



11/9/2007

בס"ד שבת "תולדות" ה'תשס"ח

## HBA Newsletter 3

Shalom Chaverim!

In this newsletter, we have in addition to the regular staff, Dvar Torah by Rabbi Shaul Feldman, the director of Bnei Akiva in north America and Canada.

### "Kadima BNEI AKIVA" \ Rabbi Shaul Feldman

The *Midrash* in *Parshat Noach* brings an unbelievable story about *R' Akiva*.

When *R' Akiva* was teaching his students he realized that they were falling asleep in class. *R' Akiva* wanted to wake them up so he said the following statement:

"Why did Esther deserve to become the queen of 127 continents? She was a great grandmother (many generations) to our mother Sarah who lived for 127 years. She, therefore, deserved to be a queen for 127 continents"

The *Midrash* doesn't state whether the *Talmidim* woke up.

What did *R' Akiva* try to teach his students? What's the connection between being a queen and Sarah Imenu?

We are in the middle of the stories about our ancestors, we see that their quality of ruling wasn't something external, but rather, internal.

We can see that in Sarah's numbers of life, as Rashi states "when she was 100 she was just like when she was 20..."

The *R' Yona* in *Avot* writes that the problem people have is forgetting and getting used to things. You lose the excitement.

Sarah was still excited about the future of the Jewish people until her last day.

*R' Akiva* told his students that were sleeping exactly that message.

They were sleeping because they were used to learning from *R' Akiva* and it wasn't special for them anymore. Just imagine if we would hear that *R' Akiva* was

alive we would travel to the end of the world to study by him. And here, his students are sleeping?

*R' Akiva* told them that in order to be a king you must work on that attribute of not letting yourself get used to the routine of daily life. He explained that you must stay excited all your life about your growth and the growth of *Am Israel*.

Same in *BNEI AKIVA* we are his students. We must continue to stay excited and active on the issues that the Jewish people are going through “*AM Israel Beretz Israel Al Pi Torat Israel*”

### **So, what happened in the last month?**

Another busy month full of Bnei Akiva activities has passed, and I want to share some of the wonderful experiences that Bnei Akiva members have had.

On the night of Hoshana Raba, 13 Chanichim Chevraya Bet (high school students) attended a session of learning at UOS followed by pizza in the Sukkah. Rabbi Gelman, Dr. Shulamit Pollak and Tzvi Urkowitz talked with the teenagers about the place of the individual in Judaism. It was an inspiring evening, and I hope it will be the first among other study nights for teenagers.

On Shabbat “Noach” (Oct. 13) we opened a new age group in Bnei Akiva Houston – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Their anxious Madrichim are Atara Urkowitz, Barry Mueller and Avi Levy. So far, we have 8 Chanichim in this group (Chevraya Taf), and we are hoping to include more 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, so please encourage your children to attend!

In order for the Chanichim to know what Bnei Akiva is all about, we decided to start a month of activities that will explain the basics of Bnei Akiva. We opened this month on Shabbat Vayera (Oct. 27) by having a mini Shabbaton for the Madrichim, which included Friday night dinner at our home followed by Peula (activity), and another Peula before Snif on Shabbat about the



ideology of Rabbi Akiva, and the reason for our movement's name, *Bnei Akiva*. 13 Madrichim from UOS and YI participated.

On Sunday, Oct. 28, we had a good example of what Bnei Akiva represents – the combination of ideals and fun. 27 Chanichim showed up early in the morning (I apologize to the parents that were forced to wake up so early on Sunday morning) and we drove to Sugarland to take part in walk for diabetes. It was a great experience and we really felt that it raised our awareness for this illness and the people who are affected by it.





After the walk was over we drove to FunPlex! The kids had great time roller skating, go carting, bowling, riding different carousels and eating pizza.



Last Shabbat (Nov. 3), we had our first activity in “Bnei Akiva” month. All the groups had different activities about the Semel (symbol) of Bnei Akiva and its meaning.

That Saturday night we had a special activity for Chevraya Bet (high school) – Day without sun. We started the night with ice skating and continued with a scavenger hunt, BBQ, learning Torah, basketball and games. 31 highschoolers participated this awesome event.





Dear parents,

As you read, we have had a busy and exciting month in Houston Bnei Akiva. We encourage all your children to join us! We want to thank the Madrichim for all the hard work and effort they put in the last month.

Bevirkat Chaverim Letora Veavoda  
Einat & Yoni