



## Just Walk Beside Me

**By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director**

Each Shabbat, each Chag, prayers for the hostages, prayers for the IDF soldiers and prayers for the American military and police forces are said at my shul. They bring us all that connection to what is happening in Israel and what is happening on many college campuses. For the American military and police forces, a line about 3/4 of the way into the blessing says: *Lo yisa goy el goy cherev v'lo yilm'du od milchama*: "Nation shall not lift up sword against another nation, nor shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah, 2:4)

They shall not learn war anymore. What a beautiful sound that has. We are promised a beautiful life when Moshiach comes (the Messiah). We will all live in peace with each other; the humans and the animals.

But how will we get there? How will we learn this new way? Well one thought is that we learn from examples. Examples that we set. Each of us individually has the power to be the example for our community.

In education, teachers know that modeling is a powerful way to educate. Modeling for a child on how to take turns works so much better than just telling a child, "You need to share." What does that even mean? But if instead you begin this way:

"Oh, you want to take a turn with the blue block? Let's see how we can make that happen. Eliana, can I have a turn with the blue block when you are done? I am building a tall tower and I need it for the top of my tower in my castle." "Can we set a timer so you can have it now and I can have it in a little while?" The purpose of modeling the behavior is so Eliana has a reference point. She can learn the socially acceptable way to get what she needs and then be successful. And both her and her playmate can feel good about the interaction.



What if I model using kind words with the people around me? Will this then help them to do the same in their circle? And so on? That is the hope. That is the goal.

*Lo yisa goy el goy cherev, v'lo yilm'du od milchama.* There is a song in English that goes with this. “Don’t walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me, I may not lead. Just walk beside me and be my friend and together we will walk in the path of HaShem.”

When we lead together, we have more strength to affect this positive change. More opportunities to be the positive influence needed to change people’s perspectives. Will you join me on this quest? We need an army of positivity because the examples being set on those college campuses and by Hamas doesn’t spark any positive change.

Shabbat Shalom.