

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

Perhaps you've heard the old joke in which a young student comes to the master and asks, "Please, can you teach me all of Jewish history?" To which the master responds, "That's easy. They tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat!" It's a joke, of course, but within every good joke – including this one – lies at least a kernel of truth.

If I had to choose the three most consequential dates in all of Jewish history, I imagine they would be 586 BCE (the fall of the First Temple in Jerusalem), 70 CE (the fall of the Second Temple in Jerusalem), and 1948 CE (the founding of the modern State of Israel. As a Jew who shies away from defining myself as a victim, it may seem odd that I would choose two of the most devastating and violent dates to be among the three, but I pick 586 BCE because it was only when we were forced to live without the First Temple of Solomon, which was the sacrificial center of our people, that the Jewish religion actually came to be. Before that, we were still practicing the religion of Israel, a religious practice that centered on the sacrificial cult. Once animal sacrifice was no longer possible (because the Temple was the only place authorized to conduct sacrifices), we were forced to create new paths towards the sacred. The end result was the introduction of a service based on spoken prayer, i.e., the sacrificial offering to God in words rather than animals and grains.

Similarly, I pick 70 CE because it was only when we lost our

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Calendar of Events

Friday, February 7

7:30pm: Shabbat Service

Sunday, February 9

9:30am: Sunday School

Saturday, February 15

10:30am: Torah Study

Friday, February 21

7:30pm: Shabbat Service

Sunday, February 23

9:30am: Sunday School

Monday, February 24

7:00pm: Book Club

Sunday, March 1

9:30am: Sunday School

10:00am: Sisterhood

Friday, March 6

6:00pm: Pizza Dinner & Purim Spiel

Saturday, March 7

5:45pm: Dinner & Havdalah, followed by
Reel Theology: [The Descendants](#),
Dessert & Discussion after the movie

Sunday, March 8

9:30am: Sunday School

Rabbi's Message (continued)

sacrificial center for the second and final time that the ancient priesthood became obsolete (it was the priests who oversaw the sacrificial system). As a result, "Rabbinic Judaism," a tradition based on Talmudic wisdom and innovation (which is the basic form of Judaism that we practice today), was born.

Of course, 70 CE is critical for another reason, too, because once dispersed into the Diaspora, our people were now filled with a hope so deep-seated that it would remain a driving spiritual force for the next two millennia, until May of 1948 when at long last, our "two-thousand-year-hope, to be a free nation in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem," finally came to be realized. To be clear, though, this national hope never would have – or could have – been realized had it not been for an extraordinary gathering of 208 participants and 26 news correspondents some 50 years prior in the city of Basel, Switzerland.

Over the course of the last three days of August 1897, Jews from across Europe (roughly ½ from Western Europe, ¼ from Russia, ¼ from the rest of Eastern Europe – and four from the United States) gathered together in Basel, Switzerland, for the First Zionist Congress, organized and chaired by Theodor Herzl. While it is true that the majority of world Jewry at the time was lukewarm (at best) to idea of Political Zionism, Herzl and his fellow members of the Congress refused to be dissuaded. They had a vision, and they were set on achieving it. So confident was Herzl, that he wrote just three days later: *"At Basel I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years perhaps, and certainly in fifty years, everyone will perceive it."* Indeed, with half a century of continued efforts, this is exactly what came to fruition in 1948.

1897 was the First Zionist Congress. Over the next 123 years, until today, there have continued to be periodic gatherings of Jewish representatives from around the world to discuss Zionist issues. At first these meeting happened annually and then biannually (with a break during WW II). With the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Zionist Congress (which eventually came to be called the World Zionist Congress) began meeting in Jerusalem every four-to-five years, and has followed this pattern ever since. The 38th World Zionist Congress will gather with 500 elected delegates from around the world in October of this year. Among the myriad items on their agenda, perhaps the most consequential will be a process of voting over how to disperse hundreds of millions of dollars to various organizations within Israel. Voting for delegates to the World Zionist Congress is open to all Jews, 18-years-old and older. On-line voting has already begun, and will close on March 11.

I cannot stress enough just how important it is to the development of Jewish pluralism and human rights for all (including women's rights, LGBTQ rights, minority populations rights, etc.) that we make sure there is a strong Reform voice participating in the allocations process. For that to happen, we will need as many Jewish adults as possible to vote for the Reform slate. There are a number of slates, and obviously you are free to vote for whichever you choose, but I will be clear that **I myself cast my own vote last week for the Reform Movement's slate.**

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Rabbi's Message (continued)

To vote, just go to <http://arza.org/election/> and follow the instructions. You will need access to your email throughout, as you will have to enter a PIN twice (one PIN for registering and a different PIN for voting). Unfortunately, it does cost \$7.50 to vote (\$5.00 for voters 25 and younger). Please know that this is not the Reform Movement's doing, but an administrative decision made by the World Zionist Congress to cover the cost of the election.

To give you further background on why this is such an important opportunity, I am including information compiled and disseminated by ARZA (Association of Reform Zionists of America). I encourage you to read it and vote. And, as always, if you'd like to speak with me about why I find this to be so important, please do reach out.



L'Shalom,

Rabbi Dubin



Photos from MLK Weekend
Shabbat Service

Rabbi's Message (continued)

The World Zionist Congress Election 2020 FAQs

What is the World Zionist Organization?

The World Zionist Organization (WZO) was founded by Theodor Herzl at the First World Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. Today, it serves as the Parliament of the Jewish People, and designates representatives to the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Jewish National Fund, and other affiliates. The WZO utilizes the World Zionist Congress to establish its policies and internally elect leadership to the bodies that define executive policy, departmental direction, and budgetary decisions.

What is the World Zionist Congress?

The Zionist Congress is the World Zionist Organization's legislative body. The Congress meets every five years in Jerusalem. The Congress is the only body in which all of World Jewry is represented democratically. It determines policy, designates its course of action, chooses the leadership of the World Zionist Organization, as well as the Keren Kayemeth L'Yisrael (JNF Israel). These decisions influence hundreds of millions of dollars in funding and paid portfolios. Importantly, the Congress makes decisions that affect the status of Reform Jews in Israel and across the world and allocates considerable funding available to Progressive Jews in Israel.

Why is this important?

The American delegation to the Congress is the largest single delegation from outside of Israel, with 145 delegates. The decisions of the Congress influence hundreds of millions of dollars in funding, and the Reform movement currently receives over \$4 million each year. Because the election is held every 5 years, the impact of the election could impact over \$20 million for Reform institutions and programs in Israel and the United States. In addition, the Congress will help determine the leadership of the Israeli national institutions, budgetary decisions, and policy in Israel and worldwide. In short, the WZC election in the United States is crucial for the growth and influence of the Reform Movement in Israel and around the world.

Rabbi's Message (continued)

World Zionist Congress

What is ARZA?

ARZA, the Association of Reform Zionists of America, is the Zionist arm and voice of the Reform Movement and an affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism, serving 1.5 million Reform Jews in North America. ARZA is the vehicle for the collective participation of American Reform Jews in the Israel engagement agenda with an emphasis on advocacy, travel, and Zionist education in North America. Our mission is to make Israel fundamental to the sacred lives and Jewish identity of Reform Jews. A Zionist organization, ARZA unconditionally supports Israel and champions activities that further Israel as a pluralistic, just, and democratic Jewish state.

How does ARZA help Reform Judaism in Israel?

ARZA provides the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) and the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) with financial support generated through individual membership dollars from members of URJ congregations. ARZA, and its umbrella organization ARZENU, represents Reform Judaism in the World Zionist Organization, thereby providing a strong voice for Reform Jews in America and our movement in Israel in this worldwide organization.

How does ARZA represent itself in the Congress?

ARZA is a proud member of ARZENU, the umbrella organization of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists. ARZENU has constituent groups in fourteen countries and represents the interests of these groups and of Reform and Progressive Judaism worldwide in the governing bodies of the World Zionist Organization and in the Jewish Agency for Israel.

World Zionist Congress Election 2015 Results

ARZA received 39% of the votes and 56 of 145 delegates. What have we accomplished since then?

Through the force of our delegation we were able to ensure that over \$4,000,000 a year (\$20 million over 5 years) of financial support goes to our movement in Israel. We appoint key professionals to carry out our Reform Jewish values within the national institutions that help implement Reform values (equality, pluralism, commitment to a two-state solution).

We join with Israeli political parties to influence Israeli society in matters of conversion,

Rabbi's Message (continued)

marriage and divorce, religious pluralism, gender rights, and combating racism. We have passed key resolutions in the World Zionist Organization's policy body for equality, transparency, and pluralism.

Why We Want You to Vote Reform

The election is our chance to have our voice heard in Israel. It's a powerful way to combat the discrimination the Reform Movement faces from the Israeli government.

The Government of Israel allocates nearly 4 billion NIS a year to Orthodox and Haredi institutions (in comparison to only 10 million NIS for the Reform and Conservative movements combined) who then block support of the pluralistic streams. The World Zionist Congress elections enable both ideological influence on Israel and the Jewish people's agenda while also ensuring basic funding to pluralistic and Reform programs. Only by growing our strength in national Israeli institutions can we ultimately make progress on the issues we care about: pluralism, peace, economic justice.

The WZO offers us the opportunity to appoint key leaders of these influential organizations. The Jewish National Fund (KKL) controls a significant budget and holds responsibility for land purchases and sales in the Land of Israel. It is critical for us to hold meaningful leadership positions in these organizations in order to implement our values and to prevent use of government and public/philanthropic funds in ways antithetical to our ideology. The funds allocated through our leadership roles in the WZO and JNF-KKL are critical. They are the largest individual budget source of the IMPJ. Currently, the KKL- WZO agreement provides the Israeli Reform Movement close to 3.5 million NIS (~\$950K) / year. This money is guaranteed through 2020, which over 5 years will total 17.5 million. Additionally, these institutions provide 20-25% of the Israeli Reform Movement's budgets.

Do I have to be a member of an organization or congregation to vote?

No. Just be Jewish, Zionist, and 18 or older.

Can I vote more than once?

No. One person, one vote.

President's Message

Centenarian.

This past weekend, I spent time with my family in Las Vegas celebrating the 100th birthday of my great-aunt and godmother, Gladys Dorfler. My great-aunt was born before the Great Depression of the 1930s. Before cars and electricity became commonplace. Before TV and radio were invented. Way before the internet, cell phones, refrigerators, and most of the modern conveniences that we consider essential to today's living.

We can tell that her body is slowing down, but her mind is still very sharp. She watches a lot of TV, especially the news to keep abreast of what is happening in the world and our country. She has always been pro-Israel (even though Israel was not a country until she was 28 years old). She is a very proud Jewish woman, with opinions on most subjects.

Thinking about getting older is something that most of us do at some time or another, and we think about what life will be like when we get to an advanced age like my aunt. When you think about what life might be like at that age, it is hard to imagine. My aunt could not have envisioned fast food restaurants, computers, and all the things that computers can do for and against us. When I think about what my life might be like in 20 years, there are probably so many things that have yet to be invented that they will throw me for a loop, just as email and text messaging and all the modern ways of communicating that we now think of as normal have done. The things that will be prevalent in 2040 are possibly not even on the drawing boards of some inventor.

My advice for this month is simple: enjoy your life as much as you can, be good to the people around you. and never take them for granted because they will not be here forever. And tell the people you love that you love them. Do it while they are here and not after they have passed away.

I love you all.

Howie

Updates & Events

SISTERHOOD

The JCNWJ Sisterhood is sponsoring the annual Mishloach Manot fundraiser for Purim (March 6, 2020). Please participate in this happy mitzvah by giving sweets and gifts to your temple family!

Every temple family will receive a gift bag filled with delicious hamentaschen and a card wishing them a Happy Purim. We ask all families to donate to this important fundraiser helping to raise money for enhanced audio visual equipment and capabilities at our Center.

Please plan to attend pizza dinner followed by the Purim shpiel on Friday, March 6, 2020, beginning at 6pm. Mishloach Manot gift bags will be distributed at this time. If you are unable to attend, you can pick one up on Sunday, March 8th, during Sunday School, or they will be delivered. However, we hope to see you in-person!!

Directions for Participation:

Please send your donation by March 1, 2020, to Ruth Schutzbank, Attention Purim Project / 25 Stewartsville Road, Stewartsville, NJ 08886. Although a minimum donation of \$18 will cover the cost of the gift bag, please consider a generous donation of up to \$180 (as we have suggested in the past).

If you have any questions or want information about joining Sisterhood, please contact Suzi Marr at suzology.sm@gmail.com or 908.343.1135.

Thank you!
JCNWJ Sisterhood

Upcoming Schedule


Sunday 3/1 - 10:00 - until finished

Mishloach Manot Assembly

We will be putting together goody bags for Sisterhood's annual fundraiser. Anyone wishing to help is welcome!!!

Updates & Events

JEWISH CENTER OF NORTHWEST JERSEY



Reel Theology - 5780

FEB 1 - YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN - 5:45 DINNER, PASSOVER WINE TASTING, & HAVDALAH - 6:45 SCREENING - 8:30 DESSERT DISCUSSION

MARCH 7 - THE DESCENDANTS - 5:45 DINNER & HAVDALAH 6:30 SCREENING - 8:45 DESSERT DISCUSSION

APRIL 4 - MEMENTO - 5:45 DINNER & HAVDALAH 6:30 SCREENING - 8:30 DESSERT DISCUSSION

MAY 9 - THE KING'S SPEECH - 5:45 DINNER & HAVDALAH 6:30 SCREENING - 8:30 DESSERT DISCUSSION

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Upcoming Schedule:

February 9

February 23

March 1

Updates & Events

MAH JONGG

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

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.

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.

TORAH STUDY

Consider joining the monthly Saturday morning Torah study group, ongoing for more than twenty years, freewheeling and always thought-provoking. We are nearing the completion of Deuteronomy—likely later this year. Come when you can.

The next meeting is February 15 at 10:30am.

Upcoming Schedule:

February 15	March 15
April 18	May 16
June 13	

FOOD DRIVE

We continue to collect non-perishable food items for the local food pantries.

The food pantries are in dire need of supplies to fill their shelves as more and more people are in need and your generosity will help fill that need.

Thank you for your continued support!

Iris

Updates & Events

DONATIONS

In honor of the High Holy Days
- Robert and Linda Margolis

On the Yahrzeit of William Robins
- Bernie Robins

On the Yahrzeit of Joseph Berkowitz
- Jerry and Rita Berkowitz

On the Yahrzeit of Ellen Field
- Alison and Andy Shelofsky

On the Yahrzeit of Jean Siegel
- Rhonda Jordan

On the Yahrzeit of Rebecca Goldenthal
- Nancy and Dr. Bernard Robins

In honor of the High Holy Days
- Jeff and Jeannie Berkowitz

JCC EVENTS

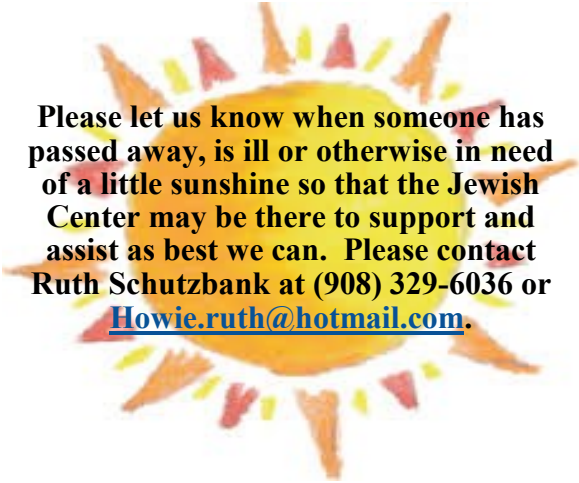
Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center

Renegade Women In Film & TV, with Elizabeth Weitzman. Sunday, February 9, 10:30 AM at the JCC, Bridgewater. Fee: \$25/Person includes Brunch; \$36/Person includes Brunch and Book. To register visit ssbjcc.org or call 908-443-9018.

Who Says You're Dead?: A Book of Medical Dilemmas for the Curious and Concerned, with Jacob M. Appel. Thursday, February 13, 7 PM at the JCC, Bridgewater. Fee: \$10/Person. (Free to Maimonides Society Members.) To register call Lauren at 908-758-2003.

Troubled Water, What's Wrong With What We Drink, with Seth M. Siegel. Thursday, February 20, 7 PM at the JCC, Bridgewater. Fee: \$10/Person. To register visit ssbjcc.org or call 908-443-9018.

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.

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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.