

Encountering the Face

Many people who live a “religious life,” or aspire to one, pray that God will appear to them in a cacophonous moment of revelation. Every morning in many synagogues, particularly in Israel, Jews hope for a glimpse of the divine presence when they dramatically reenact the Priestly Blessing from Parshat Naso, which we encounter at the beginning of June this year:

May GOD bless you, and keep you;
May GOD make God’s face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you;
May GOD lift up God’s face towards you, and give you peace.¹

What is it that we hunger for when we pray to see the face of God?

Perhaps we pray for a moment of God’s unending love, which will ameliorate all of the pain and suffering inherent in human life. God will appear as a gentle glow, in whose light we can bask and be okay.

Or perhaps we hope to know God as intimately as we know a friend, or even to believe that such intimacy is possible. For what is a face, really? More than an amalgam of features, it is the vehicle of interaction, the vessel through which we connect to other people. If God were to turn the Divine face toward us, then suddenly God, who so often feels distant or even nonexistent, would be as immanent as a lover.

Divinity demands a response, certainly no less when it appears on a person than when it appears on a bush.”

Perhaps when we pray to see the face of God, we hope for the certain knowledge that would follow if God lifted God’s face toward us. Suddenly, we would know that God is real, just as Abraham knew. We would know that God is real in the way that Moses, who spoke to God face to face, knew. We would see the face of God and then revelation and faith would cease being mysteries and would instead become concrete realities in our lives.

Perhaps revelation isn’t what happens when God decides to reveal the Divine face to us as a supernal visage, filling the sky with thunder and lightning. Perhaps God’s face is lurking in the face of every human being, and revelation is the moment when we recognize the flesh and bone faces we see walking down the street as traces of the Divine.

As the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas put it, “The dimension of the divine opens forth from the human face.”²

We pray to see God’s face, but perhaps the face has already been revealed, set atop every human body, and we would be better served to pray for the ability to see it. We are like Joseph’s brothers, who hope for a miracle to save them from

famine. They look for signs and miracles, manna falling from heaven, but they cannot recognize their brother sitting in front of them³. We too are hoping for a revelation with trumpets, a revelation to which we can proudly stand up and declare our presence, as Abraham did when God called to him. We spend tremendous time enmeshed in our painful hopes for something transcendent, something extra-ordinary, when it might be that the revelation of the divine is only possible in the face of God which is sitting across from us on the cross-town bus.

But perhaps like those early morning Jews, who cover their heads with their prayer shawls, fearful of the force of God’s blessing, we too are hesitant to actually encounter the immanence of God. We are hesitant because we know that nobody can see the face of God and live, at least not as they have been. When we recognize the face of another human being as the face of God, we encounter something outside of ourselves which disrupts our own self-obsession. Could Moses have possibly heard the call of God from the burning bush and said, “Thanks for calling, but I’m doing something more important now. I look forward to getting back to you as soon as possible”? Divinity demands a response, certainly no less when it appears on a person than when it appears on a bush.

When we recognize that face on the bus as the face of God, we cannot go on living as we have.

The Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries
And daub their natural faces unaware.⁴

One cannot see the face of God and continue with business as usual anymore than one can hear a lion roar and not be afraid. When we perceive God’s face in nature, perhaps the response is to fall on our faces. When we perceive God in the pages of a book, then perhaps the response should be with words. But when the face of God appears in the faces of other people, then our response should take place in the syntax of ethics. ■

—Rabbi Brent Spodek, MTM Rabbinic Fellow

This d’var Torah originally appeared in slightly different form as part of the 2006 Dvar Tzedek series of American Jewish World Service, and is reprinted with permission. You can subscribe to the AJWS Dvar Tzedek by visiting www.ajws.org/parshah.

1. Numbers 6:24-26.
2. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1969), page 78.
3. Genesis 42:8
4. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “Aurora Leigh,” in *The Complete Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), page 134.

PLEASE COME...

Learn about our new *Havurot* program, address questions to our rabbis, meet other congregants, our new MTM Rabbinic Fellow, Board members and staff, view a big-screen photo presentation of life at BJ ...

BJ ANNUAL MEETING**Thursday, June 5 • 88th Street Sanctuary • 6:00PM**

Continuing in the last year's successful new format, **we will begin informally from 6:00-7:30PM** with food, wine and the opportunity to socialize with each other. This year's program includes a re-launch of our *Havurot* program, and an opportunity to address questions directly to the rabbis. **The formal meeting will begin at 7:30PM** and will include the election of new members to BJ's Board of Trustees. For more information contact Harold Goldman, Executive Director, at x248.

• Friday Night Off-Broadway: Shabbat at BJ

Friday, June 6 • Following the 7:30PM late service • 88th Street. Extend your Shabbat experience beyond services. The BJ Shabbat Onegs are designed to take us on a journey through the powerful beauty of Shabbat with traditional rituals, live music, joyous dancing, singing and food. As the Sanctuary fills with the sounds of Shabbat, played by the BJ musicians, intimate and sacred time and space are created. Please visit www.bj.org for more information.

• Ledor Vador Shabbat Luncheon: Jews in Theatre

Saturday, June 7 • Following Shabbat morning services • 88th Street Frankel Hall. The entire BJ community is invited to an intergenerational Shabbat luncheon hosted by Ledor Vador. BJ members Ron Guttman and Gordon Edelstein will talk about Jewish influence on their profession of choice: acting and the theatre. Please R.S.V.P. to blasky@bj.org or x334, leaving the names of those who will be attending. Also, send a check for

\$15/member or \$18/non-member with "Ledor Vador 6/7" on the memo line. Children are welcome to attend free of charge.

• Baking for Kiddush

Thursday, June 12 • 7:00PM • 88th Street Kitchen. Whether you are an expert pastry chef, or you don't know a sifter from a sieve, please join the BJ community in baking dessert for the June 14 Community Kiddush!

• Early Summer Hebrew Chanting Extravaganza at BJ!

Saturday, June 14 • 8:30PM • 88th Street. Let your spirits soar and your bodies sway as B'nai Jeshurun and Romemu jointly present an evening of Hebrew Mystical Chant with the "Kirtan Rabbi," Andrew Hahn, in honor of his 50th birthday. Kirtan is fully participatory call-and-response chant: a wonderfully fun I-Thou singing and dancing experience. Events begin with a nosh and learning with the BJ rabbis and Rabbi David Ingber, followed by Havdalah and the Hebrew Kirtan. This event will be filmed and recorded for the first-ever Kirtan Rabbi CD! Visit www.kirtanrabbi.com for more information.

• High Holy Day Flower Fund

Each year our High Holy Day services are enhanced by the addition of beautiful flower arrangements. Please help us enhance the beauty and atmosphere of our High Holy Day services by making a donation to the High Holy Day Flower Fund today. You may make a donation at www.bj.org or by mailing a check to the BJ office, 2109 Broadway, Suite 203 New York, NY 10023. If you have any questions, please contact Erzsébet Ragyina at eragyina@bj.org or x228.

• Tikkun Leil Shavuot at BJ: Sinai

Sunday, June 8 • 9:00PM • 88th Street. From 9:00PM-midnight (following Shavuot services at 8:30PM), join painter Jill Nathanson and Arnie Eisen, Chancellor of JTS, for a visual and textual hevruta study session entitled "Seeing Sinai." The evening will continue with another study session with Chancellor Eisen, and all-night study with the BJ rabbis.

Shavuot Schedule of Services**Sunday, June 8****Erev Shavuot**

Evening Service followed by Tikkun Leil Shavuot:

88th Street Sanctuary8:30 PM-midnight

88th Street Frankel Hall.....midnight-5:30 AM

Monday, June 9**First Day Shavuot**

Sunrise Services5:30 AM

Morning Services

88th Street Sanctuary10:00 AM

Children's Services

88th Street Frankel Hall.....11:15 AM

Community Picnic

Riverside Park (weather permitting)Following Services

Second Evening Shavuot

88th Street9:00 PM

Tuesday, June 10**Second Day Shavuot****Morning Services**

88th Street Sanctuary9:30 AM

Children's Services

88th Street Frankel Hall.....10:45 AM

• **Rosh Hodesh Women's Group**
Facilitated by Rabbi Felicia L. Sol and Chen Ben Or Tsfofi,
Marshall T. Meyer Fellow

Iyar: Tuesday, June 3 • 7:00PM • 88th Street

Tammuz: Tuesday, July 1 • 7:00PM • 88th Street

• 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.

Z'man Kabbalat Torateinu: Preparing for Shavuot through Text Study and Song

Rabbi J. Rolando Matalon

4 Wednesdays (remaining class 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.

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

MTM Fellow's Message CHEN BEN OR TSFONI *(continued from page 1)*

of farewell, of saying goodbye to this incredible community at BJ.

I take back with me in my suitcase many experiences, teachings and new understandings. One of the most significant things I can say I have learned here is how people at BJ see the role of the rabbi in their community.

In Israel I will have to work hard in order to create my space as a rabbi. I will need to build my role within a people and community that are foreign to the concept of a rabbi. They do not know what to expect from such a person having a role in their lives. This is so different from what I encountered here—a place where people know what they can receive from their rabbis, and a place where they have different models of rabbis. For me, this encounter has helped define a model I would like to implement in Israel.

Those who have visited Nigun Halev in Israel can understand how special and intimate this small community is. It started as a group of friends coming together with a common goal—and I, as the rabbi, have had the opportunity to get to know each member as an individual and to have a role in their lives. But this intimacy can sometimes become overwhelming, and it does not allow for the many opportunities possible in a larger community. That is why I feel I am experiencing the best of both worlds, in Israel and here.

Living in a country as a religious minority was also a new experience for me. Leaving our Sanctuary on a Friday night or after Yom Kippur services and emerging on Broadway, entering the active, non-stop New York nightlife which contains not even a single moment of Shabbat, still hits me hard every time. The need to create a personal sanctified space around myself—regardless of where I am physically—was a very challenging experience. At times I realized that the situation we live in, in which nothing can be taken for granted and we need to choose every single aspect of our religious life, is a situation that strengthens one's identity.

Living in Israel, we take our Jewish identity for granted. Surrounded by Hebrew, Shabbat, and the atmosphere of holidays, we are rarely aware of choices we do not need to make. Only here could I learn that living as a minority requires a special sensitivity to the society in which we live. Coming from a society in Israel that too often is self-concerned was, again, a learning experience.

There are many advantages to living in the Diaspora. There is no need to build a state from the foundations, and to pay the price that comes with it. The ability of a liberal, pluralistic Judaism to flourish here was an amazing reality for me, coming from a place where Judaism at times is practiced in the narrowest ways.

Living here emphasized the importance of Hebrew to me. My personal Judaism grew from using Hebrew; whether it was reading sacred text or making a grocery list before going shopping, language is crucial to me, a fundamental part of my identity. I think that so many things get lost in translation and that those who experience Judaism here, away from Hebrew, experience a very different Judaism.

I am leaving BJ with the deep understanding that we need each other so we can be more complete, so we can challenge each other to be better, to keep each other restless. The time I spent here has made that understanding clear. The partnership between our liberal communities in Israel and American pluralistic Jewish communities in general, and BJ in particular, has to be everlasting.

I thank the entire BJ community, all those who made this experience possible. Please remember that Nigun Halev is your home in Israel—our doors are always open to you. Thank you again to Felicia, Roly, Marcelo, and Ari for your love, guidance, and open path to your hearts.

With great love,

Chen ■

Mazal Tov

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

Nathan Wild	Joshua Wexler-Waite
Aaron Horwitz	Yaniv Lewis
Emma Bratman	Lucas Schwartz
Brett Goldstein	Kaila Budofsky

To the following members and their families (through May 2):

Rae-Ann Kershner and Scott Allen on their upcoming wedding.

Chen Ben Or Tsfohi, Marshall T. Meyer Fellow, on receiving her Masters in Jewish Education from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Esther Lederman, Marshall T. Meyer Fellow, on becoming a rabbi and receiving ordination from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Yasher koah to Amy Harmon, daughter of BJ member Barbara Harmon, who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting for her series "The DNA Age" published in *The New York Times*.

Condolences (through May 2)

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

Marcia Kaplan on the death of her beloved mother, Phyllis Kaplan.

Sharon Messitte, Harvey, Matthew, Nicholas and Paul Greenberg and their entire family on the death of Sharon's beloved father, Sidney Messitte.

Amy Wachtel on the death of her beloved aunt, Betty F. Edelstein.

Susan Goldberg on the death of her beloved cousin, Linda Levine.

Susan, Stephen, Sara and Sabrina Kippur and Joshua Lambert on the death of Susan's beloved aunt, Bebe Lavin.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
<p>June 1</p> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 43</p>	<p>2</p> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 44</p>	<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM - Rosh Hodesh Women's Group, 88th St. (SEE P.4) <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 45</p>	<p>4 ROSH HODESH SIVAN</p> <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 46</p>	<p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:00 PM - Annual Meeting (SEE P.3) <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 47</p>
<p>8 EREV SHAUVOT</p> <p>Evening Service followed by Tikkun Leil Shavuot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8:30 PM - midnight, 88th St. Sanctuary (SEE P.10) midnight - 5:30 AM - midnight, 88th St. Frankel Hall 	<p>9 1ST DAY SHAUVOT</p> <p>BJ OFFICE CLOSED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:30 AM - Sunrise Services 10:00 AM - Morning Services, 88th St. 11:15 AM - Children's Services, 88th St. Frankel Hall 9:00 PM - Second Evening Services, 88th St. 	<p>10 2ND DAY SHAUVOT—YIZKOR</p> <p>BJ OFFICE CLOSED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM - Morning Services, 88th St. 10:45 AM - Children's Services, 88th St. Frankel Hall. 	<p>11</p> <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>	<p>12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM - Baking for Kitchens (SEE P.3) <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>
<p>15</p> <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>	<p>16</p> <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>	<p>17</p> <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>	<p>18</p> <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>	<p>19</p> <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>
<p>22</p> <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>July 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM - Rosh Hodesh Women's Group, 88th St. (SEE P.4) 	<p>2</p>	<p>3 ROSH HODESH TAMMUZ</p>

SERVICE TIMES

Morning Minyan (88th Street):

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

Kabbalat Shabbat: PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TIME!

- June 6, 13: 6:00 PM 88th St. Sanctuary • 7:30 PM 88th Street Sanctuary
- Beginning June 20: 7:00 PM 88th St. Sanctuary
- Additional Service June 6: Wandering Minyan 6:00 PM 88th Street Frankel Hall

Shabbat Morning: PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF LOCATION!

- June 7, 14: 9:30 AM 86th Street • Children's Services 10:45 AM 86th Street Chapel and Parlor
- Beginning June 21: 9:30 AM 88th Street • Children's Services 10:45 AM 88th St. Frankel Hall
- Additional Service June 7: Junior Congregation 10:30 AM 86th Street Social Hall

DAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Meeting, 88th St.</p> <p>begins Day 47</p>	<p>6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:00 PM - Family Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 6:00 PM - Wandering Minyan, 88th St. Frankel Hall 7:30 PM - Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. Following the 7:30 PM Service - Oneg Shabbat, 88th St. (SEE P.3) <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 48</p>	<p>7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM - Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St. Bar Mitzvah - Jared Kandel-Fishman Bat Mitzvah - Simone Kolleeny 10:30 AM - Junior Congregation, 86th St. 10:45 AM - Children's Services, 86th St. Following Services - Ledor Vador Shabbat Luncheon, 88th St. (SEE P.3) 4:00 PM - Minha, 88th St. Bar Mitzvah - Matthew Povich <p>OMER: Tonight begins Day 49</p>
<p>Kiddush, 88th St.</p>	<p>13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:00 PM - Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 7:30 PM - Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>	<p>14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM - Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St. Bat Mitzvah - Saskia Naegele Bat Mitzvah - Tess Wagman 10:45 AM - Children's Services, 86th St. Following Services - Community Kiddush 8:30 PM - Chanting with the "Kirtan Rabbi," 88th St. (SEE P.3) <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>
<p>Trip</p>	<p>20 SERVICE TIMES CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM - Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>	<p>21 SERVICE LOCATIONS CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM - Shabbat Morning Services, 88th St. Bat Mitzvah - Hannah Teush Bat Mitzvah - Basia Rosenbaum 10:45 AM - Children's Services, 88th St. Frankel Hall <p>BJ Israel Trip</p>
<p>Trip</p>	<p>27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM - Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 	<p>28 GAY PRIDE SHABBAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM - Shabbat Morning Services, 88th St. 10:45 AM - Children's Services, 88th St. Frankel Hall
<p>TAMMUZ</p>	<p>4 ROSH HODESH TAMMUZ Independence Day BJ OFFICE CLOSED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM - Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 	<p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM - Shabbat Morning Services, 88th St. 10:45 AM - Children's Services, 88th St. Frankel Hall

ADULT CLASSES

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

Wednesday

- Z'man Kabbalat Torateinu: Preparing for Shavuot through Text Study and Song 7:00-8:15 PM remaining class June 4)

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Sunday-Thursdays

- BJ/SPSA Homeless Shelter 7 PM

Thursday

- Judith Bernstein Lunch Program 12 PM

Candlelighting Times

June 6	8:06 PM
June 8 (First Evening Shavuot)	8:08 PM
June 9 (Second Evening Shavuot)	9:16 PM
June 13	8:10 PM
June 20	8:12 PM
June 27	8:13 PM
July 4	8:12 PM
July 11	8:10 PM
July 18	8:06 PM
July 25	8:00 PM

Parashat HaShavu'a

June 7	Naso
June 14	Beha'atotekha
June 21	Shelah
June 28	Korah
July 5	Hukkat
July 12	Balak
July 19	Pinhas
July 26	Mattot

Havdalah Times

June 7	9:15 PM
June 10	holiday ends 9:17 PM
June 14	9:19 PM
June 21	9:21 PM
June 28	9:22 PM
July 5	9:20 PM
July 12	9:16 PM
July 19	9:11 PM
July 26	9:04 PM

Shalom U'l'hitraot

S omewhere out of time
In the mystery of time
Somewhere between memory and forgetfulness,
Dimly though

I remember how once I stood
At Your mountain trembling
Amid the fire and the thunder.
How I stood there, out of bondage
In a strange land and afraid.
And You loved me and You fed me
And I feasted on Your words.
And, yes, I can remember
How the thunder was my heart
And the fire was my soul.
O God, I do remember.
The fire burns in me anew.
And here I am, once more
A witness to that timeless moment.
Present now in the light of Your Torah
I am reborn.
(from *Vitaher Libenu*,
Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley)

This meditation is read aloud before the Torah is taken out of the aron hakodesh (the holy ark) every Shabbat morning at my parents' congregation, where I grew up. We are entering z'man matan Torahteinu, the time of the giving of our Torah, one of the names for Shavuot, when we commemorate the giving and receiving of the Torah on Sinai. There is a beautiful tradition that we were all present at Sinai, even those of us who were not yet born into this world, so all of us have the primal memory of receiving the Torah, when our identity was revealed to us.

Everything has its Torah. The Torah is truly the Torah of Everything, and some believe that God used the Torah as a blueprint for Creation. There are also many smaller sifrei

Torah: the Torah of New York, the Torah of social justice, the Torah of Jewish education. Each of these places and experiences has a Torah, a compilation of stories and laws that shape our identities.

For the past seven years, I have been blessed to receive the Torah of B'nai Jeshurun, first as BJ's Director of Family Life, then as the Director of Education. It has been my distinct honor to work with BJ's professional and spiritual leaders, lay leaders, congregants, and children. I have been here long enough to witness ideas and dreams bear fruit, especially in the areas of the Hebrew School, Junior Congregation, B'nai Mitzvah, the Teen Program, and Reach for Shabbat. This is truly an awesome place to work! I am sad that I have now arrived at the moment when I will leave the professional Sinai that BJ has been to me.

I offer my profound gratitude to all of the people who were my partners in realizing these dreams at BJ and I offer a blessing to all who will continue the work of making BJ a better place for kids and families. May the Youth and Family Education Team, Davey Rosen, Rebecca Rosenthal, and Kerrith Solomon, under the wise guidance of Ivy Schreiber and Rabbi Felicia Sol, be as lucky as I have been. May you have strength and perseverance to implement your visions, and may you often taste the sweet fruits of your successes.

A wider thanks to all of BJ's leadership and congregants, even outside of the realm of Youth & Family Education, for helping Ari and me find our spiritual home here. We look forward to being "civilians" at BJ starting in June! ■

—Hollis Gauss

Hollis Gauss began working at BJ in June, 2001, and cannot really believe she is leaving at the end of May. In August, she will start working as the Director of Jewish Life at the Jewish Community Project Downtown.

Information About Your Membership Renewal

RENEW ONLINE OR BY MAIL

- Please visit www.bj.org to fill out your renewal membership application.
- If you wish to renew by mail, please complete the membership application mailed in late May.
- Staff regularly updates our database according to the information you provide on your application. Please complete this form in full.
- It is important that we receive birthdates for all members of your family so that we may include everyone in age-appropriate mailings such as B'nai Mitzvah, family programs, events based on age group etc.
- If you have multiple e-mail addresses, please provide the address to which you want to receive BJ communications.

FOR ALL RENEWING MEMBERS

- **In order to ensure you receive your High Holy Day entrance cards, you must first pay your outstanding pledges and balances.** Our policy states that any payment received by B'nai Jeshurun will be used to pay off the oldest outstanding pledges and balances first. For example, if you have membership balances that pre-date the current year, your new payment will be used to pay the oldest balance first.
- We also remind you that if you have not yet fulfilled your 2007 Kol Nidre Partnership pledge, you may send a check to the BJ office or click on "Make a Donation" at www.bj.org. If you would like to speak to someone about your pledge, please call Erzsébet Ragyina in the Development Department at x228.

HIGH HOLY DAY INFORMATION

- **Your location for High Holy Day services is assigned on a first-come first-served basis.**
 - **The earlier you return your membership forms, the more likely it is you will be placed at your preferred location.**
 - **Space at some locations fills up within a few weeks so please consider sending your location request as soon as possible.**
 - **If your family and friends wish to be at the same location, you must all renew at the same time.**
- Special Needs seating will only be available at the BJ Sanctuary on 88th Street and the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew on 86th Street.
- In order for us to provide entrance cards for Rosh Hashanah, membership applications must be in our office and date-stamped by **Friday, September 12.**
- In order for us to provide entrance cards for Yom Kippur, membership applications must be in our office and date-stamped by **Friday, September 19.**
- Entrance cards will be mailed starting late July. Entrance cards will not be mailed after Wednesday, September 10. Beginning Monday, September 15, entrance cards will ONLY be available for pick up in the B'nai Jeshurun office.

Remember to return your membership application no later than Friday, August 15, 2008!

Questions? Contact Belinda Lasky, Director of Membership, at blasky@bj.org or x224.

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. If you have any questions, please call Erzsébet at x228.

The Shabbat of Inclusion

my name is Ilene Lainer and my husband, Steven Kantor, and I are congregants at BJ. In February I spoke at BJ on the Shabbat of Inclusion, a Sabbath dedicated to looking at how we can better include people with disabilities in our community. This celebration was joined by more than fifty congregations in the N.Y. metropolitan area. This is an excerpt of my comments.

Like many of you, I always knew I wanted children. We were blessed with a son, Max, who seemed perfect in every way. About two years later we had Ari. When he was a little more than 18 months old I noticed that Ari was different from the other children his age. He was unwilling to join in and seemed unaware of us when we called to him.

We need to find our humanity and do what may not come naturally... get beyond our aversion and reach out."

We saw the doctor and after lots of tests we got the diagnosis... Autism spectrum disorder. We were stunned... dumbstruck.

Like many of you, we dreamed that our children would be bright and capable. They would grow to have lots of friends and one day build lives of their own. Like so many other parents we had hopes about who our children would become. In a single

45-minute doctor's appointment many of our dreams for Ari were crushed. We were told that Ari would never have friends, might never talk and would never grow up to be the strong and independent person we imagined.

For the next five weeks I spent my days on the phone calling every lead I could find and talking to anyone who would help me find resources for our son. I spent my nights panicked and crying that we couldn't find help. While it is extremely hard to get a diagnosis that something is terribly wrong with your child it is simply impossible to accept that you can't find him the help he needs.

Finally we found people to help us. They were costly, they often disagreed with one another, and we saw little improvement. For the next few years our home was turned into a public meeting place. We lost our privacy and for some time it felt like we had lost our dreams.

Having a child with a severe disability changes you. It is isolating and it truly makes you an outsider in your own world. As the parent of a child with autism I can't socialize in a family setting. Other parents can talk while their children play. Our child doesn't play so one of us has to be with him at all times. That means that we can't socialize unless others are willing to join us in our separate and somewhat isolated world.

When you have a child with a severe disability, you need even more support than you would need to parent a typical child. The truth is, once you have a child with a severe disability you get less support. Fewer people invite you to their homes. It is understandable. They don't know what to say. They don't know

how to help. They don't know how to treat our son. People don't ever call to make plans with Ari. Few people remember his birthday unless they are relatives or therapists.

Getting Ari into school was close to impossible but after years of waiting we found a school that would take him and people who taught us to help our son. Once things were better for Ari, I realized how angry I was. I kept asking myself, "Why is education a right for every child but for a child with a disability it's a privilege?" "Why did I have to leave New York City so he could attend the only appropriate school that would take him?" "Where are the schools in Manhattan?"

We decided this was just too hard. If we were dissolving under the weight of these problems what would this be like for a single mother or someone who didn't have the financial means or education that we did? We decided we had to do something so we joined with others and started a foundation and a charter school that provides a specialized education for children with autism. I know that we did this because we have a child with autism. Later I realized that speaking up for others who cannot speak for themselves is a very Jewish thing to do.

What I want from other people is for them to recognize Ari as another person in the room. I don't want him to be invisible... or worse. Simple acts of kindness like a smile make a world of difference.

I think that most people have an aversion to the disabled. They often find them frightening, repellent or just off-putting. Maybe we just have to acknowledge that this is a common feeling.

We all have to remember that any of us could be disabled. Any of us could have a stroke, be in a car accident or have a child or grandchild with autism. We need to find our humanity and do what may not come naturally... get beyond our aversion and reach out.

We have found that those who have taken the time to know Ari tell us they feel enriched by him and his spirit. My hope is that more people will make the effort to reach out to people with special needs and they will find a rich and rewarding experience unlike any other. They will find that there is a window to a very different world filled with wonder and joy and complete kindness. I know that for us, our lives are much better because of Ari.

BJ, and many other congregations, have decided that it is time to focus more on how we can include all people with disabilities in our community. Rabbi Marcelo Bronstein recently hosted the BJ Inclusion Committee at his home, and we are hard at work discussing how to best reach out to our community. Please get involved. If you would like more information, contact Naomi Goodhart at ngoodhart@bj.org or x240. ■

—Ilene Lainer

Adult Education Fund

Alan and Mimi Frank in honor of Bernice Todres' 70th birthday
 Helena Diamant Glass in honor of the birth of Lauren and Ari Holtzblatt's beloved daughter, Noa Sasha Blu Holtzblatt
 Helena Diamant Glass in honor of Alan and Mimi Frank's new home
 Helena Diamant Glass in memory of Rabbi Judah and Rebitzin Hadassah Nadich
 Joy Sardinsky in memory of her aunt, Sylvia Skolnick
 Alvin and Pat Thaler in honor of Rabbi Hillel Friedman
 Bernice Todres in memory of Ellen Landau's beloved father, Irving Landau, and Suzanne Jacoby's beloved father, Leonard Galfin

Daily Minyan Fund

Elaine Nevins in memory of Harvey Israelton's beloved mother and in memory of Shira Nadich Levin's beloved mother, Hadassah Nadich

Etz Hayim

Helena Diamant Glass in cherished memory of her beloved father, Karl Diamant

Floral Fund

Alan and Mimi Frank in honor of their son, Jarod Leland and Ilana Toorans's marriage

General Fund

Robert and Kathleen Emerman in appreciation of BJ's wonderful Friday evening services
 Paul and Nancy Freireich in honor of Bernice Todres' 70th birthday
 David Gottlieb in memory of his beloved father, Jacob Gottlieb
 Stephen and Susan Kippur
 Mortimer and Bernice Levine in celebration of Helen and Hal Lehrman's 50th anniversary
 Robert Linderman and Ida Granowitz in memory of Pauline Israelton
 Jonathan and Ellen Litt in memory of Stuart Wolfer
 Brian and Sharon Milzoff
 Ronnie Reden
 Seymour and Lillian Rosenberg in honor of Karen Mendelson and Adam Skolnick's engagement and forthcoming marriage
 Adina Schecter
 Lisa and Richard Sobelsohn in honor of Rabbi Felicia Sol, Hazzan Ari Priven, Rebecca Rosenthal, Mira Rivera and Jerry Korman for their support of Rachel Sobelsohn becoming a Bat Mitzvah.
 Jack and Judith Stern

Amy Wachtel in honor of Malcolm Fox's Bar Mitzvah, and Anders Halperin's Bar Mitzvah
 Amy Wachtel in honor of Hershel Zellman and Mary Noble
 Mim Warden
 Cynthia Wineburgh

Hevra Kadisha Fund

Stanfred and Phyllis Silver in memory of their beloved father and father-in-law

Hebrew School Fund

Daniel and Leslie Merims in honor of the birth of their grandson, Zachary Dimitri Merims
 Seymour Schechter in memory of his father, Moisha Aaron

Helen Radin Memorial Zayin Adar Annual Teaching

In memory of Helen Radin:

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 Deborah Pinsky
 Herman and Myrna Rosen
 Eric and Jennifer Solomon
 Amy Wachtel

Harold and Helen Lehrman in memory of Harvey Israelton's beloved mother, Pauline Israelton

Homeless Shelter Fund

Julie Brail
 Andrea and Larry Riskin in honor of Helen and Hal Lehrman

Judith Bernstein Lunch Program

Debra Dash in memory of her beloved parents, Muriel and Sam Dash
 Linda Kates in memory of Harvey Israelton's beloved mother, Pauline Israelton
 Richard Levine and Janet Gold
 Glenn Marlowe and Judy Geller-Marlowe in memory of Shira Nadich Levin's beloved mother, Hadassah Nadich

Marshall T. Meyer Memorial Fund

Glenn Marlowe and Judy Geller-Marlowe in honor of the birth of Ari and Lauren Holtzblatt's beloved daughter, Noa Sasha Blu Holtzblatt

Sarah Segal Memorial Fund

Richard and Elaine Heffner in memory of Sarah Segal

Shabbat Oneg Fund

Clifford Aymes

Shira Palmer-Sherman Memorial Fund

Andrew Sherman and Joanne Palmer in honor of Lori Moss's birthday

Yizkor Fund

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 James Altman and Ellen Schechter in memory of Ellen's beloved mother, Pearl Grossman Schecter
 Tzvi Barak and Marion Maienthau-Barak in memory of Yaacov Borushak
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 Bonita and Harvey Ganot in memory of her beloved sister, Elizabeth Chaney
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 Jonathan Green in memory of his beloved grandmother, Anne Mayer
 Frances Greenberg in memory of her beloved husband Jack, Baby Linsky and beloved daughter Rosalie Linsky
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 Dorothy Winter in memory of her beloved parents, Fannie and Joseph Winter
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 The Membership Committee in memory of Marcia Kaplan's beloved mother Phyllis Kaplan

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 June/July 2008

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Editor & Designer: Harriet R. Goren

SYNAGOGUE:

257 West 88th Street

OFFICES:

2109 Broadway (Ansonia), #203

Main Telephone Number
212-787-7600

Fax Number (2109 Broadway)
212-496-7600

Website
www.bj.org

Committees & Services:

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 J. Rolando Matalon
 Marcelo R. Bronstein
 Felicia L. Sol

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Rabbi Brent Chaim Spodek
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