

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal



January 2002

**JCNWJ Journal
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RABBI'S MESSAGE

It may or may not be the fulfillment of an ancient curse, but it is true that we live in interesting times. Some days we are told to worry, other days we are told to proceed as normal. It would seem that we have no choice but to do both at the same time, to worry sufficiently but also to proceed as normal.

But perhaps the solution lies less in our actions than in our attitude. Whether we are worrying or living normally, we want to do both with an awareness of gratitude. Each day is a gift. Each evening we pray for God to cause us to lie down in peace. Each morning we offer our thanks to God for having watched over our souls during the night and for returning our souls to us, giving us another day of precious life.

I recently read a prayer which speaks to our times. It is attributed to an anonymous Confederate soldier (quoted by Rabbi Wayne Dosick in his book When Life Hurts):

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;
I was made weak, that I might learn to humbly obey.
I asked for health, that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy,
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need for God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am, among all, most richly blessed.
For all that has been lost, we begin this secular new year most richly blessed.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

Yesterday began my family's annual December vacation in Vermont. Each year, I look forward to every moment of "vegging out". Usually for me, true pleasure begins when my family is out on the slopes; and, I am stretched out alone in the condo with a constant flow of freshly brewed coffee, cartons of reading materials are stacked by my side and the beautiful Green Mountain scenery is the picture painted just beyond my living room window.

But for some reason, this year began with an immediate sense of relaxation for me. We left home on a most spectacular day with me in the driver's seat. With a deep sigh and some yoga breathing, all of the tensions associated with the obligations of home and the new worries of world affairs vanished. The clear, blue skies allowed my mind to empty of these thoughts and to focus on new and present ideas.

As the sun's rays were magnified through invisible prisms in the atmosphere, I became acutely sensitive to the sights along Route 287 and the New York Thruway. The tall, thin pines and the bare birch trees became highlighted at the highway's edge. Every rock formation and every mountain cluster created a three dimensional still life never accented so vividly before. Every bird soared above the roof tops of the red barns dabbling the countryside. Even the road signs glistened with a palette of vibrant yellows, reds, greens and blues.

As I continued to drive on this glorious afternoon, traveling from state to state at speeds well above the specified limits, and as other mini-vans and S.U.V.'s traveled close to my side, and vehicles moved on the bridges that traversed above me, freedom became the concept that filled my mind....freedom to journey to any place in our country and freedom to journey at any time with only the fear of being stopped for moving too fast. And while on a journey, we are free to enjoy the canvas G-d placed before our eyes. I asked myself, "How could these freedoms be denied to any human being?"

As we enter the 2002 year with new fears of traveling in flight, I suggest that we stay within our borders with other means of transportation in order to enjoy our country's endless beauty that we are free to see. And, I invite everyone to join me at the Center to give thanks that we are blessed with so much natural beauty and free to see it all. Let's pray together that all people across the globe may some day enjoy these same privileges.

May you all be blessed with good health and happiness throughout the year.

*Shalom,
Gwen*

SHABBAT SERVICES *will be held:*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 7:45 pm, 7:45 pm

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 7:45 pm, 7:45 pm

SHABBAT SERVICES, FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, *will be a very special service. This will a naming service for members of the congregation who do not have a Hebrew name. Everyone is invited to this very special life cycle event.*

MAZEL TOV to **Sam Hirsch** on the occasion of his **Bar Mitzvah, Saturday, January 26** at 10 am. We all share in wishing the family of Sam hearty Mazel Tov in celebration of this joyous life cycle event.

SUNDAY SCHOOL *will meet:*

SUN., JAN., 6, 13*, 20, 27*

**Kindergarten/first grade class meets*

Sunday School begins promptly at 9:30 am. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class, so please bring your children to Sunday School on time.

CONFIRMATION CLASS *will meet:*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 7-8:30 pm

LIBRARY will be available on **SUN, JAN. 20.**

MEN'S CLUB will meet on **SUN., 1/6, 9:30 am.**

BOARD MEETING *will be held on MON., JAN. 7, 7:30 pm.* All members of the congregation are welcome to attend.

TORAH STUDY

SAT. 1/19, 10-11:30 am

All members are the congregation are encouraged and welcome to participate in this informal discussion group.

SUNDAY SCHOOL DIVERSITY PROGRAM

This program will be presented in conjunction with the national holiday celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. Parents are invited to attend the program along with the students.

6th and 7th GRADERS

All 6 and 7 graders are expected to attend the Mitzvot of Metrowest program on January 13. The JEA is located on Route 10 in Whippany. Directions will be distributed in class. Parents will provide their own transportation.

TU BISHVAT SEDER

If you have never attended a Tu Bishvat seder, you are in for a treat. Although the seder is celebrated during Sunday School, January 27, members without children in Sunday School are also welcome and encouraged to come, to help cut up fruit, and to celebrate "The New Year of the Trees."

CALLING ALL OWNERS!

Many dishes and utensils were left at the Nagorsky's home after the celebration for Helen! They have been delivered to the Center's kitchen ready for pick up.

Items delivered are listed here:

Large, purple, ceramic dish from Pier 1 Imports, Serving fork white, plastic shell dish for dip, Large plastic plate in a bright gold finish, Plastic serving spoon Large, gold Tupperware top (or cake server base?), Large, round, 3" high, clear Tupperware container

FOOD VOUCHERS

Remember to support the Center by purchasing A&P and Shop Rite food vouchers. Please contact Suzanne Colby at 852-7304.

THANK YOU

The Board would like to thank Sandy Seidorf for organizing the wonderful celebration for Helen Mattson. We would also like to thank Helene Friedlander for her magnificent performance on the piano. What a great evening!!

MANY THANKS

The Board wishes to thank Judy May for donating the beautiful new dried floral arrangement for the bema. She made it herself! Thank you for sharing your special talent with the Center.

We also would like to thank Judy Schroeder and Barbara Simons for running the Chanukah Gift Sale. Great job once again!

Also, many thanks to Cynde Vestal for organizing the book drive for our servicemen and women overseas. We collected three boxes of books which she delivered to the sponsor of the program, The Flemington Jewish Center.

THANKS to all who attend the celebration in honor of Helen Mattson. The party was an overwhelming success with 68 members of the congregation attending. A great time was had by all.

THANKS to everyone for their gifts for the Jewish residents at Hunterdon Developmental Center. Their holidays were enriched from the generosity of our Temple community.

CONDOLENCES to Barbara Simons on the recent loss of her mother.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to all our "January Babies".

SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2001

time to be announced

Come join us for **"ITALIAN NIGHT"** as we join in Shabbat Across America. Volunteers needed to prepare, help set up, and serve. **RSVP to Laurie Hessels 876-5286, or Rhonda Jordan, 832-7731 by February 15, 2001.**

PTO

Want to get involved, think about taking the reins as PTO President. See Sandy Seidorf or Laurie Post.

A volunteer is still needed to coordinate the Purim Carnival in March. See Sandy or Laurie if you are interested.

EDUCATION

Students and parents celebrated the Festival of Lights at the annual Chanukah party. Special thanks to Ken and Mercedes Weiland for helping the

Sunday School students make the beautiful menorah's which will be cherished for years to come.

DID YOU KNOW

That our young adults in the confirmation class gave up a Sunday morning to help the house committee chairperson, Laurie Hessels, clean out classrooms, bring items up and down the stairs, change light bulbs, put batteries in the clocks, and other necessary chores that needed to be done.

Thank you to a wonderful group of young adults who took the time to help our Temple stay in working order.

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS are still available. Contact Robin Hall, 908-850-6594.

CANCELLATIONS DUE TO WEATHER

Should bad weather be an issue on a Friday evening, a message will be left on the Center's answering machine by 5:30 P.M. if services have been canceled. Should bad weather be an issue on Sunday morning, a message will be left on the Center's answering machine by 7:30 A.M. if Religious School has been canceled. We will attempt the snow chain again this year as well!

Also, the WRNJ radio station will broadcast any cancellations. However, be sure to call the Center's machine for full details and updates.

B'NAI MITZVAH PROJECTS

The B'nai Mitzvah class is proud to announce that a new batch of mitzvah projects will be beginning. This year, all collection boxes for mitzvah projects will be kept in the front classroom of the center, the B'nai Mitzvah classroom. So, please be aware of where to find them. Collection boxes will only be one component of a more rounded overall project. Any questions or comments on mitzvah projects can be directed to Lisa Braunstein (e-mail: lisachloe418@hotmail.com) or the rabbi.

The students who will be B'nai Mitzvot this year are proudly working on the following Mitzvah projects:

SAM HIRSCH (Jan 26, 02) Sam volunteered at an animal shelter every single Saturday. I'm pretty sure he's been doing this for about a year. Great project!

BRETT WYCKOFF (4/6/02) and GENNA

GOLDNER (4/19/02) worked together, making communications books that special-needs children can use to communicate with their caregivers. It sounds like very meticulous work. They meet to work together.

BRIAN SULVINSKI (5/4/02) has been doing various projects to raise money and collect goods for families of the victims of the World Trade Center

RUBY BLOCH (5/31/02) has been visiting at a nursing home. She talks with residents there, asks what their favorite foods are, and cooks them and brings them in.

**JEWISH LIFE SPONSORS DR. KEN LIBO:
"LIFE AND LAUGHTER" - THE INFLUENCE OF
YIDDISH HUMOR ON AMERICAN CULTURE**

Dr. Ken Libo, an historian and biographer, will present "Life and Laughter: The Influence of Yiddish Humor on American Culture" on Thursday, January 24 at 7:30 p.m. at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center (JCC), 775 Talamini Road in Bridgewater. The program sponsored by Jewish LIFE, a collaborative adult education program serving residents of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties. Tickets for the evening are \$7 for Jewish LIFE members and \$10 for non-members.

Dr. Libo will talk about the profound influence of Yiddish humor on American English. More than 300 Yiddish words and expressions-mentsh, kibosh and chutzpah are just a few examples-are an integral part of American English. Many Yiddish words and expressions took life as punch lines in jokes. Libo's shtik is sure to entertain you. You can even have a nosh and schmooz for a while after the program.

Dr. Libo is an author and popular lecturer. His books include *All in a Lifetime*, a memoir of the Loeb's, *We Lived There Too*, a history of Jews in the American West, and *World of Our Fathers*, with Irving Howe, for which they shared a National Book Award. He was formerly the English editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward* and served as curator of American Jewish History at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, and Beth Hatefutsoh in Tel Aviv.

For further information and to register, contact Laura Friedman, JCC Assistant Executive Director, at 908-725-6994 x213, or e-mail LFriedman@ssbjcc.org. Visit the JCC website at www.ssbjcc.org and go to the Jewish LIFE page.

LIFE

We convince ourselves that life will be better after we get married, have a baby, then another.

Then we are frustrated that the kids aren't old enough and we'll be more content when they are.

After that, we're frustrated that we have teenagers to deal with. We will certainly be happy when they are out of that stage.

We tell ourselves that our life will be complete when our spouse gets his or her act together, when we get a nicer car, when we are able to go on a nice vacation, or when we retire.

The truth is there's no better time to be happy than right now. If not now, when?

Your life will always be filled with challenges.

It's best to admit this to yourself and decide to be happy anyway. Happiness is the way.

So, treasure every moment that you have and treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time with... and remember that time waits for no one.

So, stop waiting...

Until your car or home is paid off

Until you get a new car or home

Until your kids leave the house

Until you go back to school

Until you finish school

Until you lose 10 lbs.

Until you gain 10 lbs.

Until you get married

Until you get a divorce

Until you have kids

Until you retire

Until summer

Until spring

Until winter

Until fall

Until you die

There is no better time than right now to be happy.

Happiness is a journey, not a destination.

So work like you don't need money, love like you've never been hurt, and, dance like no one's watching.

If you want to brighten someone's day, pass this on to someone special.

I just did.

Author Unknown