



קירוב

The Bulletin of Congregation B'nai Israel

Tishrei 5769

October 2008

*Judaism for Today
In a Warm and Caring
Environment*

FROM THE RABBI

Dear Friends,

Let me open with a joke I heard in Brazil: Two in the morning. Yankele can't sleep. He turns this way, that way, gets up, eats, drinks milk. Three in the morning he comes back to bed, just to turn and turn. Sarale, his wife, asks: 'What's wrong?! Why can't you sleep already?!' To which Yankele answers: 'Sarale, we have a problem. We owe too much money to Yosl. I can't sleep thinking of how we'll pay him. We have no money this month.' Sarale jumps out of bed, grabs the phone, calls Yosl. 'Yosl? This is Sarale. I am calling you to let you know we have no money this month, so we are not going to pay any of what we owe you this month.' She slams the phone and says: 'Now it's his problem. Go to sleep.'

Call me simple minded, but I always laugh when I remember my friend telling me this joke. It's good to have a laugh about money, and it has probably been a good chunk of time since any of us have laughed about it. As the year goes on and *Sukkot* approaches, we are being faced with times that get more and more difficult, financially speaking. It is impossible to ignore the news and the generally dark atmosphere brought by the media, and we have to work very hard not to be engulfed by that same pessimism in our homes and workplaces.

We are clearly in the midst of one of the most serious economic crises this country has endured. Some bring back the ghost of the Great Depression of 1929 and affirm this is it – in the 2000's. We

have seen traditional financial institutions, such as Lehman Brothers, file for bankruptcy and other newer institutions earn the dubious honor of being called the largest bank failure in US history. That among other terrifying news. All this has hit our families at B'nai Israel in one way or the other – currently I know of five families where at least one adult is looking for a job, to say nothing of those who have seen their pensions shrink and their investments whither.

Our tradition has a lot to say about money and how we treat each other financially. One of the most known verses of the Torah is *if you lend money to My people, exact no interest from them*. And the next verse says: *if you take your neighbor's garment in pledge, you must return it to him before the sun sets*. The text goes on to forbid us from leaving our neighbor exposed to the elements, without protection, without a blanket to sleep with at night, and affirms that if we do those things God, compassionate as He is, will hear his/her cries and we will be in deep trouble¹.

The rabbis in the Talmud go on to affirm that *all gates to prayer and crying out to God are locked, with the exception of the gates through which the cries of those who have been wronged are heard*. And in the same passage they go on to affirm that *there are three evils before which the Curtain that separates us from God is never closed: financial overreaching, robbery and idolatry*. Finally, we read that *a person should always be careful that there is food in his/her house; because strife is prevalent in a house only on account of the lack of food... hence the saying: When the barley is quite gone from the pitcher, strife comes knocking at the*

¹ Exodus 22:24 and following verses

door.² In the Birkat Hamazon, the grace recited after meals, we ask God that we never find ourselves in a position where we are dependent on loans or gifts of other human beings.

Yet, as much as our tradition is aware of the pain that can accompany the blind forces that operate our economy in general, it is forever reminding us that money is not the be all and end all of our life. As important as money may be, being a mensch — a decent human being — is infinitely more important. Economic crisis and hardships can teach us the very same lesson, if we are open to it.

First, according to the Talmud, to be in debt is not a situation to be ashamed of: *Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Eleazar son of Rabbi Shimon — The Holy One of Blessing said to Israel: 'My children, you can bank on me and celebrate the holiness of the day, and trust Me and I will pay.'*³ So asking for help — and eventually going back to a position of helping others — is nothing to be ashamed of: even the Holy One of Blessing enters into debt here and there.

Second, one of the very best investments that we can make at all times, whether our bank accounts are in great shape or not, is sacred time. Sacred time is “spending” that will always come back to you — find time to connect to your family and friends in a dinner in a *sukkah* or, even better, during one day a week, Shabbat. This sacred time that you carve out should not be slashed by the ring of a cell phone, interrupted by e-mails, disrupted by a trip to the mall, violated by TV ads and series’ episodes, or decimated by a to-do list. Sacred time is an incredible gift to yourself, your family and your community.

Sacred times have too often been taught and viewed as impositions from tradition, but they are really good excuses to pay more attention to our families and to our communities, and banking on the capital that does not fly away — our values, our friendships and our presence in difficult times. Lao Tzu, in his Book of Tao, taught: *We turn clay to make a vessel; but it's on the space where there's nothing that the usefulness of the vessel depends*⁴. Our tradition, by

giving us guidelines on how to create sacred time, offers us the breathing room and the space required to become and raise menschen — decent human beings.

The good news is that there is hope — the fiscal year will be over soon, and we expect changes to happen. But let’s remember that our net worth is really not defined by our financial situation, but by helping those in need, by being there for our families and friends, and by creating compassion and justice in our communities.

With blessings,
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 8TH AT 7:00 P.M.

Maimonides Academy of Western Connecticut will celebrate its 30th anniversary with a cocktail reception, entertainment, and both a silent and live auction on Saturday, November 8th 7:00 P.M. at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, CT.

At the reception, four honorees - Dr. Alvin Goldman, founder, Mrs. Bea Golub, Rabbi Jon Haddon and Mrs. Sara Kruzansky, will be recognized for their integral roles in the Academy's foundation and success.

Maimonides' goal is to provide our students with an excellent education integrating Judaic and general studies and fostering individual and social development in an environment that instills learning as a positive experience. The children are taught Tikun Olam, literally "fixing the world," and it shows every day in their interactions with each other and the world around them.

Tickets are still available at \$100 each. The auctions consist of (30) items ranging from a rare case of Tuscan wine to a family summer getaway at Smuggler's Notch, VT.

The proceeds from the evening will directly impact the continuation of the scholarship fund as well as provide for new equipment for the computer lab.

For more information on the 30th Anniversary Celebration, please contact Dawn Roberts, Fundraising Committee Chair at 646-468-0239 or Roberts4@snet.net

² Baba Metzia 59a

³ Beitzah 15b

⁴ Tao Teh Ching, chapter 11 sentence 2, trans. J.H. McDonald, 1996

FROM THE PRESIDENT

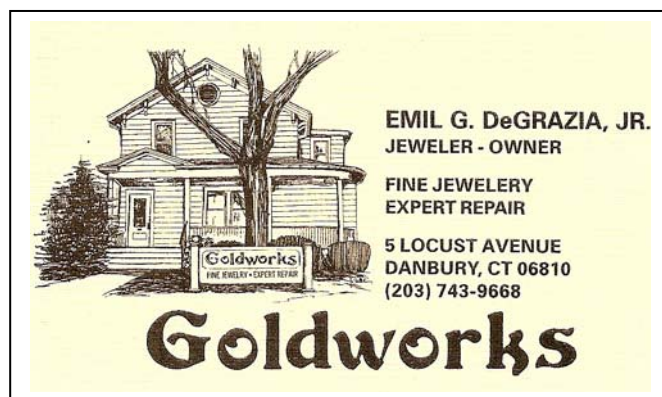
Dear Friends,

Barbara and I spent *Selichot* in New York. Well more honestly, we spent a weekend in New York during which *Selichot* fell. I had seen a listing for a service and concert at a prominent Reform temple in Manhattan that featured a popular Israeli jazz group. And so we went.

The service was held in a sixth floor chapel that could easily have swallowed the entire B'nai Israel building. Before entering the elevator, we peeked into the main floor sanctuary, a humongous, ornate and quite beautiful cathedral-like space. There was a *Havdalah* ceremony on an outdoor deck that had a star spangled view of the night sky and the twinkling apartment towers of the Upper West Side. The *Selichot* service followed with several rabbis and cantors (of the half dozen, some were interns) and the Israeli jazz group participated throughout, living up to their reputation for a smooth and mellow sound.

By the way, I'm not criticizing the temple or the service, but I do want to point out an item of remarkable contrast to B'nai Israel. There were about 85 congregants in attendance that evening and not one of them said hello to us or wished us a happy new year (the rabbi on the other hand, was friendly as always, as we have known him for many years).

This morning, the Shabbat before *Rosh Hashanah*, we had about 45 people at services at B'nai Israel, including a woman and her child and a young single woman, none of whom had been to our synagogue before. At the kiddush, I noticed clusters of congregants talking to them, a very diverse group of B'nai Israelites across a wide span of ages. Each of the three was made to feel welcome and I believe that they probably will return.



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Like many affiliations in life, I think that people connect with an organization because they connect with its people. A synagogue may have an impressive interior, a gym, state of the art equipment, a service club, a noble purpose, but essentially, the human connection is what primarily drives affiliation and especially, sustained commitment.

We have welcomed a number of unaffiliated members of our community with an offer of free High Holidays tickets, as a pilot outreach program, plus many of our congregants have brought family members, as well. I cannot imagine any of them not being greeted warmly and sincerely by any number of our congregants.

While our rabbi is incredible, our cantor wonderful, our services inspiring, (our announcements, ya gotta admit, unique!), the person to person connection, at services, at school and adult ed classes, through the efforts of our *Bikur Cholim* committee or our outreach programs, is what drives affiliation and sustains commitment.

This is a synagogue that cares about Judaism and a congregation that cares about people. Our tradition holds welcoming the stranger in high esteem. Sure, as the bottom line, "Buck Stops Here" guy I'm hopeful that our freebies beget donations and new members, but as our Patriarchs and Matriarchs understood, you never know when a stranger may actually turn out to be... an angel!

Shana Tova,
Joel

CBI EVENTS & CLASSES

Mondays at 8:30 A.M. Torah With Modern Commentary

October 12th *Sukkah* Building and Decorating!

October 12th Women's Group Meeting/Brunch 11:00-12:30

October 14th & 15th *Sukkot* services at 9:30 A.M.

October 21st *Shemini Atzeret/Yizkor* services begin at 9:30 A.M. *Simchat Torah* Celebration at 6:30 P.M.

October 22nd *Simchat Torah* services at 9:30 A.M.

October 26th from 10:00 A.M. - 5:30 P.M. Fall Into *Sukkot* - A Harvest Celebration at Blue Jay Orchards in Bethel

**Religious School: Tuesdays 4:00-6:00 P.M.
Sundays 9:30-12:30 P.M.**

MITZVAH OF THE MONTH

Let's make that Lulav Shake!

The *mitzvah* regarding the four species of *Sukkot* is found in the Torah. After discussing the week-long *Sukkot* festival, specific instructions for how to celebrate the holiday are given. Leviticus 23:40 reads: "On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Adonai your God seven days."

These are the four species that form the group we call "lulav". It is a *mitzvah* to shake the *lulav* on each of the first seven days of *Sukkot*.



Clockwise from top left Etrog, Hadas/Myrtle, Lulav/Palm branch, Arava/Willow



The four species are shaken in the synagogue as part of the morning service during the holiday of *Sukkot*. They are not waved on *Shabbat* because there is fear that one would carry these items, either to the synagogue or to an expert, with whom to learn how to wave it. Carrying

would then violate *Shabbat*. It is good for each individual to have a lulav and etrog, but many synagogues leave some sets in the synagogue sukkah for the use of their members. If you cannot make to the synagogue every day of *Sukkot*, do shake it at home!

The proper time for shaking the lulav is in the morning. Before the blessing, the etrog is held with its pittam (stemlike protrusion) pointed downward.

The blessing is:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ
עַל נְטִילַת לֻלָּב:

"Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us concerning the waving of the lulav."

On the first day of waving add:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁחַיֵּנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה:

"Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has granted us life, sustenance, and permitted us to reach this season."

After the blessing, the etrog is inverted so that the pittam (or bottom) faces up. At this point you wave/shake the lulav (together with the other three) in following manner:

1. Stand facing east.
2. Hold the lulav out to the front and shake it three times. Each time the motion of shaking should be a drawing in to you - reach and draw in, reach out and draw in, reach out and draw in.
3. Repeat the same motion three times to your right, behind over your shoulder, to your left, raising it up above you, lowering it down below you. It helps to imagine yourself inside a giant clock, and your motions go clockwise, and then up and down.

All of these should be done slowly and deliberately – concentrating on the symbols and on the intention of the *mitzvah*.

A meditation that you may want to add before your lulav shake: *As I lift up these symbols of life on Sukkot, commemorating our wanderings in the desert and the fall harvest, I reach out to You, and You are everywhere. You sustain life in each direction—across the seas, in the deserts, on mountain tops and ice caps, skyward to the clouds, deep down in the earth’s soil, and to the cosmos which frame them all.*

The symbols of the lulav. The Kabbalists say that the four species of the Lulav represent four different types of Jews:

1. The Etrog has a good taste and a good fragrance. It represents a person with both wisdom (Torah learning) and good deeds.
2. The Hadas (myrtle) has a good fragrance, but is inedible. It represents a person who has good deeds, but lacks wisdom.
3. The Lulav (date palm) is edible, but has no smell. This represents the person with wisdom, but without good deeds.
4. The Aravah (willow) has neither taste nor smell. It represents a person with neither good deeds nor Torah learning.

The four species must be taken together as a unit. So too, the Jewish people needs all types of Jews to survive. We need all of us.

The Sefer Bahir, a kabbalistic work almost 2,000 years old, describes the four species as four parts of a human being:

1. The Etrog represents the heart, the seat of our emotions.
2. The Hadas (myrtle) has leaves shaped like an eye.
3. The Lulav (date palm) represents the spine, from where our actions emanate.
4. The Aravah (willow) represents the lips, our speech.

The four species must be taken together as a unit. So too, to achieve happiness, one must use all of one's faculties in unison. You cannot say one thing and feel another. We must unify our feelings, our actions, our speech and our outlook. With all of these working together, we are well on the path to self-esteem, tranquility and joy.

Need back up childcare?
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 or Facilitator for an event?
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OCTOBER EVENTS

Sukkot

1st Day Tues., October 14, 2008 9:30 a.m.

2nd Day Wed., October 15, 2008 9:30 a.m.

Shemini Atzeret/Yizkor

Tues., October 21, 2008 9:30 a.m.

October 21st *Simchat Torah*
Celebration 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 22nd
Simchat Torah Services 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, October 12th *Sukkah* Building and Decorating at 9:30 A.M.!

Each year an intrepid band of volunteer builders erects our synagogue sukkah. If you would like to assist, please be here at 9:30 A.M. It doesn't take long and it's lots of fun. After the *sukkah* is up our religious school students will be decorating it as they do every year. Again everyone is invited to participate in the *mitzvah* of beautifying the *sukkah*.

Sunday, October 12th Women's Group Meeting and Brunch from 11:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

Please join us on Sunday for a lively discussion and a delicious brunch. Our Women's Group meetings have always been enjoyable, stimulating, inspiring and just a great time for all. We look forward to seeing you there and look forward to our new members joining our group.

Please RSVP to the office (203-792-6161) and let us know if you're coming so that we can plan for the brunch.

Sunday, October 26th from 10:00 A.M. - 5:30 P.M. Fall Into *Sukkot* - A Harvest Celebration!

The Outreach Committee is excited to announce our next Public Space Judaism event, which will be "Fall into *Sukkot* - a Harvest Celebration!" It will be held on Sunday October 26th from 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. at Blue Jay Orchards on Plumtrees Road in Bethel. This is the height of the pumpkin picking season, and we will be

setting up a *Sukkah* to share in the celebration of the season, and to bring Judaism into the community. There will be music, games, and lots of festivities for kids and adults alike!

So mark your calendars, tell your friends, and please let us know if you will be able to participate. We're looking for volunteers to spend just a little time talking to people that stop by. It's a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the presence we have in our community, and provide a warm introduction to Jewish life in Danbury.

A NOTE OF THANKS TO CBI

Shlomo Kessel is the director of the Emunah Children's Center in our sister city of Afula, Israel. Twice now, we have been honored to host performances of the Centre's Emunotes, who have entertained us with their song and dance revue. The Congregation B'nai Israel community has also made very generous donations to the Emunah Centre.

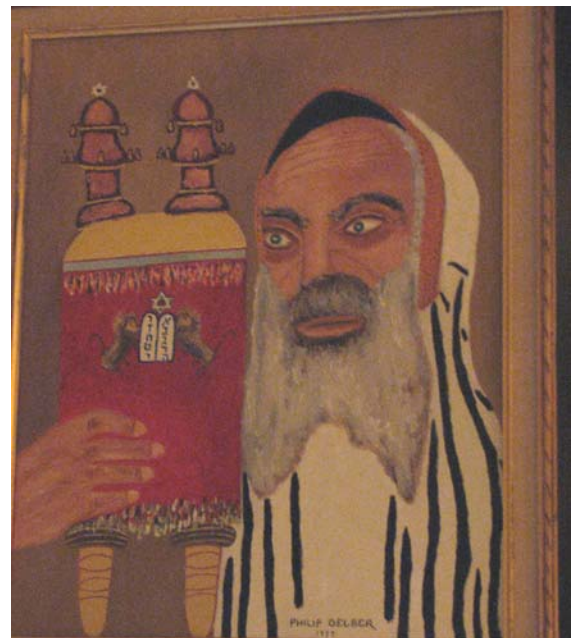
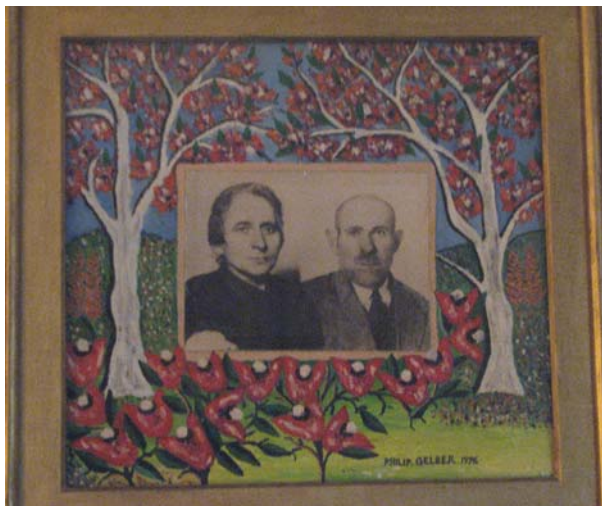
The following are excerpts from a letter from Mr. Kessel to Alvin and Pat Goldman: "...it was very special to visit the B'nai Israel family who once again embraced the Emunotes with open arms. The friendship and hospitality shown to our girls made them feel very welcome and important...this was an opportunity for us to say thank you and bring a small taste of Israel to good friends.

...On behalf of the Emunotes and indeed all 200 children at the Emunah Center in Afula, I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation and thanks to Congregation B'nai Israel for your continuing interest and love for the children. Your assistance and support are invaluable in enabling us to provide the children with their many needs. I am very hopeful that our relationship will go from strength to strength. We are very lucky to have you on our team!"

SAVE THE DATE! November 9th from 2:00 - 4:00 P.M. Art Show

Philip Gelber has a twinkle in his eye when he speaks of his November one man show at the Ridgefield Library. The show will open on November 9th with a reception for the public from 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. and will run for the whole month.

Gelber describes his work as oils including an eclectic mixture of landscapes, both physical and psychological (including Holocaust memories) and religious subjects. Also, he adds with a mysterious smile, "People who know my work will be surprised!" This surprise element is yet another incentive to come to the Ridgefield Library in November to see Philip's beautiful work.



Photos courtesy of Pat Goldman

GOOD TIMES WE SHARED

Religious School *Shofar* Hike



Photos courtesy of Alice Cahn

MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

Meet the Dubois Family

It was approximately one year ago when I received a telephone call that my caller ID registered as coming from Palo Alto, CA. Because I knew no one from that area I steeled myself for a sales pitch or perhaps a political poll. It was a pleasant surprise to hear an enthusiastic voice who introduced herself as Ellen Dubois, a friend of my niece, Tina. Ellen explained that she was moving with her family from California to Connecticut as her husband, Larry had accepted a job in Danbury. She was particularly interested in the Jewish community, hoping that it would offer her the challenge of active volunteerism.

Moving to the East Coast was particularly attractive to Ellen and Larry because their two daughters, Emily and Abbey were in eastern colleges--Emily, in her senior year at Boston University School of Management where she was working toward a BS in Business Administration with a concentration in marketing and Abby who was entering her freshman year at the Pratt Institute School of Art and Design in Brooklyn.

Ellen originates from Massachusetts and Larry from California--she from a "Conservadox" home and he from a Reform background. Perhaps this would appear as though "never the twain shall meet" but in this case, Rudyard Kipling was proven wrong as the couple has a talent for adapting to the challenges of the various communities to which Larry's fascinating and successful career has taken them.

It all began in 1975, when Ellen a student at Simmons College in Boston attended a mixer and was introduced to Larry, then a student at MIT. After graduation and marriage the couple moved to CA where Larry received his PhD in Physical Chemistry at the University of CA in Berkeley.

Then, in 1980, it was back to the East where Larry was drafted to work for Bell Laboratory in New Jersey. During the 14 years that they lived in Summit, NJ, the DuBois girls were born and the family became actively involved in the Jewish Community. But when Larry was tapped to work for the Defense Advanced Research Project in Washington, it was an "offer he could not refuse" and the family moved to McLean, VA.

While in McLean, Ellen became an active volunteer in the synagogue and school system. According to Larry, "Wherever a need existed, Ellen willingly volunteered to fill it." After six years, the headhunters again sought Larry out and the family was off to California where he began a new position with SRI International in Menlo Park. Palo Alto became their new home and Ellen quickly set down roots in the community and in the well known Kol Emeth Synagogue.

While living in Palo Alto, Emily, who was attending the Summer Brandeis Genesis Program learned of the tragic bombing by terrorists of the cafeteria at Hebrew University...Deeply shaken, Emily, then VP of the United Synagogue Youth, created a project that was to attract attention across the U.S. She set the task of collecting \$15,000 for relief to terrorist victims in Israel. She connected this with the memory of the 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust and launched a campaign to collect a penny in memory of each of these children. Her goal was to involve school children, in a meaningful and consciousness raising tzedakah project in which they could actively participate. To this end gallon milk jugs were placed throughout the Bay Area of California and each week Ellen and Emily traveled to empty the containers of their pennies. Ellen remembers with humor and pride being referred to as the "Penny Schlepper," and the Penny Girl's Mother. Soon the project gained momentum and spread throughout the states, ultimately far exceeded Emily's original goal.

Though the family greatly enjoyed life in California, they did not hesitate when Larry was offered the challenging position of Senior Vice President and Chief Technical Officer of Advanced Technology Materials, Inc. in Danbury. With a fascinating new challenge and two daughters in the Northeast, the DuBois family was on the road, again.

After arriving in Danbury the exploration of a new synagogue was high on their priority list. Both Ellen and Larry are "big believers in the traditionalism of conservative ritual" and they have found B'nai Israel to fulfill that ritual. After their first visit, they observed that CBI has a certain integrity and warmth. "We enjoy the *hey mish* quality of the synagogue," Ellen explains.

We are happy to welcome the DuBois Family who bring to CBI a profound commitment to Judaism and the creativity and energy to help it grow.

Pat Goldman

SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

Services begin at 9:30 a.m.

✧ **Shabbat, 12 Tishrei, Saturday October 11, Ha'azinu:** A beautiful farewell song which Moshe delivers to the people of Israel. *Haftarah:* II Samuel 22:1-51

✧ **Shabbat, 19 Tishrei, October 18, Hol Hamoed Sukkot.** *Haftarah:* Ezekiel 38:18-39:16

✧ **Shabbat, 26 Tishrei, October 25, Bereshit:** The meaning of being created in the image of God. *Haftarah:* Isaiah 42:5-43:10

✧ **Shabbat, 3 Heshvan, November 1, Noah:** God destroys the world by flood and renews humanity through Noah. *Haftarah:* Isaiah 54:1-55:5

✧ **Shabbat 10 Cheshvan, November 8, Lekh L'kha:** Abraham and Sarah are called by God to set out for Canaan and become a people. *Haftarah:* Isaiah 40-27-41:16

CANDLE LIGHTING

October 8, 2008:	<i>Erev Yom Kippur</i>	6:06 p.m.
October 10, 2008:		6:02 p.m.
October 13, 2008:	<i>Erev Sukkot</i>	5:58 p.m.
October 17, 2008:		5:51 p.m.
October 20, 2008:	<i>Erev Shemini Atzere</i>	5:47 p.m.
October 24, 2008:		5:41 p.m.
October 31, 2008:		5:32 p.m.
November 7, 2008:		4:24 p.m.

Yahrzeits

19 Tishrei, October 18, 2008

Yafa Boms (Abe Boms)

Yetta Bat Ya'acov (Martin Waltuch)

20 Tishrei, October 19, 2008

Ira Lawrence Glass (Carla Paulli)

21 Tishrei, October 20, 2008

Louis S. Rosenberg (Alice Cahn)

Lester Bardack (Rabbi Judy Frankle-Bardack)

22 Tishrei, October 21, 2008

Abraham (Abe) Golub (Bea Golub)

29 Tishrei, October 28, 2008

Rose Mendlovitz (Pat Goldman)

4 Cheshvan, November 2, 2008

Morris Mark (Paula Cook)

7 Cheshvan, November 5, 2008

Morris Horn (Roslyn Bank)

Aaron Shenker (Martin Shenker)

11 Cheshvan, November 9, 2008

Samuel Silverstein (Roslyn Friedman)

THANKS! THANKS!

For the General Fund

✧ Pam and Shalom Lampell wishing all a *Shana Tova*

Dina Essinger wishing everyone at CBI a *Shana Tova*

For the Mentor-In-Residence Fund

✧ Sara Kruzansky in memory of her mother Rivka Schuster

For Their Generous Kiddush

✧ Philip Gelber in memory of his wife Mira

✧ Carol Nurenburg

✧ Rabbi Judy Frankle-Bardack in memory of her mother

Stew Leonard's Gift Card Fundraising Program



Do your shopping at *Stew Leonard's* because the synagogue receives 5% (sometimes 10%) when you shop using the gift card(s).

Call Cheryl at the office (792-6161) for your gift card(s).