

Kayruv



קירוב

“Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment”

January 2020

Tevet/Shevat 5780

FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends,

The first and most basic claim that Judaism makes about being human is that we are all created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in God's image. This means that every person, by virtue of being born, has

innate dignity and worth. Not only is this

one of the first statements about humans in the Torah, but it is expanded and defended by the rabbis in a famous Mishnah: “Therefore Adam was created alone to teach you that whoever destroys a single life it is as if he has destroyed a whole world.”¹

That same Mishnah continues a bit further: “A single human was created first... to proclaim the greatness of the Holy Blessed One; for humans stamp many coins with one seal and they are all like one another; but the King of kings, the Holy Blessed One, has stamped every human with the seal of the first human, yet not one of them is like another. Therefore everyone must say, “For my sake was the world created.”

Taken together, the statements of the Mishnah mean that not only every single human life is precious but also that each person is endowed by God with unique qualities that will never be replicated in precisely the same way in another. And all those differences between us are actually a reflection of God's greatness – our diversity is what makes God great.

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***Kayruv* means “Welcoming.”**



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¹ Sanhedrin 4:5

And yet, the state of our world seems to press for the denial of these claims. Judaism is rooted in an understanding of God and humanity that rejects the diminishing of the human potential, and yet the world abounds with it. Millions die of hunger and treatable diseases every year. Several thousands die in war, or fleeing from war, every year. Prejudice, hatred, bigotry, terror – all of these deny the sanctity and worth of human life, individually and collectively.

The dream put forth in the Torah and in Rabbinic sources seems laughable. Should we abandon our core values because they seem impossible in face of the world? Should we simply disengage? Or should we fight the obviously stronger currents, and die trying?

Rabbi Yitz Greenberg writes: “Living with a dream is treacherous business. The dream gives and the dream takes away. Dreams can brighten an oppressive reality, or they can make the everyday appear drab and repellent. Dreams can give life purpose or rob it of value and meaning. Dealing with this double edge has been a major challenge for the Jewish people on their great trek through history toward redemption... Without the dream it hardly seems worth living... With it, every day unredeemed life hardly seems worth living at all.”² Our tradition offers a solution: We have to engage and live in the world, but we must remember and live the dream. “Six days a week you will engage and do all of your work, but the seventh day will be a Sabbath – a day for God.” This is Shabbat: a complete day of rest. The rabbis will later create so many safeguards that Shabbat will look like a mountain suspended by a thread. The end result of this is a day in which all of the rest of the world is shut out, and we can, for a moment, have a taste of the world to come.

Rabbi Greenberg continues: “Paradoxically, Judaism affirms both the dream and the reality, both the perfect, redeemed world to be brought into being by human effort and the imperfect, unredeemed world of today...” Shabbat, says Greenberg, places the Jewish people as a timeless voice of dissent against the ways of the world.

Shabbat is the key to experience and enjoy the world as it is, while still voicing a vision of perfection. He ends his piece by declaring:

“Through total immersion in the Shabbat experience, Jews live the dream now. By an act of [sheer] will, the community creates sacred time and space.”

Shabbat is so much more than a day of not working. Shabbat becomes a day of reconnecting with the Torah dreams for our world and our own lives. Shabbat becomes the holy time that saves us from giving into despair when everything seems to be crumbling around us, when light seems to be eaten by darkness. By being in community, by taking a moment in the week to appreciate and relate to each other, Shabbat reminds us that love triumphs over loneliness, that understanding can destroy judgement, that human dignity will win over human degradation. Through praying, singing, talking, walking, dreaming, playing, and sleeping we remind ourselves of the spark within that knows that things can be better, that we can be better. We reawaken ourselves to the fact that we are more than our work, our conflicts, our fears, our inbox or our phones.

It is not an accident that in the *Kiddush*, the blessing sanctifying Shabbat, we remember two things: God creating the world and taking the Jews out of Egypt. One reminds us of the larger picture of creation: we are all siblings to each other, no matter how different we may seem. And the other reminds us that freedom and transformation – personal and national – are a constant possibility.

The Slonimer Rebbe³ in his book *Netivot Shalom*, writes: “Every Shabbat has the power to bring redemption to the world. And this is why the commandment is written, ‘Keep the Shabbat, and sanctify it. And you must remember, because you were a slave in Egypt’ – it is incumbent upon every Jew to remember and truly know the experience of the liberation from slavery, because it is on Shabbat that the possibility of coming out of Egypt is renewed. And this is not exclusively for the sake of memory, rather it is for the sake of actually doing the work of Shabbat. A Jew must rise up from a place of degradation, a devastating situation, and find within him/herself ultimate freedom ... it is upon every Jew to remember that it is his/her life’s work to leave Egypt, and with the strength of the holy Shabbat, to bring redemption to the world.”

² The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays, p. 128

³ Rabbi Shalom Noach Berezovsky, Belarus August 8, 1911 – Jerusalem August 8, 2000

So observing Shabbat is not just about not doing things, or reminding ourselves that the world ought to be different. It is about finding and connecting with the redemptive powers within ourselves. Our personal liberation is at stake at every Shabbat. Properly done, we free ourselves from exhaustion, overwork, pettiness, anxiety and despair. It is only when we connect with those powers that we can go out and transform the world all of the other six days of the week.

Stop for Shabbat. Go all the other days of the week.

Warmly,
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends


WHEEEEEEEEEEE! That was the fastest month ever! I've learned a new trick, how to make time fly! Time for another Kayruv article! I'm thinking there should be some TV dinner equivalent, words that one can put in the microwave for 20 seconds and pfff, a Kayruv article is ready! Maybe the next generation of Alphabet Soup?

Mazel Tov! You had the skills to make it to 2020! So let's vote whether we should spend the next few minutes looking back at the last year, or use the time to look forward to the coming year! Drummmmmrlllllllllllll.....! The votes are cast, and, WOW!, it was a tie, a little bit of both!

We've introduced a wonderful miracle drug to keep us healthy and happy! That would be the Schmooze and Booze Nights! It has been proven that positive social interactions are healthy for each of us, and some believe a little liquid refreshment helps also. Dr. Pepper of course!

If you didn't come to our Schmooze Nights, this is what you missed! Our first gathering in July featured stories of the persons who influenced us the most. That was followed in August by stories of how we met our best friends, and what they meant to us. In September, Joel Levitt regaled us with his passion for telling his family history and leaving a written legacy for his children. January featured one of our new members, Julie Kushner, who happens to be our State Senator. She gave a great talk about her journey to where she is today!

Plan on a life changing Schmooze and Booze in the future, where you can share your "Top Twenty List" of things you want to accomplish. Start thinking about this, and start a special book to include your ideas, and check them off as you make them happen. This idea was featured in a Debbie Macomber novel and, truly, once you start thinking about what matters to you, it can guide your actions and how you use your time.

 The Grief Recovery Method[®]

The Grief Recovery Method[®]: Grief Support Group
An Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Losses

Myths about grief:

- *Time heals all wounds*
- *Replace the loss*
- *Grieve alone*
- *Be strong for others*
- *Bury your feelings*

Your feelings are normal and natural. The problem is that we have been socialized to believe that these feelings are abnormal and unnatural.

Whether loss is from:

- Death
- Divorce or end of a relationship
- Loss of a career
- Loss of trust
- Loss of faith
- Loss of safety
- Loss of health

This 8-WEEK PROGRAM meets
In the **GOLDSTONE CAREGIVER CENTER** at **DANBURY HOSPITAL**
Beginning Thursday, February 13 – April 9, 2020, 2:00pm – 4:00pm

People say you have to let go and move on in your life, but they don't tell you what you need to do to accomplish that. The Grief Recovery Method[®]: Grief Support Group not only makes that possible, but provides partnerships and guidance to ensure that it happens.

To Register or for further information call or e-mail:
Chaplain Beryl Knudsen • Certified Grief Recovery Specialist[®]
Spiritual Care Department - 203-739-7135 / beryl.knudsen@wchn.org

We shared a great evening with our Veteran's Day Celebration in November! We had a lot of fun with an afternoon of line dancing in September! And about to happen as I write this, is our first Talent Show!

WOW! I'm out of breath, so much happening!

Lots of Adult Education Classes happen regularly! One is currently happening on Monday evenings at 7:00 and Tuesday mornings at 10:00. These are taught by Rabbi Altenburger.

We have had a *Bar Mitzvah* and look forward to five upcoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvahs* this year!

We had our volcanic driveway crater repaired a few weeks ago! It needed a Band Aid, and it got it because some caring anonymous donor made it happen!

We had a Food Drive at Stop and Shop that collected over 1500 pounds of food and raised \$300! That was a great help to our local Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen.

Broken lights on our Memorial Boards have been fixed because of the efforts of our House Committee!

We have said goodbye to the lease of our printer, and now have purchased our own printer to produce the *Kayruv* and handle our printing needs!

That covers some highlights of the past year! We have much to look forward to. This is the time of New Year's Resolutions!

We hope each family will take a moment to submit a picture via e mail for our Membership Directory!

We hope to have a movie and pizza night for all, and perhaps one for our student crowd!

Hopefully we will start a schmooze for youngsters soon!

I am hopeful we can initiate a Jump Rope For Heart to benefit the American Heart Association!

I am hopeful we can realize Project Pam, a commitment to a community service project dedicated to Pam Lampell or someone special to you!

Our Adult Education classes will continue. Our Schmooze and Booze nights will continue.

And the glue that keeps B'nai Israel together, and always has, will continue to thrive. That would be our services every Saturday, and all holidays! Consider coming to a Saturday service! Consider attending holiday services!

Consider bringing your own ideas to fruition. Join a committee! Join the *Bikur Cholim* Committee (Caring Committee) and visit congregants who would benefit from a visit. Make a phone call to brighten someone's day.

Join the Cemetery Committee to help important business. Our synagogue was founded in 1898 to accomplish two things. That would be services, and a place to bury our family members. This doesn't happen without effort, often behind the scenes.

Consider sponsoring a Kiddush on Saturday! This can be done by a financial contribution or by making the Kiddush yourself!

Consider writing an article for *Kayruv*!
Consider being part of Laundry Love!
Consider helping a Food Drive!
Consider helping at the Food Pantry or the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen!

I know very few of you are concerned with how many people responded to my secret code last month. So I will tell you! I don't remember! However, I will try again. The code word this month to let me know if you read this article is "Write On"!!

Next month will feature a very special, very important announcement! It will be of huge magnitude to Congregation B'nai Israel! I look forward to sharing it with you next issue! Don't miss it!

Glen Lebetkin

UPCOMING EVENTS

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

193 Clapboard Ridge Road
Danbury, CT 06811



Super Bowl 2020

It's time for **Super Bowl LIV**. This year the game will be held on **Sunday, February 2, 2020**. 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 selections will be made at the synagogue on the morning of February 2nd.

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

Have fun while supporting CBI.

Mailed entries should be received by Friday, January 31, 2020. If you are late, please contact Henry Tritter at 203-748-4250 before Sunday morning.

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**
\$100.00 for three boxes

Please reserve _____ chances

Enclosed is my payment of \$ _____

Name _____

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

SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ **Shabbat, 14 Tevet, January 11, Vayhi:** Jacob blesses his sons before he dies.

Haftarah: I Kings 2:1-12

☆ **Shabbat, 21 Tevet, January 18, Sh'mot:** The Israelites are enslaved and Moshe is called by God to confront Pharaoh.

Haftarah: Isa. 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23

☆ **Shabbat, 28 Tevet, January 25, Va'era:**

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

Haftarah: Ezek. 28:25-29:21

☆ **Shabbat, 6 Shevat, February 1, Bo:** Free at last! The Israelites leave Egypt.

Haftarah: Jer. 46:13-28

☆ **Shabbat, 13 Shevat, February 8, B'Shalah:**

Crossing the sea and singing for joy!

Haftarah: Judges 4:4-5:31

CANDLE LIGHTING

January 10, 2020	4:25 PM
January 17, 2020	4:33 PM
January 24, 2020	4:41 PM
January 31, 2020	4:50 PM
February 7, 2020	4:59 PM
February 14, 2020	5:08 PM

YAHARZEITS

20 Tevet, January 17, 2020

Meilakh Asinovsky (Geysa Rabinovich)

21 Tevet, January 18, 2020

Betsy Field (Joyce and Martin Shenker)

22 Tevet, January 19, 2020

Norman Bass (Gail Boms)

1 Shevat, January 27, 2020

Louis Heller (Marc D. Heller)

6 Shevat, February 1, 2020

Benjamin Smeer (Dina Essinger)

8 Shevat, February 3, 2020

Bertha Blumenthal (Susan Tritter)

15 Shevat, February 10, 2020

Harry Goldman (Alvin Goldman)

17 Shevat, February 12, 2020

Sophie Bloomfield (Heather K. Mazarakos)

THANKS! THANKS!

For the General Fund

☆ Paula Cook in memory of her mother Gloria Mark

☆ Ellen Griles thanking CBI for our warm thoughtful services that her grandson actually enjoyed!

☆ Paul and Phyllis Ruffer thank you for answering a request for an evening *minyán*.

For Their Generous Kiddush

☆ The Altenburgers in honor of family birthdays

☆ Izzy Kaplan in memory of loved ones and in honor of friends

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.