

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

חזק חזק ונחזק *Chazak chazak v'Nitchazek*. Be strong, be strong, and we will be strengthened. These words form the quintessential Jewish statement of conclusion. It is said in (Ashkenazic) communities around the world every time we come to the end of another book of Torah. This past Shabbat, being that we concluded the yearly reading of Leviticus, we followed custom and recited these very words of strength.

It's an interesting phrase for many reasons, among which is the fact that it is comprised of two identical words in the singular followed by a related word in the plural. And so we ask why? Why say the first word twice? And then why move from singular to plural for the third?

As should be a surprise to no one, these straightforward questions have a plethora of suggested answers, but one of the more generally accepted ones, and certainly the one that resonates most fully with me, is summed up by my teacher, colleague, and friend, Naamah Kelman, Dean of the Jerusalem campus of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (and also, by the way, the first woman ever to be ordained as a rabbi in Israel), who writes the following:

“Whenever we finish a book of the Torah in the synagogue’s cycle of readings, those who are present respond immediately with three words: *Chazak, chazak, v’nitchazek!* Be strong, be strong [in the singular] and we will be strong [in the plural].” My late father, Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, taught: Why do we say *chazak* twice, when once would be enough? It is to tell us that if you and I each are strong, then together we are even stronger. In other words, this is a true “win/win” situation: I need you to be strong so I can be strong too.”

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Mark Your Calendar

- **Sunday, June 9**
9:30 am – Security Meeting/Training
9:30 am – Sunday School
10:30 am – Annual Congregational Meeting (see Pg. 7)
- **Friday, June 14**
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service, Shavuot
Honoring all graduates
- **Saturday, June 22**
10:30 am – Torah Study
- **Sunday, June 23**
12:30 pm – Person of the Year Picnic for
Jeff Berkowitz @ the home of Jerry &
Rita Berkowitz
- **Monday, July 1**
7:00 pm – Board of Trustees Mtg.
- **Friday, July 12**
7:00 pm – Shabbat Service
- **Monday, July 15**
7:30 pm – Book Club
- **Saturday, July 20**
10:30 am – Torah Study
- **Monday, August 5**
7:00 pm – Board of Trustees Mtg.
- **Friday, August 16**
7:00 pm – Shabbat Service
- **Saturday, August 24**
10:30 am – Torah Study

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

How simple yet profound! How easy, yet also so challenging! And how perfect, because it is true. My strength depends on yours, your strength depends on mine, and together, we will be even stronger when we work in concert with one another.

But there is more, at least for the JCNWJ family, because finishing the Book of Leviticus was only one of the reasons we uttered these Jewish words of conclusion recently. The second, and far more personal reason we said them was that this past Shabbat marked the conclusion of Cantor Lazar's tenure as our leader in song. Beginning this summer, she will be devoting her professional attention to fulfilling her expanding responsibilities as Director of Steve & Kate's Camp on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

Over the time that Cantor Lazar has been with us, she has strengthened our worship and our very souls with the sweet and powerful melodies that resonate from her with the voice of an angel. She has strengthened us through her jovial way with our students and her personable conversations with members of all ages. She has strengthened us with her command of Torah and her deep knowledge of liturgy.

In turn, we, too, have strengthened Cantor Lazar. We have strengthened her with our commitment to maintaining Jewish life in a rather remote setting, with our appreciation of deep prayer and meditation, and perhaps, most of all with our *heimishe* ways. As a proud New Yorker myself, I have license to say that being able to hold on to a piece of the JCNWJ way of life is valuable beyond description when living day to day in the middle of New York City. My time in Washington is what sustains me in New York, and from having spoken with Cantor Lazar about this, I can say that it is no less the case with her as well.

In the end, we are among the truly blessed because we can say that Cantor Lazar has strengthened us, as is Cantor Lazar, because she can say that we strengthened her. Together we are all blessed because having had the fortune of being together, we have all become even stronger. Best of all, even though Cantor Lazar will no longer be with us in the building, the lessons of love and devotion that we have taught each other will continue to pay dividends for years to come.

We are strong, Cantor Lazar is strong, and together, we have all been strengthened.

Shalom,

Rabbi Dubin

President's Message

This third part of my Jewish Journey picks up after Sharon Herson asked me to assume the role of temple president.

It was as president that I seemed to find my religious calling. I have loved being the lay leader of the congregation. The best benefit of this job has been getting to know all the people who have come through the temple, particularly the ones who have been with me since the beginning: Sharon, Helen Mattson, Rhonda Jordan, and Marsha Gross. I consider the entire temple part of my family and I will do everything in my power to make your lives better.

What I am probably proudest of in my tenure as president are the relationships I have formed. I have so many good friends at this temple, and I truly consider it my second home.

A great benefit of being president is that I became at ease speaking in front of people--giving the announcements at each service and leading services when the Rabbi was away helped pave the way. How did this help me outside the temple? In 2007, when I saw that my business was headed for a rough time, a friend asked if I would be interested in a job at IBM. When I started interviewing, it became apparent that the main part of this job was the ability to be able to speak to and in front of people. With the experience that I received at the temple, I was enthusiastic about trying to do this for a living. I was offered the job and have been with IBM for the last 12 years.

Perhaps my proudest accomplishment at the temple was getting the lift installed. The year before we began that project, there was a funeral at the temple; an older gentleman came in and was unable to walk down stairs to the restroom. Gwen Nagorsky, the president at the time, and I had to carry him down the stairs! I vowed that day to do something about it. When I became president, that was my first order of business. I called a special general meeting to discuss the project and hoped to get congregational approval to spend the significant amount of money necessary to accomplish this goal.

We sat in the simcha room and went around the room asking everyone their opinions. The first half of the room was enthusiastic about the project, and at about the halfway point, a past president gave many reasons why we couldn't do this project. As he was a builder, we gave his arguments a great deal of weight. As we went around the second half of the room, people were not as enthusiastic as the first group. I then gave the first people who spoke a second chance, since they had heard some valid reasons why we couldn't do this.

As we finished hearing everyone out, my feeling was that we were not going to get approval. But the vote was something like 80% for and 20% against. I looked at Rabbi Lewis and asked what happened, and she said, I think they trust you to do the right thing. We were able to put in the lift and every time I see it used, I think of the two people who were foremost in my mind when we did this. They were Stanley Schick and Maxwell Gross, both of blessed memory. While they were my inspirations, I knew that many others would find this gift a blessing.

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President's Message (cont.)

I also must thank Jeff Berkowitz at this point, as Jeff ran a fund raiser outside of the temple for a Shabbaton for Rabbi Lewis and managed to raise the money to finance the lift.

My next proudest moment was being able to watch my class of adult women become Bat Mitzvah and to have our other teacher, Charlotte Fels, be able to celebrate with these amazing women.

The last accomplishment to this point was finding a new rabbi after Rabbi Lewis to lead us into the future. I believe Rabbi Dubin is the perfect rabbi for us at this point in time and that we are very fortunate to have him as our spiritual leader.

There are so many other moments that I cherish with all of you, but they are too many to list.

I love you all and wish you nothing but the best.

Love,

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

SISTERHOOD NEWS

Sisterhood wrapped up the year with a breakfast meeting at the Washington Diner. We elected new officers:

President: Suzi Marr,
Vice President: Iris Hirsch,
Secretary Stephanie Perfetti,
Treasurer: Ruth Schutzbank.

We enjoyed a wonderful year of events from the Mitzvah Day in September to our Judaica Swap Party/Fundraiser in April. We look forward to a great year next year as well.

As a side note, Sisterhood is donating the materials cost for Mishloach Manot for Security costs as well as all other proceeds as mentioned in past newsletters.



Mazel Tov Cantor Lazar

Updates & Events

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

The final Sunday School before summer break will be Sunday, June 9. We will be preparing for the service on June 14 and deciding on our Tzedakah donations. Thank you to all for another great year.



Sunday School celebrating Morah Shira's birthday

TORAH STUDY

Torah Study continues at the JCNWJ. The next meeting will be Saturday, June 22 at 10:30am. All are welcome. Here is the full summer schedule:

- June 22
- July 20
- August 24

MAH JONGG

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

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.

FOOD DRIVE

Our congregation continues to donate food all year round to the food pantry. 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.

Updates & Events

PERSON OF THE YEAR

We will be having a celebratory picnic on Sunday, June 23rd to honor Jeff Berkowitz for the years that he has spent lovingly taking care of our building and our grounds.

We will be celebrating at the home of Jerry and Rita Berkowitz – 721 Pequest Drive; Oxford, NJ.

Please RSVP via the Evite or Perfect Potluck.

ANNUAL MEETING

Shalom everyone,

We are having our annual General Meeting on Sunday June 9th at 10:30 AM.

At 9:30 AM, The Washington Police will be giving us advice on how to best protect ourselves. Please join at 9:30 to learn what YOU can do if an emergency arises.

Please RSVP to Howie at howheeee@comcast.net to let me know that you are coming and so that we can have the correct amount of food.

I love you all,
Howie

DONATIONS

In Honor of Jeff Berkowitz
– Judy and Paul May

In Memory of Anna Fleckles
– Sharon Herson and Daniel Fleckles

On the Yahrzeit of David Pinn
– Helen and John Mattson

On the Yahrzeit of Saul Schutzbank
– Ruth and Howard Schutzbank

On the Yahrzeits of Norma and Herbert Shifrin
– Laura and Paul Tarlowe

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.

Supporters



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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.