

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

Journal

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Rabbi's Message

“One thing I ask of the Lord”

Preparing for the Days of Awe (and EVERY other day, too)

Conventional wisdom suggests that Yom Kippur is the singularly most important day of the Jewish calendar. It is, after all, on this day that God makes final decisions on whether or not to grant us a good year ahead.

Without diminishing the importance of Yom Kippur, I must confess that I believe it a mistake to place too much importance on any single day. Yes, Yom Kippur matters. It matters terribly. But unless we prepare sufficiently, it also becomes a day built on unreasonable expectations, a lackluster effort that we somehow assume will write us into the Book of Life for good and not bad. To me, this is like expecting to pitch a perfect game without first having taken the time to review our throwing mechanics – or even warm up our arm before the game. Just as success on the field takes time and effort and sustained commitment, so too with living a life of goodness.

The month preceding Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is called Elul, and it begins at sundown on Friday, August 10. Elul is fascinating, because while it is a month with no holidays, its holiness could not possibly be any more pronounced. It is, after all, through extended penitential prayer during Elul that we prepare ourselves spiritually for the *Yamim Noraim*, the Days of Awe, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

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Mark Your Calendar

- **Sunday, August 12th**
11:00 am – Open House for prospective members at the Temple
2:00 pm – Congregational Picnic at the home of Diane Margolin (see e-mail for the Perfect Potluck link)
- **Friday, August 17th**
7:00 pm – Shabbat Service
Oneg – TBD
- **Saturday, August 18th**
10:30 am – Torah Study at the home of Esther and Roland Bakonyi
- **Friday, September 7th**
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service
Oneg - TBD

High Holy Days Schedule

- **Sunday, September 9th**
7:30 pm – Erev Rosh Hashanah
- **Monday, September 10th**
9:30 am – Rosh Hashanah Day 1
- **Tuesday, September 11th**
9:30 am – Rosh Hashanah Day 2
12:00 pm – Lunch following service

Yom Kippur – September 18-19
Details in September newsletter

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

One of the chief additions that we insert into the daily liturgy of Elul is Psalm 27, a special penitential poem that offers a voice of encouragement and reassurance in God's great capacity to save and protect. We continue this practice until the end of Sukkot, because it is during this period that God is especially focused on deciding our fate. The Book of Life, we are told, is sealed on Yom Kippur, and delivered at the end of Sukkot. To help us navigate this awesome period, we turn to heightened power of directed prayer.

The insertion of Psalm 27 into Elul liturgy is a relatively new practice in Jewish life. In fact, the first time it ever made its way into a formal prayer book was in 1745, when the German rabbi and Talmudist, Jacob Emden (1697-1776), published his *Siddur Bet Yaakov*.

Psalm 27 is especially suited for Elul for many reasons, the first of which can be found in its very first verse:

*The Lord is my **light** and my **salvation**;
whom should I fear?*

The Ten Days of Awe between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are an especially precarious time for us. Our very lives, spiritually speaking, depend on successful navigation of the challenges, so we are grateful for every bit of help we can find. According to tradition, Psalm 27 teaches that the Lord **lights our way** on Rosh Hashanah and **provides our salvation** on Yom Kippur.

As the psalm continues, we come across a particularly curious plea in verse 4:

*One thing I ask of the Lord,
only that do I seek:
to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life.*

Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808-1888) was particularly challenged by the notion that we should ask, through the psalmist, to live in the House of the Lord (the Great Temple) all the days of our lives, because were such a dream to come true, we would never have time to do all the other things necessary to living a full life. After all, according to Jewish teaching, prayer and study without follow-up action, is meaningless at best, and perhaps even blasphemous. The fact is, not even the Kohen Gadol, not even the High Priest himself, lived entirely in the Temple.

Rabbi Hirsch teaches, therefore, that rather than reading this verse literally, we should understand it as inspiration to live every day in such a manner that wherever we are, we always create our very own "House of God" around us and all with whom we come into contact. In other words, as Rabbi David Golinkin, President Emeritus of the [Conservative Movement's] Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem writes, by living in a manner that truly honors our responsibilities to God and to others, "our earthly life becomes a chariot for God's presence, and God has a place to dwell on this earth."

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Rabbi's Message (cont.)

As I see it, my friends, this is the goal of the upcoming Days of Awe from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur: **to live in a manner that truly invites God's presence among us.** In order to merit such a gift, however, we cannot assume that Ten Days of Awe alone will be sufficient, which is why we spend the entire month of Elul hard at work, accounting for our behaviors from the preceding year.

Of course, once we do a full accounting, once we truly immerse ourselves in serious and genuine introspection, our eyes then become opened to the reality that repentance cannot be a one-day event on Yom Kippur if we really want to live the best lives we can. Nor can it be limited to the Ten Days of Awe between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Nor, for that matter, can it be limited even to the Ten Days plus the entire month of Elul. In order for repentance to serve its full function of helping us live lives worthy of God's choosing to dwell amongst us, our behavior will have to be such that the invitation is issued day in and day out – "all the days of our lives."

Please do not misunderstand. Yom Kippur truly **is** a singularly important day in our Jewish Calendar. It is the day on which we are taught that God seals our fate for the coming year. So we do hope you will bolster our communal effort at repentance with your presence this Yom Kippur (September 18-19) at 115 Youmans Ave. And yes, Rosh Hashanah really is another singularly critical day, because it is the day on which we begin the truly heavy lifting that brings us to Yom Kippur. But let us not be fooled into thinking that the entire job can be done on these two days alone. In a sense, it takes the entire month of Elul to bring us to the point of readiness. Then again, even the month of Elul itself cannot be sufficient, because if our goal is to create a situation in which God will choose to live amongst us, we must build and carry that House of God every single place we go. And we must do it every day of our lives. The time is now. The time is always.

*One thing I ask of the Lord,
only that do I seek:
to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life.*

Wishing us all strength in our efforts,

Rabbi Dubin

President's Message

Our temple's Israel trip was everything that I hoped it would be. It was educational. It was enlightening. It was fun. It was a bonding experience the likes of which I have not experienced before. Going on a trip with 14 people, some of whom were close friends and some who were known, but not as close was so wonderful. The people on the trip that I did not know as well as the others, I learned so much about them and left the trip hoping to spend more time together. The close friends that I had, we became even closer (I hope).

When I travel, the one thing that I look for in the people I travel with is the ability to handle the things that go wrong without going crazy. I knew we were in for a good trip by the time we left the Tel Aviv airport. Someone had picked up Helene's luggage and left the airport with it. Helene was trooper and never lost her perspective and her good mood. Her luggage was returned within an hour and our tour started. The second major thing to go wrong was Roy's wallet was stolen at the Dead Sea. Roy handled this as well as humanly possible. I don't know if I would have been able to be calm as he was, but he showed me how to handle adversity coolly and calmly. I was very impressed.

Our tour guide Uri was phenomenal. From the start with his getting on the bus and speaking to us in a thick Israeli accent and then asking us if we would prefer normal English, to his hysterical recounting of Jewish history from Adam thru the founding of the State of Israel in Caesarea, he made the trip exceptional.

When people ask me what was my favorite part of the trip, it is almost impossible to pick out one. We did so much, saw so much and learned so much, it was mind boggling. The group is trying to go through our pictures and plan on sharing the trip with the temple sometime this fall. I hope that you will be able to join us for this evening when we share our experience as a group. Also, ask any of us about the trip and you are sure to get a different experience, as we all experienced this trip through our own eyes.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the High Holidays in early September.

Shalom and Love,

Howie



SISTERHOOD

NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

To All Temple Members!! Please join us on September 30, 2018 at 10:30 at the Temple for our first Sisterhood meeting of the year. A light breakfast will be served. We will spend some time catching up and making fun and meaningful plans for the year. No need to RSVP unless you have questions.
shelofsky@comcast.net

Here is a tentative meeting schedule for the year.

September 30 @ 10:30- First Meeting of the Year- at the Temple
(tentative-waiting for A Grow A Row approval)
October 14- Mitzvah Day- time and place TBA
November 18 @ 10:30- at the Temple
January 27@ 10:30-at the Temple
March 10 @ 10:30- at Temple- pack Mishloach Manot bags
May 19- Final Meeting- at the Temple

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.

Updates & Events

SUMMER PICNIC

The temple will be holding our annual picnic on August 12th at 2 PM at the home of Diane Margolin.

This is always a great time and we hope that you can make it.

The temple will be supplying paper goods, but we need your assistance in making this picnic a success.

Please sign up for the potluck at:
<https://www.PerfectPotluck.com/YADJ9020>

In addition, please bring your own lawn chairs, bathing suits, fishing poles, games such as frisbees, Diane will supply wiffle ball equipment.

We will be hosting an open house from 11 AM to 1 PM at the temple. If you know of any prospective members, please invite them to both events.

TORAH STUDY

Torah study will be held on August 18 at the home of Esther and Roland Bakonyi in honor of Roland's birthday. Lunch will follow. Please RSVP to Esther if you plan to be there. We are still in Deuteronomy.

BUILDING UPDATE

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!

FOOD DRIVE

Our local food pantries are in dire need of supplies. Donations are down and the need for food is greater than ever. The Jewish Center is collecting non-perishable items such as canned soup, pasta, and cereal on an ongoing basis to help out those in need.

MAH JONGG

Mah Jongg continues at the JCNWJ. Contact Rhonda Jordan at helpmerhonda171@yahoo.com if interested!

Updates & Events

FLOWER FUND

It is that time of year when we prepare for the High holidays.

As in the past, we offer you the opportunity to contribute to our flower fund to have fresh flowers on the bimah for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Also, you can send New Years greetings to any or all of the congregation through the newsletter.

And lastly, you have the ability to have your relatives and friends, who have passed away, have their names printed in our Yiskor memorial book as well as have their names read in the synagogue during Yiskor.

Please respond to Iris Hirsch as soon as possible by filling out the attached form and mail it in, in order to give us time to finalize our preparations.



ONEG SIGNUP

Greetings to the Members of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey from the Oneg Committee!

We hope that everyone is enjoying the summer thus far. Attached are the 2018-19 JCNWJ Shabbat Services Calendar Oneg Shabbat Sign-Up Form. Kindly mark the dates for services on your personal calendar.

In continuing our tradition of involving the entire temple community as hosts of our Onegs, please read and complete the Oneg Shabbat Sign-Up Form after first considering your personal calendar and anticipated conflicts. Be sure to include 1st choice, 2nd choice and 3rd choice. The sooner you respond, the more likely you will get your 1st choice.

You may send the completed Form to Lynne Kowski either by email (Lynne.Kowski@raritanval.edu) or by regular mail Lynne Kowski, 72 Bowerstown Road, Washington, NJ 07882. Forms must be submitted by no later than **August 15th**.

Thank you for your continued support and participation, Lynne

Updates & Events

MAZEL TOV

MAZEL TOV TO THE HALL FAMILY!

Congratulations to Robin and Colson on the birth of their newest grandchild, Lila Rose Hall. Lila was born on June 21st, 2018. We wish you all well.

WEBSITE

Members Only!

The JCNWJ website has a section for temple members only. Here you'll find the latest membership list and other documents not for public consumption.

To access, go to www.jcnwj.org/members/ and enter the user name jcnwjmember and password. Forgot the password? E-mail website@jcnwj.org.

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.

DONATIONS

For Donating High Holy Day Prayer Books –
Congregation Beth Am (Los Altos Hills, CA)

In Celebration of Edythe Herson's Birthday
– Helen and John Mattson
– Howie and Ruth Schutzbank
– Rhonda Jordan
– Rita and Jerry Berkowitz

In Honor of Our 30th Anniversary
– Lisa and Richard Bauch

In Memory of Meyer Bauch
– Lisa and Richard Bauch

To the Building Fund
– Rhonda Jordan

To the Jewish Center's General Fund
– The JCNWJ Sisterhood

To the Membership Fund
– Rhonda Jordan

To the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
– Rhonda Jordan

To the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
– Robin and Leon Hall

Speech from Suzi Marr to her students on June 3, 2018:

The goal was always to make our little ones feel welcome and comfortable here. My thought was that temple should be a fun experience filled with laughter and conversation while we learned Hebrew and about Jewish history and culture. Instilling community

I am sorry I didn't say more at the Consecration service a few weeks back. But, as I reflected on that beautiful and fun night, I counted over 2.5 dozen children, 8 madrachim and 14 years that I was lucky enough to spend Sunday mornings here with some combination of all of you. There is no doubt that the children are comfortable and happy here. That's due to all our efforts, the parents and congregation for a constant willingness to contribute, and all the teachers that have set the stage from Rabbi Lewis, Rabbi Zamore, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Rosenblum, Mrs. Stanton, Mr. Weiner and Howie to Rabbi Dubin, Mr. Tucker, Mrs. Fesinstine and Shira!

I feel very **Lucky** to have become a part of this Sunday School and to have "worked" alongside all of you in our shared goals.

I feel very **Proud** of every child that we've taught and influenced over the years; their efforts and accomplishments while traveling on their journey through life.

I feel very **Excited** to have passed the torch to Shira. She's brought a new, fresh, young energy here that is beautifully contagious!

But this year is about these kids here and now. As I watched Faye, Laura, Loudon, Tanner, Alex, Ashley, Emma, Molly, Sofia, Jill, Walker, and Royce participate in various activities throughout the year, I felt happy for them and the pride they feel in being Jewish and being a part of all of us. That is the ultimate goal and makes for the most satisfaction.

I look forward to how Rabbi Dubin, Cantor Lazar, Shira, Adam and Debbie will continue to mold our young ones and lead us in our Jewish journeys.

Thank you!!

