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## Rabbi's Message

RABBI BRENT CHAIM SPODEK

There are many ways of building a bridge, and possibly the least efficient is to send a dozen BJ Tze'irim to do it. The 20- and 30-year-olds of our congregation rarely know how to mix cement or use a shovel, few can select the proper rocks for base supports, and most are not entirely clear about which end of a pick axe to use.

Nevertheless, twelve of us, including Guy Austrian, BJ's Director of Social Action/Social Justice, went to Guatemala in February under the auspices of the American Jewish World Service (AJWS), an international development organization which is dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger and disease in the developing world. At best, we were mediocre construction workers, and yet there is little else I have done in my time as the MTM Rabbinic Fellow which has been as effective in building a world in which justice is manifest.

The bridge we were working on was not a metaphorical bridge of interpersonal connection, but an actual steel and concrete bridge which crosses a river and upon which hundreds of Guatemalan children hope to travel in order to reach their school. The dozen of us made modest contributions to building this bridge, but what we did there made a mighty contribution to reshaping our hearts to ones which are sensitive to the complex reality of the world. Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz, the spiritual supervisor of the Mir Yeshiva, taught that just as a sufficiently sensitive seismograph can detect a tremor in any part of the world, so too a heart can be made sensitive enough to sense pain in the world. We went in order to have our hearts broken so that they could be reshaped in a more sensitive form.

AJWS does amazing work in pursuit of their goals—but the work the twelve of us did with our hands did very little to alleviate poverty, hunger or disease in the developing world. The work we did in Guatemala with our mouths and our ears might yet do much more. We talked to the students and their teachers and learned how the Mayans bore the brunt of the 36-year Guatemalan civil war, how thousands were massacred by US funded troops and how Mayan culture was brought to the edge of extinction in Guatemala. We heard from Jesús Tecú Osorio, the leading force for prosecution of war criminals in Guatemala, and winner of the 1996 Reebok Human Rights Award. The \$25,000 he received built the school to which we were building a bridge. We saw the murals students painted which told the stories of the murders they witnessed. We encountered a world beyond our immediate borders, a world which demands a response from us.

We went to work, we went to talk, and most importantly, we went to get our hearts broken. We went to become Jews who understand that as Simeon the Righteous teaches in Avot, the world stands on three things—Torah, Avodah and Gemilut Hasadim. **Torah** is the substantive learning in which we were constantly

*(continued on page 4)*

## Our Sanctuary: Reflections from a BJ Trip to Guatemala

“... **W**hen Moses had finished the work, the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the Presence of the Lord filled the Tabernacle... in the view of all the house of Israel throughout their journeys.” —Exodus 40:33-37

As we read the moving description of God watching over the Israelites throughout their journeys, we witness the culmination of the work devoted to the mishkan, the sanctuary the Israelites have been building. The presence of God has been drawn into the Israelites midst.

Together with eleven others from BJ's Tze'irim (20s/30s) community, I took an opportunity to learn a little more about our global mishkan. We had volunteered to spend a week in Guatemala with American Jewish World Service, where we would help in the construction of a bridge. Our journey took us to Rabinal, a place which not long ago had been all but forgotten by the rest of the world. Its people are still coming to terms with the after-effects of civil war, and it seemed as though everyone we met had a story. A relative lost. A life lived in poverty. And an indigenous community so badly devastated by violence that the U.N. described it as genocide.

As we spent our days working, exhausting ourselves, covered in mud and dirt, we were starting to learn new stories. The bridge we were helping build was part of a much larger project. It would help students travel safely to school—a school founded to educate the indigenous Maya Achi youth in their language, traditions and culture. We worked alongside these students, and with each story shared, each pile of earth moved, and each smile exchanged, something greater was happening, something I couldn't quite put my finger on.

**Our work wasn't only about shoveling earth and mixing cement. Our hands might have been occupied with the task at hand, but our hearts were busy as well."**

Notwithstanding the beauty of these moments, it was difficult to tell how we could possibly make a difference in Rabinal. A teaching by Gersonides (14th c. France) helped guide me:

*"...In the case of the Tabernacle... the repetition is so extraordinary that each of its details must have its own particular meaning."*

In other words, the true beauty of the mishkan lies not in the extravagant fabric, and artisan's gold.

Rather, it is in the attention paid to each and every complex detail. Although we may read the minutiae of the tabernacle as insignificant, the Torah reminds us that it is not. In order to build a place where God can dwell, we can't afford to gloss over the details. And as we saw how excited the students were for the bridge, we were coming to learn that our smallest actions have profound repercussions.

This was encouraging to contemplate yet something was still on my mind. None of us had any construction experience—at best, we were an extra set of hands. Given that, we asked the question "Why have we come?"

Our host, Guillermo, smiled before he answered us. By being there, we demonstrated our solidarity with the people of Rabinal—the community knew that we cared. Moreover, the project was not just a physical construction, but a spiritual one as well.

A teaching by Rabbeinu Bahya (13th c. Spain) notes that the work required for the mishkan is sometimes described as m'lacha, and other times as avodah. And although these words are synonymous, there exists a slight difference, for avodah can also refer to service, or worship.

*"If the Torah used only the word m'lacha, we may think that the construction of the mishkan was a job like any other... but that is wrong, the very act of building the tabernacle was a divine service, one which could be performed by anyone who was generous of heart."*

Our work wasn't only about shoveling earth and mixing cement. Our hands might have been occupied with the task at hand, but our hearts were busy as well. Our presence was meaningful because the bridge didn't simply require m'lacha. It needed our avodah. It needed people working together with a humble mindfulness that the ultimate goal wasn't just the bridge.

When we returned to New York, I wondered what my life could look like if I lived it with the same consciousness and intensity that I did that week. Yet when I tried to imagine what it might take to build our mishkan, I became overwhelmed. The completion of our mishkan simply seems so far away.

I needed a place to start, in order to take a step forward in this holy work. And the heart of the Israelites' mishkan led me to it. In order to begin this avodah, I learned that there is a greater, more pressing task that we must first take upon ourselves. It's the task of breaking open our hearts. And with our hearts wide open, only then can we hope to build our mishkan, a place where God can dwell, and accompany us on all our journeys.

*These words of Torah are offered in honor of Jesús Tecú Osorio, founder of Fundación Nueva Esperanza, in Río Negro, Rabinal, Guatemala. ■*

• **Friday Night Off-Broadway: Shabbat at BJ**

**Friday, May 2** • Following the 7:30PM service • 88th Street Sanctuary and Frankel Hall. Extend your Shabbat experience beyond services. BJ members and non-members in their 40's and 50's are invited to share an intimate Shabbat dinner together in Frankel Hall. Please visit [www.bj.org](http://www.bj.org) to register. At 10PM, the entire BJ Community will be invited to enjoy dessert and celebrate Shabbat together with Shakshuka. Shakshuka will perform and lead us in joyful Shabbat songs.

• **The 7th Annual BJ Women's Retreat: Preparing for Shavuot**  
**Rabbi Felicia Sol and MTM Fellows Esther Lederman and Chen Ben Or Tsfofi**

**May 16-18** • Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center. The registration deadline has passed for this retreat, but please contact Yael at [yhammerman@bj.org](mailto:yhammerman@bj.org) if you would like to be added to the waiting list.

• **Green Feast: An Interfaith Potluck Dinner**

**Monday, May 19** • 6:30PM • 86th Street Social Hall. Join us as we share an organic, vegetarian potluck dinner with SPSA, West Park Presbyterian Church, ASMA Society, and the Muslim Consultative Network. We will hear Jewish, Muslim, and Christian teachings about honoring the environment, enjoy live music by musicians from each tradition, and strengthen the community that we've built at our interfaith Yom Kippur/Ramadan break-fasts. Space is limited and priority will be given to BJ members. Registration will close once all spaces have been filled. Registration is not complete until you receive a confirmation. Register by Monday, May 12 to [x379](tel:2123794379) or [interfaithpotluck@gmail.com](mailto:interfaithpotluck@gmail.com)

• **Renee Kaufman Lecture Series presents *Daughters of Wisdom***

**Tuesday, May 20** • 7:00PM • 88th Street Sanctuary. *Daughters of Wisdom* is a story of the Tibetan people, an experiential and transporting view of contemporary Tibet seen through the eyes of some of its most extraordinary women, the nuns of Kala Rongpo Monastery of Nangchen, Kham. *Daughters of Wisdom* is an intimate portrait of these women and their rare and exceptional spiritual community, one that couldn't have existed twenty years ago, but is thriving today. Some shy, some outspoken, all committed to the often difficult life they have chosen, the nuns graciously allowed the camera into their vibrant spiritual community and offer us brief flashes of insight into their extraordinary lives. Screening will be followed by Q & A with producer/director Bari Pearlman.

• **Lag Ba'Omer Concert Featuring Neshama Carlebach's Newest CD Release**

**Thursday, May 22** • 7:00PM • 88th Street Sanctuary. Neshama Carlebach, one of the leading superstars in Jewish entertainment, is continuing the legacy established by her father Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. His deep spirituality and his love of all humanity filled every song he wrote and touched every person he encountered as he changed the face of Jewish music. This event will celebrate the release of Neshama's sixth CD with a performance featuring Neshama and the Green Pastures Baptist Church Choir. This newest recording consists of all original music with English lyrics. The title track, *One and One*, showcases the Green Pastures Baptist Church Choir.

• **Membership Renewal 2008-2009**

Membership renewal season is upon us! In late May, you will receive your membership renewal packages for 2008-09 and applications will be available on our website. Please make every effort return your forms as quickly as possible so that we can assign you High Holy Day locations. We are excited about this year's service sites. You'll find Adult and Children's Services at 88th Street, 86th SPSA, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. Symphony Space will host the Family Service.

• **Home Hospitality Needed**

Home hospitality is needed for ten high school basketball players from Sderot, Israel, for six days between July 13 and July 23. The Jerusalem International Basketball Sports Center has invited these boys, who have suffered the Qassam rocket attacks, for a vacation in the United States to visit New York and Jewish summer camps in the area. We need places for one or two in a room. Please contact Jules Love at [jlove3@nyc.rr.com](mailto:jlove3@nyc.rr.com) or 212-724-5303.

Please see the BJ website, [www.bj.org](http://www.bj.org), for more information and how to register.

• **Rosh Hodesh Women's Group for Iyar**  
*Facilitated by Rabbi Felicia L. Sol and Chen Ben Or Tsfofi, Marshall T. Meyer Fellow*  
**Monday, May 5** • 7:00PM • 86th Street Chapel • Free; registration not required. Each new month on the Hebrew calendar, we will have an opportunity to study, discuss, celebrate and pray together on this holiday traditionally associated with women. Please bring a dairy/vegetarian kosher snack to share.

• **The Poems of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel**  
*Rabbi Marcelo R. Bronstein*  
**3 Mondays** (May 5, 12, 19) • 7:00-9:00PM • 86th Street Parlor Room (5/5, 19), Board Room (5/12) • Free; registration required. During the last High Holy Days, we explored the theology of our teacher Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. He also wrote poetry, and during these three sessions we will read his poetry and attempt to connect it to his theology. The last two sessions will be co-led with Basya Schechter, who has set many of these poems to music.

• **Revelation According to Dr. Emanuel Levinas; In Preparation for Shavuot**  
*Rabbi Felicia L. Sol*  
**4 Tuesdays** (May 6, 13, 20, 27) • 7:00-8:30PM • 88th Street Sanctuary • Free; registration required. In a chapter in his book *Beyond the Verse*, Dr. Levinas explores the nature and meaning of Revelation. Together we will do a close read of this chapter,

which opens up a gate into the philosophy of Dr. Levinas as well as a perspective on Revelation and its demands on us. Participants are encouraged, but not required, to buy the book.

• **A MONTHLY LUNCHTIME ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**  
**Engendering Judaism: What Is At Stake?**  
*Rabbi Felicia L. Sol*  
**7 Wednesdays** (remaining class May 7) • 12:15-1:15PM • BJ Office • Free; registration required. Meet monthly to discuss Dr. Rachel Adler's book *Engendering Judaism*, which raises the deep questions of what it means to sustain and create a Judaism that is alive, relevant and inclusive for both men and women, while acknowledging the complicated reality of the "tradition" which is patriarchal at its essence and yet what we've received over thousands of years. Full participation in the discussion will require purchasing the book and reading the chapters in advance of the discussion.

**Z'man Kabbalat Torateinu: Preparing for Shavuot through Text Study and Song**  
*Rabbi J. Rolando Matalon*  
**4 Wednesdays** (May 14, 21, 28, June 4) • 7:00-8:15PM • 88th Street Frankel Hall • Free; registration required. As spiritual preparation for Shavuot, we will learn relevant classical texts, as well as piyutim (liturgical poems) and biblical verses set to melodies from different parts of the Jewish dispersion.

## Rabbi's Message RABBI BRENT CHAIM SPODEK *(continued from page 1)*

engaged. There is nothing simple about this sort of engagement with the world, there is nothing simple about the Jewish textual tradition and every day we spent hours reading sophisticated Jewish texts which shed light on the moral complexities of what we were doing. **Avodah** means both work and service, and for sure, we were engaged with avodah in the form of work—for all our inadequacies, we actually did spend hours every day digging ditches, carrying rocks and mixing cement. There is a bridge foundation that might not have been there without our efforts. But avodah as prayer was also a major component of the week—every morning, half our group was on the roof of our building, some davening with tallis and tefillin, some doing yoga, each of us deliberately starting the day with a sense of spiritual centering and thankfulness. Finally, **Gemilut Hasadim** is perhaps best understood simply as acts of loving kindness done directly, like a mother nursing a child. But more fully, Gemilut Hasadim is understood as the outward turn which is at the heart of Judaism. Gemilut Hasadim is the recognition that it is not all about me, but that there are others in this world, and the measure of who I am as a person is the degree to I am aware of these others and respond to them.

On service learning trips, such as the one Tze'irim took to Guatemala, or the BJ teens took to Mexico, we are forced past the elaborate shields we use to protect us from the suffering of the world. Talking to children who travel through mud to reach a school after their government tried to exterminate them, our hearts are forced into a tender openness which might otherwise be foreign. This openness, this painful encounter with sufferings unlearned and unacknowledged, is a necessary precondition to the justice work which is at the heart of religious Jewish life. R. Nachman of Breslov taught that "There is no more complete thing than a broken heart," and in a world designed to protect our hearts from pain, these trips allow us to break our hearts so they can be re-formed, sensitive to the widows, the orphans and the strangers of the world. The real work begins now that we try to live in this world with hearts which are a little more sensitive.

*Rabbi Brent Chaim Spodek is one of the Marshall T. Meyer Rabbinic Fellows at BJ. Following the end of his fellowship in June, he will become the rabbi-in-residence/Director of Jewish Communal Affairs at the American Jewish World Service. ■*

## Mazal Tov

**To the following members and their families on their b'nai mitzvah (through April):**

Lydia Dubois                      Eliana Langer  
Henry Richey                      Daniel Schreck  
Felicia Kuhnreich

**To the following members and their families (through April 4):**

Stephen and Dorothy Vatner on the birth of their grandson, Joseph Henry, to Daniel and Amy Vatner.

Leonard Wasserman on the birth of his granddaughter, Olivia Rose Mori.

Arlene and Irwin Brandon, and Avery Brandon and Gary Hennion, on the naming of their granddaughter and daughter, Skyler Eliana Hennion.



## Condolences (through April 4)

*The community of B'nai Jeshurun extends sincere condolences to the following members and their families:*

Susan Mason on the death of her beloved mother, Zina Schaefer.

Marcia Annenberg and Robert and Suzie Scher on the death of their beloved father, father-in-law and grandfather, Morton Annenberg.

Richard, Laura, Jessica, Joshua, and Rachel Bass on the death of Richard's beloved sister, Claudette Bass.

Hilda and Adena Greenberg on the death of their beloved brother and uncle, Joseph Weiss.

Harvey Israelton on the death of his beloved mother, Pauline Israelton.

Geoff Leibovitz on the death of his beloved mother, Rabbi Diane Leibovitz.

Gil, Jacob and Sophie Eisner and Kate Wenner on the death of Gil's beloved mother, Shirley Philip.

Carol Schiffman-Durham on the death of her beloved father, Leonard Schiffman.

Laurel, Gene, Sasha and Rachel Eisner on the death of Laurel's beloved sister, Caryl Mesch.

Ronda Small and Ira, Evan and Perry Wolfman on the death of Ronda's beloved aunt, Gertrude Felberbaum.

Sara Mandelbaum, Stephen, Daniel and Laura Goldstein on the death of Sara's beloved mother, Lynn Mandelbaum.

Shira, Jimmy, Alexander, Gideon and Benjamin Levin on the death of Shira's beloved mother, Hadassah Nadich.

Robert Wolfson on the death of his beloved father, David Wolfson.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
				1 YOM HASHOAH  OMER: Tonight begins Day 15
4 • 12:00 PM - Family Israel 60th Birthday Celebration, Riverside Park (SEE P.10)  OMER: Tonight begins Day 15	5 ROSH HODESH IYAR • 7:00 PM - Rosh Hodesh Women's Group, 86th St. Chapel (SEE P.4)  OMER: Tonight begins Day 16	6 ROSH HODESH IYAR  OMER: Tonight begins Day 17	7 YOM HAZIKARON  EREV YOM HA'ATZMAUT • 7:00 PM - Service, 88th St. (SEE P.10)  OMER: Tonight begins Day 18	8 YOM HA'ATZMAUT BJ OFFICE CLOSED  OMER: Tonight begins Day 19
11  6th Grade B'nai Mitzvah Retreat OMER: Tonight begins Day 22	12  OMER: Tonight begins Day 23	13  • 5:00 PM - Families Cooking for the Shelter, 88th St. Frankel Hall  OMER: Tonight begins Day 24	14  OMER: Tonight begins Day 25	15  OMER: Tonight begins Day 26
18  Women's Retreat OMER: Tonight begins Day 29	19 • 6:00 PM - Interfaith Potluck Dinner, 86th St. Social Hall (SEE P.4)  OMER: Tonight begins Day 30	20 • 7:00 PM - Renee Kaufman Lecture Series, 88th St. (SEE P.4)  OMER: Tonight begins Day 31	21  OMER: Tonight begins Day 32	22 • 7:00 PM - Concert with Carlebach, 88th St. (SEE P.4)  OMER: Tonight begins Day 33
25  OMER: Tonight begins Day 36	26 Memorial Day BJ OFFICE CLOSED  OMER: Tonight begins Day 37	27  OMER: Tonight begins Day 38	28  OMER: Tonight begins Day 39	29  OMER: Tonight begins Day 40

SERVICE TIMES

**Morning Minyan (88th Street):**

- Monday-Friday 7:30 AM • Sunday & National Holidays 9:30 AM

**Kabbalat Shabbat:**

- 6:00 PM 88th St. Sanctuary • 7:30 PM 88th Street Sanctuary
- Additional Service May 2: Wandering Minyan 5:45 PM 88th St. Frankel Hall

**Shabbat Morning:**

- 9:30 AM 86th Street • Children's Services 10:45 AM 86th Street Chapel and Parlor
- Additional Services May 3, 10: Junior Congregation 10:30 AM 86th Street Social Hall

DAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
gins Day 12	<p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM – Family Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> <li>6:00 PM – Wandering Minyan, 88th St. Frankel Hall</li> <li>7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> <li>Following 7:30 PM Service – Oneg Shabbat, 88th St. (SEE P.4)</li> </ul> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 13</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St.</li> <li>Bar Mitzvah – Nathan Wild</li> <li>9:30 AM – 6th Grade B'nai Mitzvah Class, 86th St. Chapel</li> <li>10:30 AM – Junior Congregation, 86th St. Social Hall</li> <li>10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St. Chapel and Parlor</li> <li>4:00 PM and throughout the evening – Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebrations (SEE P.10)</li> <li>7:00 PM – "Reach for Shabbat" Havdallah, 88th St.</li> </ul> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 14</p>
gins Day 19	<p><b>9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:30 AM – Frankel Fridays, 88th St. Frankel Hall</li> <li>6:00 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> <li>7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> </ul> <p>6th Grade B'nai Mitzvah Retreat</p> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 20</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St.</li> <li>Bar Mitzvah – Aaron Horwitz</li> <li>10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St.</li> <li>Following Services – Community Kiddush</li> </ul> <p>6th Grade B'nai Mitzvah Retreat</p> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 21</p>
gins Day 26	<p><b>16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> <li>Following 6:00 PM Service – Zayin HS Family Dinner, 88th St. Frankel Hall</li> <li>7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> </ul> <p>Women's Retreat (SEE P.4)</p> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 27</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St.</li> <li>Bat Mitzvah – Emma Bratman</li> <li>10:30 AM – Junior Congregation, 86th St. Social Hall</li> <li>10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St.</li> <li>6:45 PM – Minha, 88th St.</li> <li>Bar Mitzvah – Brett Goldstein</li> </ul> <p>Women's Retreat</p> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 28</p>
h Neshama (P.4)	<p><b>23 LAG BA'OMER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> <li>7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> </ul> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 34</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St.</li> <li>Bar Mitzvah – Joshua Wexler-Waite</li> <li>Bar Mitzvah – Yaniv Lewis</li> <li>10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St.</li> </ul> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 35</p>
gins Day 33	<p><b>30</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> <li>7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St.</li> </ul> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 41</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St.</li> <li>Bar Mitzvah – Lucas Schwartz</li> <li>10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St.</li> <li>Following Services – Community Kiddush, 86th St. Social Hall</li> </ul> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 42</p>
gins Day 40		

## ADULT CLASSES

Please see the BJ website, www.bj.org, for more information and how to register.

### Monday

- Introduction to Judaism 7-9 PM (through May)
- The Poems of Abraham Joshua Heschel 7:00-9:00 PM (May 5, 12, 19)

### Tuesday

- The Book of Genesis 8:10-9 AM (through May)
- Revelation According to Dr. Emanuel Levinas; In Preparation for Shavuot 7:00-8:30 PM (May 6, 13, 20, 27)

### Wednesday

- Engendering Judaism: What Is At Stake? 12:15-1:15 PM (remaining class May 7)
- Z'man Kabbalat Torateinu: Preparing for Shavuot through Text Study and Song 7:00-8:15 PM (May 14, 21, 28, June 4)

### Thursday

- Parashat HaShavu'a: Study of the Weekly Torah Portion 7-9 PM (through May)

## YOUTH CLASSES

### Monday

- 4-5:30 PM, Kindergarten and First grade
- 4-6 PM, Second through Sixth grade

### Thursday

- 4-5:30 PM, Kindergarten and First grade
- 4-6 PM, Second through Seventh grade

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

### Sunday–Thursday

- BJ/SPSA Homeless Shelter 7 PM

### Thursday

- Judith Bernstein Lunch Program 12 PM



indicates Family Life and Hebrew School events

### Candlelighting Times

May 2	7:35 PM
May 9	7:42 PM
May 16	7:49 PM
May 23	7:56 PM
May 30	8:02 PM

### Parashat HaShavu'a

May 3	Kedoshim
May 10	Emor
May 17	Behar
May 24	Behukotai
May 31	Bamidbar

### Havdalah Times

May 3	8:39 PM
May 10	8:48 PM
May 17	8:56 PM
May 24	9:03 PM
May 31	9:10 PM

## Sisterhood of the Traveling Tallis

It started out being symbolic of one thing, but it became a symbol of something else.

When my older son was preparing to become a Bar Mitzvah, I really looked forward to shopping for a tallis for him. I envisioned this as a deep and fulfilling journey down to the Lower East Side, a discussion about Jewish history, and a sense of wearing something tying him to his legacy.

Instead, the actual experience was a cranky teenager, bored by searching through overstuffed shelves, intimidated by the Hasidic salespeople, and resentful of spending the time. So, I consoled myself by buying myself my first tallit. As a woman, I had never purchased one, but I felt it would represent a renewed commitment as my son became a Bar Mitzvah.

The “aha” moments of my son’s preparation came at unexpected moments—the laughter with Ari at the full rehearsal, the singing of the Shehecheyanu at minyan, the tears that sprang out of my eyes at the first note of that Kabbalat Shabbat. These moments will remain with us always.

When my younger son started to prepare to become a Bar Mitzvah, I had no illusions about the tallit purchasing experience. However, this was an entirely new experience.

I had made many meaningful friendships with families in this

son’s Hebrew School grade. So, as all of our children went through the shared experience of preparation, we too shared our experiences and our journeys.

The mothers of these children discussed venue options, swapped endless Simcha resources (invitations, transportation, photographers, hotels, music, décor), shopped with each other for clothes, and prepared table decorations for each other. The week of the Simcha, we drove cars to venues to help transport items, attended the minyans where our children read Torah the week before they became a B’nai Mitzvah, hosted Shabbat dinners for each other’s families during that weekend, and came to brunches with out-of-town guests the next day. We proudly danced the hora and lifted each other on chairs.

And, since many of us mothers did not own a tallis, my tallit was borrowed by each of the mothers for that special day. It became a symbol of the community that we created at BJ: one which we had created through the experience of our children, and which had taken on a life of its own.

We had become “The Sisterhood of the Traveling Tallis.” ■

—Lisa Mednick Owen, a member of BJ since 1995. Her sons Alex and Teddy are now 18 and 15, respectively. She would like to dedicate this article to the memory of her father, Richard Mednick.

## Memorial Plaques: Linking the Past to the Future

We are again offering the members of our community the opportunity to make a special contribution in the memory of loved ones and have their names permanently inscribed on black granite plaques at the back of the 88th Street Sanctuary.

If you would like to honor the memory of a loved one in this way, please send their name along with a \$1,400 donation per name, or \$2,000 per couple, to B’nai Jeshurun, Attention: Erzsébet Ragyina by August 1, 2008. The names will be inscribed before the High Holy Days and a ceremony in their memory will take place later in the year. Please remember to include the name of the person to be memorialized, your name, and a phone number where you can be reached.



IN COMMEMORATION OF YOM HASHOAH

## When Israel Went Forth

*(Psalm 114: "When Israel went forth from Egypt")*

When Israel went forth  
 as smoke from Auschwitz,  
 when we were set free as ashes  
 from our bodies,  
 when we leapt up with the sparks,  
 the earth was sealed  
 and filled with gas.  
 Our pain was unnamable.  
 Death was our guardian.

When the red sea of our blood  
 flooded the earth  
 we did not have time to build an ark.  
 A rainbow did not vault the heavens  
 promising to shield us from harm.  
 That flood never receded.  
 The swelling sea never parted for us.

We took flight  
 on the wings of doves,  
 escaped through the chimneys  
 on ashes and sparks  
 and drifted on fugitive clouds of smoke  
 toward the heavens  
 where we settled on stars.

(More brilliant than the stars,  
 our light now fills the heavens.)

When Israel went forth  
 as smoke from Auschwitz,  
 when our life-breath was taken  
 in the fathomless silence of screams,  
 when we were drowned in a sea of gas,  
 darkness flooded the heavens and the earth.

When the earth trembled,  
 when our world vanished  
 as though it had never been,  
 when our nakedness  
 called out of the whirlwind,  
 Nothing liberated us.

—Written by BJ member **Amos Neufeld**

This poem appears in the second edition of the poetry anthology "Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust" edited by Charles Fishman. It was read by the poet's daughter, Maddie Neufeld, on a recent visit to a synagogue in Poland.

Please join us...

## Israel at 60: BJ Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration Events and Activities

<p><b>Saturday, May 3</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Junior Congregation</b></li> <li>• <b>Children's Services</b></li>   <li>• <b>Israel Community Conversations for Families</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult learning for parents with young children (children are invited)</li> <li>• Family learning for families with school-aged children (parents and children learning together)</li> <li>• Teen learning</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• <b>Celebrate Israel's 60th Anniversary with the BJ Community.</b> Join us in intimate conversations about Israel hosted in members' homes*.</li>   <li>• Conversations will be followed by a festive Israel party featuring an Israeli DJ, delicious Israeli food and dancing all night.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10:30AM, 86th Street Social Hall</li> <li>• 10:45AM, 86th Street Parlor and Chapel Both services will have an Israel focus.</li>   <li>• 4:00PM, Members' Homes</li>   <li>• 6:45PM, Members' Homes</li>   <li>• 9:00PM, 88th Street Sanctuary</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sunday, May 4</b></p>	<p><b>Family 60th Birthday Celebration Extravaganza</b> With games, Israeli dancing, crafts and food.</p>	<p>12:00-3:00PM, Riverside Park</p>
<p><b>Monday, May 5 and Thursday, May 8</b></p>	<p><b>Hebrew School Celebration</b> Snacks, dancing, fun and educational activities about Israel.</p>	<p>4:00-6:00PM, Heschel School and 88th Street</p>
<p><b>Wednesday, May 7</b></p>	<p><b>Yom Ha'atzmaut Observed</b> Festive service and presentation of documentary film.</p>	<p>7:00PM, 88th Street</p>
<p><b>Thursday, May 8-Sunday, May 18</b></p>	<p><b>Celebrate 60 with Hamidrasha's Delegation</b></p>	
<p><b>Saturday, May 10</b></p>	<p><b>Community Se'udah Shlishit</b> Explore Israel's six decades of challenges and creativity and how they continue to impact our lives today. Including a premier showing of photos from our "Israel Trail Encounters" hike.</p>	<p>7:00PM, 88th Street</p>
<p><b>Thursday, May 15</b></p>	<p><b>Social Action-Social Justice Event with Hamidrasha</b> For those traveling with BJ to Israel in June and BJ's Social Action/Social Justice volunteers, please join the delegation of women from Hamidrasha for a discussion of the challenges of social justice in the ever-changing Jewish State from the eyes of women leading initiatives for social change.</p>	<p>7:00PM, 88th Street</p>

\*The deadline to register for this event has passed.

**Adult Education Fund**

Susan Viuker Landau in memory of Florence Katz Viuker

**Arthur P. Morgan Fund**

Estate of Arthur P. Morgan

**Beba Bronstein Jewish Camp Scholarship Fund**

Mark Grumet in memory of his beloved father, Alexander Sidney Grumet, and Uncle, Harry Both

**Bikur Holim Fund**

Nancy Beal Mostow and Michael Mostow in memory of Helen Radin

**BJ Hebrew School Fund**

Alex Federman and Tamar Kotz Joel Friedman and Marian Faytell Amy Singer and Richard Einhorn Marc and Joyce Yassky

**General Fund**

Stuart Dorsky David Fitterman in support of Morning Minyan, in honor of Bernice and Morty Levine's 65th Wedding Anniversary, and in honor of Sian Gibby's Torah chanting Adrienne Hiatt in honor of Julie Engel Madeline and Allan Melzer in honor of Renee Melzer's 65th birthday The Membership Committee in honor of Barbara Simon's granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah Edward Miller and Bena Green in honor of Arthur and June Nislick's grandson, Joshua's Bar Mitzvah Jeffrey Nevid and Judith Wolf-Nevid in honor of Rabbi Anne Ebersman, Cantor Ari Priven, and MTM Rabbinic Fellow, Chen Ben Or Tsfofi Lilli Platt in honor of Howard Mandell and the Wednesday Morning Minyan Robert and Amy Pollack in honor of Marya Pollack's birthday David and Amy Pollack in honor of BJ Jason Rico

Bernice Todres Barry and Elain Waldman in memory of David Goldberg Elizabeth Weiss Mildred Wood Kirk Zachary

**Helen Radin Memorial Zayin Adar Annual Teaching In memory of Helen Radin**

Judith and Carl Felsenfeld Hilda Greenberg Melissa Kantor Harold and Helen Lehrman Mark and Marya Lehrman Mortimer and Bernice Levine Gail Landis Lilli Platt

**Hevra Kadisha**

Andrea Siegel in memory of Judith Stern Riklis

**Homeless Shelter Fund**

Marilyn Bernard in wishing for Refuah Shlema for Shelley Bernard Linda Kates to give thanks for her brother's new job Ellen Perecman in memory of Jimena Martinez's beloved father

**Judith Bernstein Lunch Program**

Ceil Kraus in memory of her beloved sister, Shirley Bernstein Glenn Marlowe and Judy Geller-Marlowe in memory of Sheila Dekel

**Marshall T. Meyer Memorial Fund**

Nancy Greenblatt in honor of Mim Warden, and in memory of Richard Posen Sharon Anstey in loving memory of Helen Radin, Pamela Cohn-Allen, and Marshall T. Meyer

**Teen Programs**

Julie Borish in memory of Richard Mednick Julie and Peter Borish in memory of Richard Mednick Eric and Debra Lerner in memory of Richard Mednick

Eric and Debra Lerner in honor of Kerrith Solomon and Rabbi Marcelo Bronstein for their leadership and inspiration with the teens on their trip to Muchucuxah Debra Luks in memory of Richard Mednick

**Yizkor Fund**

Tamar Baumgold in memory of her beloved mother, Devora Riwiin, and sister, Miriam Hacker Isabel Berkowitz in memory of her beloved father, Max Berkowitz Charles Borrok in memory of his beloved mother, Gertrude Traub Irwin and Arlene Brandon in memory of Arlene's beloved father, Nathan Barrett Edward Brill and Michele Levin in memory of Beulah Brill Albert and Joanna Bukszpan in memory of Joanne's beloved father, William Miller Thomas and Donna Divine in memory of Marcia Riklis's beloved mother, Judith Stern Riklis Michael Feldberg and Ruth Lazarus in memory of Udyss S. Lazarus Jerry Goldfeder and Alice Yaker in memory of Alice's beloved mother and father Deedy Goldstick in memory of her beloved father, George J. Dorfman Harriet Goren in memory of her beloved mother, Etta Goren Don Grubman and Deborah Stein in memory of Dan's beloved father, Moe Grubman Paul and Carol Jackson in memory of Paul's beloved mother, Victoria Jackson Shoshana Jedwab in memory of Ruth Jedwab Richard and Rosemary Kalikow in memory of Norman Kalikow Stephen and Dede Kessler in loving memory of Dede's parents, Lettie Berger Glicksman and Jack Glicksman Stephen and Susan Kippur in memory of Stephen's beloved father

Amelia Korn in memory of her beloved father, Jakob Korn Sarah Lazin in memory of her beloved father, Charles Lazin Harold and Helen Lehrman in memory of Hal's beloved father, Louis Lehrman Joel Levy and Barbara Blum in memory of Barbara's beloved, Philip Blum Ella Lidsky in memory of her beloved father, Rav Leib Cwik, and brother, Aba Cwik Gertrude Litowitz in memory of her beloved husband, Joseph Litowitz, and son, Robert Litowitz Jonathan and Ellen Litt in memory of Claire Grosness Miriam Lox in memory of her beloved father, Aaron Lox Ted Metzger and Robin Fleischner in memory of Ted's beloved mother, Ruth Metzger Bruce and Lorrie Millman in memory of Bruce's beloved father, Meyer Millman Samara Minkin and Trent Gegax in memory of Sylvia Blum Michael and Nancy Beal Mostow in memory of Nancy's beloved father Adrienne Packer in memory of her beloved brother and sister, Stephen Packer and Eva Salmier Sara Pasternak Levine and Mathew Levine in memory of their beloved friend, Harriet Granet and Sandi Pasternak Lilli Platt in memory of Abraham Platt Paula Rackoff and Maya Rackoff in memory of Alan Mack Rackoff Bella Rector in memory of Bella's beloved parents Imogene Reznick in memory of Vivian Yale's beloved brother, Arthur Gordon

KOL HADASH • NEW VOICE May 2008

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