

Kol THE VOICE OF Barrack

Kislev: Celebrating Amidst Challenges

Shalom Everyone,

Today we leave the month of Heshvan, also sometimes referred to as MarHeshvan. (One of mar's translations is "bitter.") As the only month in the Hebrew calendar that does not have a unique holiday, Heshvan encourages us to develop an attitude of gratitude, allowing us to find happiness and even joy during moments of everyday life, even without a special reason to celebrate — and even amid a global pandemic that is radically changing how we live, work and study.

Now with Rosh Hodesh Kislev, we begin to focus on the horizon as we countdown to Thanksgiving and Hanukah. But perhaps this year, as we watch the COVID-19 cases rise in our community, we should bring the lessons of Heshvan with us, continuing to remind ourselves that even our imperfect everyday lives can be sources of joy, inspiration and light. Family and community celebrations will look different this year, but our reasons for celebration endure.

As Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l so aptly noted, "We are on a journey. The destination never changes but we move, and where we are today is not necessarily where we were yesterday so each day has a new challenge."

I see the destination Rabbi Sacks is referring to as living a positive, purposeful life in community with others. So while each of our journeys are unique as we move from Heshvan to Kislev, we can all apply the lessons of Heshvan: of contemplation, gratitude and contentment in our own ways and in doing so we will be best prepared to make the most of our current circumstances and be ready when a brighter day comes.

Hodesh Tov,
Rav Will

Kol Barrack (The Voice of Barrack) is a periodic publication that recognizes the new month in the Jewish calendar. In this edition, Rav Will Keller, Director of Jewish Life, shares his thoughts with our school community.



Rav Will Keller

DIRECTOR OF JEWISH LIFE

Rav Will is in his fifth year as the Director of Jewish Life at Barrack, where he organizes Shahrarit groups, coordinates holiday and hesed programming, and teaches the seniors participating in Barrack's Jewish Leadership Initiative. Rav Will holds a Masters in Jewish Education from Hebrew College, Rabbinic ordination (Semicha) from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah and is currently completing the DSLTI (Day School Leadership Training Institute) through JTS. An excited Jewish educator, Rav Will works with students to find meaningful entry points into Jewish life through which Jewish connection and values will elevate our collective experience.

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