

Torah Talk – מאמרי תורה



The Parasha Post of Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School of the Nation's Capital

Parashat Vayelech
September 15, 2018

פרשת וילך
ו' בתשרי תשע"ט

Torah Reading: *Devarim* (Deuteronomy) 31:1-30

In this *parasha*, Moshe concludes his speech to *Bnei Yisrael*, blesses Yehoshua, and instructs the community to gather every seven years to read publicly from the Torah; Hashem predicts the eventual straying of *Bnei Yisrael*.

If I had to give a title to this Torah Talk, I would call it, "It's All About Our Children."

The text gives the reason for the once-in-seven-years gathering for the reading of the Torah. The text says (verses 12 and 13):

יב הקהל את-העם, האנשים והנשים והטף, וגרף, אשר בשעריך--למען
ישמעו ולמען ילמדו, ויראו את-ה' אלקיכם, ושמרו לעשות, את-כל-דברי
התורה הזאת. יג ובניהם אשר לא-ידעו, ישמעו וילמדו--ליראה, את-ה'
אלקיכם: כל-הימים, אשר אתם חיים על-האדמה, אשר אתם עברים
את-הירדן שמה, לרשתה.

12 Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and the stranger that is within your gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Hashem your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; **13** and that their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear Hashem your God, as long as you live in the land where you will go over the Jordan to possess it.'

The text makes clear that the only hope for the continuity of the Jewish people is the education of our children. I know that I am preaching to the choir, but it is good to remind ourselves now and then that nothing is more important than our children's Jewish education, as indicated in the verse above. Unfortunately, the statistics in the last Pew Report show that only 15% of Jewish children in the United

States receive any kind of Jewish education, either day school or supplemental school. Thank God we are part of a growing school where each year, more children have the opportunity to become educated Jews. This year, almost 400 children are receiving a superior Jewish education at MILTON, and with God's help, this number will continue to increase as we open our eighth grade next year and expand all of the grade levels.

On behalf of everyone at the Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School of the Nation's Capital, we wish you a year filled with blessings. May 5779 bring you and yours health, happiness, fulfillment, and peace.

Shabbat Shalom and Shana Tova!

For Discussion:

- Look at the text of the *Shma* (*Devarim* [Deuteronomy] 6:4-9). There also, the text tells us to educate our children. What is the difference between these two sections? How do they reinforce each other?
- Why is it important for children to be educated Jewishly?