



Around the Early Childhood at Stein Yeshiva

The Fours

Did you ever hear of a stick turning into a snake? Our Fours will tell you all about what they learned in this week's **parsha, Va'eira**. Hashem performed many nisim to convince the Mitzrim that He wanted Paroh to let B'nai Yisorel go. When Aaron threw down his staff it turned into a snake. The Fours can demonstrate with their very own staff that they made. When thrown to the ground, it turns into a "snake."

The class also **learned all about the makos**. Morah put animals and frogs on the table. The children played with them, wondering why they were there. Later, in a Learning Moment, Morah explained the makkos that we discover in this week's parsha. Throughout the week, there were many opportunities for the children to explore the makos. The children were able to internalize the Parsha through, arts & crafts, dramatization, creative play, as well as song and dance

The yeladim made **"dom" cups** with one side a Mitzri and the other a Jew, to show the difference between the two. The children also dramatized being a Mitzri and a Jew. Everyone answered whose water remained as water and who's turned into blood. They also made **frogs** that stick out their tongues.

Sensory sand filled with "bugs," yuck! But, it was so much fun to play with the "kinim." For the wild animals, the children **laced animals** and made scary animal sounds. We hope the

other classes were not too scared by all those scary noises! The children also made **puppet shows** using wild animals. They felt a fake hand full of **boils** and made their own shchin hand too. The children also played on the snow learning about barad.

Letter of the week: **כ** kaf for the word kos or cup. The yeladim had a good time cutting out the letter and putting it in their Aleph Bais notebooks. They children also made an Aleph Bais train, reciting the letter that a train was pulling. It was great practice for the Aleph Bais.

Our **hibernating frogs** (Miki and Momo) definitely captured the hearts of both the Fours and the Threes this week! Baruch Ha-Shem, the two frogs huddled together in a deep sleep inside their toy submarine for the past two weeks only to reappear today as the weather warmed. Morah Temple was so afraid they had perished; the whole class was thrilled to see them swimming and jumping; very active and very much alive!

The Fours continued working on their **map skills** by making a concentric model of six circles – each circle depicting a wider concept of where we live in the world. The children identified water from land and deepened their understanding of community, state, country, and planet!

Our **featured letter** of the week was L for Lacing. We took the opportunity to practice both our sewing skills and how to lace our shoes and tie a bow. We also discussed the Maka Kinim



and its modern day counterpart – Lice – and the importance of not sharing hats or hair brushes.

In science this week, we completed our unit on the **making of Maple Syrup** by boiling real maple syrup in the stove with a candy thermometer and pouring the hardened syrup onto snow to cool. The children loved the maple candy – such a fun project!

In **Math** we continued our understanding of number order by playing a variety of math games where the children had to figure out the missing number in a number sequence. We started off by writing the sequence on the whiteboard, but by the end of the week the children were able to listen to a number sequence and identify the missing number in their head. We also started practicing writing the numbers from zero to ten.

THE THREES

This week in **Parshat Va'eira**, the yeladim learned all about the 10 makkos, the punishments HaShem gave to Mitzrayim for enslaving B'nai Yisrael. The first 7 are in this parsha, and we especially focused on blood, frogs, and hail. After exploring the parsha through an illustrated book, the children turned water red with food dye to represent blood, and some friends even tasted it. For frogs the class hopped and croaked to simulate how loud and full Mitzrayim was of frogs. For hail the class froze ice with food dye to display the fire mixed with ice. At the Shabbat table you can ask your children what the makkah was when all the water turned red, what is the animal that hopped all over Mitzrayim, and what the ice rocks from the sky are?

We're sure they will be happy to display their frog project for you as well.

Parshat Va'eira has to be contextualized with the beginning of the slavery in Parshas Shemos. **Slavery**, of course, is a new topic for the yeladim to encounter. They are able to define a slave as someone who has to work hard and is not allowed to go away. They are also able to connect themselves, Jewish children, as part of the Jewish People today with the B'nai Yisrael in the parsha who used to be slaves. When Rav Shem Tov teaches the events in the Parsha, he always uses the pronouns "**us/we**" and not "them" to emphasize the importance of each Jewish child personally identifying with the accounts of Chumash.



Our ote of the week is **n** Mem, for mayim, Moshe, Miriam, Mitzrayim, makkah. Some of the children volunteered other words such as mom and mitzvah. Mems were all around our room this week allowing the children to physically connect to the letter. As the year progresses Rav Shem Tov includes more Ivrit in the daily environment. The children have been learning to say "boker tov" for good morning, "ma'agal tefillah" for davening circle, "mayim"

for water, and Rav Shem Tov sprinkles in other words such as "ken/lo" toda/bevakasha" when speaking with the children, "lisaber et haozen," to encourage the feeling of being used to Ivrit being spoken. As the year continues more otiyot and vocabulary will be added to the class' environment.

And last week ... In Parshas Shmos the yeladim learned about Benay Yisrael's slavery in Mitzrayim, baby Moshe being put in a taivah (a tiny baby boat) in the river, and the burning bush. They know that Paroh said "no more baby boys allowed," and that his daughter, the Princess of Mitzrayim, saved Moshe from the river.

The children remembered from the Chanukah fire lessons that when something catches fire it burns up and goes away. However, the neis at the burning bush was that it stayed alive. They were amazed to discover that HaShem spoke to Moshe through the bush and instructed him to go to Paroh and tell him to free the Jewish slaves. To commemorate the burning bush, each child designed a burning bush to take home. They colored a paper bag green and cut it into strips to create branches. Then they glued tissue paper on to simulate fire, and put an LED tea-light inside. We hope you lit up your child's burning bush just before candle lighting last week, to stimulate parsha discussion at your Shabbat table.

After **exploring the parsha**, the yeladim practiced building buildings and cities for mean Paroh, King of Mitzrayim. They also built taivahs to put baby Moshe in down the river, and saved him just as the princess did. The classroom has many great blocks, Magnatiles, and other loose objects to encourage imagination,



dramatization, and pretend play.

Learning about Moshe in the river was a great **transition** to learning all about water. The class pulled out water buckets, plastic fish, and magnetic fishing rods to have some hands on experience exploring water. They also dropped in food dye and watched it disperse throughout the water. Then they helped Morah Ellyn make snow, which enabled the class to learn further about the seasons, and the difference between rain and snow.

This week was such an incredible week for exploring the wonders of Hashem's animal kingdom. The yeladim were fascinated by the first 7 Makkos, especially with the tzefardaya (frogs) and wild animals. During tefilah, the yeladim were so interested in the wild beasts that Hashem sent down as another Makah. **"What kind of animals are wild beasts? Where do they live"** asked a friend. "Are they real or pretend" asked another friend. Rebbe said "Oh, they were real, but those kind of wild beasts don't exist anymore." But Hashem did make lots of different types of animals that do still exist.

Soon the yeladim became engrossed in **describing** various animals they've encountered. Many friends have been to the zoo or a farm. Lots of the classmates recalled the petting zoo that came to visit Camp Shemesh. The Moros explained that the different kinds of animals live in different places. Some live in the jungle, on a farm, in a forest, or in a Zoo. Some live in hot climates, some very cold. Some animals hibernate, while oth-

ers migrate. Bears, frogs, bats, skunks, chipmunks, snakes, turtles, and even ladybugs hibernate. What does "hibernate" mean, the yeladim asked?

The yeladim know from their **nature walks** that all the trees are bare during the winter months. They concluded through discussion, that there isn't enough food for the animals to eat during the cold winter months. Hashem makes such smart animals they know they need to sleep in order to survive. The children learned that during the fall season the animals eat lots of food. Their bodies turn the food into fat so they can keep warm and use that to nourish their bodies as well. The animals' body temperature lowers and their heart rate slows down. The animals sleep for most of the winter. Some animals get up occasionally and then fall back to sleep. They wake up fully rested when the spring season comes and there's plenty to eat again.

Using a variety of animals in the class, the children began dividing the animals into groups. They **categorized the animals** into arctic, jungle, or farm animals; those that hibernate and those that migrate. The yeladim had **so many questions...** Where does the animals' family live? What do they eat? Where do they sleep? On our winter nature walk, Noam noticed a flock of birds in the sky and commented that they must be migrating. The children have developed such inquisitive minds!

Time to investigate: The class watched a short video on Hibernating animals and many of our questions were answered. Afterwards, the yeladim searched pictures in magazines and books to find animals that hibernate for the winter. They were thrilled to learn that Stein Yeshiva actually has its own hibernating animals; **MoMo and Mickie**, the frogs in the 4s. Did you know frogs hibernate? The yeladim were so excited to see Mo-Mo and Mickie snuggled on top of each other inside a little cave in the castle in their fishtank. They didn't move for 3 weeks and only woke up for a few minutes and then went right back to sleep.

"All aboard!" yelled the yeladim. "The train is going to leave" said the class after they listened to Morah Ellyn read "The Hibernation Station," by Michelle Meadows. The book follows a group of animals who are gearing up to hibernate for the winter. The animals come from all over and wear their pajamas as they travel on the train picking up all the animals who hibernate for the winter. The children loved listening to the book and were inspired to create their own special home and bed for an animal they choose.

During "dramatic play" the yeladim used their **imaginations** and made a story up about the animal they chose. Some friends worked together to create an ice castle for some friendly penguins. The yeladim took white Legos and made an igloo with white pom-pom's to simulate snow. They surrounded the igloo with blue Legos for water. The children used blocks and twigs to make diving boards for their arctic penguins who love the icy cold water, and surrounding snowy land. Other friends worked together to make a jungle for a lion, complete with mountains and trees, and a special bed for him to sleep on. Some made a



long rectangular Magnatile house for a cow who makes chocolate milk. They loved sharing with each other their made up story and animal's home. It was wonderful to watch the yeladim use their knowledge of the animal they had chosen and add their **incredible imaginations** to make it magical as well!

Pajama and Stuffed Animal Day: The yeladim marched into the class on Thursday all decked out in their cozy pajamas. They pretended to be getting ready for the long winter sleep by eating lots of food, and each made a special cozy bed for themselves. The children used mats and blankets and took their special stuffed animal friend to their "winter home". The Moros strung lights around the classroom, and turned off the overhead lights. The yeladim asked if the classroom could remain like that for the rest of the year, it felt so cozy and everyone loved it. The children listened as the Moros read a few books, and before long the children were getting sleepy. It was such a perfect day to take a long nap. Everyone pretended to bunker down for the winter and hibernated. After naptime, the yeladim awoke feeling refreshed, just like a bear, frog, skunk, or chipmunk might feel after hibernating for the winter. But our hibernators enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies to celebrate **Avi F.'s birthday**.

The yeladim love doing projects and the **frog puppet** was a big hit. Using paper bags, the children noticed the smooth texture and painted them green, giving the bag a gritty texture like a frog. Each child took turns using a die cut circle and put dots on their fogs. Googly eyes completed the job. Pharaoh, watch out!!!

H is for Hibernation, Hail, and Hannah. The children found 2 "Hs" in Hannah's name! Using pretzels, sticks, salt, sand and playdough the yeladim used different media to put 2 long lines and a short line together to begin making their H's. They did The Hokey Pokey dance and were so excited to hear Hokey began with an H too. The children love learning new letters to add to their repertoire.

Although it has been too cold and slushy to go outside most of the past two weeks, the children have been able to engage in **physical activity** as well. Every day the class has dance party, stretching, yoga, marching, hokey pokey, jumping jacks and other movement activities to make sure everyone is staying active, promoting health, and positively using their energy

A big thank you to Shoshana Genack (Avi's Imma) for coming in

to class to teach us all about making **healthy food choices**. The children loved hearing her stories.

THE TWOS

The Twos are very aware of the changing weather and have been intrigued by the snow. The children made **mini snowmen** and discussed the shape of the snowman. They noticed in order to build a snowman you need three circles, one big, one medium and one small. The children added cotton balls onto their snowman like the one they made together for the hallway. The children placed a hat on Mr. Snowman and gave him a paper carrot for a nose. The children looked outside and noticed the snow and ice on the ground. It was too cold outside for the children to go and explore so they watched as the ice melted and disappeared over the week.

In last week's parsha, **Shemos**, the Twos heard the story of baby Moshe. The children **explored baskets** and the different shapes and sizes baskets come in. The children looked around their classroom for baskets and pretended our dolls were baby Moshe. After listening to the Parsha story the children made their own baby Moshe and baskets. They glued brown paper to the sides of a container and put brown crinkle paper at the bottom to make it comfortable for baby Moshe. Next they helped Morah Yehudit wrap baby Moshe in cloth and placed him gently into the basket. The children then added green material on to our parsha paper to look like the reeds and grass along the water. The children lastly colored the page with blue crayon to represent the sky and water. The children had a lot of fun making and **creating their own baby Moshe**. They learned how kind Batya was for taking in baby Moshe even though she knew he was one of the Jewish babies. The children practiced acts of kindness throughout the week by helping friends, asking if they were feeling okay and sharing.



Continuing with Parshas, **Va'eira**, the Twos learned about Paroh not being nice to the Jewish people and not letting them go out of Mitzryim. Moshe was sent to

let Paroh know that if he did not let his people go, bad things would happen to him. To prove to Paroh that





bad things would happen, Aaron threw his stick to the ground and it turned into a snake. Parah thought it was just a magic trick and also tried to change a stick into a snake. The children worked on their fine motor skills and made a **beaded snake**. They also went outside to find sticks. The children loved the beading exercise and cannot wait to share their snake projects with you

All about blue! This week the Twos learned and experienced the color blue. The children started off their week by reading "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?" After reading the Brown Bear book, the children searched around the classroom for blue toys and blue items. Morah Elke played a color "Simon Says" game with the children using the last three colors and adding our color of the week. The children made a blue horse to add to their color book by coloring the horse with a



blue crayon and gluing blue felt onto the horse. The children were very excited because they were able to make blue slime with Morah Ayse. The children helped measure and mix the ingredients for the slime and watched as it turned ooey gooey! Once the slime was ready, the children were able to play and explore the slime. Some of the children found the slime to be fun and squishy while others did not like the slimy feeling. Morah Yehudit added to the color blue by teaching the children *kachol*. The children worked on a *dag kachol* and also ate blueberries as a special treat.

DAYCARE

The Haftorah for Parshas Shemos begins, "Yatzitz oofarach Yisroel," Yisroel will "bud and blossom." The daycare toddlers are all beginning to blossom into a delightful class of kindergarten.

Over the past two weeks, the children have been learning some **new songs** for Shabbos. They are learning "Zoom Galli, Galli," with a refrain of "Shabbat Shalom"; "Dovid Melech Yisroel," with a refrain of 'Shabbat Shalom"; and of course "Bim Bam," again with a refrain of Shabbt Shalom. All of the children should be saying "Shabbat Shalom" very soon.

For **music and movement**, we are learning a song about a child who went out to buy bread for his mother. He did not want to walk so he decided to swim like a fish, fly like a bird, hop like a bunny, etc. The daycare toddlers had so much fun pretending to swim, fly, hop, trot, waddle, and slither around the room.

To improve the children's **listening skills**, we also are enjoying a song about Bunny Foo Foo. At the end of the song, we all hold up our arms and say "Poof."

Since this week is Shabbos mevarchim Shevat, we are sending home a **beautiful tulip flower** that the children decorated themselves. We tried finding items with soft textures for the children to glue onto their flowers since we are learning what "soft" means.



After HASHEM commanded Moshe and Aaron to be the emissaries to free the Jewish people, the Torah lays out their lineage. At the conclusion, the Torah repeats the names of Aaron and Moshe, this time in reverse order, with Aaron mentioned before Moshe.

Rashi seems to be bothered by both the repetition of the names and the reversal of their order. He says this comes to teach us that Moshe and Aaron were equal. Even though from this point forward, Moshe would be the leader of the Jewish nation, don't make any mistake. Aaron was just as great.

The difficulty with this Rashi is that according to all measures, Moshe Rabbeinu was far greater than Aharon. Moshe was the leader of the Jewish nation. He brought the makkos (plagues) on Mitzrayim (Egypt). He led the Jewish people out of slavery. He split the Yam Suf. He went up to receive the Torah on Har Sinai. But even more telling, he was the greatest Navi (prophet) who ever lived. The only human who reached the level of seeing HASHEM with total clarity was Moshe. There never was, nor will there ever be, a person who will reach that level.

So how can Rashi tell us that Moshe and Aaron were equals when clearly Moshe Rabbeinu was on a higher madreigah (level)?

➤ TWO SYSTEMS FOR MEASURING THE GREATNESS OF A PERSON

The answer to this question seems to be that there are two systems for judging a person's greatness, one is absolute and the other is subjective. When measuring a man based on the absolute standard of greatness in Torah and perfection, Moshe was far greater than Aaron. He towered over any other human ever created. However, there is another system for measuring a person's success.

Based on his capacity, and his potential, how much did he accomplish? Before each person is born, he is predestined to certain abilities and talents, a particular level of intelligence, and an exact disposition and temperament. At the end of his days, he will be compared to what he could have become. How far did he grow? How much

The Measure of the Man

"This was Aaron and Moshe to whom HASHEM spoke...."

—Shemos 6:26—

did he accomplish with the tools given to him? This system is subjective. How much of his potential did he fulfill?

Moshe may well have reached 99% of his potential, but so did Aaron. So even though in the absolute sense Moshe was far greater, and others had to treat him as the greatest human being ever, in the subjective sense of reaching one's capacity, Aaron was his equal, and as such was just as great. That is what the Torah is teaching by exchanging the order of their names.

➤ I WON'T BE COMPARED TO YOU

One of the most sobering concepts is that when I finish my job on this planet, I will be judged. But I will not be measured in absolute terms of how much Torah I mastered or how much I accomplished. That is far too inequitable.

I won't even be compared to others in my generation. I won't be compared to you, or to him, or to her, or to anyone else. I will be measured by a far more just and exacting standard – me. How much of me did I become? 80%? 60%? 50%? And that is who I am for eternity.

➤ WHEN WE LEAVE THIS EARTH – THE SYSTEM IS SUBJECTIVE

In this world, we can't measure a person's capacity, so we give honor and respect based only on the absolute measure of the person. If this person is functioning on the level of a great person, we are obligated to respect

him and treat him with honor.

However, when we leave this temporary existence, everything will become clear. I will understand exactly what I was destined to be. And I will also know your capacity and what you could have been. There are no head starts, no advantages or disadvantages, just percentages of realized potential.

At that point in our existence, there will be individuals who appeared to us as great while we were occupants of the physical world who then will shrink dramatically, having only reached 20% of their potential. They'll be pygmies. And there will be many others who we once cast into the category of the insignificant, but who are actually towering giants, having reached 85% of their potential. Just as with Moshe and Aharon, it wasn't the rank or position that they held that is the final determinant, but rather their subjective greatness in regards to who they should have been.

➤ WHO I AM FOR ETERNITY

This concept has great relevance to us – both positive and negative. It seems to be a natural tendency to compare ourselves to others. "I am smarter than he is. Better than she is. Not as talented as he is. . ." If my disposition is to favor myself – being kindly to me and tough on you – I become inflated, over-confident, and full of myself. If my prejudice is to be harsh on myself, then I will constantly find others superior, and my sense of self will suffer.

The reality is that all of it is irrelevant. It just doesn't matter. It is true that at the end of my days I will be compared – not to you, but to me. The only question they'll ask and the only criteria that will count is how far I took my G-d-given talents and situation. How much of me did I become? And that will be the rank and station that I will occupy for eternity.

For more on this topic please listen to Shmuz #24 – Understanding Life Settings.

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