

Kayruv



קירוב

“Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment”

September 2016

Elul 5776

FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends

September is an interesting month, as it is usually close to the Hebrew month of *Elul* or the Hebrew month of *Tishrei*. As the weather begins cooling down, and summer begins taking leave, leaves begin falling on the

ground and our thoughts begin turning inward. This is the season for *Teshuvah*, Returning.

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***Kayruv* means “Welcoming.”**

This Return is not merely a u-turn, not just “getting back onto the straight path.” This Return is the Return to our core values, to our spiritual home. Jews have several spiritual homes to which we return: family, community, history, culture, Torah. All of these parts of our lives have shaped, in one way or another, how we express who we are today. The High Holidays are a call to come home.

There is also, of course, the presence of September 11th – and, 15 years ago, that date was but a few days before *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year. This year, on the educational side of the internet, high school teachers have expressed their amazement at the fact that they have to teach the events of 9/11 to kids who were not yet born in 2001. “How,” asked one of the teachers to a group I belong to, “do we teach and help kids understand what happened without passing subliminal messages of hatred, distrust and violence? Without painting an entire group of people with one general, large, brush?”

Among Jewish educators that is a very important question, precisely because we know – or, better said, our history teaches us – that horrible, unspeakably terrible things have happened several times when we ourselves were painted with one brush, or when we painted other groups within our own people with one.

If we are frank and candid about what we see in the world, we will admit that this tendency is found inside every community – the tendency of seeing the Other as an anonymous, amorphous, and therefore, dangerous entity. In faith communities, this can become complicated by how leaders read certain passages of sacred texts.

A colleague of mine, rabbi Gerald Zelizer, pointed out that, "It's not true that Islam was also "hijacked" by the 9/11 hijackers. It's not true that the "Price Tag" thugs, who vandalized and torched mosques and other institutions in Israel, misrepresented Judaism. It's not true that prominent Christian preachers in the United States who justified slavery by quoting the New Testament misquoted that Scripture. It is true that the sacred texts of Islam, Christianity and Judaism are double-edged, conveying contradictory messages. One edge cuts to hate, exclusion, insularity and violence. The other edge flows to love, pluralism, universality and acts of kindness. Which edge prevails depends on who reads which passage, when it is read and how it is interpreted¹." His piece at NJ.com goes on to show troubling pieces of sacred texts for all monotheistic faiths, and makes the case that no religion is exempt from religious violence – even Buddhism.

Becoming a better person, our tradition wants us to realize, takes conscious effort. It takes embarking in a process – a process that begins with asking each person you have hurt or wronged in the past year for forgiveness. Becoming a better person begins by admitting that you are not perfect, and that you did not act in a good way towards someone else².

And I think that becoming better people – Jewish people, Muslim people, Christian people, and so on, also begs that we don't look away and pretend that our traditions are perfect.

We need to admit that in ALL traditions there are voices that impel violence towards the Other – and we need to admit that those voices are not helpful or good today³. In a globalized world, where we see so many other ways of being human, where so many feel insecure in their identities precisely because of that, the voices that need to be heard, loud and clear, are the voices of compassion and coexistence. Those insecure in their own identities are prone to eliminate (or expel) the Other instead of learning about the Other, of knowing the Other, of admitting that the Other is part of our world as well.

¹www.nj.com/opinion/index.ssf/2016/09/nj_rabbi_we_must_ignore_the_destructive_teachings.html

² That person, of course, can also be yourself – especially if you engaged in self-destructive actions or habits in the past and want to change this.

Olam Chesed yibaneh – the world will be built using compassion⁴ – is a favorite verse in our tradition, used to show how the world's very existence depends on compassionate actions on our part. That same psalm, Psalm 89, includes a verse we will say out loud during the Musaf Amidah as part of the "Shofarot" verses: *Ashrey haAm yodei Truah* – happy is the people that know the *truah* sound⁵. And just before that we read: "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne, compassion and truth go before You."⁶

Justice and truth are the pair that balances out compassion and righteousness (*tzedek*) – striving to know how to balance compassion and truth is the hallmark of our season of *Teshuvah*, of Return. There is the harsh truth of violent voices in this world in all traditions, and knowing how to respond with the voices of compassion from those same traditions is, eventually, what will keep the world existing. That is the call of the *truah*, of the shofar: to renew our allegiance to the voices of compassion and community-building in our sacred texts.

May this month of *Elul* mark a time of building bridges of compassion towards the Other and towards ourselves, may it be a time of returning to the values of being *menschen*⁷ may we strive to become better.

Warmly,
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

³ Maybe they were needed when they were written.

⁴ Psalms 89:3

⁵ V. 16

⁶ V. 15

⁷ Decent, good people

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

I hope your summer was as restful and restorative as mine! (I've just returned from a family trip out to Utah to visit my parents, and Rachel and I handed Adina off to them for a couple of days while we enjoyed a relaxing stay at a beautiful resort.) Of course, there's been plenty going on at B'nai Israel over the summer, and I'd like to highlight just a few items. We had an absolutely "bang-up" Friday evening service on August 26 with members of the New Milford Community Drum Circle, who brought an incredible variety of drums, tambourines and other percussion instruments in all shapes and sizes, and laid down a beat that swept us off our feet and into Shabbat with real *ruach*. A big thanks to Joel Levitt (also a member of the New Milford Community Drum Circle himself) for inviting the Circle to join us, and to Barbara Levitt and Rabbi Altenburger for publicizing the event far and wide.

Our volunteers have continued to put the finishing touches on the basement restoration, and I'd like to particularly thank Yuki Turk and Paula Cook for helping to clean and organize the library, and Barbie Steinberg and Henry Tritter (with some assists by Paul M Simon) for completing the truly Herculean task of installing ceiling tiles. *Kol hakavod*, it all looks amazing! Hebrew School and our preschool program Gan Shalom are starting up again, and I'm proud to say that not only are our graduates Grace Rudick and Jack Mandell returning to help out (a real tribute to their dedication and *chesed*, and to Rabbi Altenburger's vision and leadership), not only is Mary Ohring returning to start off Gan Shalom on the right foot (for which I'm very grateful), but we're also welcoming some new families to B'nai Israel and our Hebrew School, all of which is great news!

Please don't forget about our endowment chair Doug Wise's talk on Saturday, September 11 at noon about "Legacy Planning with IRAs". He will discuss charitable bequests of retirement assets, lifetime giving through the newly permanent qualified charitable distribution tax provisions, and perpetual support opportunities through our endowment funds, all of which is news you can use,

especially for those of you who are currently or will soon be required to pull money from your IRAs every year. I'll be speaking a bit about the communal efforts galvanized by our Annual Meeting, and Rabbi Altenburger will present her vision of the opportunities that may inspire our future. It's an important event that will give all of us a chance to find ways we can help support each other and our community. (And did I inexplicably forget to mention that a light lunch will be served?)

Finally, speaking of supporting our community, I would like to encourage everyone who loves B'nai Israel—and I can tell that you do, since you've made it this far and you're still reading!—to take a page from Barbara Levitt's book, and help get the word out about our community. Barbara has really poured her heart and soul into outreach, with energy, time and commitment that are simply off the scale. She's tireless, tenacious, and most of all, she's fearless, which is what makes her so effective. But we can't let her do it alone—we owe it to ourselves, and to each other, to join her in taking this responsibility seriously. Now is the time of year, with *Rosh Hashanah* just a few weeks away, when Jews are looking for a community to call home. If we're willing to toot our own horn a little, and let folks know what we love about B'nai Israel—a Hebrew School with exceptional one-on-one instruction, an innovative and free preschool program open to non-members, and High Holy Day services without tickets, just to name a few of the many things that set us apart—we can have a surprisingly big impact. Please let your friends, co-workers, acquaintances, and yes, even random strangers you meet at Starbucks, the bank, or the grocery store know what we have to offer. You'll be happy you did.

Shanah tovah together as a vibrant, outgoing, and fearless community,

Kennis Koldewyn

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

September 11th at Noon Legacy Planning with IRA's

Our endowment chair, Douglas Wise, will be giving a talk on one way you can financially support our communal efforts through Legacy Planning with IRAs. He will cover charitable bequests of retirement assets, lifetime giving through the newly permanent qualified charitable distribution tax provisions, and perpetual support opportunities through our endowment funds. The presentation will be of particular interest to those who are, or soon will be, subject to required minimum distributions from their IRAs.

Before Doug's presentation, our president Kennis Koldwyn will give an overview of the communal efforts that were inspired by the Annual Meeting, as well as our prospects for the next year and Rabbi Altenburger will speak about the opportunities she envisions for our future.

A light lunch will be served.

DONATIONS NEEDED!



FOR OUR LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES!

This is 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.

HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 2016



ROSH HASHANAH 5777

October 2nd

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Candle lighting 6:15 P.M.

Evening services begin at 7:30 P.M.

October 3rd

Rosh Hashanah Day 1

Morning Services begin at 8:30 A.M.

Tashlich at 5:00 P.M.

Candle lightning after 7:12 P.M.

October 4th

Rosh Hashanah Day 2

Morning Services begin at 8:30 A.M.

Havdalah 7:11 P.M.



YOM KIPPUR

October 11th

Erev Yom Kippur

Fast and *Kol Nidre* Services

begin at 6:00 P.M.

October 12th

Yom Kippur services begin at 8:30 A.M.

Yizkor at around 11:00 A.M.

Study Session begins at 4:00 P.M.

Mincha and *Neilah* services

begin at 4:45 P.M.

Shofar 7:00 P.M.



SUKKOT

October 16th

Candle lightning 5:53 P.M.

October 17th

Sukkot Day 1 services

begin at 9:30 A.M.

Candle lightning after 6:50 P.M.

October 18th

Sukkot Day 2 services

begin at 9:30 A.M.

Havdalah 6:50 P.M.



SHEMINI ATZERET SIMCHAT TORAH

October 23rd

Candle lightning at 5:42 P.M.

October 24th

Shemini Atzeret services

begin at 9:30 A.M.

Yizkor around 11:00 A.M.

Candle lighting for *Simchat Torah*

after 6:41 P.M.

Simchat Torah evening services

begin at 7:00 P.M.

October 25th

Simchat Torah services

begin at 9:30 A.M.

BEYOND B'NAI ISRAEL

"A good photograph is knowing where to stand."
Renowned nature photographer Ansel Adams

Okay, as any photographer knows, it's a little more complicated than that, but there is also much truth in so simple a statement. For longtime member and former CBI Financial Secretary Michael Weinstein, his hobby of photography, is simply about, "having a record of what I've done and what I've seen." His goal; "to take good pictures to the best that I can."

Take a look at his photos and you'll see that Michael far exceeds that modest goal. A photo buff for decades, Michael started out with an Olympus 35 mm film camera and another very small "half-frame" camera. Today, he rotates among three digital cameras, with a Sony as the one he turns to most often. Two facets of life most intrigue him: the natural world and, of course, his and wife Evelyn's grandchildren.

Primarily an outdoor photographer, Michael will often opt to take panoramic shots. This is accomplished by taking a series of overlapping shots which are then "stitched" together to form a wide frame panorama. For that, he taught himself to use software which merges the multiple shots into one seamless picture, then crops it down to an appropriate size.

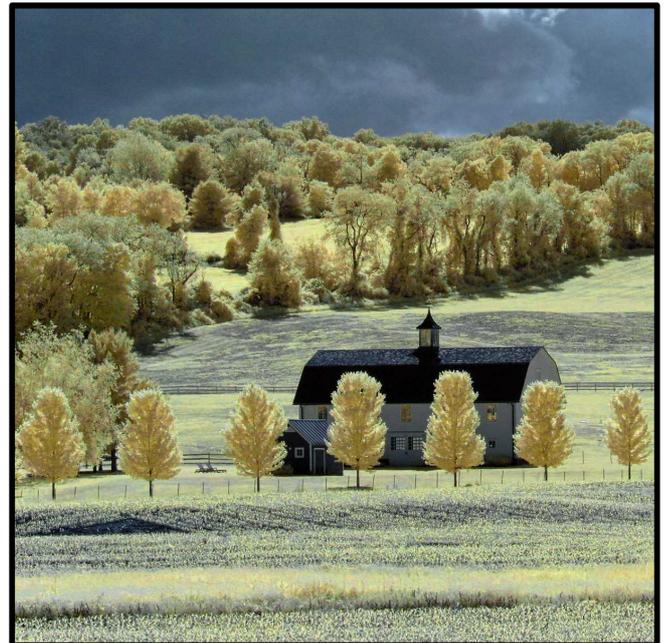
Since retiring after a long and successful career as a nuclear engineer with several companies, including NASA, Michael, Evelyn and Evelyn's twin sister Natalie Slavin have travelled the world, recently visiting Hawaii, where he stopped into an art gallery and discovered the world of infra-red photography. That inspired him to learn a new bag of photographic "tricks". When he returned home to New Milford, he had one of his cameras modified to take infra-red pictures, in which visible light is filtered out. The resulting photos are, he said, "surrealistic and very striking."

Evelyn, Michael and Natalie have travelled throughout Europe and the US, with favorite photographic destinations including Scotland, Hawaii, Sedona, Arizona and Iceland, with the latter being, "the most photogenic place you could be."

It's apparent that Michael has a true passion for photography and a skill that is equally apparent. I didn't ask him which of his photographs was his favorite, because I remembered the line attributed to the great photographer Imogen Cunningham: "*Which of my photographs is my favorite? The one I'm going to take tomorrow.*"

We wish Michael many more tomorrows to take his wonderful photographs.

Joel Levitt





IN THE COMMUNITY

Jewish Federation of Western Connecticut

Our campaign kickoff event is Thursday, September 15, 2016 from 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. in the Weinberg Function Hall and we invite you to join us to mingle with our donors, board, leadership and community members! This event is free of charge and we encourage you to stop by.

Thanks to a generous donor, all attendees have the chance to win the VIP Tango Dance package (see below).

Our event co-chairs Rachel Albert and Marcelo Tortoriello have worked hard on this event and we're excited to feature a signature cocktail, delicious appetizers and a fun tango demonstration and lesson.



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“THE LEGACY OF A RIGHTEOUS PERSON IS ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”

A most appropriate way to remember family and friends is through contributions to *tzedakah*. This year B'nai Israel will again publish *Sefer HaZikaron*. The Memorial Book, containing prayers and a listing of loved ones of blessed memory. This book is used during *Yizkor* services on *Yom Kippur* and throughout the rest of the year. Please return the form below to the office by **SEPTEMBER 30, 2016** with the appropriate contribution if you wish to include the names of your departed.

You can add a teaching or favorite saying from a loved one (**15 words or less**) or just put “repeat” if you wish to keep your message from last year.



.....

Please include these names in the *Sefer HaZikaron*:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Personal Message (Optional)

Contribution: First Name = \$18.00 Additional Names = \$9.00

Contributor(s) _____

In order to ensure correct publication please mail the completed form along with your check payable to Congregation B'nai Israel no later than September 30th.

SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ **Shabbat, 7 Elul, September 10, 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, September 17, Ki Tetze:** An array of civil and domestic laws for the Israelites to follow upon coming into their land.

Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1-10 + 54:11-55:5

☆ **Shabbat, 21 Elul, September 24, Ki Tavo:** Come and discuss blessings and curses in Jewish thought. *Haftarah:* Isaiah 60:1-22

☆ **Shabbat, 28 Elul, October 1, Nitzavim:** Choose life! How do we do that? *Haftarah:* Isaiah 61:10-63:9

☆ **Shabbat, 6 Tishrei, October 8, Vayelekh:** Moshe prepares himself and the people for his death. *Haftarah* Hosea 14:2-10, Micah 7:18-20)

CANDLE LIGHTING

September 9, 2016:	6:53 P.M.
September 16, 2016:	6:41 P.M.
September 23, 2016:	6:29 P.M.
September 30, 2016:	6:17 P.M.
October 2, 2016: <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	6:15 P.M.
October 3, 2016: <i>Rosh Hashanah</i> Day 1	
Candle lighting after	7:12 P.M.

YAHARZEITS

21 Elul, September 24, 2016

Abraham Manber (Judy Maya)

10 Tishrei, October 12, 2016

Edythe Nackman (Joyce Shenker)

For Their Generous Kiddush

☆ Harriet and Glen Lebetkin

☆ Joyce and Martin Shenker

☆ Asya and Todd Takken

☆ Fran and Chris Kimball

☆ Pam Lampell

THANKS! THANKS!

For the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

☆ Caryn and Joe Golden in memory of Dennis Adler

☆ Barbie and Jeffrey Steinberg in memory of Dennis Adler

☆ Paula and Philip Cook in memory of Dennis Adler

☆ Gail and Abe Boms in memory of Dennis Adler

☆ J.B. and J.A. Donnelly in memory of Dennis Adler

☆ Lenore Podhouser in memory of Dennis Adler

☆ Jean and George Ohring in memory of Mary Ohring's mother Theresa Shostak

☆ Bob and Rochelle Ward in memory of Denis Adler

☆ Roslynn and Joel Greenberg in memory of Dennis Adler

For the General Fund

☆ Barbie and Jeffrey Steinberg in memory of Shalom Lampell

☆ Jo Ann and David Small in memory of Shalom Lampell

☆ Doreen Waver in memory of Shalom Lampell

☆ Lenore Podhouser in memory of Shalom Lampell

☆ Barbara Weisblatt in honor of all those who called, came and helped her

☆ Sherie and Erwin Coyner and family in memory of Shalom Lampell

☆ Barbara Weisblatt in honor of Susan Tritter

☆ Joyce and Martin Shenker in memory of Shalom Lampell

☆ Roz and Alex Bank in memory of Bessie Bank

☆ Hillary Oser in memory of Shalom Lampell

☆ Allison Beck in memory of Shalom Lampell

☆ Bonnie and Robert Chernikoff in memory of Shalom Lampell

For the Kay and Harry Robinson's Children's Book Fund

☆ Barbara and Joel Levitt in memory of Mel Friedman, Dennis Adler, Shalom Lampell and Jean Turk; *refuah shlema* to Barbara Weisblatt and Joe Golden; best of luck to Doreen Waver in your new position. You will be missed!

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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