

Kayruv



קירוב

“Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment”

May 2019

Iyar/Sivan 5779

FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends,

As we move from *Pesach* to *Shavuot* we count the *Omer*¹.

There is an important spiritual practice regarding the discipline of counting the *Omer*, which is to take a moment to take stock of your personal life, of your soul-traits, while you

count. Each of the seven weeks in the *Omer* period is dedicated to one of those soul traits.

The past week and this present week are dedicated to *Chesed* (lovingkindness) and *Gevurah* (severe judgment). These two are always thought of as opposites: immersing yourself in lovingkindness requires giving up severe judgment, and vice versa.

The *New Yorker* has a famous cartoon² called “The Surrendered Mom”. The drawing is of a robot-like smiling woman with three speech bubbles, and they say:

“Drive you and six friends to the mall? Why, I’d love to!”

“You need \$500 for a beanbag chair? Sounds like a plan!”

“You’re quitting middle school? Well, you know best.”

It’s funny, and if you’re a parent it is really funny. But for all of us, it is a powerful reminder that lovingkindness is not enough. It’s obvious that such a surrendered parent is actually missing the necessary counterweight of judgment and restraint in that love. Love without judgment is like

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***Kayruv* means “Welcoming.”**



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¹ This *mitzvah* is found in the Torah, and you can read more about the ins and outs of it in the section “*Mitzvah* of the Month”.

² See the cartoon here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy8n85u6> It can be made into a poster should you need.

Jello without a bowl. It's really a mess. Love needs limits.

There is another mess, however, equally dangerous: severe judgment without lovingkindness. That is the empty bowl, with nothing to nurture. Any relationship that is based on severe judgment alone is harsh and unfeeling, one that breaks the spirit of whomever it touches. It is based on an extreme power imbalance: *Gevurah* is also translated as "strength".

Power, which is another expression of *Gevurah*, works best and is sustainable only when tempered by mercy and love. And love works best when tempered by judgment and limits.

This is true in any aspect of our lives: home, school, work, government. You could see all news, today and in every moment of human history, as a commentary on the dance between Lovingkindness and Power, in both public and private spheres.

There are people who need to develop more their restraint, their judgment and their strength; there are those who already deny themselves and others so much that they'd better loosen up.

The ideal, says our tradition, is to develop each trait and find a balance between them. It is no surprise that the movie *Fiddler on the Roof* opens with a monologue about keeping the balance. The balance will be different for each person and each situation, but it needs to be there.

And from these two soul traits, we move on to the other five: *Tiferet* (beauty); *Netzach* (endurance); *Hod* (humility); *Yesod* (connection) and *Malchut* (actualization).

If you are interested, there's an app for that – or a few, actually. And sites. And books. And calendars³. But the important part, remember, is the courage to do it and the desire to find your balance – "like a fiddler on the roof."

Warmly,
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

³ "Counting the Omer" by Simon Jacobson is one of my favorites, as well as the apps OmerCounter (from Neohasid) and Omer Counter from Chabad.

MITZVAH OF THE MONTH: Counting the Omer

The Torah commands the counting of the seven weeks following *Pesach*: "You shall count from the eve of the second day of *Pesach* (lit. Shabbat), when an *omer* of grain is to be brought as an offering, seven complete weeks. The day after the seventh week of your counting will make fifty days, and you shall present a new grain offering to God (Leviticus 23:15-16)."

Shavuot, which happens at the 50th day after *Pesach*, is the celebration of two bounties: agricultural and the giving of the Torah. The slave mentality is supplanted by a more liberated one, one whose understanding of freedom is more mature and responsible.

When do we count the *Omer*?

The counting begins on the second night of Passover, most *haggadot* in the Diaspora will add it to the end of the second seder. The *omer* is counted each evening after sundown.

What do we say?

One stands when counting the *omer*, and begins by reciting the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סִפִּירַת הָעוֹמֵר:

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha'Olam
asher kid-shanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al sefirat
ha-omer.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments and commanded us to count the *omer*.

After the blessing, one recites the appropriate day of the count. For example: *Hayom yom echad la'omer*. Today is the first day of the *omer*.

After the first six days, one also includes the number of weeks that one has counted. For example: *Hayom sh'losha asar yom, she'hem shavuah echad v'shisha yamim la'omer*. Today is 13 days, which is one week and six days of the *omer*.

The blessing for counting the *omer*, as well as the language for each day of counting, appears in most prayer books at the end of the text for the evening service.

Because the blessing should precede the counting, and not the other way around, many Jews will not say what day of the *omer* it is until after the ritual counting. So the reminder about what day to count is often phrased as “yesterday was the fifth day of the *omer*.”

What happens when you forget?

I’m glad you asked! If one forgot to count the *omer* on a particular night one counts the next morning without reciting a blessing, and then continues counting as usual — with a blessing — that night.

If, however, one forgets to count the *omer* at night and also forgets to count in the morning, one should still count the *omer* on every subsequent night, but should no longer recite a blessing before counting. The development of the soul-traits, as explained in the rabbi’s article, continues as usual – and that is why having an app, an email reminder or an *omer* calendar is very helpful.

RABBI’S OFFICE HOURS

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

A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO THE B’NAI ISRAEL COMMUNITY

Shalom Hevre (warm community),

Let me introduce myself. I am Nadja Raver, a synagogue member, Hebrew school mom and trustee on the CBI Board. I’ve borrowed the president’s pen this month to talk to you about the board and encourage you to join us. I know, I really know it sounds scary. Another commitment in our busy lives but it really is fun most of the time and more importantly participation is essential for the continued existence of our community. Without new voices and ideas we can’t grow and meet the challenges in our future. Here is a chance to do that while *kibitzing* and *noshing* with friends.

Let me give you a little overview of the responsibilities board membership entails. I promise this won’t be long. I have a full-time job, two rambunctious boys who love to snowboard

and more dogs than I really should have 😊.



I have been a synagogue member for three years and I joined the board as a trustee last year. We have one meeting a month, usually at 7:00 P.M. on a weekday, averaging an hour to an hour and a half. There are maybe two or three emails requiring my response per month. Meetings involve reviewing past minutes, discussing committee reports and voting as needed.

There are many committees to participate in (*Ed Note: See page 10*), some have actual meetings and some are conducted entirely by email.

This year we need to fill two trustee positions, the Vice President's seat and the big, not so scary, President's chair. Joe Namer, Peter Hirsch and I make up the committee for board nominations. Over the next week or so we may call or approach you to discuss joining the board. Don't run away, we're not intimidating and you can always say "no".

This letter is just to put the idea in your mind to think about joining our not-so-late evening meetings.

Let's start with the trustees. This is a great way to dip your toes into synagogue leadership, meet more members, learn how our synagogue is run and why the decisions, bylaws, directives, pronouncements, statutes, (you get the idea) etc. are made. It's something small you can do for our community while drinking coffee and eating snacks.

The Vice President position is in charge of fundraising and generally helps the President get things done. No one President can be at every committee meeting or talk to every congregant so the pres and the vice pres often divvy things up.

Now for those of you interested in a little more intense participation, we have the President. This position has been held by some wonderful people in the past and I spoke to three past presidents to get an idea of what it entails. I don't have an exact number of hours per week that are needed but the consensus was about 10. As Susan Tritter said to the board, sometimes there is very little to be done and other times there are not enough days in the month but that's why we work together as a community to lighten the load.

Attending services is recommended and gives the community a chance to see the president and get the low down on what's happening. Presidents are responsible for running the board meetings, prepping the agenda, answering questions from the congregants, acknowledging comments and actions made by members and the public and signing the synagogue's checks. While the President must deal with any problems that arise there has been only one recent event that required him to immediately come to the

synagogue and committees were created to prevent that from happening in the future. Traditionally, the president writes a monthly message to the community in the Kayruv as well. Fear not! Our past presidents can help with the transition and mentor as needed. Lastly the President has always given a *Kol Nidre* speech. While this may seem a deal breaker for some, rest assured there are many people behind the scenes helping with this task. The West Wing taught me that all good presidents have a Toby Ziegler or Sam Seaborn in the wings.

If you've made it this far, THANK YOU! If you have an interest in joining the board or any questions please reach out to a board member. We'd be happy to share our experiences. Our names and numbers are listed in every Kayruv.

Sincerely,
Nadja Raver

Donations for CBI's Year Long Food Drive



Our ongoing food donation program continues to be a success. Don't stop now! There are people in our Danbury community that need our help. This is a monthly donation program. Please bring a little something whenever you can.

GOOD TIMES WE SHARED

A Seder for our Religious School Students

Photos courtesy of Nadja Raver

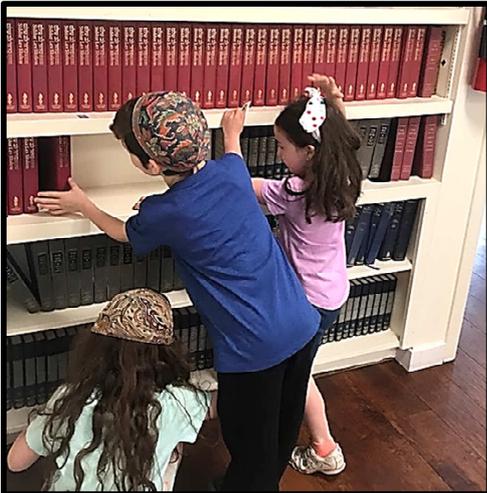




Yachatz



Moses comes to visit after a long, hard day walking in the desert...



Searching for the Afikomen



...to attend a student-led press conference.



SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ **Shabbat, 6 Iyar, May 11, Kedoshim:** The ethical laws that govern Jewish society in the Holiness Code. *Haftarah: Amos 9:7-15*

☆ **Shabbat, 13 Iyar, May 18, Emor:** We read of the holiness among the priestly class followed by description of holiness in time: The Jewish Holy Days. *Haftarah: Ezekiel 44:15-31*

☆ **Shabbat, 20 Iyar, May 25, Behar:** The social responsibility toward the earth and the poor. *Haftarah: Jeremiah 32:6-27*

☆ **Shabbat, 27 Iyar, June 1, B'Hukotai:** The book of Leviticus ends with the promises and consequences of following the law. *Haftarah: Jeremiah 16:19-17:14*

☆ **Shabbat, 5 Sivan, June 8, B'Midbar:** The camp of Israel organizes itself in the desert. *Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22*

☆ **Shabbat, 12 Sivan, June 15, Naso:** The princes of Israel bring their offerings: The laws of the *Nazir* and the *Sotah* are explicated. *Haftarah: Judges 13:2-25*

CANDLE LIGHTING

May 10, 2019:	7:43 PM
May 17, 2019:	7:50 PM
May 24, 2019:	7:56 PM
May 31, 2019:	8:02 PM
June 7, 2019:	8:07 PM
June 8, 2019: <i>Shavuot</i>	9:15 PM
June 9, 2019: <i>Shavuot</i>	9:16 PM
June 14, 2019:	8:10 PM

YAHARZEITS

8 Iyar, May 13, 2019

Rose Friedman (Melvin Friedman)

12 Iyar, May 17, 2019

David Tabachnick (Rochelle Hutchings)

14 Iyar, May 19, 2019

Milton Small (Pam Lampell)

Milton Steinberg (F. Richard Steinberg)

23 Iyar, May 28, 2019

Betta Pagrach Smeer (Dina Essinger)

Manny Ashkenas (Nada Adler)

29 Iyar, June 3, 2019

Louis Levitt (Joel Levitt)

6 Sivan, June 9, 2019

Elsie Steinberg (Jeffrey Steinberg)

12 Sivan, June 15, 2019

Golda Haller (Phyllis Cooper Steinberg)

THANKS! THANKS!

For the General Fund

☆ Marlene and Harry Gittlitz: Thank you for the warm welcome to services.

☆ Barbara Weisblatt in honor of Patricia and Jay Weiner, Lois Stein, Roz Friedman, Doris Andersen, Lucy Block

☆ Phyllis and Jerry Steinberg in memory of Burt Gold brother-in-law of Pat and Alvin Goldman

For Their Generous Kiddush

☆ Thank you to Paul M Simon for our *Pesach* treats

☆ Simeon Lamour

IN THE COMMUNITY

CAMP RAMAH/NEW ENGLAND

Join us this summer at Camp Ramah in New England for our Prospective Family Day from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm on Sunday, July 14 OR Sunday, August 4, 2019

Come see for yourself where all of the Ramah magic happens! Check out our beautiful lake, refurbished tennis courts and sports fields, newly designed arts and crafts and woodworking studios, our thrilling ropes and adventure course and so much more. Tour our spacious bunks and see where our campers eat, pray and play! Learn about the unique Jewish education program which enables our campers to learn Hebrew and study their Jewish heritage in an informal setting.

Meet the Director, Assistant Director and other key staff who will be there to answer questions and tell you about the extraordinary opportunities that await your child at Camp Ramah. Camp Ramah offers two-week sessions for children currently in grades 2-3 and four or eight-week sessions for children in grades 3-10. To learn more or to RSVP, contact Lori Fish Bard at: lorib@campramahne.org.

Lori Fish Bard
Community Liaison,
Greater Washington DC area
Camp Ramah in New England
202.246.0653 cell

Let us pay for your Shabbat dinner!

Sharing challah over a Friday night Shabbat dinner table is a great opportunity to make new friends and build community. Our Upper Fairfield County Jewish Federation aims to support families with young children coming together for Shabbat dinners. Want to host a Shabbat dinner in your home? We'll help pay for it!

Here's how it works:

- Hosts must live in Upper Fairfield County and be under 40 years of age OR have children 11 years old or younger.
- Each dinner should have a minimum of six adult participants, not including the hosts, with at least 50% of the participants having no prior relationship to the hosts. (You set the maximum number of participants for your dinner.)
- All dinners will be open to all Jewish families regardless of congregational affiliation. The Federation will provide hosts with a reimbursement for food costs in the amount of \$20 for each adult participant (including the hosts) up to \$200 per dinner.
- While candle lighting, Kiddush, and other Shabbat rituals are encouraged, there will be no mandated ritual practice or food restrictions for Shabbat dinner, except that all dinners must be held on Friday nights.
- We'll provide complementary challah!
- Interested? Contact Monique at monique@jewishphilanthropyct.org.

