

February 9th, 2018	24 Sh'vat 5778
Shabbat Parshat:	Mishpatim
Candle Lighting:	5:05pm

Volume 19, Issue 17

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

Following the revelation at Har Sinai and the Jewish Nation's commitment to obey the commandments of Hashem, the Torah begins to list various laws. Many deal with civil law such as damages, theft and fines. Others are spiritual laws such as Shabbat, the Chagim (Holidays) and not to engage in idol worship.

A number of the laws listed share one common denominator; they are sins that can be committed with words alone. Examples include the sin of Lashon Hara (hurtful speech), to blaspheme Hashem or to curse a parent and, of course, not to lie. Our sages point out that these types of sins are especially dangerous because it is so easy to cause so much damage.

A quick study of the laws of Lashon Hara, will reveal the seriousness with which the Torah treats this area. And rightfully so. A few words, spoken in passing, can create hurt and strife and can lead to serious financial loss. Imagine the impact to a business, if it was suggested that the owner is not 100% honest.

The ease with which one can commit such an act is what makes them so dangerous. Very few people would see themselves capable of

raising a hand against another to cause harm. But how often do we make disparaging comments that cause more damage than a few days healing can fix?

The Vilna Gaon explains that the punishment for cursing someone is worse than that for causing actual physical harm because a physical wound will heal in time, but emotional hurt can stay with a person forever.

When the Torah exhorts us not to tell a lie it uses a very interesting expression, "מדבר שקר תרחק", distance yourself from a false word. The Gerrer Rebbe notes that the Torah does not normally distance us from an action but it tells us simply not to perform the act. The Rabbis may then institute rules and safeguards to keep us from falling into potential snares. Yet here, it is the Torah itself creating the barrier.

This again is an indication of the seriousness of such transgressions and how easily they can be committed. It is our responsibility to follow the Torah's lead and distance ourselves from the evils of improper and hurtful speech.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Don Pacht
Head of School

SCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED

Please note that the school will be closed **February 12th and February 13th** for Family Day Break. School will resume on Wednesday, February 14th.

MAZAL TOV

Mazal Tov to VHA Staff Member **Mrs. Lisa Altow** and **Mr. Andrew Altow** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son **Ari**. Mazal Tov as well to the entire extended family.

Mazal Tov to **Rabbi Ilan** and **Mrs. Dina Acoca** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son **Nissim**. Mazal Tov as well to the entire extended family as they celebrate this special occasion in New Jersey.

Mazal Tov to **Rabbi Yechiel** and **Chanie Baitelman** on the engagement of their son, (VHA Alum) **Levi** to **Rivka Klein** from Johannesburg, South Africa. Mazal Tov as well to the entire extended family!

SHEVA BRACHOT INVITATION

The entire VHA parent body and staff are invited to join in the celebration of the marriage of **Akiva Striks** to our daughter (and VHA alum), **Chana Devora**. Please join us for a Sheva Brachot /Dessert Reception on Feb 20th from 6-8 pm, at our home, 1068 West 41st Ave.

Rabbi Aaron and Rochel Kamin

PINK SHIRT DAY

VHA is proud to be participating in the upcoming nation-wide Pink Shirt / Anti-Bullying Day. Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to wear pink to show solidarity in taking a stand against bullying.

The pink t-shirts have been ordered but if you did not purchase a t-shirt you are encouraged to wear pink articles of clothing (while respecting VHA uniform norms) on February 28th. We look forward to showing that VHA is a community that does not support bullying!

VHA TUITION RECEIPTS READY FOR PICK-UP IN THE OFFICE

Parents please pick-up Tuition Tax Receipts for Kindergarten to Grade 7 Tuition and Preschool Tuition Receipts from the school office.

SHABBATON

VHA AND SCHARA TZEDECK

Save the Date for the VHA Family Shabbaton February 23-24, 2018. Join us Friday night, Shabbat lunch or both. Pricing: Adults \$20, Children \$12 and under 5 is free. Friday night services start at 5:30pm

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear VHA Families,

Our Board of Directors is currently engaged in a Strategic Planning process which will lead them to setting goals for the coming years. This process allows us to focus on the future and take the appropriate steps to realize a vision for the future of VHA.

At this 'information collection' stage, the Board would like to solicit the input/feedback of all families. While you are always able to contact the school's Administration, we would invite you to connect directly with Dr. Terry Neiman who is acting as Facilitator through this process.

If you would like to share you thoughts, concerns or ideas for consideration through these deliberations, please contact Terry via email at tneiman@alum.mit.edu to arrange a time to speak.

Thank you for your input and we look forward to continued growth and success!

Yours truly,
Glenn Bullard President, Vancouver Hebrew Academy Society

CONTACTING VHA STAFF

To contact VHA Staff by email, please go to our website for a full list of email addresses: <http://vhebrewacademy.com/staffcontact.php>

STUDENT COUNCIL SCOOP

Student Council is excited to be sponsoring the following upcoming events:

- Basketball Tournament: there will be both girls and boys tournaments taking place during lunch recess times over the month of February.
- Pink Shirt Day: The Student Council will be taking the lead in orchestrating VHA's participation in this year's Pink Shirt / Anti-Bullying Day on Wednesday, February 28th! Please see the Pink Shirt Day section of this newsletter.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our student government!

AVOT UBANIM

Saturday, February 10th, 2018 at 7:05pm held at the Beth Hamidrash 3231 Heather Street. Where family can learn the Torah together while enjoying great food and prizes.

SAFEGWAY/SUPERSTORE CARDS

Going to Safeway or Superstore for your grocery shopping? Don't forget to pick up gift cards at the VHA office. Get your shopping done and help support YOUR PAC! Cards are in stock now at VHA!

SHALHEVET GIRLS

A play produced by the Shalhevet Girls High School. For women all of ages. March 5th, 2018 at 6:15pm at Schara Tzedek.

Ticket prices: Children... \$15 - Adult... \$20 - Premium... \$50 2 Premium... \$90 - 3 Premium... \$135 4 Premium... \$180

VHA OPEN HOUSE

Registration packages for Preschool-September 2018 will be sent to soon. Please let us know if you are planning on sending your child.

VHA PAC VOLUNTEER HOURS

Our family participation/school service program requires each family to contribute 18 hours of time assisting in various school programs throughout the year. Please submit your PAC hours via email at: vha.pta@gmail.com with HOURS written in the subject line. Many of you have done hours and unless you let us know, we will not be able to credit you for them. Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of our children.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

February 2018

- 12-13 Family Day Break (school closed)
- 15 Non-Uniform Day
- 20 Hot Lunch
- 23-24 VHA Shabbaton with Schara Tzedek
- 28 Ta'anit Esther (2:00pm dismissal)

NUT RESTRICTED SCHOOL

Please keep in mind when preparing snacks and lunches for your children that VHA is a Nut Restricted School. Nuts and nut products are not allowed in the building. Below is a list of nuts that are included in this restriction.

- Peanuts and Peanut Butter.
- Tree nuts (including Almonds, Walnuts, Cashews).
- Sesame Seeds and Sesame Oil.

Products that MAY contain nuts are permitted. As well as the above items, there are other foods that do pose an allergy risk. Therefore, please remind your children that the sharing of food is not allowed.

SHARE YOUR TIME & TALENT WITH THE STUDENTS OF VHA

As we plan for our lunchtime and after-school extra-curricular programs, we invite friends and family of the school who have a special talent or interest that they are willing to share with our students to run workshops, clubs, or activities. For Term 1, Mrs. **Ettie Shurack** ran two VERY successful programs for Duct Tape Crafts and Chess Club.

Is there an area of interest that you can share? Please keep in mind that we do not need a commitment of several weeks; perhaps there is a project that can be completed in 1 or 2 sessions that students can be guided through.

Please contact **Teagan** at office@vhebrewacademy if you are able to volunteer your time and enrich our students' school experience. Some ideas include:

Woodworking, Music, Art, Lego, Mishnah, Scrap-booking.

We look forward to another term of wonderful programming!