

Kayruv



קירוב

“Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment”

January 2019

Tevet/Shevat 5779

FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends¹,

Michael Lukas's opinion piece in the New York Times made enough waves that it was mentioned by one of our congregants on the Shabbat just after its publication². In my not so

humble opinion, for all the bruhaha it created, it simply revealed the current conundrum of Modern Jews, particularly living in America, but by no means restricted to it. In globalized times we have made a serious, albeit subtle, substitution. Since we have progressively substituted Jewish text with Jewish history as a source of identity and values, it is no surprise that *Hanukkah* presents an incredible challenge.

Having an identity is a fundamental piece of being human. Where a vacuum is formed in the source of identity, something will spring up to take its place. Until Modernity, the main source of identity for Jews was text, and identity positioned itself in relation to those texts. With Modernity, history begins to provide Jews with an alternative locus of identity, and how one positions oneself regarding the history of one's people becomes a fundamental piece in the creation of the individual's identity. It is no wonder that one of the most famous jokes about Jewish festivals is, "They tried to kill us. We survived. Let's eat."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Rabbi's Message	Pg. 1
Hebrew School Students to Lead Services	Pg. 2
Vice President Message	Pg. 3
Looking Ahead	
Super Bowl LIII	Pg. 4
Good Times We Shared	Pg. 5
Baby Faces 2018!	Pg. 7
Schedule of Services	Pg. 8

Kayruv means “Welcoming.”



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¹This is a slightly altered version for a letter to the editor of the NYTimes

²<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/01/opinion/sunday/the-hypocrisy-of-hanukkah.html>

As Jewish texts are less studied, Jewish identity becomes moored in external behaviors and categories, losing its connection to internal values and way of life. Synagogues and rabbis that accept that their function is to offer a set of life cycle services disconnected from life affirming practices are part of the problem, offering a band-aid for a case of flu: the cosmetic eventually falls down, and the lack of values is still there.

We have been living in a globalized world for about thirty years now. The French philosopher Edgar Morin alerted us already in the 90's for the need of an education for complexity in a world increasingly globalized, given that embracing simplicity of thought engenders extremist forms of thought. The desire for easy answers to complex problems is the malady of our era, and, in part, the source for political and religious polarization in many countries, ours included.

Even a tradition that prides itself for complexity, like the Jewish tradition, with its reams upon reams of discussions and different views of the same verse of the Bible, can suffer from this malady. This can be seen when certain works by complex sages, such as Maimonides, became forbidden in certain Jewish circles; and when other sages, such as Rashi, are dubbed "all truth" – with whom one cannot disagree. How the mighty have fallen, in the words of another complex writer, King David.

That search for simplicity is also corrosive when we – Jews and gentiles alike – talk about the state of Israel: how many people will decide it is all evil, and how many people will decide it is above any criticism? The same phenomenon is present as one surveys current American attitudes towards almost any other issue, firearm regulation among them.

Without having Jewish texts as a source of identity and values, and without having training for complexity, Mr. Lukas's problem with Hanukkah is quite expected: history must be wholly good to be a positive source of identity, and whose history is? History is a poor teacher of values. Human history is mostly an unfortunate series of misuse of power, creating victims by the ton in its wake. However, any Jew alive today owes his or her existence to the Maccabees, imperfect in their actions as they were once they got to power. And, truth be told, so too any Christian. Without the

Maccabees regaining the Temple, there would be no Temple for Jesus to rail against, and Rabbinic tradition would probably have been too young to survive.

In times like ours, Jewish institutions for deeper learning, such as Mechon Hadar in New York City, offer an enormous array of possibilities to seriously engage with Jewish texts, in an embrace of complexity and modernity that is unparalleled. Mr. Lukas would do well to learn with them, and maybe his own relationship with the Jewish tradition in general, and Hanukkah in particular, would become richer and, dare I say it? More complex.

Warmly,
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2019 HEBREW SCHOOL STUDENTS TO LEAD SERVICE

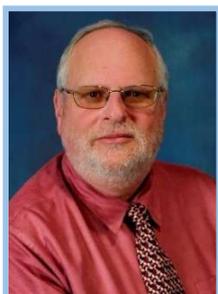
As we advance in our study of the (*Mishkan*) Tabernacle, I have exciting news. On February 9th, 2019, our Hebrew School students will be leading the service and some of them will be reading from the Torah! The reading on that Shabbat is actually the description of the *Mishkan*, so all the vocabulary we have been studying will come to life for our Torah readers.

Our scholars who will not read Torah will be leading parts of the service, so please make sure that all come. If by any chance there is a problem with your child being here on February 9th, let Rabbi Altenburger know. Services begin at 9:30 AM, and the students lead from the very beginning of the service. **Please be prompt.**

RABBI'S OFFICE HOURS

Rabbi Altenburger invites you to meet with her and will be available any day except Wednesday and Shabbat. Please feel free to call or stop by.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

As this issue of the Kayruv is published, I am on my almost annual trip to Ireland and Great Britain (England and Northern Ireland) with twenty WCSU students. It is an exciting trip for the students and, even after leading this trip over fifteen times, for me. Since I am away, I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity for a guest columnist, your Vice President David Levine to share his thoughts and observations.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

There is an ample amount of unfettered power in the world from sheer ignorance. The world remains silent about the accountability of inhumane abuses and genocide from mass immigration due to international policies of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1441, UNSCR 1973, and the like. The world remains silent about U.S. central bankers exporting artificial inflation in order to purchase foreign assets (or enforcement via internationalist mercenaries) at the expense of the American taxpayers' quality of life. The inconvenient truth is the cause of the former, the military-industrial complex, is perpetuated by the cause of the latter, central bankers. Whether it is the learned cognitive dissonance or learned helplessness, ignorance is deeply rooted in society all over the world. Ignorance is illustrated in a myriad of interdependent circumstances: from unemployment to terrorism. Ignorance has been learned through entertainment, through law

and order, through language, and so forth. Succinctly put by Frederic Bastiat, "When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men in a society, over the course of time they create for themselves a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it."¹

Consciousness can overcome ignorance. The practice of mindfulness cultivates consciousness. In other words, humanity can empower itself to change its destiny through a simple daily practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness requires less effort, rather than more, to be effective; however, this article does not explain how to practice it. It is easy to write about mindfulness and simple to discuss, but mindfulness is difficult to practice. It appears people seek sensationalism and instant gratification; however, it takes patience and maturity to foster awareness. Awareness will liberate the individual from ignorance. Ignorance is to view the world how one wants to see it rather than to see the world for how it truly is. It takes awareness of an individual to choose to practice mindfulness for empowerment. After an individual is aware of the here and the now, he or she will have the confidence to make conducive, positive life decisions. Our attachments and aversions coupled to ignorance dissipate as a result of overcoming ignorance. Furthermore, without attachment and aversion, we can fill in the voids with G-d's love.

Meditation is the path towards mindfulness. Consciousness is the effect from the cause of meditation. Consciousness and meditation are interdependent. Meditation is to be able to tame the mind of worthless, illusionary thoughts.

To give an analogy of meditation for those who do not practice daily meditation: it is akin to swimming underwater in a river only to come up to realize the river took him or her downstream, unknowingly because he or she was unaware of the water's current. Although, for those who do practice or otherwise understand daily meditation, he or she would be able to stand in the river to become aware of the current without being moved by it. With G-d's blessing, a little practice has a huge impact.

¹Bastiat, Frédéric. *The Law*. Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y: Foundation for Economic Education, 1962. Print

The prophets required awareness before they were able to communicate with Divinity. Additionally, the prophets had to endure ignorance in order to treat it with mindfulness of G-d's law.

Again, mindfulness is easy to write about and meditation is simple to discuss, but all are difficult to outright practice, so it should be written about and spoken of as it has been in Jewish history:

"With his keen mind, [Moses] was able to understand what was required to attain enlightenment, realizing that the path was through meditation (hitbodedut). He therefore chose to separate himself from all who would disturb him and to reject all physical desires, choosing to be a shepherd in the desert, where no people are to be found. While he was there he unquestionably attained a great attachment to the conceptual, divesting himself of all bodily desires, until he was able to remain for forty days and nights without eating or drinking."

Rabbi Simon ben Tzemach Duran (1361 - 1444)²

David Levine

THANK YOU!

CBI members thank you for your generosity to Kehilat Israel Kasuku. We have received a number of requested items to bring to the Jewish community in Ol Kalou Kenya. Some of the items that we are still hoping to bring are:

- Shabbat candle holders – small and not too heavy would be best for traveling with
- Computer laptops or tablets
- We still have room for more educational materials especially for children.

We will be accepting items brought to the synagogue by January 12th.

We are excited to build our relationship with the Jewish community in Kenya.

Sam and Dina Markind

LOOKING AHEAD



Get ready for Super Bowl LIII !

This year the game will be held on **Sunday, February 3, 2019**. We will be awarding a first place cash prize of \$600.00 as well as a half-time prize of \$150.00. The price of boxes is the same as previous years, **\$50.00 for one** and **\$100.00 for three**. We will be following the same ground rules as we have in past years. The random selection of boxes will be made at the synagogue on the morning of February 3rd.

We plan to email each participant, whose email address we have, a copy of the grid indicating which boxes belong to whom.

Have fun while supporting CBI. Entries should be **RECEIVED AT THE OFFICE** by Friday, February 1st.

SUPER BOWL "LIII"

I want a chance to win the grand prize of \$600.00 or the half-time prize of \$150.00. Chances to win are... **\$50.00 for one box and \$100.00 for three boxes:**

Please reserve _____ chance(s)

Enclosed is my check for \$_____

Name _____

Please make check payable to **Congregation B'nai Israel**.

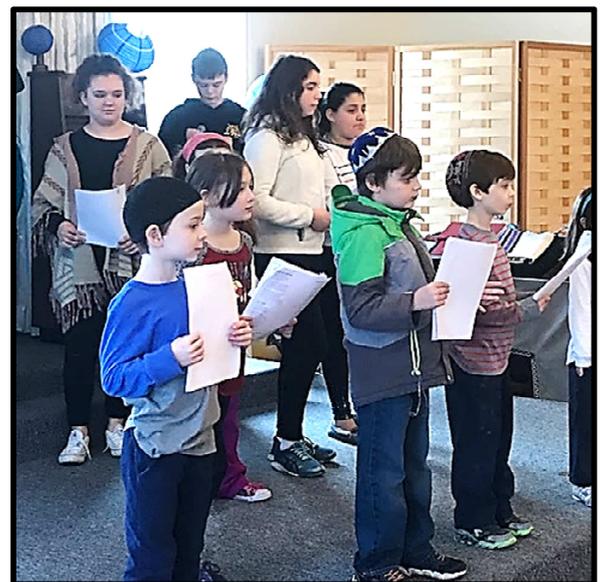
²Magen Avot 2:2 (Livorno, 1785) p. 16a.

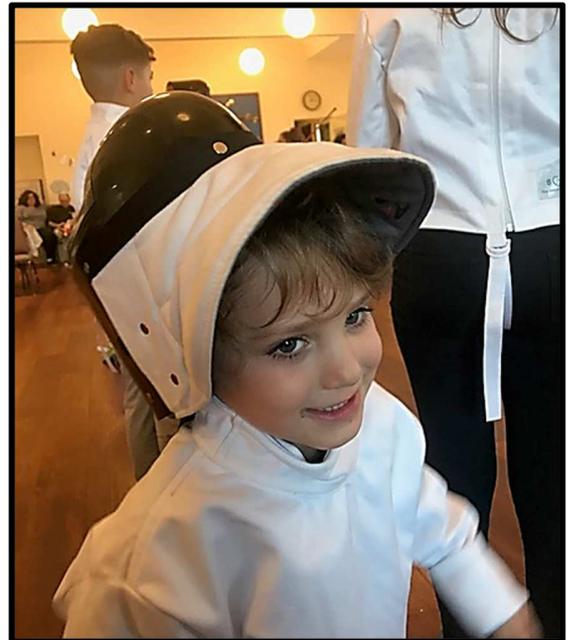
GOOD TIMES WE SHARED

Our Religious School *Hanukkah* Celebration!

Did you miss the play, the fun, the fencing? Here are a few pictures of the fun event.

Photos courtesy of Nadja Raver





BABY FACES 2018!



Rylah Mael, daughter of Jared and Gena, granddaughter of Lorie Mael. She was born on 1/17/18



Eli Adler, son of Fred and Fê Adler, grandson of Nada Adler, born 1/25/18



Ari Shaffer Dressman; Born 9/6/18 in Plano TX; 7 lb 11 oz; 19 1/4" long; parents Mike and Shera Dressman; Grandparents Gail and Abe Boms, and sister Sidney!

SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ **Shabbat, 28 Tevet, January 5, Va'era:**

Pharaoh refuses to set the Israelites free and Egypt is beset with plagues

Haftarah: Eek. 28:25-29:21

☆ **Shabbat, 6 Shevat, January 12, Bo:** Free at last! The Israelites leave Egypt.

Haftarah: Jer. 46:13-28

☆ **Shabbat, 13 Shevat, January 19, B'Shalah:**

Crossing the sea and singing for joy!

Haftarah: Judges 4:4-5:31

☆ **Shabbat, 20 Shevat, January 26, Yitro:** Standing at Sinai and receiving the Word of God.

Haftarah: Isaiah 6:1-7:6;9:5-6

☆ **Shabbat, 27 Shevat, February 2, Mishpatim:**

Sealing the Sinai Covenant and receiving the Code of Civil Law. *Haftarah:* Jer. 34:8-22;33:25-26

☆ **Shabbat, 4 Adar 1, February 9, Terumah:** The Israelites are instructed to build a sanctuary to house the two tablets and to serve as a center for worship. *Haftarah:* 1 Kings 5:26-6:13

CANDLE LIGHTING

January 4, 2019:	4:24 PM
January 11, 2019:	4:31 PM
January 18, 2019:	4:39 PM
January 25, 2019:	4:47 PM
February 1, 2019:	4:56 PM
February 8, 2019:	5:04 PM

YAHARZEITS

15 Shevat, January 21, 2019

Harry Goldman (Alvin Goldman)

17 Shevat, January 23, 2019

Sophie Bloomfield (Heather K. Mazarakos)

20 Shevat, January 26, 2019

Lisa Sharon Steinberg (F. Richard Steinberg)

24 Shevat, January 30, 2019

Mel Friedman (Roslyn Friedman)

Doris Hornstein (Heather K. Mazarakos)

27 Shevat, February 2, 2019

Sara Kruzansky (Dina Markind)

30 Shevat, February 5, 2019

Meir Rabinovich (Eliezer Rabinovich)

Steven Schorr (Heather K. Mazarakos)

1 Adar 1, February 6, 2019

Esther Breeman (Barbie Steinberg)

7 Adar 1, February 12, 2019

Luba Levinson (Gesya Rabinovich)

THANKS! THANKS!

For the General Fund

☆ Gail Boms in memory of Norman Bass

For the Siddur Fund

☆ Dr. and Mrs. Martin Wolf in memory of Doug Wise

☆ Pat and Alvin Goldman in honor of Susan Tritter's 70th birthday

For Their Generous Kiddush

☆ Isabel Kaplan in memory of her beloved father

☆ Fran and Jeff Kass

☆ Pam Lampell

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE JCC IN SHERMAN!

An Evening of Jazz with The TJ Thompson Trio Saturday, January 12th 7PM (snow date Jan. 19th 7PM) ~ \$20 Members/\$25 Non-Members .Please buy tickets online by Thur., Jan. 10th.

Glass Bottle Paint Night with Color on Wheels Thursday, January 24th 7PM-9PM (snow date Jan. 31st) ~ \$45 Per person, glass bottles included, BYOB, light snacks provided. Please Register by Tues., Jan. 22nd.

For the Love of Shakespeare Friday, February 1st 7PM (snow date Feb. 8th 7PM) ~ \$20 Members/\$25 Non-Members Please Buy tickets online by Wed, Jan. 30th.

A Voice Among the Silent: The Legacy of James G. McDonald, Saturday, February 2nd 7PM (snow date Feb. 9th 7PM)
James G. McDonald's grandson, H. Vail Barrett will be giving a short speech before the viewing documentary followed by a Q&A \$10 Members \$15 Non-Members. Please Buy tickets online by Wed., Jan. 30th.

From all of us at the JCC in Sherman - Happy Holidays and have a very Happy & Healthy New Year! We look forward to seeing you for our 2019 season!

To RSVP to events please call or email us at 860-355-8050
info@jccinsherman.org | www.jccinsherman.org