

Kayruv



קירוב

“Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment”

July/August 2015

Tammuz/Av/Elul 5775

FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends,

We are entering the most important period of the Jewish calendar. I mean the month of *Menachem* Av, which begins on July 17th. The month is called Av, which in Hebrew

means father – but in the sense of being the moment of creating the seed for the next year. That interpretation of the name Av has its basis on how we refer to the creative work that cannot be done on Shabbat. That is called “*av melachah*” or the creative-work father. Which means that it is the archetype of creative work.

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***Kayruv* means “Welcoming.”**

If you embrace that, then, you understand that the work we begin doing in the month of Av is the archetype of the spiritual work that we will do during the rest of the year, particularly the period that begins with *Rosh Hashanah*. It turns out that *Rosh Hashanah* is not only apples and honey.

Rabbi Alan Lew, z”l, wrote the best book regarding the spiritual work that our tradition invites us to do during this season. The book is called *This is Real and You are Completely Unprepared*. One of the main ideas in the book is that the spiritual process that culminates on *Yom Kippur* begins on *Tisha B'Av*. On *Yom Kippur* we are not supposed to do a marathon of thinking and fixing, this long-range race does not even begin on *Rosh Hashanah* with the Ten Days of Repentance. It begins now, at this moment in the year, three full weeks before the 9th of Av.

On the 9th of Av we remember and commemorate the breaking down of old structures by fasting, refraining from greeting one another, and doing other observances¹. But we need to have eyes open to see the old structures crumbling – and not be taken in by what is called “conceptual failure”. Conceptual failure is the inability of admitting that

¹Fasting, along with not applying creams and having baths or sexual relations, plus not wearing leather shoes nor tallit and tefilin in the morning are practices of the day of *Tisha B'Av*. One can work, however, and is able to put on tefilin after 1:40 PM, generally, to daven mincha (say the afternoon prayers). In recent times, a number of contemporary thinkers have pointed out that *Tisha B'Av* should be observed in a lesser form, particularly in light of the establishment of the modern State of Israel, and that as a sign of acknowledgment of the blessing of the State of Israel one should fast only until 1:36 PM (this is the official time for the earliest mincha prayers in Danbury this year). There are, of course, those who disagree. See the cliff-notes of the controversy here:

http://www.responsafortoday.com/engsums/1_4.htm

your vision of what is happening is wrong, when confronted with evidence. And that process of forcing our eyes open and our hearts to admit that there is change that needs to happen begins three weeks before the 9th of Av, when the first walls of Jerusalem were breached by the Romans, and which the Jewish calendar marks with an unassuming, small and almost unheard of fast, the fast of the 17th of *Tammuz*.

That is a full ten weeks before *Rosh Hashanah* – it precedes even the month of *Elul* which is supposed to be the beginning of the wakeup call to the closeness of the High Holiday period when we begin sounding the *shofar* every morning to stir up our souls to the process of the High Holidays.

The internal transformation and renewal of the High Holidays is atonement, reconciliation, repair, restitution to wholeness – we all know that. But according to Rabbi Lew, z”l, this journey begins with the acknowledgment of alienation and estrangement caused by the breaking down of old structures, which is the theme of *Tisha B’Av*. So the most interesting thing is that, if we immerse ourselves in the midsummer fast, with all the emotions and awareness we are supposed to match to the fast, our experience of the High Holidays will be more intense.

Communally, these old structures were represented by the Temple – and, consequently, all the old ideas present in that mindset: hierarchy based on birth, forgetting our interpersonal responsibilities and favoring ideology over compassion, and a vision of a God that can be appeased more through rituals than right actions. If you have doubts about any of these ideas connected to the Temple, the *Haftarot* (readings from the prophets) that rebuke Israel for the three *shabatot* before *Tisha B’Av* are made for you. Take a peek at these verses from the first chapters of the prophet Yermiahu, or Jeremiah: *My judgments against them touching all their wickedness; in that they have forsaken Me, and have offered to other gods, and worship the work of their own hands... Also in your skirts the blood of the souls of the innocent poor is found...*

Individually, personally, each of us can identify his or her personality structures – how we deal with other people, anger, complacency, judging too much or not enough, the list is probably infinite for each of us – but we usually stick to those

structures until some major crisis hits, forcing us to act in a different way, and change. Divorce, death, bankruptcy on the negative side, and births, marriages, inheritances on the positive side - and so many others on both sides - are all catalysts of change, forcing us to abandon those structures and find a better way of being. And those crises are forcing us to acknowledge estrangement from our better selves, from others, and from God.

At a communal level, we act out this demolition of old structures on the day of *Tisha B’Av* in many ways: we do not say ‘hello’ or ‘goodbye’ when we see people. We pray without asking for anything. We remember all sorts of other tragedies that happened in *Tisha B’Av*, and we remind ourselves of what caused the Temple to be destroyed: senseless hatred. With all this in one’s awareness, we read the Book of Lamentations, *Eicha*, and we fast. And YET we go out into the world: the most interesting – and I should say, the most challenging – part of *Tisha B’Av* is that you can work during that day. We continue our contacts with people, with those we love and those we are yet to love, a powerful reminder that how we walk in the world is of supreme importance.

And then, according to Rabbi Lew, z”l, we are not supposed to slouch back on the couch of our old structures and wait for *Rosh Hashanah*. For the next seven weeks we are to be engaged in introspection. We read the seven *haftarot* of consolation, but – as all of us who have faced a major crisis know – words do not turn the clock back, or make things right. And by then, of course, we have already begun *Elul*, the month before *Rosh Hashanah* – and if you have slouched back, the cries of the *shofar* are there to wake you up. Rabbi Lew, z”l, goes on to explain that “the essential gesture of this entire period is to become more mindful, to become more aware both of your own situations psychologically and spiritually, and those things that you’ve been doing that aren’t so productive. So, the closer we are to being in the present moment, the more mindful we are, the closer we are to God. God is here; if we are elsewhere, we are estranged from God.”

How do we effect reconciliation with God? It takes time – that is why the process begins now – because we first need to realize that we were, indeed, worshiping the creations of our hands. We

have to mourn that state of mind - it is only then that we can begin the journey. And as we do that, we realize how we can't do all the changes we need to do by ourselves. Changing patterns is difficult, as anyone who has tried to break bad habits can tell you. We all need an extra push: we need a sense of a transcendent consciousness beyond our own to do all this.

At B'nai Israel, we will have the traditional reading of the Book of Lamentations, Eicha, and we will close the reading by lighting the candle of senseless love – which is, at the end, the modern attempt to be conscious that not feeling hatred is not enough: we need to be aware of God's presence in everyone we meet, even those difficult people. Even if the difficult person is... ourselves.

Warmly,
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

THANK YOU

The families of Pearl and Amos Turk would like to express their sincere appreciation for all the thoughtful donations made to Congregation B'nai Israel in memory of Pearl. She valued the role of the synagogue in the perpetuation of Judaism and was a generous supporter of CBI.

Sincerely,

Amos Turk
Robbie Bergman and Linda Ray
Michael Bergman and Deborah Teason
Daniel and Yuki Turk

HIGH HOLY DAY SCHEDULE 2015

ROSH HASHANAH - 5776

Sunday, September 13, 2015

Candle lighting at 6:48 PM

Erev Rosh Hashanah services begin at 7:30 PM

Monday, September 14, 2015

Rosh Hashanah Day 1 Services begin at 8:30 AM

Tashlich at 5:00 PM

*Candle lighting (from preexisting flame)
at 7:47 PM*

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

Rosh Hashanah Day 2 Services begin at 8:30 AM

Havdalah 7:38 PM

YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, September 22, 2015

Candle lighting/Fast begins at 6:32 PM

*Erev Yom Kippur Kol Nidre Services
begin at 6:45 PM*

Wednesday, September 23, 2015

Yom Kippur services begin at 8:30 AM

Study Session begins at 4:00 PM

Mincha Neilah services begin at 5:20 PM

Havdalah/Break Fast 7:24 PM

SUKKOT

Sunday, September 27, 2015

Candle lighting at 6:24 PM

Monday, September 28, 2015

Sukkot Day 1 services begin at 9:30 AM

*Candle lighting (from preexisting flame)
at 7:22 PM*

September 29, 2015 – Tuesday

Sukkot Day 2 services begin at 9:30 AM

Havdalah at 7:14 PM

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe it's been a full year since my first missive in the Kayruv as president of Congregation B'nai Israel - clearly, time flies when you're having fun! I'm honored to be continuing to serve as president, and as

always, I'm very grateful for the support and help that I have been receiving from all corners of the congregation. I'm especially thankful that Isabel Kaplan is continuing as First Vice President, always picking up the pieces I drop - I'd be lost without her. I'm also greatly indebted to Rabbi Altenburger for her wisdom and guidance, not to mention her superb board training exercises this past year, which have really helped the Board of Trustees learn to work more efficiently and focus on its core responsibilities. I'd like to make a special mention of two departing officers, Henry Tritter as Recording Secretary and Nada Adler as Corresponding Secretary, for their many years of devoted and selfless service. And of course, I greatly appreciate the time and effort put in this past year by departing board members, and the commitment that our new and continuing officers and board members have made in agreeing to serve this year (see page 13). The generosity of heart and spirit of everyone at B'nai Israel, and the dedication and endless elbow grease of our volunteers continues to be a source of wonder and inspiration for me.

Speaking of which, lazy summer days are here again, but not at B'nai Israel! The basement reconstruction is hitting the home stretch, thanks to an incredible team effort between munificent donors, indomitable volunteers, and everyone's \$100 assessments—thank you to those who have already sent theirs in, please keep them coming!

Have you ever felt like you've gotten stuck in a rut, lost your mojo, become complacent, or been worn down to the point where all of your energy is focused on just getting through the day (or getting out one of these darned Kayruv letters by the deadline)? There are times when life is challenging regardless of who you are, and at such times, it's easy to forget what you might be able to accomplish if only you still thought it were

possible. I've been continuously harping about this for the past couple of months, so it won't come as any surprise that I worry that Congregation B'nai Israel may be experiencing just such a moment as a community.

The difficulties we face (and that many other churches and synagogues face as well) pressure us into channeling our efforts into mere survival, while dissuading us from thinking deeply about who we are, what we treasure as a community, and how we want to change the world. I threw down this gauntlet as the core of my "state of the *shul*" speech at the annual congregational meeting (which was well attended despite my lackluster snacks - I'll do better next year, I promise), but it received a surprisingly warm reception. I'm thrilled that a number of members of the congregation have approached me over the past few weeks to find out how they might get involved with or provide ideas to the Visioning Committee, and I think many of us are ready to start asking ourselves demanding and critical questions about our future.

I'm very encouraged that our community seems open to the possibility of change and growth. And best of all, we're not alone—volunteers have already stepped forward to help guide us through this process, and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), of which B'nai Israel is a member, is providing leadership training and organizational support. I'm delighted to announce that the USCJ has asked us to host "New Horizons: A Summit for Small Congregations" at B'nai Israel on Sunday, October 18, at which leaders from congregations all over our area (New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts) will learn how to create a visionary leadership team, and study strategies and best practices for strengthening and enhancing their congregations for the future.

Have a magnificent, restorative summer, and, if I don't see you sooner, I'll see you in less than 10 weeks (gulp) on Rosh Hashanah!

Together for a dedicated, inquiring and visionary community,

Kennis Koldewyn

JULY/AUGUST EVENTS

July 25th Erev Tisha B'Av

Our study session will begin at 9:10 P.M. followed by the reading of Eicha, Lamentations, in both English and Hebrew. This year we will be joined by members of Temple Sholom from New Milford, CT.

The fast begins at 8:18 P.M. and ends on July 26th at 1:00 P.M. according to most Conservative opinions, and ends at 8:57 P.M. according to most Orthodox opinions.

LOOKING AHEAD



HEBREW SCHOOL CORNER

TUNE IN!

Sunday August 23rd – First day of Hebrew School

THANK YOU

We want to publicly thank all those who volunteered this past year for Hebrew School:
Barbara Weisblatt
Isabel Kaplan

WHAT'S UP?

We want to introduce Jason Mix and Hannah Hirsch as our new assistants! We thank Jack Mandell for coming back!

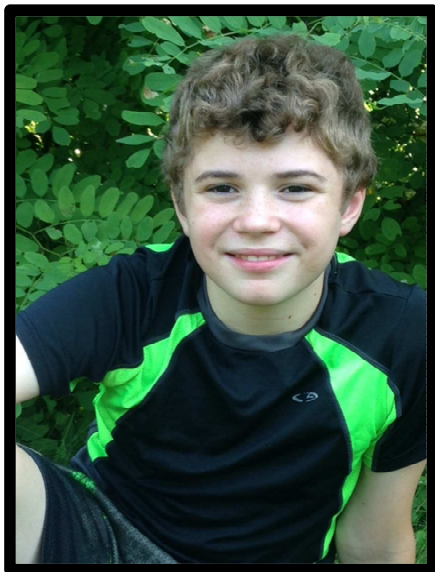
Our Hebrew School has the goal of excellency and innovation in Jewish supplementary education. Our program this year emphasizes Hebrew, Torah, and Jewish values.

Saturday, August 29th at 9:30 A.M. Joshua Hirsch is called to the *Torah* as a *Bar Mitzvah*

Vanessa and Peter Hirsch invite you to share in their *simcha* as son Joshua is called to the torah as a *bar mitzvah*.



MEET JOSHUA HIRSCH



Joshua Hirsch is a very affable young man with many interests. He is the middle child of Peter and Vanessa Hirsch, with older sister Hannah, fifteen, and younger brother David, age eight, completing the human members of the family. A pet dog, a cat, and a foot-long bearded dragon lizard named Spike are the family pets.

Joshua's father and his second-grade teacher have inspired his interest in mathematics. He also enjoys language arts at West Side Middle School Academy, which is where he will complete his middle school education in the coming year. Joshua is looking forward to studying about World War II in eighth grade. Extracurricular activities include baseball, video games, and drawing. Joshua's long term dreams and goals include playing professional baseball, with a back-up plan in place. He has a longtime interest in sea animals, so he is also considering a career in marine biology.

In addition to baseball, Joshua also enjoys football and hockey. The New York Mets are his favorite professional team. When asked about a favorite childhood memory, Joshua recalls his first roller coaster ride on Storm Runner at Hershey Park, PA. He also enjoyed a family vacation at Disneyworld in Orlando, Florida with roller coaster rides on the agenda there as well. Perhaps "roller coastering" is good preparation for taming one's nerves, since Joshua appears poised, calm and well prepared as the date of his *bar mitzvah* approaches!

If a genie stopped by to grant Joshua two wishes he quickly decided that his first wish would be to stop bad people from doing evil. Secondly he would wish for the power of flight. As Joshua launches into his life as a Jewish young man post-*bar mitzvah*, our congregation wishes him much *mazel* and many happy memories from his experience!

Harriet Lebetkin

ON BEING A JEW

Sometimes I don't realize how much I like being Jewish until I catch myself walking around my house singing and humming the Shabbat melodies I learned this last year preparing for my *Bar Mitzvah*. I really want to continue going to services after my *Bar Mitzvah*. But, maybe not every weekend.

A lot of Judaism to me is celebrating the Jewish Holidays. My favorite holiday is Passover. I really like *matzoh* ball soup and having fun with friends at the Seder. Many times, my best friend Harrison (Berr) comes over or we go there on Passover, and the *matzoh* and eggs breakfast that my BiPa use to make for my Dad, and he now makes for me, is not that bad either.

I like going to Hebrew School and hearing the Jewish stories. My favorite is the Passover one. Another, the story where a man slept for 70 years was interesting because that is not humanly possible. I also found the Noah's Ark story interesting because God told Noah to go on an ark with two of everything for the most part.

Something else about Judaism is the fact that God is everything. I came into Hebrew school thinking that God was a giant that was controlling the universe. But I have learned so much and have abandoned this theory in favor of the rabbi telling the class that God is everything surrounding you. He is not a human controlling us like puppets. However, he is watching over us.

Joshua Hirsch

A GIFT TO CBI



Thanks to the generosity of Mr. David Marks of Sherman, a retired furniture craftsman, Congregation B'nai Israel has two new torah holders for our sanctuary.

Since leaving his business, Mr. Marks has dedicated himself to using his artistic skills to benefit Jewish organizations and individuals both here and abroad.

Our sincerest thanks go out to Mr. Marks for his donation, which will certainly enhance our services.



DANBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

“The Times They Are A-Changin’”

Bob Dylan, 1963

For many people, the changing economic picture, the changing dynamics within our families, or the changes brought upon us by age and/or illness, mental or physical may necessitate reaching out for advice, resources to contact or just a sympathetic ear. For years the Greater Danbury Jewish community had that person in Roz Kopfshtein and now, upon her retirement, the newly reorganized Jewish Family Services for this area has a new social worker, Donna Prywes, LCSW.

Jewish Family Services is the surviving member of the area's longtime Jewish Federation, which disbanded this past year. A newly revitalized board has brought Donna in to meet the needs of the Jewish communities of Northern Fairfield, Southern Litchfield and Eastern Putnam Counties. Donna is very enthused about her new position. Although she will be working with folks of all ages, she expressed, “a passion for working with the geriatric community,” which may be especially valuable in our own aging local population. Not only are the front line of Baby Boomers now in their mid-sixties, but many have questions concerning their own aging parents and the issues they face.

From our recent conversation, it's apparent that Donna will be a warm and welcoming presence in our community. She has had extensive social work experience within the Westchester Jewish and secular communities, particularly with the Visiting Nurses Association of the Hudson Valley. A resident of nearby Somers, NY, Donna lives with husband Harry, a podiatrist and twin son and daughter, both of whom attend Wesleyan University. While not unfamiliar with the Danbury area (her brother-in-law Mitchell Prywes is a Danbury physician), Donna has plans to connect with area rabbis and social service agency directors to introduce herself and some of the programs and activities she plans to be part of. While the parameters of Donna's work will not permit one-on-one individual counseling, (The JFS is a resource, referral and information service.) she will serve as a conduit for information about helpful resources, as well as be,

“an advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.”

Her office will be at the United Jewish Center in Danbury, where she will work 2-3 days a week (days TBA). She will be able to be reached at the JFS by phone (203) 794-1818 or by email at JFSDanbury@gmail.com. JFS services are confidential and free. Donna Prywes, with a world of experience and a calm, engaging and empathetic manner will be a welcome resource for the Greater Danbury Jewish community.

Joel Levitt



Israel Cancer Research Fund Comes to Danbury

In recent years, Israel has emerged in a leadership role in cancer research, and on June 16th an enthusiastic audience had the privilege of firsthand insight into some of the recent breakthroughs by a team of Israeli scientists that have already begun to reshape the treatment of deadly forms of that disease.

The meeting introducing the work of the Israel Cancer Research Fund (ICRF) was sponsored by the Markind, Kruzansky and Miller Families and graciously hosted by Dina and Sam Markind. More than 40 people were in attendance.

The Connecticut director of ICRF, David Kweskin, explained that the focus of that nonprofit group was to research grant proposals and select the most promising. Once the proposals are selected the scientists are given free reign to creatively launch their research without binding grant restrictions. The results have produced a prolific body of research and many innovative gains in treatment of a variety of cancers.

Mr. Kweskin introduced one of the grant recipients, Dr. Carmit Levy to the group. Dr. Levy, a youthful Jerusalem native of Yemenite heritage, earned a graduate degree in pharmacology and biochemistry from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Hadassah Medical School and completed post-doctoral studies at Harvard Medical School before establishing her own lab at Tel Aviv University in 2011.

Dr. Levy spoke about her research on melanoma, a lethal skin cancer that accounts for 80% of deaths from skin cancer. The cancerous growths, Dr. Levy explained, develop when unrepaired DNA damage to skin cells - most often caused by ultraviolet radiation from sunshine or tanning beds - triggers mutations that lead the skin cells to multiply rapidly and form malignant tumors.

Dr. Levy's enthusiasm for the breakthroughs that she and her team of scientists have made and their practical application to treating melanoma was contagious and a lively Q&A followed her comments.

Levy's work is supported by a grant from ICRF the largest North American charitable organization solely devoted to raising private funds for cancer research in Israel. Founded in 1975 ICRF has provided more than \$50,000 in grants to more than 2,000 researchers in Israel with dramatic results moving the treatment of cancer forward.

For more information about ICRF contact David Kweskin: david.kweskin@icrfonline.org

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Can You help?

Our friend Chad Sinanian is looking for temporary jobs. His skills include filing, bulk mailing, stuffing envelopes, labeling, addressing envelopes, messenger work, delivering mail from one office to another in a building, handling UPS manifests.

He accepts the CT minimum wage, and can work anywhere in Danbury, Brookfield, Bethel, so long as the SWEETHART bus can bring him. Please contact Chad at [203-241-0372](tel:203-241-0372) or [203-778-8106](tel:203-778-8106) or chadwicksinanian@hotmail.com

OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

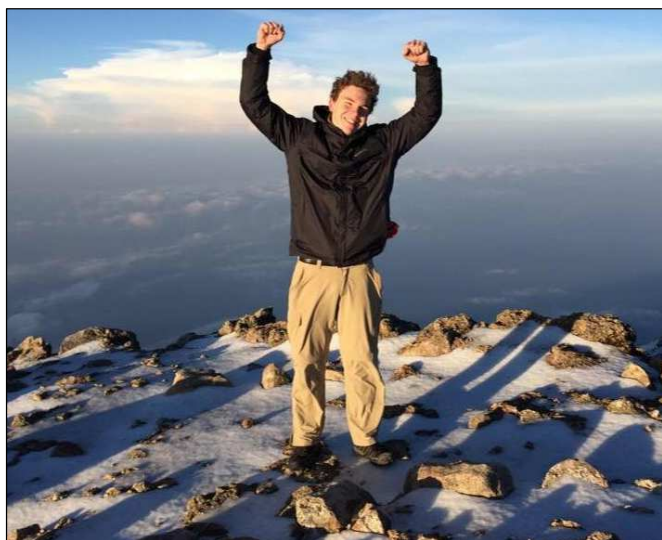
Victor Namer's Summer

Starting this summer, I began volunteering at Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown. At this hospital, I get a chance to work with people who have a wide range of mental illnesses and disorders. CVH is an in-patient facility where volunteers and staff use hands-on teaching skills needed to manage a patient's individual form of mental illness. My role at CVH is to both interact with the patients and to help them during their daily lives. They have varying degrees of problems with mental illness, and some are not able to function on a basic level to perform daily tasks. I help them by working with them on skills ranging from social interaction to basic computer skills, and everything in between.

In addition, this summer I traveled to Guatemala, where I climbed the tallest peak in Central America. It was honestly one of the most beautiful sights I have seen in my life. Since returning, I have stayed active by working a few jobs over the summer.

Most recently, I was awarded two scholarships from the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America for my academic achievement and involvement in the community, and received the John Tamas Memorial Emerging Student Leader Award from WestConn's Division of Student Affairs. Finally, I have made Dean's List for my second consecutive semester.

Victor Namer



Standing at the tallest peak in Central America, Volcano Tajumulco.

Leora Waltuch's Birthright Trip

Every Jew should get to see Israel at some point in their life, regardless of their financial situation or religious affiliation. It is our birthright as Jews. That is why the Taglit Birthright program exists, because we, as Jews, have this right. At twenty-two, I decided to take advantage of this opportunity, and I am very glad that I did.

On my trip, I was exposed to all different kinds of Jews. There were girls and boys from Brooklyn who were Modern Orthodox; the girls spoke Hebrew and the boys put on *Tefillin* on the bus every morning. There was a boy from Iowa who had grown up as pretty much the only Jew in his area. Through the course of the trip he learned not to be ashamed of being Jewish, and to actually be proud of it. There were people who didn't know the *Aleph Bet*, and people who had taken it upon themselves to learn it. We were all very different, but we were all Jews, and by the end of ten days, we had created a very close bond. We celebrated each other's triumphs and worried about each other's hardships. In a way, we became like a small family.

I had been concerned about missing my own family while in Israel. Other people I know who had been on the trip assured me that the Birthright schedule is so packed, you have no time to feel homesick. While I cannot say I did not feel homesick, it is true that almost every minute is scheduled. It is not a vacation, but a tour, and trying to fit all of Israel into ten days is not easy.

We went to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Golan Heights, and the Negev. We explored Safed and Jaffa. We kayaked down the Jordan River, climbed Masada, hiked Ein Avdat, rode camels, and visited a goat farm. We saw where they signed the Israeli Declaration of independence, visited the grave of Ben Gurion, toured Mt. Herzl and The City of David, floated in the Dead Sea, and went to an Israeli beach and an Israeli bar. We stayed in two Kibbutzim, one hostel, two hotels, and one Bedouin tent. It was a very active trip. There was a lot of walking, a lot of heat, a lot of information, and a lot of food. We did get the occasional moment to breathe, but mostly we were jam-packed. The rules were strict (though not everybody followed them) but it was still a very enjoyable experience.

One of the main rules was that people were allowed to drink, but not get drunk. Before going on the trip, I heard that there were a couple nights out when the under-twenty-ones would get to go out and take advantage of the younger drinking age. This

sounded like a sort of bonus option, and personally, I would have preferred to stay back at the hotel and read a book. However, as I found out, this outing, like most everything on the itinerary, was not optional. This was a relief to a few friends I made who had made it their mission to convince me to come out with them. I admit, I was touched that they wanted me to come. So, in Tel Aviv, at the age of twenty-two, I entered my first bar. I didn't drink, but I did observe, and all I can say is it was an experience. I appreciated the concern everybody showed for everybody else. We came close to sending out a search party for one boy who had wandered off, and he later told me that he was touched by how worried everybody had gotten because he didn't think they liked him very much.

This boy, among many others in the group, had helped me out during the mountain-climbing excursions. I am not so good with heights and I have never really hiked before. Ein Avdat is a high climb with incredibly steep steps, if you can call them that. There were many moments when I was sure I would not make it; I was sure I would pass out or fall to my death. It was clear to everybody on the trip that I was struggling, and I received continuous support from everybody. I was offered helping hands and kind, encouraging words and somehow, though I'm still not really sure how, I made it to the top. I expected to be judged for how much I struggled, but I was rewarded for conquering my fear. Everybody kept telling me how proud they were of me and how I had inspired them. I also got a free hat, which was pretty cool, and a great souvenir and reminder of my triumph. More important than the hat was the feeling of accomplishment and pride. In spite of my own self-doubt, I could tell that when my friends told me they were proud of me, they meant it. Climbing Masada to see the sunrise the following day was not quite as challenging, but I still struggled. I am now able to say that I climbed Ein Avdat and Masada, which is worth a lot to me.

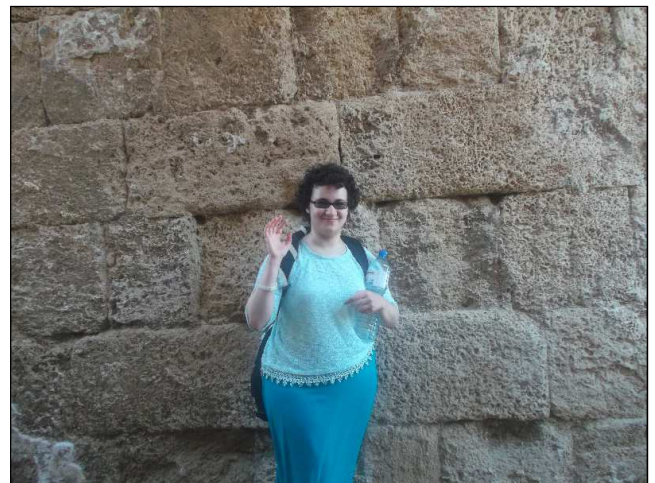
While we were on top of Masada, we went to the old temple, and had sort of faux-bar/bat mitzvahs. Obviously, there was nobody reading from the Torah. Bringing a Torah up Masada would be a pretty big risk. However, members of the group were offered the opportunity to come in front of everybody and talk about what the trip meant to them, what being Jewish meant to them, or just anything they wanted to share. I spoke about my own Jewish experiences, and other people came forward with theirs. It was definitely one of the bonding experiences. There were some tears, and multiple group hugs. It was a good time. Of course, then we had to make our way back down Masada, but

downhill is always easier, and somehow, tired and thirsty as we were, we all survived.

I did end up getting sick, which is apparently not uncommon. My advice to anybody going to Israel: bring Ginger Ale. You may get sick, and they do not have it. Many of the Israelis I spoke with had never even heard of it. Sure, they have sodas, but not that one. When they get sick, they drink tea, lemonade, water, or nothing at all. I cannot speak for everybody, but personally, when I get nauseous, I drink Ginger Ale, and there was a point near the end of the trip when I would have given my left arm for a bottle. I was finally able to get some on the flight back. As it was an Austrian Airline, it was Austrian Ginger Ale. It was a little different, and kind of appley, but it worked well enough.

I would certainly like to go back, and I would encourage anybody who has the opportunity to go as well. Birthright is an amazing experience, and even if you get a little sick like I did, you'll still never regret going.

Leora Waltuch



SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ **Shabbat, 2 Av, July 18, Mattot-Mas'ei:** The final portions of Bamidbar, the route of our wandering is recounted. *Haftarah:* Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4

☆ **Shabbat, 9 Av, July 25, D'Varim:** Ready to enter the land of Milk and Honey, Moshe addresses the Israelites and reviews their history with them as warning. *Haftarah:* Isaiah 1:1-27

☆ **Shabbat, 16 Av, August 1, Va'et'hanan:** Still addressing the Israelites, Moshe regrets that he will not be entering the land with them. In this *parsha* Moshe repeats the Ten Commandments, as well as addressing us with the words of the *Sh'ma*.

Haftarah: Isaiah 40:1-26

☆ **Shabbat, 23 Av, August 8, Ekev:** Moshe enjoins the Israelites to remember that their future depends on their actions. *Haftarah:* Isaiah 49:14-51:3

☆ **Shabbat, 30 Av, August 15, Re'eh:** Moshe teaches us the economics of *zedakah* (charity and welfare) which are the responsibilities of the people of Israel as they create a society in their own land.

Haftarah: Isaiah 66:1-24,23

☆ **Shabbat, 7 Elul, August 22, Shoftim:** Moshe instructs us to set up just courts to rule our society. "Justice justice shall you pursue."

Haftarah: Isaiah 51:12-52:12

☆ **Shabbat, 14 Elul, August 29, Ki Tetze:** An array of civil and domestic laws for the Israelites to follow upon coming into their land. *Haftarah:* Isaiah 4:1-10

☆ **Shabbat, 21 Elul, September 5, Ki Tavo:** Come and discuss blessings and curses in Jewish thought.

Haftarah: Isaiah 60:1-22

☆ **Shabbat, 28 Elul, September 12, Nitzavim:** Choose life! How do we do that?

Haftarah: Isaiah 61:10-63:9

CANDLE LIGHTING

July 17, 2015:	8:06 P.M.
July 24, 2015:	8:01 P.M.
July 31, 2015:	7:54 P.M.
August 7, 2015:	7:45 P.M.
August 14, 2015:	7:36 P.M.
August 21, 2015:	7:26 P.M.
August 28, 2015:	7:15 P.M.
September 4, 2015:	7:03 P.M.
September 11, 2015:	6:51 P.M.

YAHREZEITS

4 Av, July 20, 2015

Sally Rudick (Charles Rudick)

8 Av, July 24, 2015

Bernard Breeman (Barbie Steinberg)

21 Av, August 6, 2015

Bessie Bank (Alex Bank)

Alfred P. Poll (Susan Osness)

22 Av, August 7, 2015

Abraham Lepson (Sol Lepson)

23 Av, August 8, 2015

Aryeh Leib Kerstein (Michael Kerstein)

26 Av, August 11, 2015

Elliot Maya (Alan Maya)

28 Av, August 13, 2015

Harry Robinson (Barbara Levitt)

Dr. Ralph Alpher (Harriet Lebetkin)

30 Av, August 15, 2015

A. Paul Titter (Henry Titter)

4 Elul, August 19, 2015

Robert Salm (Joyce Shenker)

8 Elul, August 23, 2015

Bessie Lepson (Sol Lepson)

11 Elul, August 26, 2015

Helen Berman (Sol Berman)

21 Elul, September 5, 2015

Abraham Manber (Judy Maya)

27 Elul, September 11, 2015

Henry Friedman (Melvin Friedman)

29 Elul, September 13, 2015

Carmen Maza (Howard Weiner)

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☆Clara Genetos in memory of Pearl Turk

☆Roz and Alex Bank in memory of Yetta Horn and Leon Bank

☆Rochelle Hutchings in loving memory of Pearl Turk

☆Steven and Melina Rabinowitz for *Shavuot* yahrzeit

☆Pat and Alvin Goldman *mazel tov* to Marc and Kathy Heller on the marriage of their son; get well wishes to Shalom Lampell and Glen Lebetkin; Condolences to the Turk and Bergman Families on the loss of Pearl Turk

For the Kay and Harry Robinson Children's Book Fund

☆Barbara and Joel Levitt in loving memory of Pearl Turk

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☆Ronni Allen in memory of her father Jay Seifert

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