**Olam Tikvah Religious School Tichon Class**

**Mr. Bender’s 8th and 9th Grade Class:**

Hi Everyone!!!

I miss seeing you all in person, but Ms. Beland-Ackerman has come up with the next best thing: *Virtual Learning*. I am excited as we **ZOOM** into a new way of remote learning.

So here is how it works: Every week we will post materials, which will engage your intellect, challenge your thinking, and offer you new ways to explore our Jewish heritage – all from the comforts of your home! Be prepared for something completely different, which will engage your mind and lead to really cool discussions on our Sunday ZOOM chats.

**So, what’s a ZOOM chat?** It’s a short 15 to 20 minute group discussion (*so be on time*) where you will be able to express your opinions (one at a time, please) and we can listen to each other and – most importantly, see each other and reconnect on screen.

During this time, we are exploring new and engaging ways to continue our quest of learning together Jewishly. As a starting point, we will slightly deviate from our planned curriculum and instead focus on issues more adaptable to virtual learning. So, I will be providing very short items for you to read and think about and/or really cool **YouTube Videos** for you to watch and think about.

We will follow these materials up each week with the short ZOOM virtual interactive chat/class where we can all see each other and YOU will have the opportunity to participate (instead of raising your hand, you will be able, one at a time, to “unmute” your microphone and speak to everyone).

Okay, here’s the first virtual lesson, ***LET’S START!***

**Compassionate Communications:** We live in an interesting time right now, we meet less with people in person locally, but yet connect instantly and globally through our electronic devices. During this time, as we become more remote and yet interconnected, I wonder about whether we will lose the ability to communicate with each other with compassion.

So, I invite you to watch one very short (90 second-ish) story on YouTube (with few words) about a blind man. A word about the video: This video was produced in Scotland by a small communications company. The population of Scotland is about 5 million people. This YouTube video has been viewed over 28 million times (which means that every man, woman, and baby in Scotland may have watched this video 5 times!).

Here’s the link to the YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/Hzgzim5m7oU>

The YouTube Video is titled: “The Power of Words” (and its by Andrea Gardner).

*Hint: You may want to watch the video twice, since it moves fast.*

Once you have watched the video, please think about and be prepared to discuss on ZOOM the following discussion questions:

1. How did most people view the blind man at first?
2. What changed?
3. Why did the same sign, but with different words completely change people’s reaction?
4. What was your reaction to this video? Did you love it, hate it, or indifferent?
5. Did this video change your awareness of how we communicate?

Some Jewish concepts we will explore:

**Tzedakah,** the Hebrew word for charity and righteousness. It is a form of social justice in which the giver (donor) benefits from giving as much or more than the recipients of the charity.

**Gemilut Hassadim,** (“acts of loving-kindness”) is a fundamental Jewish value. It is when we do a kind act (mitzvah) *without* the anticipation of receiving something in return.