

Kayruv



קירוב

“Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment”

December 2020

Kislev/Tevet 5781

FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends,

Have you ever been on a subway and had a beggar come into your car? Perhaps it is a person carrying a tin cup that you see time and again on the same train? And has this person gone row by row, seat by seat, holding out his cup asking for alms? And if so, when he came to your seat, how

did you feel? Has this ever happened to you? If it has, you probably felt a moment of annoyance. You feel like a captive audience, and you feel uncomfortable being solicited in a place where you cannot escape. Maybe you feel you are being taken advantage of, and so you may drop a coin in the tin cup and go back to reading the paper or whatever it was you were doing before you were solicited, but you don't like it.

If this is all too familiar to you, then this story is for you:

It was a weekday afternoon. I was on the downtown E train, absorbed in my newspaper, when the door of the preceding subway car opened and a man with thick glasses entered.

“Oh, ho!” I thought to myself, “Here comes the pitch!” Instead, this is what the man said:

“Thank you ladies and gentlemen.” And then, as if he was reading my mind, he said, “I am not here today to ask you for money. I am here to thank you for what you have already been kind enough to give me over the last few months. Your money has enabled me to get these special glasses that I am now wearing. I am still nearly blind but now I can read. This is what has enabled me to get a job. A job!!!! So I thank you. I thank all of you!”

Kayruv means “Welcoming.”

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And the story ends with the author recalling how he moved to the next car and could see him addressing those riders too. He couldn't remember ever encountering him before this and he certainly didn't remember giving him any money. "But," says the author, "I certainly wish that I had done so."

Isn't that a powerful story? Especially at this time of year of giving and receiving, the one thing I think we all can lose sight of is gratitude. We lose sight of gratitude on many levels. The most obvious circumstance occurs during the gift giving process. It may not be the perfect gift but someone took the time to think of you. Be grateful.

Then there is a deeper level of gratitude in appreciating all with which you have been blessed. This should lead to "paying it forward" by doing many acts of kindness to make the world a better place. Be grateful.

And then I believe there is a yet deeper level of gratitude illustrated by this story. It is when you have been lacking in character and/or behavior and you don't even know it until something happens to teach you a valuable life lesson. When, like in this story, you realize all the lost opportunities for doing good, you simultaneously realize the vast potential of opportunities for doing good that are out there as well. Follow through. You have been given a second chance. Be grateful.

Covid has presented us with unique challenges and opportunities for gratitude in all its many forms of expression and spiritual levels. We may not be able to enjoy our usual routines but there are two things you can do daily, Covid or not, that will make a difference in your world as well the world at large. First, do one deed of true giving of yourself every day. It can be as simple as a phone call to let someone know that they are in your thoughts. That kind of gift can be priceless to the recipient. The second thing is to recall one thing out loud or in writing that occurred during your day for which you are grateful. It can be as simple as the sighting of a deer in your yard if that lifts your heart. In no time at all, you will see the truth in the saying "what a difference a day makes!"

A happy and healthy Eight Days of *Chanukah* to All!! And may the spirit of gratitude and giving fill all the days of every year!

Rabbi Rhonda Nebel

RABBI'S OFFICE HOURS

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

UPDATE: LAUNDRY LOVE ADAPTS TO CORONAVIRUS

Even during a pandemic, keeping your clothes clean is a must, and Laundry Love of Greater Danbury has adapted its program of helping people who are struggling financially to keep their clothes clean.

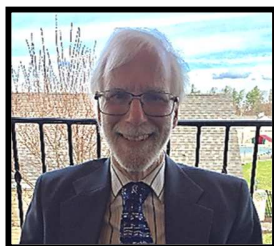
Their original approach was a once-a-month daylong laundromat event at which LLGD volunteers would assist 30 to 50 clients through the process. Obviously, putting in six two hour shifts of work in a crowded laundromat (clients plus regular customers) was no longer safe.

LLGD's new approach is to distribute pre-paid laundry cards and liquid detergent packets to community clients of temporary housing, to WIC and SNAP recipients, to clients of Catholic Charities of Danbury, and to other local organizations.

LLGD's mission continues. Congregation B'nai Israel is one of more than a dozen area religious communities that support this program both financially and with volunteers. You can help by becoming a volunteer. If you are aware of anyone in need of this program please refer him or her to the Rabbi, through the office, for further information.

You can read more about the Laundry Love program at their website: laundrylove.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

Guilty! I really am. I mean I am really, really feeling guilty! As a 70 year old "Good Jewish Boy", I was brought up properly to feel guilt for whatever

I might have done wrong. If I didn't write my thank you note, I felt the guilt! If I didn't arrive at an appointment on time, I would apologize, but ohhhh, the guilt I felt! Every day was a learning experience, and a chance to feel that guilt.

Now every day I watch the news and see miles long lines of people waiting for food. Most are people who never had to do this before. This is happening in every city, in every state. Danbury is no exception. I have driven by the Food Pantry and seen the long, long lines of people patiently waiting for food. We have many Jewish people from the area volunteering once or twice a month. If you would like to join the team, please let me know. I feel IT (guilt) as I have a wonderful healthy meal, morning, noon, and night. I am able to open the refrigerator and snack when hungry. Why do I have more than I need when others are wanting and in so much need? It is just LUCK that I was born in this country, to my parents, and that I was able to find a job to support my own family. So I do feel really, really guilty knowing that others are hungry. When I hear of parents who have to choose between paying the rent and feeding their families, I feel guilty. When I hear of parents who eat only one meal a day so their children can eat, I feel guilty.

I have learned through experience that feeling guilt is not always a bad thing! I can thank a rabbi or two for sermons on that subject! As Jewish parents "know", it can lead to self improvement!

In 1985, pictures of emaciated children in Ethiopia, stomachs distended from eating dirt, were broadcast daily on the news. There was a drought which had lasted two years and millions of people were starving and dying. The program "20/20" on ABC presented a special, featuring the poorest children in New York City giving up their pennies, dimes and lunch money to aid the starving families

in Ethiopia. The New York children raised \$150,000, and with that money a jet plane was filled with grain for the people of Ethiopia. Members of Congress traveled there to observe donkeys transporting the grain to the remote villages. When the New York City school children saw videos of the Ethiopian families making the grain into dinner over a fire and putting the food in their mouths, you would have thought the New York Giants had just won the Super Bowl!

So much screaming, shouting, and high five celebrations! That was the impetus for me to get involved in World Hunger through the rest of my teaching career. The entire Ridgefield community joined in the efforts of some very special friends and me, and expanded these programs to alleviate hunger throughout the state. Governor O'Neal even did infomercials encouraging all school children in Connecticut to participate in our "Balloon Launches" to benefit World Health and Hunger. We were able to involve major organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, Oxfam, and Americares to work together in this project. We had students in all fifty states and twelve foreign countries join in this effort! And the seeds of this activity were....Jewish guilt! (P.S. We ended those balloon launches when concerns about environmental damage emerged.)

Why tell you all this? I have an idea! I must confess I am writing this on "giving Tuesday" and this event inspired the following idea. I am planning to make a donation to our local Saint James Food Pantry, and to the Connecticut Food Bank. I am wondering if others in our B'nai Israel family would like to join me, and make donations to help feed families in our area, and elsewhere in Connecticut. We could gather all our donations and send them as a gift from our B'nai Israel family. No need to attach names, even the smallest donations are put to good use and really add up. I really hesitate to even suggest this, as I know we have a very giving congregation, and many have given so generously to help keep our synagogue healthy. I also know that each of you has your favorite charities to give to. However, if some of you of like mind are appreciative of all the food we enjoy, and are worried about those that are in need, and are going to make a donation to a food bank anyway, maybe it would be nice to make a collective statement from our B'nai Israel family. If you like this idea, please send a check with any amount you choose to Congregation B'nai Israel designated to the efforts to alleviate

hunger. Truly, any amount you are comfortable donating would be of tremendous importance to the families waiting in lines at our local food pantry. The money will be divided between our local Saint James Food Pantry and our Connecticut Food Bank.

What a great way to celebrate *Chanukah* this year, to collectively send the gift of hope and survival to our local and state Food Pantry! In this unique year where everything is a first, I hope for each of you to be safe knowing the lights of *Chanukah* are being kindled with hope for the success of vaccinations, using masks and safe social distancing, to stay the course, being safe when your lights are lit!

Thank you! Concerning another matter. I cry a lot lately! Both happy and sad tears! I know I grew up in the era where boys were taught to be men and not to cry, but I watch Hallmark movies, love romantic musicals, and watch the news every day. My tears could be due to old age, and oncoming senility or other physical changes due to aging! But, how can you not cry when you see a man throw off his prosthetic leg, jump in a body of water and swim to save a person whose car has crashed into the water?

How can you not cry when you hear doctors and nurses telling how they sit with their dying patients, holding their hands because no family members are able to be with them?

How can you not cry when you hear how a stranger donated a kidney to help someone they didn't even know to stay alive?

How can you not cry when you see a brother and sister separated in the Holocaust united after 60 years?

How can you not cry when you see a couple married for 70 years separated for four months by the virus, finally reunited, hugging and kissing each other with open arms?

How can you not cry when you see the parents who lost a teenager meet the person who received their child's heart?

How can you not cry when you see a two year old toddler, see his best friend 30 yards away, and they run to each other with open arms, one black child, one white child?

How can you not cry when UConn men's and women's basketball teams both win National Championships in the same year! (Two times!)

How can you not cry when you see and hear how overwhelmingly good people are, and not to make headlines, but just for goodness's sake? (That must be the origin of "Oh, for goodness sake!")

We do have a joyous occasion to celebrate at B'nai Israel. We have received a very generous donation to our beloved shul from George Ohring. On January 10

, we are going to celebrate naming our sanctuary the Jean Ohring and Peter Ohring Sanctuary in memory of George's late wife Jean and son Peter. This celebration was originally scheduled as a three day festive celebration, and has been postponed due to Covid several times. We will Zoom this celebration on January 10, 2021 at 11:00 A.M. We hope for all our B'nai Israel family to celebrate this together. Be sure to mark this date on your calendar!

As always, until next time!
Glen Lebetkin

DECEMBER EVENTS

LATKE SWAP!



**Thursday, December 10th at 6:00 PM.
Zoomland Dinner and Latke Swap!**

Bring your favorite, wackiest, or most delicious latke recipe to share. And bring them to eat too!! (See **Top Ten Latkes Tips:** from whatjewwannaeat.com on the following page.)



**Sunday, December 13th at 4:00 PM
CBI's Chanukah Sing-in Sing-out Event**

Join us in CBI's parking lot where we will have an outdoor *Chanukah* lighting with goody bags, hot chocolate and an old fashioned singalong in your car. If you choose to leave your car, you must wear a mask and stay socially distanced.



PLAY VIRTUAL DREIDEL on line with family members, your children or grandchildren, or friends who can't do annual traditions this year: www.virtualdreidel.com Have fun!



TOP 10 LATKES TIPS: WHAT JEW WANNA EAT

1. **What kind of potato?** The starchier the potato, the crispier the latke. Makes sense. And the starchiest potato out there is the unassuming russet. They're usually pretty cheap too, which means more latkes!
2. **Hand grate or food processor?** I like to hand grate my latkes. Because that's how my Bubbe did it and if it's good enough for Bubbe it's good enough for me. Maybe it's the blood, sweat and arm power you have to put into hand grated latkes, but they just taste better that way.
3. **Save the starch!** Shred your potatoes into cold water to prevent browning. Then wait about 10 minutes, set aside a sieve over a bowl and drain the water into the new bowl leaving the potatoes in the sieve. Press out excess water from the potatoes. Let the starch in the reserved water settle, then carefully drain the water, reserving the milky white stuff on the bottom. That's the starch! Add it back to your dried potatoes for extra crispiness. When making sweet potato latkes, I add cornstarch to the water to up the starchiness and crispiness.
4. **Dry baby, dry!** After you take the potatoes out of the water, remove as much moisture as possible using towels. Again, less moisture means crispier latkes, which means better latkes. Are you seeing the pattern here? As the later batter sits, it tends to get watery again. So make sure to dry again!
5. **Seasonings.** Feel free to get creative with your latkes! Add cumin, cayenne, za'atar, cinnamon and don't forget the salt. What about toppings? Sour cream and applesauce are delish, but how about a horseradish cream, or guacamole for a change?
6. **Fry, baby, fry!** Use an oil with a high smoke point to achieve perfectly golden latkes. I prefer grapeseed or canola oil. How do you know if it's hot? If you test a bit of the latke batter in the oil, it will sizzle but not brown immediately. Check oil periodically while frying to make sure it doesn't get too hot or cool
7. **Three's a crowd.** Don't crowd the pan! Too many latkes cool down the oil, making soggy latkes. Let the edges of the latkes get nice and brown before flipping so they won't stick. And resist the urge to use a nonstick pan: you want the potatoes to caramelize to get that nice golden color.
8. **Salt!** Fried food tastes good with salt. It's just science. Blot latkes on paper towels and drain on a draining rack. Salt latkes immediately after you take them off the fryer.
9. **Having a crowd?** Set the oven to 250°F to keep latkes warm while you are cooking the others. But don't let the batter sit too long or it will brown.
10. **Make ahead.** You can do this! Fry per usual, and then freeze them on a cookie sheet and pack in a freezer safe resealable bag. When ready to serve, let latkes thaw slightly and reheat in a 375°F oven.

SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ **Shabbat, 19 Kislev, December 5, Vayishlah:**

Jacob reunites with his brother Esau.

Haftarah: Obadiah 1:1-21

☆ **Shabbat, 26 Kislev, December 12, Vayeshev:**

Joseph, the favorite son, is sold by his brothers and sent down to Egypt. *Haftarah:* Zech. 2:14-4:7

☆ **Shabbat, 4 Tevet, December 19, Miketz:**

Joseph's powers as a dream interpreter bring him to Pharaoh. *Haftarah:* Num. 28:9-15

☆ **Shabbat, 11 Tevet, December 26, Vayigash:**

Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and reunites with his father. *Haftarah:* Ezekiel 37:15-28

☆ **Shabbat, 18 Tevet, January 2, Vayhi:** Jacob blesses his sons before he dies.

Haftarah: I Kings 2:1-12

☆ **Shabbat, 25 Tevet, January 9, Sh'mot:** The Israelites are enslaved and Moshe is called by God to confront Pharaoh.

Haftarah: Jer. 1:1-2:3

CANDLE LIGHTING

December 4, 2020	4:12 PM
December 11, 2020 (1 st Day of Chanukah)	4:12 PM
December 18, 2020 (8 th Day of Chanukah)	4:13 PM
December 25, 2020	4:17 PM
January 1, 2021	4:22 PM
January 8, 2021	4:28 PM

YAHARZEITS

18 Kislev, December 4, 2020

Shlomo Boms (Abe Boms)

19 Kislev, December 5, 2020

Sidney Rudick (Grace Rudick)

21 Kislev, December 7, 2020

Robert Reynolds (Joyce and Martin Shenker)

28 Kislev, December 14, 2020

Pearl Wexler Bass (Gail Boms)

3 Tevet, December 18, 2020

Pearl Winkelstein (Susan Tritter)

6 Tevet, December 21, 2020

Simon Markind (Sam Markind)

9 Tevet, December 24, 2020

Lila Adams (F. Richard Steinberg)

10 Tevet, December 25, 2020

Claire Katz (Debra Heckmann)

11 Tevet, December 26, 2020

Ralph Blumenthal (Susan Tritter)

13 Tevet, December 28, 2020

Israel Nurenberg (Carol Nurenberg)

20 Tevet, January 4, 2021

Meilakh Asinovsky (Geysa Rabinovich)

21 Tevet, January 5, 2021

Betsy Field (Joyce and Martin Shenker)

22 Tevet, January 6, 2021

Norman Bass (Gail Boms)

THANKS! THANKS!

For the General Fund

☆ Jeffrey and Anne Levine in memory of Alvin Goldman