

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Facebook: JCNWJ

November 2021

Vol: XLVII Issue: 4



Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

At our most recent JCNWJ Adult Hebrew class, we learned the letter, *tav*. While, personally speaking, there is so much that I find fascinating about the Hebrew language, as a 21st Century Reform Jew in New York City, *tav* is particularly fascinating, and here's why...

As you may know, when describing the different traditions of Jews from different parts of the world, the two most common groups are Ashkenazi (Jews who trace back to Central and Eastern Europe) and Sephardi (Jews who trace back to Spain, Northern Africa, and the Middle East). Within Sephardi, there is an additional distinction made between Sephardi and Mizrahi, with Mizrahi referring especially to those whose families come from Central and West Asia – primarily Arabic and Farsi speaking countries. All three of these groups, of course, are fully Jewish, but there are certain customs that differ amongst them.

While it is true that in the early days of modern political Zionism, young Ashkenazi Jews were the primary movers and shakers, it would be a mistake to assume the *Halutzim* ("pioneers") spurned Sephardi or – especially – Mizrahi custom. Far from it. In fact, because Mizrahi Jews had been living in the geographical region of Israel ever since our *first* expulsion in 70 C.E. (with some having lived there ever since *first* expulsion in 586 B.C.E.), the Ashkenazi *Halutzim* actually *avored* Mizrahi custom because, from their point of view, Mizrahi custom was the most authentic.

(continued on next page)

Calendar of Events

Sunday: November 14

9:30am: Sunday School
TBD: Adult Ed—Shabbat in Hebrew
1:00pm: Sisterhood Social (see Pg. 8)
7:00pm: Gaucher Disease Awareness
Presentation on Zoom (See Pg. 5)

Friday, November 19

7:30pm: Shabbat Evening
Kristallnacht Remembrance

Sunday, November 21

9:30am: Sunday School
11:00am: Adult Ed—Torah Cantillation
2:00pm: Virtual Israel Tour:
The Early Zionists

Sunday, November 28

11:00am: Adult Ed—Shabbat in Hebrew
2:00pm: Israel: The Golan Heights

Friday, December 3

7:30pm: Shabbat Evening
Chanukah celebration

Saturday, December 4

10:30am: Torah Study (on Zoom)

Sunday, December 5

9:30am: Sunday School
11:00am: Adult Ed—Torah Cantillation
2:00pm: Sisterhood Party (see Pg. 7)
2:00pm: Israel: Chanukah in Modiin

Most events will also have a Zoom option.

Rabbi's Message (continued)

Returning now to our most recent Hebrew lesson, the one in which we learned the letter, *tav*: when undertaking the complex challenge of choosing which language to adopt as the lingua franca of the burgeoning Zionist settlement in the early part of the 20th Century, Yiddish, the standard common language of Ashkenazi Jews of the time, seemed like an obvious choice. Ultimately however, Hebrew, the ancient and common language of our people worldwide, was chosen. But there's more to it than just that, because while Jews of Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi backgrounds all shared a common written Hebrew language, when it came to spoken Hebrew, there were (and continue to be) some pronounced differences, mostly with the "Ah" vowel (*qamatz* – אָ), the place of emphasis on words (beginning or ending of words) **and the letter tav**. More specifically, as it relates to *tav*, while this letter is sometimes written as ת and sometimes as ט, Mizrahi (and Sephardi) Jews ignore the difference and pronounce both as a "T." Ashkenazi pronunciation, on the other hand, differs between the two, with ת sounding like a "T" and ט like an "S." It is for this reason, since שַׁבָּת has a ת as its final letter, sometimes we hear people saying Shabbat and other times we hear Shabbes. The same goes for Sukkot/Sukkos or Simchat Torah/Simchas Torah. When we write these words in Hebrew, there is no confusion, regardless of our personal practices. But when we transliterate into English, certain decisions get made, and we should be aware of that.

While it is pretty rare for Reform congregations to have specific practices that are shared by all, one practice that **does** seem to be universal amongst Reform clergy and educators – and hence Reform congregations as a whole – is that since the State of Israel uses Mizrahi pronunciation, so do we, even though the vast majority of Reform Jews are of Ashkenazi heritage. In other words, we at JCNWJ, like Jews at every single Reform congregation that I know, make no distinction in pronunciation between ת and ט – even if there is the occasional word or phrase that slips in from growing up with our Ashkenazi parents or grandparents.

So why is all of this of particular interest to me at this particular time of year? Because with American Thanksgiving only a few weeks away, that also means (for 2021, anyway) that it's time to start thinking about Hanukkah, or Chanukah if you prefer.

Transliteration is a funny thing, because while some see it as a distinct science with specific rules and regulations utilized in academic writing, others see it as an art to help the average person know how to pronounce words in Hebrew. For example, while the Society of Biblical literature (the premier society for academic Biblical scholarship) instructs us to transliterate חֲנֻכָּה into English letters as *hānukkāh* – with each mark representing not only a different consonant or vowel, but even a different form of each consonant or vowel – the Central Conference of American Rabbis opts instead for *Chanukah*, which is much more user friendly to the common reader.

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Rabbi's Message (continued)

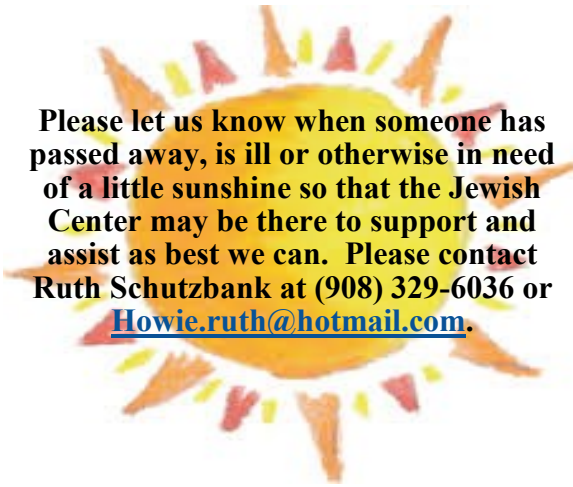
So as you begin thinking about sending holiday cards to friends and family, just know that while there are many accepted ways of spelling **חנוכה** in English, I would hesitate to call any of them wrong, so long as they help you pronounce the Hebrew word, **חנוכה**. They are just different, much as Shabbat and Shabbes are the same things, but different. We all have our own traditions, and so long as you are happy with yours, that's all that really matters, because when making your choice, you'll be just as correct as everybody else, even if different.

That said, I wish you all a (slightly premature) Happy Hanukkah, Chanukah, Hanukah, Chanuka, Hanukah, etc.,

Hanukkah Sameah (that's how I spell it, but others might write something else, such as *Chanukah Sameach*, for instance),

Rabbi Dubin

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.

President's Message

Iris received an email this week that Temple Hatikva in Flanders is being sold to the Chabad. They have been losing members and have not been able to keep up their temple. This is a warning shot to the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey.

While we are financially stable, our membership has been dwindling and our congregation is aging. We only have a few students in Sunday School, and we need to attract more members and younger families. We are trying new things as a board to try and address these issues, but it is hard finding Jewish families where we live who want to be part of a religious organization. I remember a past president, YES THERE WERE PRESIDENTS BEFORE ME, whose main goal was to not have the temple die on their term. I have been working tirelessly to keep this congregation afloat for the better part of 20 years, and we need help from the congregation.

Please reach out to any Jewish families you know who might be interested. We can make financial arrangements to assist new families. We would love to see your grandchildren in Sunday School to enhance their Jewish education and to let the students already there know that there are other Jewish children they can talk to and discuss things with and just hang out and have fun with.

I do get scared that I don't know how long we can keep going without something changing, and I would like your help. Please let's keep a Jewish presence in Warren County for the next generation of Jewish families. This temple was here before I came here, and it gave me the opportunity to see my children have their B'nai Mitzvah's here as well as my wife and her group of "The Bats" (pronounced bots) who still have regular dinners ten years after their B'not Mitzvah.

Please contact me with ANY IDEAS you may have on how to attract new members and younger families.

Love to you all,
Howie

Updates & Events

JCNWJ ADULT EDUCATION HEBREW READING & TORAH CANTILLATION

READING HEBREW

TAUGHT BY RABBI DUBIN

STUDENTS WILL LEARN TO READ THE HEBREW ALEPH-BET.
NO PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE IS REQUIRED.

OCTOBER 10, 17*, 24, 31

SHABBAT IN HEBREW

TAUGHT BY RABBI DUBIN

STUDENTS WILL LEARN THE FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE IN HEBREW.

ABILITY TO READ HEBREW LETTERS IS A PREREQUISITE.

NOVEMBER 14*, 28; DEC 12, JAN 9, 23, 30; FEB 6, 20

Sunday Mornings

11:00-11:55

*(10/17 & 11/14 will be after
Sisterhood, from 12:05 - 1:00)

Every session will include a Zoom option.



zoom

CHOOSE 1, 2, OR ALL 3 CLASSES!



Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

TORAH CANTILLATION

TAUGHT BY STUDENT CANTOR SHAYNA BURACK

STUDENTS WILL LEARN THE ART OF CHANTING TORAH.

ABILITY TO READ HEBREW LETTERS IS A PREREQUISITE.

NOV 7, 21; DEC 5, 19; JAN 30; FEB 13, 27; MAR 20



Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

Gaucher Disease Awareness with Ginger

Join us as JCNWJ member, Ginger Nathanson, shares her personal story of life with Gaucher Disease, the single most prevalent "Jewish Genetic Disease." During her talk, Ginger (a retired biology instructor) will explain how this disease is inherited, diagnosed, and, most importantly, treated.



Sunday, November 14
7:00 PM on Zoom



Zoom link sent under different cover.

Updates & Events

FOOD DRIVE

Although we are not collecting food at the Temple right now, we encourage all members to give to charities helping those in need.

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

DONATIONS

In memory of Marvin Koral, father of Doreen Webb
- Rita Koral

In memory of Max Weil
- Ruth Schutzbank

In memory of Jessica Hirsch
- Howie and Iris Hirsch

In memory of Barbara Simons
- Jerry Simons

TORAH STUDY

Torah Study—Book of Joshua

We all know the song “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho,” but have we ever seriously considered why this song was so meaningful and important to African-Americans, and whether the details of the song are accurate according to the Book of Joshua? And what is the Book of Joshua anyway? What light does it shed upon the early history of the Israelites and their conquest of the Holy Land? When was it written? How do historians, archaeologists, and rabbis view its contents? Does this book have any lessons for us with respect to modern Israel? These are some of the questions we will be considering in the coming months of Torah study as we focus on the Book of Joshua, the sixth book of the Torah and the first book of Nevi'im, or Prophets.

We will continue our exploration of Joshua on Zoom, on Saturday, December 4.

You may choose to read the text ahead of time. HOWEVER, if you are unable to read the text before the meeting and have interest in the subject, please come anyway! Rabbi Dubin will be part of the group, as he has been—a wonderful addition—for the past year and a half.

Updates & Events

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Social on Sunday 11/14 at 1:00pm:

Meet at Diane Margolin's barn

Middle Eastern luncheon from Daddy's Place - Northampton Street in Easton

Menu includes hummus, baba ganoush, pita bread, shish kebab, falafel, fattoush/tabbouleh salads, and baklava

Price is TBD based on final headcount

Wear layers and bring a bathing suit for hot tub

Diane will provide drinks and towels

RSVP to Suzi at 908-343-1135

Updated Sisterhood Schedule

5782 \ 2021-2022 [CNWI]

Beth, Ruth, Rita & I want to share some updates ~

Please save the following dates:

11/14 - Sisterhood Social /1pm at Diane Margolin's barn. Price per person TBD based on final headcount. RSVP to Suzi Marr asap

12/5 - Hanukkah party at Ruth's - 2pm

1/23 - Meeting with zoom - 10am

3/13 Paint 'n Sip Fundraising Party at Washington Borough Fire Hall - 1pm

Wk of 3/14 Evening Meeting with zoom followed by Mishloach Manot assembly ~ specific date TBD

4/9 - Anything You Can Carry Fundraising Swap Party - 7pm

5/22 Mother's Day Tea at Suzi's - 1pm

June - Skip

July - Pool Party at Beth's / date TBD

Your input is welcome.

If you have any questions, please call: Suzi 908-343-1135

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