessings!

We explored the three sections of the Shemoneh Esrei: Shevach (praise), Bakasha (requests) and Hoda'ah (thanks). The students came to understand that when we daven, we first recognise and praise Hashem, then ask Him for what we need, and finally thank Him for all that He does for us.

The students learned how to begin the Shemoneh Esrei by taking three steps backwards to show that we are preparing ourselves to come close to Hashem. We then take three steps forward, as if we are approaching a King, ready to stand respectfully before Him. They learned when to bow, when they can add their own personal tefillah, and how to take their final steps backwards when completing the Shemoneh Esrei.

It has been wonderful to watch the students grow in their confidence and understanding throughout this learning journey. They are especially proud to now be able to daven the Shemoneh Esrei just as the older students and adults do.

This is a very special milestone in their journey of Tefillah, and they should be incredibly proud of their achievement.

May our Year 4 students continue to approach all their tefillot throughout their lives with the same enthusiasm, confidence and love that they have shown for the Shemoneh Esrei. May their tefillot pierce the heavens and bring healing and peace to the Jewish people and to the whole world, and may we merit the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days!

Mazal Tov, Year 4! We are so proud of you!
Shabbat Shalom!



Our students in Israel

Late last term some of our students travelled to Israel and were kind enough to place notes from our students into the Kotel. They also delivered cards to some soldiers who were thrilled to receive them and eager to pose for photos.

Thank you Asha and Aya for delivering our messages!



Celebrating Dot Day and Buddy Relationships

Loren Pamensky and Nicky Kapul, *Primary General Studies*

Dot Day is a celebration of creativity, courage and having a go, inspired by the story *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds. It encourages us to be brave, try something new and believe in our own abilities. During that week, our Prep and Year 6 buddies came together for a fun, meaningful and creative art activity.

Our dedicated Buddy Program is a very special part of our school community, providing opportunities for a unique bond to grow between each Prep and their Year 6 buddy. Throughout the year, our buddies take part in activities and experiences together, attend assemblies side by side, and proudly support their Year 6 buddy when they have the special opportunity to present at assembly. These shared moments help build friendships, confidence and lasting memories creating buddies for life!

For our Dot Day activity, students created their own small artworks, which were then brought together to form a colourful and meaningful collage. It was wonderful to see our buddies working together, sharing ideas and showing the courage to have a go!



JLife Primary Sukkot Event

Sara Amzalak, Head of Jewish Life and Learning

On Monday September 28th, first day of Chol Hamoed Sukkot, primary school children gathered for a morning of fun, snacks and entertainment at the JLife Sukkot Event.

With the glorious sun shining, children and adults enjoyed the water colour painting, chalk art, face painting, music, bubble blowing, balloon twisting and of course the food and drink, with the opportunity to shake the Lulav and Etrog.

All who attended had an enjoyable, fun filled Sukkot morning.



October 7 Commemoration

Noah Epstein, Head of Jewish Life and Co-Curricular

The Secondary School gathered together on Wednesday morning to commemorate the third anniversary of the horrors of October 7, 2023. Together, we grieved, reflected and honoured the memories of all those who were lost on that fateful day and in the years that have followed.

In particular, we explored the tragedy through three unique perspectives:

- The perspective of a child, Ella Shani, who, at just 14 years old, was forced to grapple with the murder of her father, Itzik Kozin הי"ד.
- The perspective of a parent, Shimon Elkabetz, attempting to come to terms with the devastating loss of his daughter, Sivan Elkabetz הי"ד.
- The perspective of a widow, Tal Marantz, faced with the heartbreaking task of explaining to her young children that their father, Tzvi Marantz הי"ד, was a hero, but would not be coming home.

After hearing these deeply moving stories, we shifted our focus towards a message of hope and resilience. We reaffirmed our commitment to continue marching forward in the face of evil, towards a brighter future, carrying with us the memories and legacies of those who have fallen.

יהי זכרם ברוך

May their memories be a blessing.

We also unveiled our new sticker wall in the Secondary Corridor, a tribute to the countless fallen soldiers and civilians whose families have created stickers bearing their images alongside a quote or catchphrase that captures something of who they were, the lives they lived and the legacies they leave behind.



WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY NEED FROM OUR COMMUNITY?

From childhood to our older generations, what services from the Jewish community are important to you?

Are you in? ✓

Your voice counts.
Help shape our community's future.



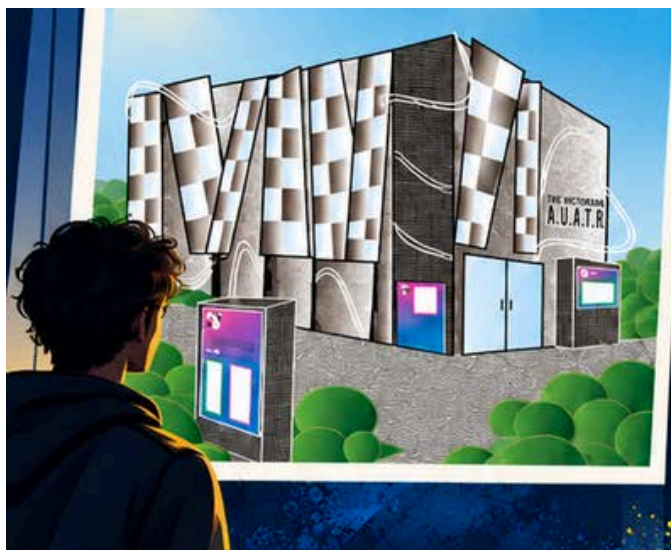
Sukkot Family BBQ

Our Sukkot Family BBQ was a fantastic community event, with over 200 people coming together to celebrate sukkot in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Families enjoyed a range of activities throughout the day, including an engaging music session by Morah Sarah and creative arts and crafts activities for children. Families also had the opportunity to fulfil the mitzvah of eating in the sukkah and to shake the lulav and etrog.

It was wonderful to see so many families celebrating together and making lasting memories. We thank all those who joined us and helped make the day such a success.





VCE Folio Night

Featuring student works from Art Making and Exhibiting,
Media and Visual Communication Design

Featuring

- Art ME developmental visual diaries and final artworks
- Media Studies folios including photography presentations and short films
- Visual Communication developmental folios and final presentations



Tuesday 13th October 2026

Yavneh Lamm Hall



7:00pm - 8:20pm - Gallery Open

8:20pm - 9:15pm - Welcome/ Media Film Screenings

Please be advised that the 2026 Media Films contain violence, course language, mental health and sensitive themes. Discretion is advised for children Under 15 years old.

Films will begin screening at 8:30pm



**LEIBLER
YAVNEH
COLLEGE**



Upcoming Dates 2026

October:

Thursday 15 – VCE Hebrew Exam

Mazal Tov

Mazal tov to **Malka and David Krupp** on the birth on a baby boy. Brother to Bowie.

Mazal tov to **Annie Cooper** and family on her Batmitzvah

Mazal tov to **Morah Romy Browne** on the birth of a son.

Mazal tov to the **Blum-Diamond family** on the birth of a boy.

MULTI-SPORTS COACHING



SOCCER | BASKETBALL

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15 October – 3 December

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A JCAS PROJECT

SEASON OF LIGHTS FAMILY FESTIVAL

– PRESENTED BY JCAS –

DECEMBER 6TH | 11AM-2PM

POSH OPP SHOPPE
484 GLEN HUNTLY RD, ELSTERNWICK

KIDS ENTERTAINMENT


ART ACTIVITIES
with Glen Eira Artists Society


MUSIC MAN


BALLOON ARTIST


FACE PAINTING


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