

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

Journal

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

According to Jewish tradition, in addition to having been the living embodiment of wisdom itself, King Solomon was also a master builder. Chief among his construction achievements was the Great Temple in Jerusalem. Built in the year 957 BCE, the Temple functioned as our focal point for holy sacrifice for almost four centuries, notwithstanding a number of significant military challenges along the way. Eventually, in 586 BCE, the Great Temple succumbed to final destruction at the hands of the Babylonian Empire, which resulted in our first national exile from the Land of Israel.

Forty-seven years later, in 539 BCE, when the Babylonian Empire fell to Cyrus the Great of Persia, we were finally permitted to return to the Land and, in 538 BCE, commence construction of our Second Temple. Though, like its predecessor, the Second Temple did find itself having to stave off various attacks over the years, this Temple managed to remain functioning not for four centuries, but for closer to six, until it was captured and destroyed by Roman forces in the year 70 C.E.

According to tradition, one of the many things the First and Second Temples have in common is that they were both destroyed on the same day of the year, on the ninth day of the month of Av, which in Hebrew is *Tisha b'Av*, a day of national mourning and fasting for Jews around the world. As I write this message to you today, it is now the **tenth** day of Av. In keeping with Jewish tradition, I have spent the last 25 hours deep in thought, pondering the question of why? Why did our two ancient Temples fall? What led to their destruction?

(continued on next page)

Mark Your Calendar

- **Sunday, August 6th**
12:00 pm – Summer Picnic
- **Friday, August 11th**
6:00 pm – Potluck Dinner
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service
- **Friday, September 8th**
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service
- **Sunday, September 10th**
9:30 am – Sunday School
- **Sunday, September 17th**
9:30 am – Sunday School
10:30 am – Sisterhood

High Holy Days

Rosh Hashanah – Thursday-Friday,
September 21-22 (begins with evening
service on September 20 at 7:30 pm)

Yom Kippur – Saturday, September 30
(begins with Kol Nidre service, evening of
September 29 at 7:30 pm)

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

Countless academicians over the years have invested untold hours seeking to explain the geo-political factors that resulted in the two destructions. As a proponent of the scientific study of history myself, I find great importance in trying to understand the precipitating factors that led to the destruction. In the end, however, I believe the far more meaningful lesson comes not from objective, dispassionate, detached historical inquiry, but rather from our theologically charged and spiritually challenging Rabbinic tradition.

The Babylonian Talmud (Yoma 9b) asks (and explains):

Why was the First Temple destroyed? Because of three [evil] things which prevailed there: **idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed** . . . And why was the Second Temple destroyed, seeing that in its time they were occupying themselves with Torah, [observance of] precepts, and the practice of charity? Because therein prevailed **שנאת חנם** (Sinat Chinam is Hebrew for “*hatred without cause*”). That teaches you that **groundless hatred is considered to be of even gravity with the three sins of idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed combined** (my emphasis).

Friends, I am concerned that too many of us have fallen into a state of surrender, a state in which not only do we accept **שנאת חנם** as our basic national reality, but a state in which we all too often find even our own selves to be active participants. Rather than behaving as a nation in which we attempt to convince those with whom we disagree that our political perspectives are best for a prosperous future, we have become a people for whom it is so much easier and more natural simply to hate those with whom we disagree. Our Rabbis of blessed memory saw the danger in such an approach. It is up to us to listen. Until we attack and reverse the current threat of **שנאת חנם**, of “*hatred without cause*,” we too, like our Holy Temples in Jerusalem, are will remain headed towards destruction.

So, with the commemoration of *Tisha b'Av* behind us, my challenge to each and every one of us is to seek out someone with whom we have deep political disagreement and engage in discussion. It can be done in person, by text, over e-mail, through Facebook, or in any way that works for you. But it is important. So important, Jewish tradition might say, that our very existence depends on it.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Dubin

President's Message

I hope that everyone is having a wonderful summer. I hope that you are all getting a chance to spend some time with your families and doing enjoyable activities. Our picnic was a wonderful success and a great time was had by all.

While you are relaxing and enjoying your summer, your ritual committee has been hard at work, making arrangements for the high holidays. You will be receiving your invitation in the mail soon. If you have been assigned a part for the holidays, please accept it quickly as the honor that it is intended and let the committee know that you will accept the honor. If you are unable to do so, please let the committee know that as well. They work very hard to give everyone a chance to participate, and if you are unable to participate, then they need to know that as soon as possible, so that they have time to adjust the schedule.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer and come back to the temple in September with a renewed sense of life and energy to make this place a sacred place for prayer and a welcoming and Hamish place for community.

See you on Friday, August 11th, for services and a pot luck dinner, or in September.

Howie

A Reminder from the Sunshine Committee



Please let us know when someone has passed away, is ill or otherwise in need of a little sunshine so that the Jewish Center may be there to support and assist as best we can. Please contact Ruth Schutzbank at (908) 329-6036 or Howie.ruth@hotmail.com.

SISTERHOOD

Please join the JCNWJ Sisterhood!

Please consider joining the JCNWJ Sisterhood. Members should receive an invitation in the mail this month to join the Sisterhood. We meet once every other month at the Temple and enjoy other events like Mitzvah Day, a Hanukkah Party, Fundraisers, Service, Social, and Educational Events at other times throughout the year.

Our first meeting will be at the Temple on September 17th. We will socialize, enjoy breakfast, and talk about plans for the year. Please come for some conversation and social time.

Meetings (*tentative*) for the year are as follows:

- September 17 – Meeting 10:30 at Temple
- October 15th – Mitzvah Day at Grow A Row - Meet at Temple for Brunch at 11:30, Mitzvah Day from 12-3 (location of farm TBD)
- November 19 – Meeting 10:30 at Temple
- January 7 – Meeting 10:30 at Temple
- March 11 – Meeting 10:30 at Temple
- May 6 – Meeting 10:30 at Temple.

I look forward to seeing many of you on the 17th of September!

Alison Shelofsky

FROM THE TREASURER

Please note the new address to send payments or requests for reimbursements (especially if you pay through on-line banking): Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey, c/o Andrew Shelofsky, 23 John Drive, Annandale, NJ 08801

TORAH STUDY

We are currently reading Deuteronomy. New participants are always welcome.

August 12, 10:30am - Torah study at the home of Esther and Roland (call Esther if you are coming)

Sept. 16, 10:30am - Torah study at the JCNWJ

Updates & Events

DONATIONS

Towards the Edythe Herson Film Project

- Teri Stanton
- Rhonda Jordan
- Alison Shelofsky

In Memory of Larry Joel Coben

- Laura and Paul Tarlowe

In Honor of the Bris for Zane Thornton

- Stuart Rubenstein, M.D.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sunday School will resume on Sunday, September 10th.

We will be participating in a "Grow-A-Row" activity on October 15th.

CONGRATULATIONS

Hearty Congrats to our high school grads: Alex, Grace, Heather, Jonathan and Sabrina.

BUILDING NEWS

Kitchen and Bathroom Supplies

If you notice that any kitchen or bathroom supplies are getting low, please email Iris Hirsch at irishirsch@comcast.net.

Missing Tablecloths

We seem to be missing our white tablecloths. Before we need to buy more, please check to see if you have them at home. If so, please return them at your earliest convenience. Thank you!

MAH JONGG

Mah Jongg will resume in October. Contact Rhonda Jordan at helpmerhonda171@yahoo.com if interested!

Wanted: Advertisers for JCNWJ Journal

Kindly take note of the ads at the end of our Journal and whenever possible, support these establishments with your patronage. It's also a good idea to mention that you saw their Temple ad. If there are any businesses that you use regularly that might be interested in taking an ad in the Journal, please contact Rita Berkowitz (berk721@aol.com) or Ruth Schutzbank (Howie.ruth@hotmail.com). You can also go to our homepage, print out an advertising form and give it directly to them to mail in.



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Tues – Wed 9:30-5:15, Thurs – Fri 9:30-7:00, Sat
9:30-4:00 (9:30-2:00 During Summer)