

# Kol THE VOICE OF Barrack

## Heshvan: Growth Begins Deep Beneath the Surface

With *haggei Tishrei* (the holidays of *Tishrei*) behind us, this week we are about to enter the Jewish month of *Heshvan*, commonly referred to as *Mar Heshvan*. Although the prefix *mar* is Babylonian in origin, in Hebrew we have translated it to mean “bitter”; *Mar Heshvan* is considered a bitter month because there are no special occasions to celebrate.

Here in the US, this month coincides with a physical “bitterness” as the temperatures turn colder, the leaves fall from trees, and we prepare for the darkness of winter. In Israel, however, the rainy season is about to begin, laying the groundwork for the coming growth of spring. In Israel, the fall rains provide for growth that begins deep beneath the surface.

In many ways, the same is true for learning and teaching here at Barrack. This week, as we enter *Heshvan*, the spiritual seeds of *Tishrei* are beginning to take root in our classrooms, on the fields, and on the stage.

### Cultivating Growth: Spiritual Seeds of *Tishrei*

The month of *Tishrei*/September was all about the inner work that we needed to do to prepare for the new year. We asked ourselves “How can I be a better person this coming year and what are tangible action steps to move in that direction?” These answers to this question provide the spiritual seeds that are needed for deep growth to occur.

### The “Second 1st Day of School”

At Barrack, we often joke that the day after *Simchat Torah* is the “second 1st day of school” as we enter a period of full school weeks with very few days off. The resumed regularity of the school year gives students the opportunity to engage deeply with their academic subjects once again; goals that were set in September/*Tishrei* can begin to come to fruition.

### Growing as leaders

Clubs, publications, and other organizations start to meet regularly, giving our students the opportunity to grow as leaders. By setting agendas, determining goals and objectives, and carrying out action plans, our students gain important leadership skills and learn how to effect positive change in an organization.

### Social and emotional growth

Just as important as students’ successes in the classroom or in athletic games are those times that can test us. Facing a challenge and overcoming hurdles provide our students with opportunities to develop grit and resilience—key social-emotional skills that are so important for growth, success, and happiness in our highly networked world.

Although the holidays and days away from school in *Tishrei* are joyful and special in so many ways, I love this time in the school year when we are all fully present with each other on a regular basis. The academic, social, and moral growth that our children are about to experience over the coming weeks and months lays the groundwork for deep maturation that occurs throughout the year. May there be nothing “mar” about the coming month of *Heshvan* for us all.

Kol Barrack (The Voice of Barrack) is a periodic publication that recognizes the new month in the Jewish calendar. In this edition, Upper School Director Dr. Darin Katz shares his wisdom and insights with our school community.



Darin Katz

UPPER SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Darin is currently in his 21st year in independent school education and his 7th year at Barrack. An alumnus of Prizmah’s YOU Lead Program (2017-2018) and Harvard University/AVI Chai’s Principals’ Center (LEV 2016 cohort), Darin currently sits on the editorial board of *HaYidion*, Prizmah’s magazine for professional and lay leaders working in Jewish day schools.