



A Message from Rabbi Rachel

Mountain, Sea, or World View



What's your favorite place to get away to during the summer? Maybe it's the shore, or the pool. Maybe it's Florida or visiting far relatives.

Wherever it is, I bet getting away gives you perspective. We look at the sea, and know that we can't even see the shore on the

other side. We travel, and meet people whose lives are shaped by routines that we don't understand. When we get away, we realize that the little everyday details of our own lives perhaps matter less in the grand scheme of things. We allow ourselves to "be" instead of constantly "doing." When we are out of our daily routines, we can consider how we spend our time, how we work, and the question of "what is it all for, anyway?!" in a different way.

Shabbat is, Jewishly, our weekly get-away, our weekly vacation from life. Baked into the fabric of what Judaism is, is this wonderful idea: A day of vacation a week is good for us. And, the genius of Judaism is what we are encouraged to do with this day of vacation. We are encouraged to spend this day of vacation, every week, with community, getting in touch with

gratefulness and happiness, and thinking about how to focus our daily lives even more on doing good. Let's unpack that. First, Shabbat is for community. This is a time to gather with friends, when many of us don't have time

to during the week. It's a time to focus on good, real conversation, asking each other, "how are you feeling? No, really?" Second, Shabbat is for getting in touch with gratefulness and happiness. Right now, we know, sadness and depression are widespread. Jewish tradition knows how difficult life can be. Shabbat, encouraging attitudes of

gratefulness and happiness, is an antidote to that. Finally, Shabbat is the "perspective" holiday. If we find time, we all have a natural question: How can I contribute to the world? How can I help the world be better? Shabbat is the weekly opportunity to reevaluate how we're spending our time, personally, professionally, and gather the strength to tweak and change if necessary, so as to do even more good in the week ahead.

"Vacation" blessings and the "Shabbat gratefulness" blessings are intertwined in wonderful ways. We know that, as Jews, we constantly pray for peace. On traveling to vacation, we traditionally say the Travelers Prayer, Tefilat Haderech: "May You lead us towards peace, guide our footsteps towards peace, and help us reach our destination for life, gladness, and peace...". It's remarkable how many times the word "peace" is mentioned; underscoring that, wherever we go, we want to go in, and to, peace. In parallel, in the Shabbat liturgy, we always conclude our most important prayers, the Amidah and the Kaddish, by praying for peace, and even underscoring that we want peace everywhere, "May God who makes peace in the heavens, make peace on us, over all Israel, and over all peoples."

Similarly, "vacation" blessings and "Shabbat" blessings are parallel in their description of, and recognition of, those moments that are awe inspiring.

There's a blessing on seeing the ocean, or a mountain, for the first time in a month. We say "Blessed is God, who does the work of creation." Similarly, every Shabbat morning, we say "Blessed is God who spoke, and the world appeared." We think about the ocean, or a mountain, or the world, as God's art. Both times are opportunities for awe, and the big, beautiful picture of the world that exists.

Recently, I saw a color picture of the Southern Ring Nebula through the James Webb Space Telescope. Have you seen it? To say that it's beautiful is an understatement. Indeed, the Jewish space engineer, Michael Kaplan, part of

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From the President's Desk by Ben Negin

We are back!



I am very honored to have been selected to serve as president of Congregation B'nai Tikvah Beth Israel. As a member of CBTBI since 2012, I consider myself truly lucky to find such a comfortable Jewish home over the past decade.

Starting a job in Vineland, I wanted to find a Jewish community without constantly having to drive to Cherry Hill.

My wife and I attended a Tot Shabbat at CBTBI with two three-year-olds in tow. Both of my sons have blossomed through our outstanding religious school from kindergarten until their B'nai Mitzvah last year. I am so happy to see Aaron and Zachary walk into the synagogue comfortably, viewing the congregation as their second family. We are also blessed that they found a group of children who have become their close friends.

The main message that I want to convey to current and future congregants is: **WE ARE BACK!** I am proud of how our congregation overcame the challenges over the past two years. We look forward to re-establishing in-person activities as well as continuing to leverage technology and lessons learned from the pandemic. CBTBI runs on volunteer power, and we are planning on resuming all of our prior committees in full force. Please reach out to me if there is any part of the temple where you feel you can contribute.


I pledge to continue the mission of CBTBI by working to create a welcoming environment for the Jewish community of South Jersey. I am available and open to suggestions on how to serve our community and spread word of the wonderful activities we have to offer.



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the team that built the telescope, said "Why wouldn't we expect that the universe that God created be a beautiful universe, right? I mean, in a sense it's just as I expected." Talk about a way to get perspective on our lives, on the earth, on the universe.


As we move through summer to fall, may we continue to feel the blessings of perspective. May we take those blessings, from space, from vacation, from Shabbat, to help our everyday lives be ever more beautiful and good.



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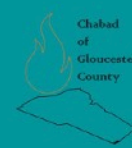
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A Message from Wendy Marder, Educational Director

Mayim Chaim



Our first teen engagement program this year was at the Negins for a pool party and, not surprising, the theme of the program is water in Judaism. We are excited about this new venture that will have the feel of a youth group but will contain a learning piece that

compliments the activity. Each of the families will host one event a year to make this program stay afloat.

Surely you can spout numerous references to water in the Torah as well as laws and customs that involve water, but it will be interesting to see what our teens come up with.

Here's some outpouring of my thoughts on water:

Let's start from the beginning: the creation of the world, but specifically, the separation of the firmament/the Heavens and earth—the waters and the land. *Shamayim* means Heavens but the word inside it is *mayim*, water.

The miracle of life, the water breaks and a baby begins to make its way into the world.

The earth is destroyed by flood because the people were too wicked, teaching us consequences for actions.

The ebb and flow of life is like the ocean;

Looking back, moving forward, learning, listening, letting go, holding on, mourning and rejoicing.



With my daughter, I began the year at the beach with tashlich, prayers, rest, relaxation, and contemplation. We walked along the sea in Spring Lake, NJ and Barcelona, Spain, and witnessed her mikvah back at the Jersey shore before her wedding this summer. The water and witnesses bringing special blessings for the bride as life began anew.

Ritual hand washing around the table at Passover as we celebrated our freedom and gave thanks. Moses drawn from the water, altering his life's path. The plague of the water turning to blood, life's devastating tragedies.

Opening my pool and working hard to perfect it, the literal sweat and tears of hard work and frustration. The satisfaction of "it's perfect" at the water testing station at the pool store.

Witnessing my daughter perform two baby namings, pouring water over the babies' feet, bringing them into the covenant.

Paper towels soaked in lemon water soothing us at our Dead Sea spa at this year's Israel Day.

Water bottles, water jugs, tap water, wishing for a water bottle filling station.

Children swimming in the pool, fearlessly jumping in to the deep end, leaping, laughing, learning.

Floating and chatting, resting and recuperating

Wind and rain turning the pool into a swamp and the cleaning process all over again; the cycles in life of good and bad.

Sitting on the ocean's edge discussing life, past, present & future as the water splashed us and kept us cool in the blazing

heat. Moving to safer spaces when necessary - Turning to friends and family in times of need, in times of joy, in the waves of life experiences.

Cleaning, soapy water, preparing classrooms for a new year. Drinking water, bathing, nurturing ourselves and our gardens and our pets.

Overflowing with emotions, tears of joy and sadness—Life

May we all be showered with the blessings of life and our hearts overflow with kindness from our good deeds and others.

Shanah Tovah — Wendy

The Shofar

Editor: Lisa Parker
editor@cibtbi.org

The Shofar is published four times a year. Please email editor for deadline information.

Congregation B'nai Tikvah-Beth Israel
115 East Holly Avenue, Sewell, NJ 08080
(856) 589-6550 • info@cibtbi.org • www.cibtbi.org

Technology Program

FOR OLDER ADULTS

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The Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey is excited to introduce a new technology initiative for older adults, made possible by a grant from the Raymond & Gertrude R. Saltzman Foundation in partnership with Candoo Tech.

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Questions? Contact Julie Calem at
jcalem@jfedsnj.org or call 856-673-2588

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