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Dear homeschooling friends,

Last week I wrote about the transition for homeschoolers into the summer season. (I trust that we have all transitioned well since last week!) Most of our children are now busy with camp, lessons, sports, iPods, and other activities. (Maybe not so different than during the year, come to think of it.) Piaget believed that children learn best through play. Many of us can relate to this due to our homeschooling experiences. So, for us, summer is not a time when learning stops, but rather takes on new form and expression.

I recently quoted from a (seemingly unnecessary) study that found that students in school are losing out on learning during their summer vacations, and it is setting them back. They are forgetting what they learned during the year. (Does anybody really remember what they learned in high school? I would quote from Paul Simon, but this is a mixed audience. I can boil down what I remember to 7 simple letters: Roy G. Biv!)

One predictable, myopic, response to this "alarming crisis" has been to shorten the summer break by a month, to keep kids in school longer, and therefore keep the loss to a minimum. How shortsighted!

Let's start a revolution! I propose we chip in and send 1000 copies of "How Children Fail" by John Holt to the heads of the largest schools around the country! Interested?

I am available to meet with parents over the summer to discuss any home schooling issues or concerns, or learning for next year. Please be in touch with me if you would like to arrange a meeting.

Have a great summer, and please do stay in touch!

~ Room613 Discussion Boards ~

The Room613 discussion board is a "list serve."

This means that when someone posts to the board, you will receive the post as an email. You will be able to respond via email, as with most discussion groups. (If you prefer, you can easily go into your preferences and change this setting.)

We hope you enjoy the discussions, and will participate, as we feel it is an important element in working towards our goal of becoming a "Learning Community of Jewish Home Schoolers."

Please note that your children can also participate in the students' discussion boards.

~ Insights into Homeschooling: Profound Knowledge pt. II - Examining the Systems We Are Involved In

For the past several weeks, we have discussed how the insightful ideas, in particular the "System of Profound Knowledge," of W. Edwards Deming might apply in the context of homeschooling.

Deming wrote that "The prevailing style of management must undergo transformation. A system can not understand itself. The transformation requires a view from outside...It provides a map of theory by which to understand the organizations that we work in."

Deming was advocating that we must strive to understand the systems we are involved in, and not blunder along, expecting success. The understanding of the system is what he called "Profound Knowledge."

In our case, the "system" is the home school. And the "Management" is...Abba and Ima!

Understanding the "system" means stepping back and observing, and learning about, how our homeschool runs:

1. Do we use certain "systems?" What is our strategy?
2. What is our budget?
3. How do we mark progress?

4. What are the learning styles of our children?

Asking - and trying to answer - these questions is the beginning of understanding our own systems. We probably all have much in common. Yet, we are all individuals, and I am sure that no two families conduct their home school in the same way.

Deming continues, explaining that this work entails "transformation of the individual," who will then "perceive new meaning to his life, to events, to numbers, to interactions between people." They will:

- Set an example
- Be a good listener, but will not compromise
- Continually teach other people
- Help people to pull away from their current practice and beliefs and move into the new philosophy without a feeling of guilt about the past

(excerpt from Chapter 4 of The New Economics, by W. Edwards Deming.)

<http://deming.org/index.cfm?content=66>

Don't these all seem like lofty and desirable goals? They can only serve to improve and enhance our experiences as homeschoolers. And I wish us all luck achieving them. Let's work together to do it!

~ Room613 Marketplace/Amazon Bookshop/Cafe Press Shop ~



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Did you know you can get all kinds of cool stuff in our Room613 Amazon marketplace? Webcams, headsets, books, and more.

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And in our cafe press shop: caps, carrying bags, coffee mugs, all with the colorful Room613 logo! Get one for your kids, and for yourself. Let the rest of the world know that you are on the cutting edge of homeschooling (while you satisfy your caffeine fix, and return overdue library books - how efficient!).



<http://www.cafepress.com/room613>

~ The Weekly Parsha: Balak ~

In this week's Torah commentary, the AriZal expounds upon the unique mystical roles employed by Balaam and Balak, respectively.

Both Balaam and Balak were reincarnations of the evil elements of both Cain and Abel, as well as manifestations of Amalek, explaining their hatred for the Israelite nation. Balaam's specialty was essentially that of sorcery, which emanates from the mouth; his soul was particularly rooted in that of Abel, illustrated by the point that the word "hevel," Hebrew for "Abel," means "breath," associated with the mouth.

Balak was a magician, primarily from the evil of Cain, who, just as a magician's main tools are his hands, focused on the corporal world, physically working the soil. The Ari expounds, in great detail, the Kabbalistic ramifications of these two entities and their attempts to stifle the powers of holiness in the process of rectifying of Creation.

From the writings of the Ari as recorded by Rabbi Chaim Vital, translated and edited by Moshe Yakov Wisnefsky <http://www.kabbalaonline.org/>

[Mercaz Machshava Tova](#) (our site for adult education)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mercaz-Machshava-Tova/246783082038915>

Why not stop by our Facebook page!

(In the immortal words of Sally Fields, "I can't deny the fact that you like me, right now, you like me!")

<http://tinyurl.com/3zqvwby>

Have you ever seen the Room613 "Jewish Homeschooling ("A Search Story") video?
<http://tinyurl.com/62mpjgo>

***Wishing everyone an inspiring Shabbos,
R. Yosef Resnick***