

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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December 2018
Vol. XLIV Issue 4



Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

In a world that seems so filled with darkness, we couldn't need the light of Hanukkah more than we do right now!

As is the case so often with Jewish ritual, even though we may perhaps take it for granted that there is a proper way of kindling the lights of our *hanukkiyot* (Hanukkah menorahs), the truth is that our rabbinic sages had differing opinions on how it should be done. For example, while Shammai (50 BCE – 30 CE) held that we should kindle the lights in decreasing numbers (8 lights the first day, 7 the second day, 6 the third, etc.), his slightly older contemporary, Hillel, taught that we should do the opposite and **increase** the number of lights each day. Of course, as we all know, Hillel's opinion is the one that prevailed.

Additionally, there is a second practice regarding the manner in which the lights of Hanukkah are kindled that merits attention. After arranging the lights from right to left, we are instructed to kindle them from left to right.

Though it might be easy to look at these ritual guidelines and shrug them off as more complicated than necessary, they are, I would say, neither small nor arbitrary in their spiritual significance. The manner in which we fulfill the mitzvah of bringing light to the world during Hanukkah truly does matter. Had Shammai's approach become the accepted practice, had we been more faithfully reenacting the dwindling supply of oil that so concerned our ancestors two millennia ago, we would have taken on a tradition that celebrates the reduction of light. As heirs to Hillel, however, we do the opposite.

(continued on next page)

Mark Your Calendar

- **Friday, December 7th**
7:00 pm – Shabbat & Hanukkah Service
Oneg – Onweller, Wilson, Perfetti
- **Sunday, December 9th**
9:30 am – Sunday School
- **Saturday, December 15th**
10:30 am – Torah Study
- **Sunday, December 16th**
9:30 am – Sunday School
- **Friday, December 21st**
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service
Oneg – Klein, Glass, Simons
- **Friday, January 4th**
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service
Oneg – Hirsch, Lappin, Kalb
- **Sunday, January 6th**
9:30 am – Sunday School
- **Monday, January 7th**
7:00 pm – Board of Trustees Mtg.

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

By going from 1 to 8 rather than 8 to 1, we take opportunity to increase the lights of hope and love and perseverance each and every night for eight full days. In a world so lacking in spiritual optimism, why would we ever choose to do otherwise?

Still, though, this begs the question: How? How do we reach our goal of bringing more and more light to our darkened world? For that, let's consider the direction in which we kindle the lights.

With apologies to the left-handed among us, I offer a teaching from Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan, better known as the Chofetz Chaim (1839-1933), who pointed out that the natural positioning for us to take when reaching our (right) hand to kindle the lights would be to stand slightly to the left of the *chanukkiya*. Therefore, if we start lighting from the left rather than from the right, we kindle the closest light to us that is not already burning each time. If we start from the right, we are forced to reach over unkindled lights each time.

This may seem unimportant, but, according to the Chofetz Chaim, it makes all the difference in the world, because there is a fundamental Jewish concept that says we should never ignore an opportunity to fulfill a mitzvah. In this case, passing our hands over the lights without setting them aflame would be akin to ignoring the opportunity to perform a mitzvah when presented with the possibility. And that, I believe, is how we fulfill Hillel's directive to bring increasing amounts of spiritual light to our darkened world. We must strive to do all we can, never to ignore the possibility of fulfilling a mitzvah.

As we continue to bask in the light of Hanukkah, I encourage each and every one of us not only to fulfill mitzvot when the opportunities present themselves, but to go out of our way to seek those opportunities even when they don't present themselves so clearly. For some, that means fulfilling more of what Jewish practice asks of us in the realm of ritual. For others, it may lead us to seek more opportunity to help our fellow human beings (or animals or nature). For all of us, however, I pray it will mean recognizing that as important as each and every one of us is, none of us is *all* there is. As we seek to bring more and more light to our darkened world, let us do so by seeking opportunity to fulfill our own obligation of doing whatever we can to offer thanks and gratitude by thinking and acting beyond our own selves.

Chag Urim Sameach, A Happy Festival of Lights to All!

Rabbi Dubin

President's Message

Most of the time, I use this forum to look forward and see what is ahead of us and what we can do to prepare for what is yet to come. I am going to talk this time about the recent past. We just celebrated the American holiday of Thanksgiving and I wanted to take the time to be GRATEFUL for all that I have in this world.

I start with a loving wife, wonderful children and a wonderful extended family. I have work that makes me feel like I am making a difference in this connected world. I am surrounded by my temple friends and I am thankful for all that everyone does here to keep our synagogue alive. I have hobbies that keep me interested in constant learning.

Most recently, my daughter Allison had her first child, Abigail Elaine Thurber. Abigail is my second granddaughter, and we are truly blessed.

I thank every one of you from the bottom of my heart and I am blessed to have you in my life.

In closing, one of my favorite sayings, to paraphrase Ben Zoma from Pirke Avot:

Who is wise? The ones who learn from all people.

Who is rich? The ones who are happy with what they have.

Who is honored? The ones who honor others.

May you all be rich, wise and honored.

Love, Howie



Join us this Friday at **7:00** for a **Communal Chanukiya (menorah) Lighting & brief sing-along**. Please bring your own chanukiya and candles so we can bring maximum light to our celebration!

CHANUKAH

Shabbat Services will follow Candle Lighting.

December 2018						
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Sisterhood

NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

The Sisterhood has been busy planning events to help out the community in December. We have collected children books for the DASACC Holiday Shoppe serving clients and families affected by domestic violence or sexual abuse. Thank you to all who generously donated these books. We also are collecting Hanukkah gifts for the Hunterdon Developmental Center. Clients have provided specific items that they would like for Hanukkah. We will also be wrapping gifts on December 13 from 6-7 at the Developmental Center. If you would like to join us please contact me, Alison Shelofsky, at 908-752-8500.

We are planning to have a Mishloach Manot fundraiser again for Purim. More details to follow. Our next meeting will be held on January 27, 2019, at 10:30 am at the Temple. Please join us, even if you are not a member yet.

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

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Thank you to all who helped out with the Hanukkah celebration on December 2nd.

Upcoming Schedule:

- December 9
- December 16
- January 6

Note that there is no Sunday School on December 23rd or December 30th.

TORAH STUDY

Torah Study continues at the JCNWJ. The next meeting will be on December 15 at 10:30 in the Simcha room. Our remaining schedule for the year is:

- December 15
- January 12
- February 23
- March 16
- April 13
- May 11
- June 22

HANUKKAH STORE

The Hanukkah Store is open until December 9th in the Simcha Room. All items are free, with donations appreciated.

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.

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.

MAH JONGG

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

Updates & Events

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.

ADDRESS CHANGE

Please note that the mailing address for donations and dues payments for the Jewish Center of Northwest New Jersey has changed to:

JCNWJ
c/o Andrew Shelofsky
10 Buttonwood Street
Lambertville, NJ 08530

If you make automated payments through your bank account or charitable foundation, please update the mailing address accordingly.

DONATIONS

In honor of the High Holy Days

- Helen and John Mattson
- Leonard Hirsch
- Robin and Leon Hall

In Memory of Charles McGee Marr

- Suzi Marr

In Memory of Max Weil

- Ruth and Howard Schutzbank

On the Yahrzeit of Doris Tarlowe

- Laura and Paul Tarlowe

On the Yahrzeit of Estelle Shelofsky

- Alison and Andrew Shelofsky

On the Yahrzeit of Sally Sylvia Zemel

- Shelley and Ralph Zemel

On the Yahrzeit of Sarah Zeiden

- Helen and John Mattson

On the Yahrzeit of Stanley Shelofsky

- Alison and Andrew Shelofsky

On the Yahrzeit of William Robins

- Nancy and Bernard Robins

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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.