

Kayruv



קירוב

“Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment”

February 2020

Shevat 5780

FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends,

As we, in our cycle of Torah readings, think about slavery and freedom, I'd like to share with you a story, one that I have told before and that some of you have asked for a copy of. The story comes from Mitchell

Chefitz, a wonderful writer. I first read it in his *The Thirty-third Hour*, and below you find my telling of that same story.

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Kayruv means “Welcoming.”

The story begins with a very wise man whose wisdom was so great that people from all walks of life came to listen to him. But one day, the wise man realized that he had forgotten something. Something important. And he was angry. An anger that you couldn't believe; a terrifying, tremendous anger; so terrifying and tremendous that it burned deeply and consumed the wise man, and he was gone, just like that –

The wise man suddenly realized that he wasn't wise anymore. In fact, he became quite ordinary. He now thought simple, ordinary thoughts, and talked simple, ordinary things with simple, ordinary people. But he remembered. He remembered that he used to be wise. And he became angry because he lost his wisdom, but he couldn't remember how. His anger smoldered, and became so terrifying and tremendous that it burned deeply and consumed the ordinary man, and he was gone, just like that –

He then was very surprised to see himself reduced yet again. He was a leper, an outcast, a beggar, revolting to see, untouchable. No one talked to him. People averted their eyes. But he remembered that he used to be quite ordinary and he remembered that people talked to him, and looked him in the eyes. And he became so angry and his anger became so terrifying and tremendous that it burned deeply and consumed the outcast, and he was gone, just like that –



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He was quite surprised to realize that he had again been reduced, and now he was an animal of some kind, hiding among the trash in fear of people and animals, running among the trees to find food and shelter. But he remembered that he used to be an actual human being, walking on two legs and having thoughts that were higher than merely existing. That memory plagued him, and he howled a terrifying howl at the night, at the unfairness of it all, he howled the immense anger inside him, so terrifying and tremendous that it burned deeply and consumed the animal, and he was gone, just like that –

And he was astonished to see that he was now a vine. The vine felt the coarseness of the tree it was attached to, and felt the confinement of being a vine, unable to move. It had a memory, a nagging feeling that it was once able to move among the trees, and this began nagging and irritating the vine, the irritation grew and became anger, so terrifying and tremendous that it burned deeply and consumed the vine, and it was gone, just like that –

The vine was really amazed to find itself now a boulder. But it remembered a time when it was able to grow and stretch out, following the light. And it became angry, and the anger burned deeply and consumed the boulder, and it was gone, just like that –

The pebbles were surprised to find themselves so very small and scattered. But they remembered a time when they had weight and strength, and could not be moved. And they became angry, and the anger burned deeply and consumed the pebbles, and they were gone, just like that –

And they became dust, and the dust was furious because it remembered a time when it had some substance and did not float around in air, moved by air currents. And that anger destroyed the dust particles, and they became just atoms and sub atoms. The atoms found themselves so separated that there was no anger to be felt.

Only then, something happened. Forces beyond connected the atoms into dust. And the dust was thankful for its substance, and for connections, basic though they were. And that thankfulness made the dust combine into pebbles, which were grateful for their small weight pulling them back to the earth. That gratitude combined the pebbles into a boulder, and the boulder was thankful for its size, for being solid. It was so grateful that it became a vine, and the vine was grateful for its ability to

simply grow. The vine evolved and became an animal, thankful for its movement among the trees. And that gratefulness made the animal evolve and become an outcast, thankful for simply being human. And that gratefulness made the outcast into a quite ordinary simple person, thankful for human contact and talk. And that gratefulness transformed the ordinary person into a wise person, so wise that people from all walks of life came to hear that person's words. But one day, the wise person realized that she/he had forgotten something.

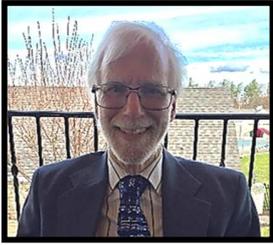
The story ends here, and we are left wondering if the character in the story will continue to be a slave to her/his anger. Slavery can take many forms, and while we think of our time in Egypt as slavery, that slavery was one of our physical selves. We don't tend to think of Pharaoh as a slave, but actually, he also was one - he enslaved himself through his acts. For six times he wouldn't be moved. The destruction of his country and people did not matter. Suffering did not matter. Then Pharaoh was also a slave to his own self-perception and he became unable to change.

We too can be slaves – maybe not in the extreme case of the character of the story, but still we all have things that we do, or say, that take us away from being fully human. Maybe we are not as trapped in our selfishness as Pharaoh. Maybe we are not that callous. But still, we have so many distractions and so many things that lead us to indifference to others. We, too, can continue behaving in certain dynamics and never break away from them.

And that is why we have to be aware that those forces of self-enslavement exist, both inside us and outside us. We have to remember the Exodus from Egypt every day, so as to become less like Pharaoh, and more like our best selves. So we, too, can hold the hope that next time we will choose differently, just like we are left hoping for the wise character in the story.

Warmly,
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends

I imagine we all have our own special memories of something we bought in Macy's. I used to buy earrings for Harriet's birthday every year. Even

this year Macy's lured me into its doors with offers for a free wallet, free watch, and \$7 coffee maker! J.C. Penney towels in our favorite colors fill our linen closet. We got our electric toothbrushes in Bed, Bath & Beyond on sale and then used the 20% coupon. We get our prescriptions at Walgreens, and when you have kids it was very helpful to have a 24 hour pharmacy. I got our 45 gallon rolling trash cans for a ridiculously low price at K Mart, and even though they now have holes in the bottom, I still manage to make them useful. My children's favorite store used to be the GAP. I have memories of my Mom loving to browse in Pier I, though I confess I never enjoyed those visits. Lord & Taylor brings back memories of my great aunt. It was her favorite store to shop in, and often my mom would join her, and of course I was schlepped along! I used to love to go into Meekers and feel the history down each aisle, with flooring and shelving from a much earlier era. Don't forget their 5 cent cups of soda! I still remember Sears on Main Street Danbury. I bought all the paint for the inside and outside of my home at Sears. I loved their lifetime guarantee on tools. Two months ago I traded in two rakes with broken teeth that I had for over 10 years. No cost for the exchange!

When I was 8 years old, I would ride my bike to get a loaf of bread at Grand Union. Every Sunday I would wait for some worker behind the counter to notice an 8 year-old boy waiting for a chance to buy a chocolate chip cake at Mayron's Bakery. It would usually take me an hour to be noticed. That was before numbered tickets. Bradlees, and Caldors had everything! Then there was E.J. Korvettes. I got many of my Beatles records there, and many of my Lionel trains also! Downtown Hartford had G. Fox and Sage Allen. My uncle used to be the chef at Sage Allen and occasionally my mom and I would go have a sandwich there and say hello. What a treat it was to get a movie to rent at Blockbusters! I hated how Blockbusters put our local Mom & Pop video store out of business.

I got my first guitar with the Green Stamps we collected from buying our groceries at Grand Union. At this point, if you are still reading this you are probably wondering if I am in the middle of a senior moment and remember that I'm writing an article in the Kayruv.

Here is our game if you are up to it. I am going to make a list and you look at the list and guess what they have in common!

1. Sears
2. J.C.Penney
3. Payless Shoes
4. Macy's
5. Gymboree
6. Chico's
7. K Mart
8. Pier 1 Imports
9. CVS
10. Bed, Bath & Beyond
11. Walgreens
12. Target
13. Papyrus
14. Forever 21
15. Victoria's Secret - 53 stores
16. Game Stop
17. Henri Bendel
18. Tesla
19. Family Dollar - 400 stores
20. Dressbarn
21. Vera Bradley
22. Gymboree - All
23. Abercrombie & Fitch - 475 stores
24. Charlotte Russe
25. Lowe's - 51 stores
26. e.l.f. Cosmetics
27. Foot Locker
28. Starbucks - 150 stores
29. H & M
30. Lord & Taylor
31. The Children's Place
32. Performance Bicycle
33. Topshop
34. Target
35. Nordstrom
36. Calvin Klein - It is no longer a brand
37. Forever 21 - 178 stores

You guessed it! Every store listed has had some or all of its stores close. In 2019 over 6000 stores closed! In 2020, there are already 2200 confirmed closings!

Enough already? So what is this all about? What is it doing in the Kayruv?

Judaism has been in “business” for over 3000 years! But if we aren’t careful, we too can face what heretofore was thought unimaginable - a closing of our doors, and all that it contained! If we aren’t careful, we someday will tell our children what a synagogue was and what happened inside its doors. Then we will tell our grandchildren synagogue stories, and then poof no one will be left who experienced life in a synagogue, who was taught in a synagogue, who got married in a synagogue.

So if we don’t want to add our name to the list of “BUSINESS” closings we need to prepare our path forward. We need “all hands on board!” We are in a period of transition. Rabbi Altenburger’s moving on is a great loss to us, but presents us with great opportunity. We must take a moment to reexamine, reorganize, and perhaps reassess our priorities! We have to change ships and we will sink if we don’t set our sails to the future! Imagine your picture of B’nai Israel in the future. Are there any changes you would like to see? Any programs you think we should be involved in? What do you especially like about our synagogue?

We have a great dedicated search committee set to help guide us through our search for a new rabbi. This will be headed by Paul Simon. Others on the committee include Charlie Cahn, Marlene Gitlitz, Dina Markind, Heather Mazarakos, and Sarah Namer.

I know that in our last Kayruv I promised a very special announcement. It is still coming! I promise it’s on its way! Next Kayruv!

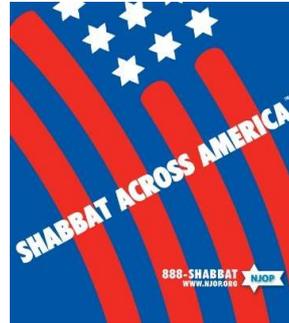
Code words to let me know you read this are “Did It!”

If you were unable to make one of our two meetings, please let me, Paul, or another one of our search committee members know your ideas for our future!

Glen Lebetkin

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Friday, February 28th Shabbat Across America! Service begins at 6:00 P.M.



Join us for **SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA** on February 28th!

The evening will begin with our Friday service starting promptly at 6:00 P.M. followed by a

delicious dinner(meat/vegetarian/vegan/gluten) options will be available).

As in previous years the cost is \$18.00 per person and \$36.00 maximum for family.

We do need you to **RSVP** so that we can plan for food. Please respond via email or call the office (203-792-6161) and leave message that you will be coming and how many.

We look forward to seeing you at **SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA!**

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

CBI'S TALENT SHOW

Did you miss our talent show? It was great. Join us next time for a great evening of entertainment from our very own talented members!

Photos courtesy of Nadja Raver and Henry Tritter



Our talent show entertainers:
Isaac Ohring, Jay Kaplan, Sharilyn Kochman, Charlie Cahn, Barbara Kessler, and Nadja Raver.



SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ **Shabbat, 20 Shevat, February 15:** Yitro Standing at Sinai and receiving the Word of God.

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

☆ **Shabbat, 27 Shevat, February 22: Mishpatim:** Sealing the Sinai Covenant and receiving the Code of Civil Law. *Haftarah:* 2 Kings 12:1-17

☆ **Shabbat, 4 Adar, February 29: 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

☆ **Shabbat, 11 Adar, March 7: Tetzaveh:** Moshe and Aaron are instructed about the intricate designs of the priestly vestments.

Haftarah: 1 Sam. 15:2-34

☆ **Shabbat, 18 Adar, March 14: Ki tissa** Moshe is gone too long and the people of Israel build a golden calf. *Haftarah:* Ezek. 36:16-38

CANDLE LIGHTING

February 14, 2020	5:08 PM
February 21, 2020	5:16 PM
February 28, 2020	5:25 PM
March 6, 2020	5:33 PM
March 13, 2020	6:41 PM

YAHARZEITS

20 Shevat, February 15, 2020

Lisa Sharon Steinberg (F. Richard Steinberg)

24 Shevat, February 19, 2020

Mel Friedman (Roslyn Friedman)

Doris Hornstein (Heather K. Mazarakos)

27 Shevat, February 22, 2020

Sara Kruzansky (Dina Markind)

30 Shevat, February 25, 2020

Meir Rabinovich (Eliezer Rabinovich)

Steven Schorr (Heather K. Mazarakos)

1 Adar, February 26, 2020

Edward Steinberg (F. Richard Steinberg)

Esther Breeman (Barbie Steinberg)

7 Adar, March 3, 2020

Luba Levinson (Geysa Rabinovich)

9 Adar, March 5, 2020

Beatrice Hermann (Patricia Weiner)

12 Adar, March 8, 2020

Violet Gittlitz (Harry Gittlitz)

14 Adar, March 10, 2020

Fred Stein (Michael Stein)

15 Adar, March 11, 2020

Bobbie Sommer (Lorie Mael)

19 Adar, March 15, 2020

Helen Maser (David Maser)

THANKS! THANKS!

For Their Generous Kiddush

☆ The Hirsch's

☆ Asya Takken