

The Shofar



March 2018
Adar-Nissan 5778

A Message from Rabbi Jordi

When the Torah is moved by emotion



Furtive hands touching the mantle and quickly kissed, a *siddur* stretched out and brought to the lips, two arms opened in front of the *sefer* to welcome it, *talit* stretched out towards a Torah that has become mobile (carried in the arms), grave or moved countenances in front of the biblical parade, attitudes

oscillating between distance and extroversion, between introspection and joy. These are all the gestures and behaviors I observe at the time when the Torah is taken out from the ark and carried around in our community. These diverse, and even opposing attitudes, reflect the sensibilities and traditions of each one of us, but they show that at this moment of the service there appears an additional feeling similar to the extra soul that Shabbat gives us: emotion.

The coming out of the Torah therefore represents a “strong moment” of the Shabbat service; certainly, this intensity is caused by the pleasure of the study and commentary of the *parashah* during which the curious spirits rediscover the meaning of the Word. But we cannot ignore its emotional content, sincere and unfeigned, which embraces most of the participants at this moment. It seems that, at this moment, the thrill of Revelation and the Sinaitic moment when the Torah is given, repeats again.

The Sefer Torah, in itself, is not insensitive because the object is embedded with meaning and history. The parchment, venerable support of the ancient texts, is the fruit of a long and meticulous writing by a *sofer* who rewrites an immutable text. The mantle is, at the same time, a decorative clothing, a velvety protection and a symbolic object accompanied by *rimonim* (crowns), a *yad* (pointer) and a pectoral plate like that of the high priest. The ark containing the Sefer Torah (*aharon ha-kodesh*) and its curtain (*parokhet*) are also reminiscent of the Temple and offer a

symbolic and ritual setting to the Torah. Despite the past centuries, the tabernacle of Moses and Aaron, the Temple of Solomon are there in front of us and open once again for the release of the Word.

Beyond the demonstrative gestures, this emotional feeling does not mean we are sanctifying the book but rather showing a strong attachment for the text; the beauty of the place, the decoration of the objects, the antiquity of the parchment are only attributes intended to exalt and praise the Word.

The palpable emotion at the exit of the Torah questions us as to the religious feeling that we feel at this moment. Leon Askenazy, a french Jewish philosopher, recalled that in the Talmud, the religious feeling appears when these two

contradictory notions of joy and fear are perceived together. The affection and respect that mark the gestures and attitudes observed at the moment when the Torah is taken out of the ark are fully in line with the two notions evoked by the Talmud. The physical materialization of the divine Word through the Sefer Torah becomes a perception of the presence of G-d that plunges us into joy and fear. Through these feelings, a personal bond is woven and an intimate connection is made between God and us through the Torah and its teaching. All the small gestures and

behaviors mentioned above then take on another aspect since they become concrete by the sensitivity and the dialogue of each one with G-d. This emotion thus becomes an intuition of the relationship with G-d and only reinforces this precept of Shema Israel: “You shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might.”



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A Message from the Executive Board

Humpty Dumpty, Eggs, and Other Ideas

As we sit looking at the snow (which seems ridiculous and unnecessary), all of our thoughts are turning to spring. What does spring bring? Hope, happiness, sunshine, renewal and eggs, which seem to symbolize all of that.

This springtime will be a season of change as Rabbi Jordi has given his notice and we have to determine our next steps. We hope that his decision brings to Rabbi Jordi whatever it is that he wants and needs. We invite him to remain a part of our CBT-BI life and history going forward. Most rabbis leaving a congregation hope that they are leaving it stronger than when they came; we would imagine that Rabbi Jordi wishes that for us, too. We have four months together to solidify his CBT-BI legacy with us and begin all of our paths forward, hopefully with his support and collaboration.

Each of us has and has had our own relationship with Rabbi Jordi. Each of us will experience his departure in a unique way. Some people will focus on what they are losing while others will focus on what the future might bring. Rabbi Jordi's departure is a loss and mourning that will happen when a rabbi leaves; each of us has a personal way of mourning.

We now ask everybody to join in focusing on the good things that we have done together and how we can achieve our brightest future together. We have had many accomplishments to enjoy and be proud of. We should celebrate them all.

We want to be very clear that our focus on the future in no way takes away from our past; we hope that Rabbi Jordi will fondly remember his accomplishments with us. Those include new types of services and new adult education programming — there are many others. We confess that we will miss his beautiful voice. We should also celebrate our growing Hebrew school, the service of our dedicated board and committees, the building renovations and security grants, and substantial process improvements for which we thank Steve Blocher, Steve Kurtz, and Judy Finneran. In the midst of sudden change, it is too easy to panic and lose track of what is good. We have a lot that is good!

Our leadership team has always aimed to be transparent and inclusive. As we begin our new journey, we give you our word that the congregation will have many opportunities to share insights and wishes, re-affirm values, remain informed and redefine our culture of kindness, compassion, spirituality

and *Yiddishkeit*. We are confident that those who will follow us share those values.

So, we are NOT like Humpty Dumpty. He was afraid; we are not. We haven't had a great fall and we do not need to



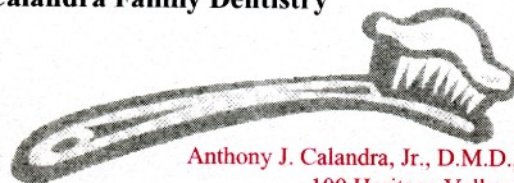
be put together again. We will enjoy our holidays, our Passover eggs, our opportunity for renewal, and we will move forward together to an ever brighter future.

— Lynn, Marcy, Beth, and Leora

Todah Rabah!

A big thank-you goes out to Mel Spiegel, who, after attending the Purim shpiel last month, made a \$100 donation to be used toward next year's shpiel.

Jamie H. Green, D.D.S. Calandra Family Dentistry



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Magnifying & Sanctifying: *Yitgadal V'Yitkadash*

by Wendy Marder, Educational Director



What is this prayer that we say several times during Jewish prayer services on Shabbat, holidays, and even during the week? Do you notice that it is said in between certain sections of the service to divide it up? Did you know that there is a Half Kaddish, a Full Kaddish, and a Mourner's Kaddish? They

all contain most of the same words and they all are said to remind us of G-d's holiness and importance.

Our older students are learning to recite the Kaddish. They have learned that the word Kaddish comes from the root word "*kodesh*" which means holiness. The question is why do people who have just lost a loved one stand and recite the Mourner's Kaddish? Are we comforting G-d who lost one of G-d's creations? Are we comforting ourselves, praising and acknowledging G-d's presence even in our miserable state of mind? Are we comforting others who need our presence to stay anchored in the real world? Are we reaffirming our faith that despite our feelings of sorrow and loss, we are able to pray, recognize greatness in the world and be thankful to G-d?

I believe it is all of these things. Some people do not believe in standing up at all if they are not in mourning or observing a *yahrtzeit*, but others stand in solidarity for those who are mourning, and for those who have no one to say *kaddish* for them. Different synagogues have different customs. At CBT-BI some of us stand and some sit. The important aspect is that we are respectful during this important prayer that not only magnifies and sanctifies G-d's name but ours, the people around us, and the people who are no longer with us, because we are/were all created by G-d.

Please contribute a picture of a loved one to our Kaddish board in the school hallway. We began this tribute board with Mr. Al Schachter, our beloved congregant, who passed away this January. His vision for our synagogue and school and his hard work helped form his legacy and he was an amazing role model for all. We will add our beloved teacher of blessed memory, Luisa Ragonese to this board, as well as our generous school benefactor, Moishe Neidenberg, whose pictures have been up in the school since they passed. By creating this bulletin board, we are magnifying and sanctifying the names of all who have passed and are dear to us and have helped magnify and sanctify G-d's name in their

own way.

At Al's memorial last month, students opened the service with the singing of *Hatikvah* and the flag raising. This was our promise to CBT-BI that Jewish education would continue.

There are many other instances that demonstrate how we have kept this promise:

In January, our third grade led us in song and prayer and spoke about their Hebrew names and favorite Jewish things.

In December, all of our classes lined up to light a menorah and stood together singing the blessings.

Mitzvah Day tzedakah collections and campaigns united our students in the action of Tikun Olam, repairing the world.

.....
Please contribute a picture of a loved one to our Kaddish board in the school hallway.
.....

The older classes participated in a Tu B'Shevat seder, tasting fruits from Israel, sipping different colored juices representing different seasons, different spheres, and our younger students planted seeds in cups to grow the parsley for their seders.

At Shabbat school, students parade around the sanctuary with their Torahs, go up for an aliyah with their parents, and lead prayers at Shabbat services.

Purim shpiel, carnival fun, Megillah readings, and costume parades are forms of Jewish education masquerading as silliness.

So *Yitgadal, v'yitkadash* — glorify and sanctify G-d's name, by teaching, learning, participating, laughing, and even crying, and being an active part of your children's lives here at CBT-BI, at home, and in the world.

Thank you! Todah rabah.

Bob's Garage



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Mazel Tov, Beth Lindenbaum!

Hebrew Name: Beryl

Bat Mitzvah Date: November 4, 2017

Parsha: Vayera

Beth is the first student in the Hebrew school class of 2017-2018 to become a bat mitzvah. She has a brother, Joey, who is in 6th grade. Her mitzvah project was participating in and raising money for the American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in Philadelphia. Beth loves sports, and participates in basketball, cross country, track, and softball.

The biggest challenge to becoming a bat mitzvah, according to Beth, was teaching her parents, and that preparing for the big day helped her to learn Hebrew.

Beth sends a special thank-you to her tutors, friends, and family.



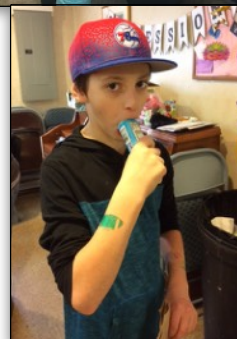
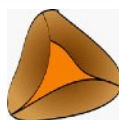
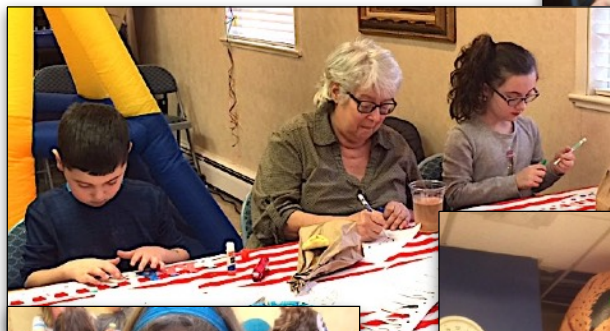
Les Miz Les Megillah: A French Twist to the Purim Story



Mazel tov to the cast, directors, and crew of "Les Miz Les Megillah," the epic Purim shpiel! If you missed the performance, you can view the video at cbtbi.org.

Celebrating Purim!

CBT-BI celebrated Purim with a musical shpiel, carnival, kids' parade/Megillah reading, and a traditional Megillah reading. Everyone had a blast! See Page 8 for more photos. Also, check out our Facebook page and visit cbtbi.org for many additional pictures. Photo credits: Marc Kamp, Allison Harris, and Martie Mollenhauer — thank you!



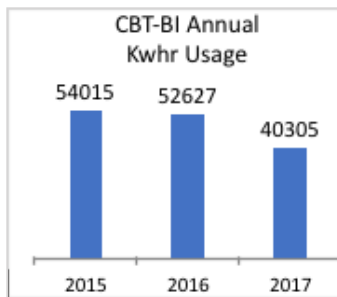
Our Solar Roof: Saving Our Budget and Our Environment

By Stu Gerstein

We have just completed our first year using solar panels on our roof. The results are in and they are better than expected! Along with going solar we substantially reduced our electric consumption. Regarding the electricity that we did use, the cost of solar generated electricity was roughly half of the traditional provider cost. Lastly, by using solar we helped our environment. Let's explore these three areas.

We Used Less Power in 2017

We consumed only 40,305 kwhrs in 2017 vs. substantially higher amounts in 2015 and 2016 (see chart).



There are several reasons for this reduction in electric usage. First, when the sanctuary air conditioning unit failed in September 2016 it was replaced with a high-efficiency unit requiring much less power. Second, the solar panels are on the roof sections that face south. The panels shade the roof in the summer, which further reduces air conditioning load. Finally, we have become vigilant in controlling the building thermostats to minimize power use. Gone are the days of air conditioning unoccupied spaces. Thank you, Steve Blocher!

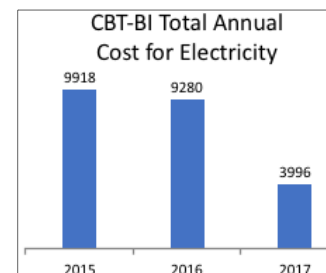
Solar Power Cost: Half of Traditional Utility

CBT-BI entered into a 20-year Power Purchase Agreement with our solar provider at the start of 2017. We don't own any of the equipment but have agreed to purchase the electricity produced. The cost per kwhr last year was 9 cents. (That rate will increase 2% per year.) The cost of electricity from our traditional provider last year was more than 17 cents per kwhr. In 2017, not only did we use less power, the price per kwhr was almost half of what we had been paying. Instead of paying over \$9,000 per year for electric, our 2017 cost was only \$3,996 (See chart on right).



We Helped Our Environment

The solar panels produced 51,555 kwhrs last year which was much more than the 40,305 kwhrs we needed. Although we were not obligated to purchase this excess power, per our Power Purchase Agreement, the excess was pushed into the Atlantic City Electric grid. ACE purchased this excess from our solar provider. We therefore not only produced enough solar power for our CBT-BI needs, our panels produced electricity to power a separate entire house for a year! Power generated using solar panels is clean. There are no stack emissions due to burning fossil fuel. By going solar we saved our planet the equivalent greenhouse emissions of a gasoline powered car driven 94,000 miles or a coal plant burning 21



tons of coal. Since we rely on trees to capture carbon dioxide, utilizing solar panels last year is the equivalent of 994 tree seedlings grown for 10 years. We can proudly call ourselves "environmental stewards."

In summary, our decision to install solar panels was clearly the right move. We have cut our electric bill by more than half and we're helping our environment. Please contact me if you have any questions (gerstein@comcast.net).

Social Action Update by Beth Nazer

Our synagogue currently participates in the following social action programs which operate within Gloucester County:

Peter's Pantry and Mother's Cupboard

Peter's Pantry is hosted by Bethel United Methodist Church on Delsea Drive in Hurffville. It is open the fourth Saturday of each month, 10 AM to 2 PM. The pantry serves Gloucester County residents who are eligible as recipients of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), WIC (Women, Infants and Children), or Medicaid, or who are unemployed or experiencing a temporary food shortage.

Mother's Cupboard, located in the Washington Township Municipal Building, helps township residents who are experiencing hard times, and serves more than 500 people each month. It is open every Thursday, 9-12 PM, as well as the fourth Thursday of every month, 5-7 PM.

Our synagogue has collection bins in the oneg room and in the vestibule outside the sanctuary. Please consider bringing a canned or packaged food item when coming to services or Hebrew school.

Family Promise of Gloucester County

Family Promise: Gloucester County gives homeless families an opportunity to achieve stability by providing shelter, food, case management, and hospitality while simultaneously using resources within the community. Local social service agencies refer eligible families to the Network; they may also help guests find housing, jobs, and benefits.

There are currently 14 congregations within our county that serve as hosts, and 11 others that act as support congregations. CBT-BI is a support congregation for Bethel United Methodist Church (see Peter's Pantry, above).

Hosting rotates weekly among the congregations. Each family is provided a living area with cots, three meals daily, and welcoming care. Guest families use a day center, located in Glassboro, from 6 AM to 6 PM daily. There, the director, a social worker, with the assistance of interns, provides case management services. Guests pursue employment if not already working, tend to pre-school children, shower, and do laundry. The day center provides guests with a mailing address and a base for housing and employment searches.

Volunteers are needed to set up living areas and cots before guests arrive at each host congregation on Sunday afternoons, drive the van between the Day Center and the hosting congregation, cook meals, and interact with the guests.

For more information on Family Promise: Gloucester County, visit www.familypromisegc.org. If you are interested in volunteering with other members of our congregation, contact Beth Nazer, brnazer@gmail.com or (856) 582-7539.

The American Red Cross Blood Drive

Once or twice each year, our congregation hosts a blood drive coordinated by the American Red Cross. Our next blood drive will be on Monday, March 26, 2 to 7 PM. If you are interested in donating, please contact Beth Nazer.

The Kathy Megee Memorial Holiday Meals Program

Our synagogue participated in Easter and Christmas "Meals on Wheels" programs for the first time in 2017. At the Christmas program, we met at the Washington Township Ambulance Hall, formed an assembly line to package 325 dinners, and delivered them to individuals and group homes. Please contact Paul Bunkin to volunteer.

A Peek into Islam by Iris Nadel

Last month, the Confirmation class, their parents, and I had the opportunity to visit a mosque in Cherry Hill. Its full name is GCLEA — Gracious Center For Learning and Enrichment Activities. We were greeted by John Starling, who appeared to be head of the mosque and key speaker. He explained their ideas and concepts and we all had many questions, which he answered proficiently. We then had a tour of their beautiful facility and snacks afterward. I think we all learned much about their religion and saw differences and similarities. They were a wonderful group who welcomed us and made us feel at home.

I think we all had reservations about our visit. Despite misconceptions, Muslims are peaceful people who are a lot like Jewish people. By that I mean we both feel alienated from the general population. Muslim children do not celebrate Christian holidays and they experience many of the same problems we as Jews do. Ramadan is a month of fasting during the day and eating in the evening only. I think we appreciated Yom Kippur as a 24-hour fast compared to a whole month!

We all felt so moved by their hospitality and general kindness and respect. I was very proud of our students and how they conducted themselves. It was a day to remember.

Celebrating Purim!



The Shofar

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