

The Shofar



July 2016
Sivan-Tammuz 5776

A Message from Rabbi Jordi Gendra



Remember Your Future

Some months ago I was teaching during a Friday night service about the fourth commandment, which is usually translated into English as “Remember the Shabbat and keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). However, this

traditional way of rendering it does not help us understand the deep truth embedded in the verse.

The verse opens with the imperative *Z'chor*, which poses a difficulty to grammarians because it is not easy to parse. It was the French medieval commentator of the Bible, Rashi, who explained it as a constant remembrance. He emphasized that this is not a punctual action — to revisit past events — but rather a constant action. Therefore, this imperative deals with the future, not the past. The commandment tells us that it always refers to the Shabbat that lies in front of us. A better translation of this commandment would then be “Remember your future!”

We are walking our way into this future together. During the last year two years we started building a project together. During this past year I have emphasized the value of community as a common unity and as reciprocity, both of them abstract concepts. This fourth commandment reminds us of the invisible. As a congregation we are still on the path, although during the past year we have accomplished a lot. Proof of that is the fact that we have regular attendance to the different minyanim that we hold during the month. We also increased our adult education activity, with exciting programs organized by many other committees. Many of you have become my study partners during these past years.

And yet, we need to remember the future! But you ask yourself, “How can we remember something that is still to come?” I know this is a difficult concept, but still we are responsible for the work needed to give birth to this future; to make the invisible visible; to bring the future to the present. That is why I need to

appeal to you to make this possible. We need your help as volunteers, making calls, stuffing envelopes, inviting friends to join us, participating on committees, taking responsibility for the future of CBT-BI. Every dime counts, every effort is welcome to bring the future into reality.

Rabbi Nahman of Brezlav taught: “Do not to ask which is your path to someone who knows it, because you will end up lost.” Disoriented and finding our path again; remembering the future; remembering that the power lies in our hands, as a community, to dream and to create anew and experience the world again as in the moment when it was first created — this is the sense of celebrating Shabbat at CBT-BI.



CBT-BI Announces New Board for 2016-2017

At the annual General Membership Meeting in May, the membership passed a budget for the upcoming year and approved new bylaws and a new slate of officers. The budget and bylaws can be found at cbtbi.org.

Below is the new board of trustees:

President: Lynn Helmer

1st VP: Beth Nazer

2nd VP: Marcy Kaufman

3rd VP: Leora Rothschild

Treasurer: Gary Rosen

Financial Secretary: Allison Harris

Recording Secretary: Chuck Nappen

Corresponding Secretary: Art Shapiro

Trustees: Jesse Brown, Sam Chelnik, Ben Gelbart,
Marc Kamp, Ben Negin, Mina Newstadt

From the President's Desk by Lynn Helmer



Rabbi Jordi's recent column explains that Shavuot celebrates the giving, rather than the receiving, of the Torah, a reminder to thank all for the gifts that make CBT-BI a special place. People give to CBT-BI in diverse ways — in how they choose to participate,

in how they choose to volunteer, and in how they choose to donate. Some give time or money anonymously or quietly. Others are more visible. All give what makes sense to them and their priorities. May our default always be appreciation for the gift of each other.

You will see changes in structure this year. Bylaws drive some of this. Feedback that some don't find participation rewarding suggests new approaches. Many juggle professional and volunteer commitments, family needs, health and financial realities; we need to find ways to welcome and include all according to their needs. Our collective desire to make CBT-BI better drives change. Let's applaud the things that work and work collaboratively and positively to change things that don't.

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It is my great pleasure to introduce our vice presidents.

Beth Nazer is the first vice president. She is responsible for the bylaws' required communication committee and ritual committee and she chairs strategic planning. B'nai mitzvah support, the choir (still directed by Norma Myer) and the kitchen committee will fall under the umbrella of the ritual committee. Beth leads the social action activities that currently include American Red Cross blood drives, food collections for Peter's Pantry and the Betsy and Peter Fischer Food Pantries of the JCC, and works with Family Promise of Gloucester County, an interfaith approach to solving homelessness. Beth asks that anyone interested in

participating in any of the above come and talk to her the next time that you see her at CBT-BI or call or e-mail her (brnazer@gmail.com).

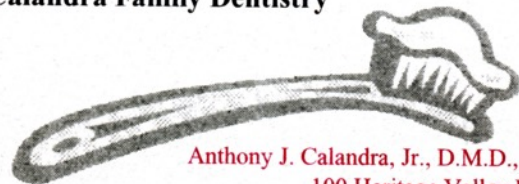
Marcy Kaufman is the second vice president. She will chair the bylaws-directed education and membership committees. The education committee will include the religious school, adult education, communication, and Tot Shabbat activities as either committees or subcommittees. The membership committee will support bikur cholim, social, social action, Shabbat Across America, break the fast, Passover Seder, and related activities — the structure continues to evolve. Marcy notes that this year promises to be amazing with great events, learning, coming together as a community, and becoming more involved in our community. If you would like to get involved in any of these activities, please email Marcy at mhkaufman@yahoo.com.

Leora Rothschild is the third vice president. She will chair the fundraising function, which will include the activities of the existing fundraising, donations, and script committees. The structure of all of this is still not firmly in place. As this is Leora's first year as a board member and an officer, she is looking forward to learning the board functions and how she can contribute going forward.

As president, I am responsible for the governance, strategic planning, finance, buildings and security, and nominating committees. I welcome your questions, support and interest. Feel free to contact me at Lynn@cbtbi.org.



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A Message from Wendy Marder, Educational Director



It is summer, a time for relaxation, vacations, sunshine, and celebrations. I rejoice at all my former students' graduations, kvell with pride at the wonderful young men and women they have become, and wish them and their families continued

good fortune as they go on to college and careers and life on their own.

This summer my family and I also have the privilege and pleasure of planning our daughter's wedding to a wonderful young man. Yes, there is stress with the details, but the hopes and dreams of this brand new branch to our family certainly counter those.

But even as we rejoice in these great life cycle events, the world is raging in crazy acts of violence and illness: Terrorism in Israel and the world's denial of the seriousness of this, gun violence decimating innocent people, growing worse with each incident, car accidents taking our teens at an ever-increasing frequency, mostly due to cell phones and carelessness, and diseases torturing and sometimes taking our loved ones.

How do we deal with these horrors? How do we raise our children without putting them in a bubble? How do we rejoice when our hearts are so heavy?

Rabbi Harold Kushner's book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* gives us guidance on how to respond to heartbreak with understanding rather than bitterness and despair, how to move forward with hope and renewal, and how to compound the good and make life better.

What does this have to do with education? I read an interesting article about Jewish parenting, which I believe goes hand-in-hand with teaching and raising our children. In this article, from *Moment* magazine (January/February 2016), many experts and parents are asked: "Is there a Jewish Way to Parent?" As an educator and liaison between parents, teachers, and children, I am often in the position of solving problems, finding solutions, and making peace in difficult situations.

If you are sending your child to a religious school, to CBT-BI, then you have an interest in what Judaism has to say about life and child rearing, but it doesn't necessarily mean that parenting needs to be one religion or the other. However, one of my favorite rabbinic authorities, Rabbi Bradley Artson, eloquently writes: "There's a human way to parent, and then what's distinctively or additionally Jewish on top of that. Human parenting is a combination of two core Jewish values: *chesed* (compassion) and *din* (justice). The Jewish manifestation of parenting is that the Jews are the heirs of an ancient tradition of wisdom and holiness. We must give our children the vocabulary and the cultural structure to be able to know that each of them is

a child of G-d." He goes on to say that the mitzvot and holidays are really all about "teaching and reminding us that we were brought out of slavery to be able to shine in the world." Other writers emphasized the various elements of Judaism, like *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) that help our children be better people; others spoke of the community of the synagogue as a place of comfort and extended family.

Regardless of your views of Judaism and/or parenting, I'm sure we all agree on one thing: There needs to be more compassion in the world and less politics. In tragic situations, look to the helpers. Be the helper. Try to find the good in everyone and instead of a race to the finish, enjoy each day of the journey and make it meaningful. We don't know what life will bring, but we can try to bring the best we can to life.

Wishes to all for a summer filled with all good things and the time for healing and renewal.



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Meet Our Summer B'nai Mitzvah

Dylan Erik Getz, Dovid Aryeh ben Mordecai Binyamin, son of Ronnie and Michael Getz, became a bar mitzvah on Saturday, June 18. His parsha was *Nasso* from the fourth book of the Torah, *Bamidbar* (Numbers).

Dylan's bar mitzvah project was working at the Camden County Animal Shelter. He swims and plays football, and though shy, he is funny and sweet when you get to know him. Learning his haftarah was his biggest challenge, but despite that he has looked forward to his bar mitzvah and celebrating this day with friends and family. Preparing for his bar mitzvah helped him become a better Hebrew reader and he especially wants to thank his tutor and teacher Jana Schachter and his family for all they have done.



Benjamin Samuel Berman, Shmuel Velvel ben Yitzchak Dovid v'Leah Malka, son of Michael and Lynn Berman, became a bar mitzvah on Saturday, June 25. His parsha was *B'ha'alotecha*, from the book of *Bamidbar*.

Ben has a sister, Hannah, and two dogs. His mitzvah project is creating a vertical garden for CBT-BI. He plays basketball and soccer. His biggest challenge was learning his haftarah, and he looked forward to seeing his friends and family celebrate with him at his bar mitzvah. Ben said that preparing for his bar mitzvah helped him focus on being Jewish and he gives special thanks to his tutor and teacher, Jana Schachter.

Joshua Hancock, Yehoshua ben Masha Leah, son of Monica Ross and the late Donald Hancock, will become a bar mitzvah on Saturday, July 23. His parsha is *Balak*, from the book of *Bamidbar*.

Josh's mitzvah project was working at the Camden County Animal Shelter. His biggest challenge to becoming a bar mitzvah was practicing, but he managed to find time despite his busy soccer and chorus schedule. He is looking forward to college and having a family of his own one day. Preparing for his bar mitzvah has made him more responsible, and he thanks his mom, the rabbi, and Miss Jana for all their help.



A View from the Pew

by Yossef ben Eliyahu

Throwing Out the B'nai Mitzvah with the Bath Water



Congregations across the spectrum of American Judaism, with the exception of the Orthodox, bemoan the loss of many of their children to a more secular stance after their b'nai mitzvah or confirmation as they go forward. With the coming of

college and young adult status, this trend frequently continues. Their link to the Jewish community grows weak, but may abate briefly with the coming of *their* children, and the cycle continues. In a few generations, as we know from the research, we have produced many Jews who hold only an ethnic sense of identity as their primary attachment to the Jewish community. Active Jewish communal engagement continues to diminish. At the same time, those who return to participation in communal life or "return for the first time" join a synagogue having little or no organizational and leadership skills and experience. In addition, they come back to the community with a thirteen-year-old's understanding of Judaism. Those already deeply engaged in synagogue and Jewish communal life are eager to recruit and mentor the next generation of committee chairs and officers.

*"It is not your duty to complete the task,
but neither are you free to desist from it."*

Those on the front lines of the struggle to maintain Jewish continuity through increased synagogue and communal engagement are troubled by the diminishing pool of "new recruits" to our cause. We tell our b'nai mitzvah they are now adults within the Jewish community. We tell them they are responsible to fulfill the commandments of observing Shabbat, fasting on fast days, visiting the sick, comforting the mourners, and maintaining the synagogue, to name

just a few. But we largely fail to actually include them in our efforts to maintain and engage others in the CBT-BI community. They don't feel welcomed because we do not welcome them, invite them to join us, instruct them or mentor them! Also we underestimate their talents, capacities, maturity, and willingness to engage in the life of the synagogue. At this point in their development into adulthood, they are already a valuable resource. Some of these young people have already distinguished themselves as tutors and mentors to our younger students. Our BBYO Re'ut chapter has distinguished itself with its intelligent, thoughtful, and moving Yom HaShoah programs, which have all been well attended and highly praised. Trips to Israel, BBYO, and summer camp help them to solidify their Jewish identity, but not their sense of valued participants to our CBT-BI family or the larger South Jersey Jewish community.

Our b'nai mitzvah teens, after being called to the Torah, are as obligated as their parents and all the other adult members of our community to support and maintain the synagogue and the community. The Talmud, in the Mishna, instructs us that, "It is not your duty to complete the task, but neither are you free to desist from it" (*Pirkei Avot* 2:21). Our teens are the next generation of Jews, and it is not too soon to begin to teach and mentor them with respect to supporting their community. Learning to maintain synagogues, participate in leadership activities, and practice their interpersonal skills provide valuable preparation for college and life beyond. These skills transfer to secondary school, higher education, and organizational life that stretches out before them. Thus, we can create a cohort of future synagogue and community leaders. This is an investment opportunity we have so far failed to take full advantage of. It may pay back our investment in our young brothers and sisters handsomely. In my next column, I will suggest some specific actions we can take to benefit from this opportunity.

B' Shalom,
Yossi

Happiness is breakfast on the last day of religious school!



Summer Tot Shabbat Services

Tot Shabbat is a service designed for children ages 7 and younger and takes place on the second Friday of the month starting at 6:30 PM. Non-members are welcome!

Upcoming Tot Shabbat services are July 8, August 12, and September 9.

The Shofar

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Put up the coffee: CBT-BI is the place to be on Sunday mornings



Above: Members of Randi Wolf's mosaic class work on their artistic creations.

Below: Moms enjoy knitting while their children attend religious school.



Sisterhood News by Luba Veytsman



Our Sisterhood had a very good year! We ended the year leading Saturday morning Shabbat services followed by a luncheon and our year-end dinner at Randazzo's. I would like to thank my board and the members of our Sisterhood who helped

during the year to make all of our events and fundraisers a success and a good time!

At our end-of-the-year dinner, a new Sisterhood board was installed. This year, Allison Harris and I

will be co-presidents of Sisterhood. I am very happy to share this honor and work side-by-side with Allison, our hard-working board, and Sisterhood members this coming year.

To kick off the new year, we are going to have a barbecue on August 18 at Diane Shapiro's house — thank you, Diane! If you are not yet a member, this would be a good time to join the Sisterhood, make new friends, contribute to the community, and enjoy all of our programs. Please look for our flyers with more information for our upcoming events.

A safe and fun summer to all!

Shalom,
Luba

Men's Club News by Jordan Harris



The hazy and lazy days of summer are finally here, and the Men's Club is looking to bring some sizzle to the season with upcoming events.

The spring season was active, with strong attendance for our monthly breakfast meetings (held on the first

Sunday of the month) and for

our card/game nights (the fourth Thursday of each month). The Men's Club continues to try many of our area's terrific diners in search of the perfect spot to find great food along with terrific conversation for our meetings. We are even expanding our culinary focus to include some of the region's best bagel shops to host our meetings.

Although the summer can be a slow season in which to plan events (due to vacations, beaches, and pool memberships), the Men's Club continues to plan events throughout the summer. Among the event ideas that are currently in discussion include a trip across the Delaware to see the Phillies play, a trip to the World War II museum in Washington, D.C. and a late summer/early fall bus trip to Manhattan to visit the haunting but significant Ground Zero site.

The Men's Club will sponsor a Friday and Saturday service and oneg during the summer when Rabbi Jordi is on vacation. Stay alert for details on the dates for the services.

One of the best ways for members to have an input on event ideas and planning is to attend our monthly breakfast meetings. It is a great forum to present ideas for future events or offer suggestions on how the Men's Club can be improved. The meetings are also a terrific avenue for socialization; very often, our discussions can go from synagogue matters to sports to politics in a very short period. There are plenty of laughs and fun to be had at our events.

See you at the next event!

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