

Kayruv



קירוב

“Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment”

June 2016

Iyar/Sivan 5776

FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends,

We, humans, are defined by our tradition as being close both to animals and to angels¹. The Talmud selects three characteristics for each: we are like animals in eating and drinking, in propagating and in relieving ourselves. We are like angels in standing erect, having understanding and in being able to speak. But wait – there is more.

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Kayruv means “Welcoming.”

As angels, we can rise to the occasion, and become better, act grandly and selflessly. How many stories have we heard of people, common people like you and I, becoming heroes of one sort or another: saving people and animals from terrible circumstances; creating opportunities for those without opportunities; some even being willing to take a bullet in place of someone else?

But like animals, we are creatures made of habit and fear, of instinct and desires. There is a story about Mohini, a white tiger who, in the 1960's, was donated to the National Zoo in Washington D.C. Being the first white tiger in America, she was a celebrity – President Eisenhower received her as a present from American philanthropist John W. Kluge. After arriving, she was placed in a 12 foot by 12 foot cage. Day in and day out, Mohini paced back and forth in her cage. The zoo eventually created an outdoor park for her, composed of hills and trees and a pond, supposedly as similar as possible to the environs she would have in India. Once the enclosure was completed, the big day of releasing Mohini into it had arrived. A large excited crowd had gathered to witness this much awaited event.

To everyone's surprise, instead of frolicking with joy in her new sprawling enclosure, Mohini headed straight for a perimeter wall at the enclosure's edge. At the wall, Mohini started to pace around in an imaginary cage – you guessed it, 12 by 12 - just the way she had done while waiting for the enclosure to be built. Mohini stayed in this tiny corner at the wall for the remainder of her life.

¹ Bavli Chagigah 16a

Everyone can see the loss that Mohini had as a result of her unwillingness to change – the loss of experiencing a beautiful place. And yet many of us will do precisely like her, and not change our minds and actions even though our entire context has changed.

As we go on thinking about CBI's future, we ought to remember Mohini's story. There are changes that need to happen for our survival. The entire context in which we are set, the American Jewish community's context, has changed.

We are still in a system – paying dues for membership – that was set during the 40's. This system worked well then, and for generations afterwards. But we need to rethink the message that this system brings with it: that we pay for a service that we receive.

I am not advocating stopping this system. I am inviting you to think of a much more fundamental change. Membership is a term loaded with the idea of transaction – just think about other places at which you are a “member” - BJ's, Costco, Netflix, the gym. You are a member because you receive a service.

At CBI our self-image has two main characteristics: we are a “caring community” and we “do Conservative Judaism” – but a community is not a service. And “doing Jewish” is not a service provided either. A community is people who you know will support you in good and bad times, and whom you will support in good and bad times. Judaism is a way of finding the connection to the Transcendent – it is inspiring, powerful, vital. But it is not a service rendered because it implies a personal effort as well.

I think we need to rethink how we approach people that come to us: we don't want them to be members, certainly not in the Amazon Prime or Netflix sense. We want them to become friends, supporters, partners, builders, teammates and any other word you can think of that implies a connection far beyond and above a “service”. We want others to find meaning in belonging to CBI just as we do.

In that sense we are closer to the Sierra Club than to Costco. We want those who come, and ourselves, to support B'nai Israel because it speaks to that which we think is inspiring, beautiful and challenging. It is a place where we come to find meaning and meaningful relationships. It is a place where we come to be closer to our aspect of angels. It is a place where we dedicate ourselves to become better people, to live inspiring and meaningful moments, and to help others. As angels, we embrace challenges and recreate ourselves. Yes, we need money to be able to afford to continue to do what we love, and money and number of “membership units” are part of the equation. But they are not the sole equation.

We are much more than just numbers: community and meaning are things that no money in the world can actually pay for.

Warmly,
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

Wow, I thought last year's Touch-A-Truck was amazing, but this year left it in the dust! Bright sun chased away early clouds and drizzle (I forgot my big gardening hat and ended up with quite a sunburn), we had a fantastic lineup of

vehicles (at least 50% more than last year—at the rate we're going, next year we'll have to rent a stadium and advertise it as a monster truck rally!), and, as always, we had a solid turnout. Let's blast our horns (although not quite as loudly as my daughter Adina did, if you please!) for Isabel Kaplan and her incredible and indefatigable team of volunteers for driving it to the finish line, along with the EMTs, police officers, firefighters and businesses who generously displayed and explained their impressive equipment.

Speaking of fundraisers, don't forget our tag sale in a couple of weeks in conjunction with Savers of Brookfield. Bring tag sale items (clothing, accessories, tools, exercise equipment, toys, kitchen utensils, books, small furniture, etc.) to CBI between June 19th and 24th, we'll get it to Savers, and they'll pay us by the pound. No fuss, no muss, no leftover items, and Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America also benefits—two *mitzvot* for the price of one!

I'm delighted to report that Rabbi Altenburger, Susan Tritter and I attended a wonderful conference a couple of weeks ago as part of B'nai Israel's membership in this year's USCJ Ruderman Inclusion Action Community, which is supporting us and over a dozen other congregations in developing and implementing comprehensive vision and action plans on the inclusion of people with disabilities. The conference was held over two days at two synagogues from last year's Inclusion Action Community: Beth El Synagogue Center in New Rochelle, and Temple Israel Center in White Plains, and the conference sessions were in turn inspiring, fascinating, overwhelming, and comforting. It was inspiring (and to be honest, at times a bit intimidating) to see the extraordinary work of synagogues such as Beth El and Temple Israel Center, and it was fascinating to hear from Jay Ruderman, President of the Ruderman Family

Foundation, about how our work in synagogues around the country fits into the larger work of the foundation. Of course, the conference reminded me about how much there is to do, which was at times overwhelming, but it was comforting to get to know and learn from leaders in synagogues just like ours who are grappling with exactly the same issues of limited time and budgetary resources, competing commitments, and innumerable other challenges that we are.

Speaking of challenges, the results of our congregational survey are in, and—without giving away the details that Doreen Waver will be presenting at the annual congregational meeting on Sunday, June 5 at 7:00 P.M.—I think it's safe to say that the results are in: we're Jews! By which I mean, we have lots of opinions, and many of them directly contradict each other. Nu, what else is new? The really interesting and exciting part comes next, and I'm looking forward to discussing the possibilities with all of you.

One more thing: I'd like to congratulate our fellow congregant, teacher, and friend Jason Mix on his recent acceptance to the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies! His warmth, enthusiasm, humor, limitless patience with small children and love of the entire Jewish community will be greatly missed by all of us at B'nai Israel. We wish him a big *mazel tov*, and hope that he'll take some of the warmth and love we have for him with him in what I am sure will be a joyous and illustrious rabbinical career. *Yasher koach*, Jason!

Together for a warm, inclusive and inspiring community,

Kennis Koldewyn

REMINDER: Although we are no longer doing the Stew Leonard's Gift Card fundraiser, we still have quite a few gift cards available. Call/email and let us know how many you would like to purchase. The gift cards are \$100 each. Great as gifts!

JUNE EVENTS

Adult Education Class Beginning June 6th and 7th Fundamental Talmud Pieces for Progressive Jews

New adult education class! Explore and discuss ten surprising and inspiring Talmud pieces. This FREE course will be given in English, translations will be provided. All are welcome.



Rabbi Altenburger will be leading two sections of the class. One, beginning on June 6th, will meet on Mondays at 7:30 P.M. The second, beginning on June 7th, will meet on Tuesdays at 10:30 A.M.

Saturday, June 11th



Shavuot begins Saturday night June 11th. Please feel free to attend one, some or all of the following program sessions!

Shavuot Program for Saturday, June 11th

9:30 P.M. – candle lighting, cheesecake and coffee.

10:00 P.M. - Re-living the anxiety of the letters, Reliving the anxiety of the mountains: a short play and a discussion on *midrashim*.

10:30 P.M. - Prayer module #1: Structure of services and *amidah*, *Kedushah* and its sources: the service of imagining yourself elsewhere.

11:00 P.M. - Prayer module #2: *Musaf* – you don't have a prayer.

11:30 P.M. - Prayer module #3: *Kaddish*, its meanings and its origins.

12:00 A.M. - The *Yetzer*: it was very good, the rabbis fighting it, and the view of the *Zohar*.

Sunday, June 12th and Monday, June 13th *Shavuot* services

Our *Shavuot* services will begin Sunday, June 12th and Monday, June 13th at 9:30 A.M. *Yizkor* service will be at approximately 10:30 A.M. on Monday.

Sunday, June 12th Religious School's Culminating Event

Our religious school's culminating event will take place during *Shavuot* services on Sunday June 12th. Our scholars will lead parts of the service and present their thoughts about *Shavuot*, the Ten Commandments and the book of Ruth. This is a holiday, therefore no video taping, taking pictures or use of cellphones is permitted.

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL PRESENTS

BETTER THAN A TAG SALE!
No fuss, no mess!

A fundraiser in conjunction with Savers of Brookfield

For every pound of fabric you donate (clothes, drapes, bedding, etc.) we will earn 20 cents/lb.



For everything else (books, lamps, all household items, we earn 5 cents/lb.



Items can be brought to synagogue beginning Sunday, June 19th from 9:30 to Noon, Monday – Friday June 20th – 24th from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. and Tuesday evening June 21st from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

ALL ITEMS ARE TO BE BROUGHT DOWNSTAIRS TO THE LARGE ROOM.

Help us make this the biggest CBI fundraiser yet!

GOOD TIMES WE SHARED

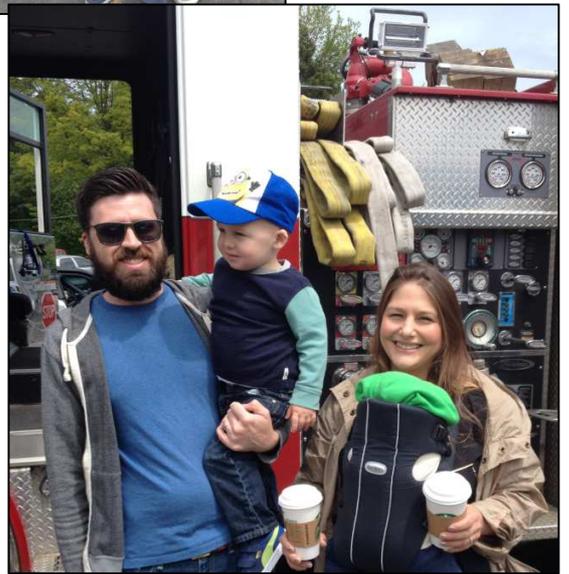
CBI's TOUCH A TRUCK!

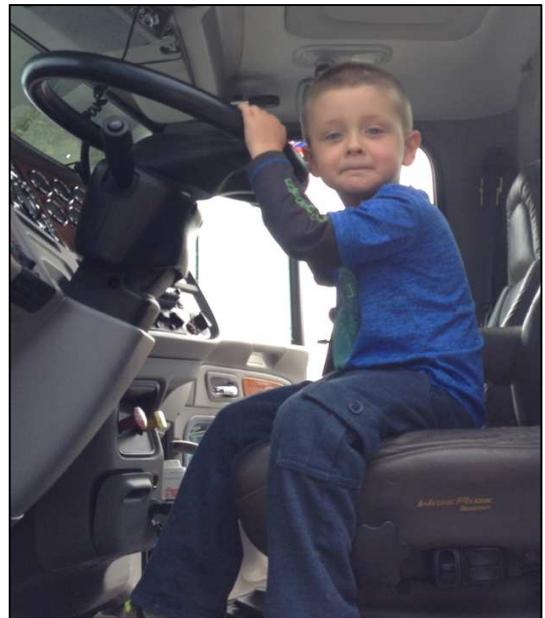
We could not have asked for a more beautiful day for our fifth annual **Touch A Truck** event. Take a moment and look at the pictures (taken by Joel Levitt and Brenda Fegley) of our friends in greater Danbury enjoying themselves.

The Touch A Truck fundraiser takes lots of time, energy and coordination. A **BIG THANK YOU** to **EVERYONE** who helped. We have pulled off yet another "funraising" event for CBI.

Isabel Kaplan









Mazel Tov to Sam Yolen and Jordan Bloom



Many of you will recognize Sam and Jordan from their attendance at Shabbat services. They were married on May 29th at the Keller Tavern Museum in Ridgefield. We wish them many years of happiness together.



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



On Sunday, June 5th the congregation met for the annual congregational meeting. Synagogue president, Kennis Koldewyn, spoke on the state of the synagogue and other issues. Our 2016-17 Board of Trustees, below, was elected.

OFFICERS

Kennis Koldewyn, President
Isabel Kaplan, First Vice President
Barbara Weisblatt, Second Vice President
Lois Stein, Treasurer
Recording Secretary – Open
Susan Tritter, Corresponding Secretary

TRUSTEES

Paul Simon
Barbara Levitt
Barbie Steinberg
Pam Lampell
Glen Lebetkin



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATES

High School Graduates

Emily Allen, daughter of Ronni and Tim Allen will graduate from Bethel High School this month. She will be attending Nazareth College in Rochester, NY to study Nursing and will be playing Lacrosse for the Golden Flyers.

College Graduates

Sophie Markind, daughter of Dina and Sam Markind graduated from UConn with a major in Human Development and Family Studies. Sophie is looking for a job locally.

IN THE COMMUNITY

What's Happening at the JCC in Sherman

Dinner Theater

Noel Coward's "Ways and Means"

Saturday, June 11th at 7:00PM

Tickets: \$40 - includes three-course dinner

Pre-paid reservations required by June 6th

The Place of Peace: Meditation and Journaling (Adults)

Class Taught By

Shannon Marzella, Life Coach

6-Week Series

Wednesdays 7:15 PM - 8:15 PM

June 22nd 2016 - July 27th 2016

\$90 Non-members / \$75 Members

Pre-paid reservations required

SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ **Shabbat, 5 Sivan, June 11, B'Midbar:** The camp of Israel organizes itself in the desert.

Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22

☆ **Shabbat, 12 Sivan, June 18, Naso:** The princes of Israel bring their offerings: The laws of the *Nazir* and the *Sotah* are explicated.

Haftarah: Judges 13:2-25

☆ **Shabbat, 19 Sivan, June 25, B'Ha'Alotekha:**

The lighting of the Menorah each day in the Tabernacle by Aaron and his sons. The Israelites begin their travels and complaints through the desert, and Moses despairs in his burden of leadership. *Haftarah:* Zechariah 2:14-4:7

☆ **Shabbat, 26 Sivan, July 2, Shelah-Lekha:**

Scouts are sent out to the land of Canaan and bring back a fearful report which results in forty years of wandering in the desert. *Haftarah:* Joshua 2:1-24

☆ **Shabbat, 3 Tammuz, July 9, Korah:** Korah and his band challenge the leadership of Moses and Aaron. The earth opens up and swallows them. *Haftarah:* 1 Sam. 11:14-12:22

CANDLE LIGHTING

June 3, 2016:	8:05 P.M.
June 10, 2016:	8:09 P.M.
June 11, 2016: <i>Shavuot Day 1</i>	9:39 P.M.
June 12, 2016: <i>Shavuot Day 2</i>	9:19 P.M.
June 17, 2016:	8:12 P.M.
June 24, 2016:	8:13 P.M.
July 1, 2016	8:13 P.M.
July 8, 2016	8:11 P.M.

Yahrzeits

12 Sivan, June 18, 2016

Golda Haller (Phyllis Cooper)

19 Sivan, June 25, 2016

David Weiner (Jay Weiner)

21 Sivan, June 27, 2016

Martha Hindin (Allen Hindin)

30 Sivan, July 6, 2016

Harry Nackman (Joyce Shenker)

4 Tammuz, July 10, 2016

Harry Kaplan (Barry Kaplan)

THANKS! THANKS!

For the General Fund

☆ Phyllis Cooper in loving memory of Pearl and Amos Turk

☆ Roslyn Bank in memory of Morris Nuskern

For Their Generous Kiddush

☆ Barbie and Jeffry Steinberg in memory of Jeff's mother Elsie

DONATIONS NEEDED!

FOR OUR LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES!



CBI's ongoing project to help our local food pantries. Items most in need are dried/canned beans, canned fish, peanut butter, jelly, fruit juice, sugar, flour, personal care items such as soap and shampoo. (The pantries get cereal, canned veggies and rice from area supermarkets.)

CBI is a generous and caring community and as always, we thank you for your donations and support as they are truly appreciated.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS IN THE COMMUNITY

These pages contain business cards of members of the Greater Danbury Community who have been instrumental and generous to us in the renovation of our building. We ask you to help show our thanks by supporting them whenever possible for the following services.

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