

Bethel-Harrisonburg.org

The purpose of this congregation shall be to worship God in accordance with the faith of Judaism; to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage; to strengthen the ties within the Jewish community; to strengthen the bonds of loyalty with the Jewish people everywhere; to bring nearer the Dominion of God on earth through an emphasis on the principles of righteousness and harmony in society at large, and to engage in social action projects in pursuit of social justice and Tikkun Olam (repair of both the human and nonhuman components of the world).

OCTOBER 2018

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

From the Beth El Board meeting:

As we continue the year, please remember to contact Bill Ney, treasurer, if you have not yet verified your annual membership. In addition, please be sure to fulfill your Yizkor pledges in a timely way.

Committees have been busy. The Building Committee continues to identify priorities for updating the sanctuary.

Please visit the web site for information regarding social action opportunities. Thank you Social Action Committee. Please note, No Excuse For Abuse, a candlelight vigil will be held on October 18, 6PM-8PM at Court Square Downtown Harrisonburg sponsored by First Step.

Josh Linder (Youth Activities Committee and Hillel advisor) is in communication with the president of JMU Hillel to encourage a connection to Beth El.

We welcome the following new members: Tamara & Jason Johnstone-Yellin and their children Cai & Zevion

As a point of information, the Rabbi Search Committee has begun formulating a description of the rabbi position for 2019-2020 at Beth El.

Men's Club is planning their corned beef fund raiser. Look for more details coming soon. Sisterhood is continuing to organize the oneg schedule. They are also planning a LuLaRoe Clothing Show on Sunday, October 28th. (Details tba)

An adult education session on addressing hate groups is in the early planning stages. We continue to dialogue with the Harrisonburg Police Department.

We are also in the early planning stages of Open Doors which will be December 24 through December 31. Please consider volunteering when asked!

Rabbinic Intern Dyme will be back again leading services on Friday, October 5th @ 7:30. This will be our annual Community Awareness Shabbat. Please invite your neighbors, friends, teachers, or co-workers to join us for an informative celebration of Shabbat, followed by an opportunity for further conversation at the oneg.

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Dear Beth El Congregants,

I hope you all feel 5779 getting off to a great start!

My best wishes for an enjoyable Sukkot, and a meaningful Simkhat Torah.

I look forward to seeing you again in early October.

Shavuah Tov, Shabbat Shalom, and Shanah Tovah,

Ben Dyme, Rabbinic Intern

Leadership

Student Rabbi: Ben Dyme

President: Michelle Ornstein

Vice President: Josh Linder

Treasurer: Bill Ney

Secretary: Phil Renick

Corresponding Secretary: Gale Clemons

Trustee: Lester Mintzer

Trustee: Bill Ney

Trustee: Ron Ornstein

Past President: Andy Kohen

At large member: Ron Rubin

At large member: Linda Kohn

At large member Amanda Friss

Sisterhood President: Sherri Alt + Rebekah Greenfield

Men's Club President: Lester Mintzer

Religious School Principals: Dara Hall + Liz Webb

Bridge Editor
Elliott Golub
Elgolubret@comcast.net
540-289-5336

YAHREZEITS

31 Amalie G Wise	1939 Member	
01 Carrye Kohen		Florine Ney's Mother
Annette Biatch		Rabbi Jonathan Biatch's Mother
Carl Goldstein	2010	Lisa Giovanetti's Father
02 David Rubin	1972 Member	
04 Bernard N. Berger	2010	Bary Berger's Father
05 Jack Lichtenstein		Joan Funston's Father
06 Paige Nash	2003	Keith Nash's Mother
08 Leonard Raff		Irma Nemoytin's Brother
09 Samuel Metzger	1911 Member	
11 David Baron		Cindy Baron's father
12 Betty Nemoytin	1991 Member	
13 Israel Smith	Member	
Harry Katzen	1981 Member	
15 Hattie Hirsch	1927 Member	
Milton Trubitz	1991	Mark Trubitz' Father
Sarah Lovinger	1996	Mitch & Valerie Lovinger's daughter
16 Miriam Brooslin Cohen		
17 Rosa Wise	1931 Member	
18 Harriet Gould	1991	Alan Gould's Mother
19 Rabbi Edward L Israel		
Mabel Rodbell	1994	Herb Rodbell's Wife
20 Barbara M Levin		
Ruth Shwayder	1967	
22 Ida Zindler		Leo Zindler's Grandmother
Dorothy D Kaiser		Paula Kaiser's Mother
25 Leon Hirsch		
Helen Wise	1962 Member	
Sarah Lebin		Dave Merlin's Mother
Marc Trubitz	2010 Member	
26 Rosalie Amberg	1915	
27 Oscar Rodbell		
Marilyn Goldenthal	2005 Member	
29 Edith Bersson	2006	Bob Bersson's Mother

DONATIONS

High Holy Day's Visitors

Frieda Tompakov

Steven & Holly Ann Ross

Renita Seldowitz

Kent Palmer

Barbara Simonetti

Lori & Doug Moyer

Fran Etner

Scott Lori Kizner

Donation & Pledges for High Holy Day's Yiskor Donations

Sherri Alt

Marlene Brumbaugh

Bary & Ruth Berger

The Berman Family

Recca Brannon & Joan Anderson

Dale & Monty Brothers

Michael & Nancy Clayman

Gale Clemons

Rachel Dorne

Judy Freudenthal

Joan Funston

Dara Hall & Family

Leslie Harris & Family

Andy Kohen

Peter & Linda Kohn

Eric Kramer & Famiy

Stu & Judy Liss

Sandy Minskoff

Esther Minskoff

Les & Becky Mintzer

Alan & Kate Neckowitz

Bill & Leslie Ney

Eddie & Margee Greenfield- Ney

Lindsey Noble

Ron & Michelle Ornstein

Kent Palmer

Eliott Robison & Liane Schleifer

Ronald Rubin

Jayne & Eric Rynar

Lenore Stallard

Valerie Stephens

Mona Wolf

Leo Zindler

To the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund

Lenny & Marulena Berman in memory of Lenny's father (Julis Berman).

Eddie & Margee Greenfield-Ney in memory of Eddie's mother (Beth Ney)

Leo Zindler in memory of his wife (Beverly Zindler)

Bill & Leslie Ney in memory of Bill's father (Joseph Ney).

Elliott & Thea Golub in memory of Elliott's father (Hyman Golub).

Elliott & Thea Golub in memory of Thea's mother (Judith Levine Schweitzer).

Elliott & Thea Golub in memory of Thea's father (Charles Schweitzer)

In Memory of Chuck Slott

Richard Baugh

Lois & Irv Slott

Valerie Stephens

Robert Satterwhite Jr.

Andy Kohen

Ron & Michelle Ornstein

Michael & Violet Allain

Arnie Kahn

Mona Wolf

Eddie & Margee Greenfield Ney

Dave Pruett & Suzanne Fiederlein

Kate & Alan Neckowitz

Ruth Kramer

In Memory of Joyce Helbraun

Valerie Stephens

Andy Kohen

Mona Wolf

Special Blessings for Elliott's Mother,
Zelda Golub, on her 101st Birthday.

To the General Fund

Penny Williams

Valerie Stephens

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL/SHORTY

Our new year is off to a great start! Our students and teachers are engaged in wonderful learning activities. We have participated in many RS school wide activities, such as decorating new school bags and making tzedakah boxes. Preschool and religious school families came together for an enriching Sukkot celebration! Thanks so much to our volunteer parents – the Johnstone-Yellin and Trantum families – for providing delicious snacks to eat in the sukkah and lots of fun activities for decorating our sukkah on Sunday 9/23/18.

Mark your calendars: Sunday 9/30/18 we invite everyone to join our Religious school and preschool students as we celebrate Simchat Torah. Please contact Liz Webb (liz.matusow@gmail.com) or Dara Hall (cell 908-0515) if you have any RS questions!

SHORTY

We have an awesome group this year! Our students are engaged and anxious to participate in meaningful activities helping others, social activities, and leadership. Our first events are coming up right away with SHORTY leading 'Pizza in the Hut' services for Sukkot on Friday, 9/28/18 at 6:30. Then we are volunteering on Sunday, 9/30/18 from 7-8pm at the Alpine Loop Gran Fondo with assisting the festival manager in breaking down the venue at the Turner Pavilion in downtown Harrisonburg. We'd love to have the community come out and support us at these two events!

Many of our SHORTY members were very engaged in honors throughout the High Holy Days! We are so proud of all of you! A special Mazel Tov shout out to our SHORTY-ite David Berger for his awesome Shofar blowing during the high holy days!

We have plans to engage more this year with NFTY. We are excited about planning shul-in events at Beth El and visiting other shuls! Come join the fun! If you know of a teen ages 13+ interested in joining SHORTY, please contact Becky Mintzer at rem82398@gmail.com for more information.

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood would like to thank everyone who helped make our Rosh Hashanah oneg so beautiful, thank you for the wonderful baked goodies and kind donations. Happy New Year to all!

We will be meeting to start the year on Monday, October 1 at the Temple, 6:00 pm. We will be serving dinner, catching up with each other, hopefully getting to know some new members. We will have just a few business items, the board met over the summer and already did a lot of leg work so it would not have to be done at our meeting. Please join us!

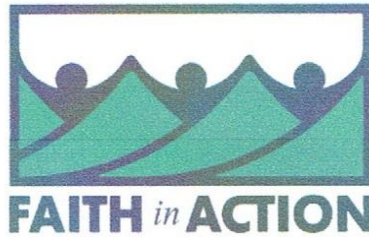
Please mark your calendars for Sunday, October 28, we have scheduled a LuLa Roe Clothing Show from 12:30-3:30 at the temple. Come shop, try on clothes, bring your friends! Last year's show was a successful fundraiser for Sisterhood and so much fun. More reminders will follow, please plan on stopping by, support this fundraiser for Sisterhood and treat yourself to new clothes for the fall and winter!

We hope to see everyone at our meeting, if you have any questions or need more information, please call Sherri Alt, 540-820-3962.

Sherri Alt and Rebekah Greenfield

Sisterhood Co-Presidents

ANNOUNCEMENTS



FAITH IN ACTION STATEMENT OF ISSUE FOR 2018

We have a dream of having our local jail become a model "greenhouse" for the rehabilitation and treatment of individuals awaiting their trial or completing their sentences. We believe jail budgets and programs should reflect such priorities and that families of inmates not be burdened with costs associated with the care of their loved ones.

We have a dream of reducing incarceration in our community by utilizing evidence-based alternative sanctions for low-risk offenders. We believe costly extended jail stays actually increase recidivism and reduce public safety as inmates lose positive connections to jobs and family while being exposed to a criminal environment that encourages anti-social behavior.

We have a dream of seeing our criminal justice system trend toward restorative rather than punitive responses to offenders. We believe the needs of victims should be a first priority, and that those causing others harm should be directly involved in repairing those harms and making appropriate restitution.

Therefore, we are committed to work with relevant policy makers and stakeholders to achieve the following in 2018:

1. Eliminate the financial burden of the \$1 per day fee currently paid by family members of inmates at our local jail and the \$3 charged for local inmates transferred to Middle River Regional Jail (as permitted, but not mandated, by VA Code Section 53.1-131.3). This is one of numerous high priority concerns expressed by family members of inmates that needs to be addressed.

2. Engage in a careful and open selection process for the hiring of a well qualified Community Justice Planner. This person would evaluate all criminal justice programs and practices, make strategic recommendations for the best allocation of resources, and coordinate the legally mandated biennial update to the Community Criminal Justice Board's Community Corrections Plan (as stated in VA Code Section 9.1-175).

3. Establish protocols for all juvenile justice cases to be screened for a restorative justice process (see VA Code Section 16.1-278-.8). We will support transparent and community based steps in implementing restorative justice alternatives for adults and juveniles alike.

Ben Dyme's High Holiday Sermons

Erev Rosh Hashanah 2018 Sep 9

Good evening everyone. For those of you whom I haven't met yet, I'm Ben Dyme, your rabbinic intern. Thank you for welcoming me into your congregation, and into your lives.

I'm honored to be here with you all, for these High Holy Days.

Please humor me, and imagine a scene: Kids are playing, Sam takes Robin's tricycle and starts pedaling around. Robin runs up and pushes Sam off. Robin's parents make Robin apologize to Sam. You can see and hear that apology, right? A mumbled and insincere, "I'm sorry," possibly while kicking some dirt and clenching a fist. However, it's good training in something that's hugely important in life. Robin didn't want to apologize, and, their parents made them as a matter of course, teaching manners and how crucial they are for getting along in society. Of course, Sam could probably tell that Robin didn't mean it, or at the most said it grudgingly. This also tested Sam's ability to accept these words from a friend.

This story speaks to what it means to say I'm sorry. At the core, it's about asking for a second chance. And even if one isn't given, in asking, the person making a sincere apology is demonstrating a readiness to try again, and to be better.

Some of the themes I'll be covering over these High Holiday sermons tie in directly with the readings that we'll have from the Torah and the Haftarah. Others tie into the themes of forgiveness and also the topic of Israel.

Tonight, I'd like to tackle forgiveness, pardon, and granting atonement. One of the main themes of the torah portion tomorrow, B'reishit, is creation, - God creating the Universe and our Earth, and everything on it, including us, in God's image.

One midrash, commentary on the Torah, speaks of Tzimtzum,

God, drawing into Godself, and making space within into which to create and place the universe. This drawing in parallels the drawing in of breath before speaking the world into being.

Breishit contains phrases like, **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אוֹר וַיְהי־אוֹר**

“God Said ‘Let There Be Light’; and there was light” When we draw our literal breathe and speak, we can create many many things, words, yes, and words that, put to a purpose, can accomplish great things.

One option is to breathe in, and then breathe out speaking apologies. It’s possible to heal wounds, repair breaches, create peace, lay the groundwork for healthier relationships in the future, using well placed, and well-thought-out words.

In my first sermon here, a couple of weeks ago, I talked about how there’s so much more to people than what we can see on the surface, emotions, motivations, hurts, trauma, passions, desires. Sometimes, we may not even realized we’ve hurt someone, so when we know that we have, and we choose to apologize, which I hope we will, we should take into consideration going into that exchange the possibility that it won’t be accepted.

One example of this comes from last December’s Star Wars movie, episode 8, “The Last Jedi.” Minor spoiler alert!

If you haven’t seen it yet, and you are sensitive to spoilers, please feel free to make earmuffs (gesture), and then I’ll let you know when I’m done referring to it with a thumbs up sign.

Here goes: At one point in the movie, Luke Skywalker apologizes to his former student for past mistakes.

Luke says, “I failed you, Ben. I’m sorry.”

Ben spits back, “I’m sure you are.”

Luke’s apology was not received well, nor accepted, as Ben was still too angry. He may never accept Luke’s apology, and, it was important for Luke to give it, in order for Luke himself to move forward in peace. I’m a huge Star Wars fan, and light-sabre battles aside, the writers, director, and actors put

together a great story with a telling scene about forgiveness. (Make thumbs up sign that I'm done talking about the movie). Asking for it is fraught with doubt because it might not be given. It's important for us to ask, sincerely, because it indicates a desire to change, beyond just for a second chance.

As we think back on the last year, on who wronged us, and those whom we wronged, we can map it out in our minds, and play the scenes over and over and over. In order to stop the loop of anger, hurt, shame, and regret, to still the spiral so that it's possible to free our minds, hearts, and spirits in order to lead a full and open life again, let us open up to, and hold the idea of forgiveness. What does it mean to have compassion on others?

To realize that they're humans with human frailties? Looking at ourselves and seeing our shortcomings and where we'd like to do better, let us realize that others are striving to do better themselves, and, if they hurt us on a bad day, just as we hope to be forgiven, let us forgive them.

I find turning to Jewish values when looking at these issues very instructive. Pirkei Avot, or Wisdom of our Sages, comes from tractate Nezikin, damages, from the Mishnah, in which Rabbis interpret the Torah. Pirkei Avot discusses Middot, Jewish Values, Middah is the singular. **Rakhamim**, compassion, is one such value. When we deal with each other with compassion, we see others as human beings, fallible, imperfect people, and we see ourselves in them. We see everyone as they are described in this Rosh Hashanah Torah Portion, Bereishit, as Betzelem Elohim, made in the image of God. Each of us contains a spark of the divine.

I needed to bring to bear a lot of rakhamim this summer, when I worked at Bellevue Hospital in NYC, as a student Chaplain. The fragility of human life hit me viscerally, as never before. All those people, in all that pain, and suffering all that grief. They told me, "What they wouldn't give to see their [parent, child, sibling, spouse, friend] again," in order to ask for

forgiveness for a past hurt they caused. All those others who mourn the loss of their speech, their mobility, their freedom - stuck in the hospital, who would they reach out to if they could?

As we look ahead to Yom Kippur, the text reads,

“For transgressions against God, the Day of Atonement atones; but for transgressions of one human being against another, the Day of Atonement does not atone until they have made peace with one another.” Let us take time during these Days of Awe, to ask for forgiveness while we have the time and the ability.

For those of us who have hold this particular view, only God knows what’s in store for us, and, as we’ve all read in years past, and as we’ll read again this year, Repentance, Prayer, and Charity temper judgement’s severe decree. As we begin 5779, let’s keep in mind how fleeting life can be, and to live each moment to its fullest, remaining present in that moment, and doing as rightly as possible, and to seek forgiveness when necessary.

May God give us the courage, and may we find it in ourselves to want to make changes, to seek second chances, to ask for forgiveness, and to forgive others who request it of us.

May we see the spark of the divine in ourselves and in each other, view others with compassion, and may we use our words wisely, to repair bridges, and create a brighter future in the coming year.

Ken Y’hi Ratzon, be this God’s will.

Amen

2nd Sermon - RH AM

Good morning, everyone.

“I have always done the best I could, at that time, with what I had.” Let me say that again: “I have always done the best I could, at that time, with what I had.” I learned this from my supervisor over the summer doing Clinical Pastoral Education,

CPE at Bellevue Hospital in NYC. I worked as a student chaplain. This thought process helps avoid what's called in sociology "stinky thinking," all the shoulda, woulda, coulda's that we regret.

My Poppi, my Mom's Dad, said years before I ever heard of "stinky thinking," to "do the best you can, dear." Keeping this in mind, and always trying to do my best, it's still easy to fall into the trap of second guessing results, and events, and my actions afterwards. I try to keep my Poppi's words in mind in every-day life, and now I consciously combat "stinky thinking," when I start to critique myself in hindsight.

For all of us moving forward, we need to do the best we can, and, we need to cut ourselves some slack, when we look back on our past deeds. We can believe that we did the best we could have, with what we had at that time.

What does this mean? Does this go against my words last night on the need for asking for forgiveness? Can we just write ourselves a pass, a get out of jail free card? No, this is different, and, it pertains to the same kinds of situations. We need to understand that we're imperfect. That even when we do our best we make mistakes. That's part of being human. And while we have to apologize for those mistakes that have hurt others, we have to remember our imperfection, and not beat ourselves up for the things we did years, or months, or days, or hours ago, about which we're now embarrassed, or ashamed, or feeling guilty. We can make recompense and restitution, and ask forgiveness, and then do our best to forgive ourselves and move on. Guilt and shame can help us to know which deeds we still need to process, and, aside from that they're heavy emotions to keep lugging around.

Sometimes terrible things happen, for which we blame ourselves, and we do lug around those heavy emotions for a long time. In the musical "Hamilton" - another spoiler here, anyone who doesn't know the music/story who wants to be surprised, now's the time again for earmuffs (gesture), and, I'll give the all clear sign when I'm done. In the musical, after Philip, Hamilton's son, is killed in a duel

over his father's honor, Hamilton is grieving and blames himself for his son's death. "[he] walks the length of the city," pacing through his emotions and his grief. He eventually receives the forgiveness of his wife, and to do that, he needed to forgive himself as well. (Give All Clear Sign)

Another part of believing that "I have always done the best I could, at that time, with what I had," is really examining our intentions, that they're good and sincere, in any task or action we undertake. If we can honestly tell ourselves that we did our best to accomplish our goals, then any collateral damage is unintentional, and should thus be treated as an opportunity for a lesson learned. As long as I learn that lesson, and apply it to future situations, then the mistake, or unintended outcome, becomes a learning opportunity. If in future situations and interactions we build on past mistakes, then we, and future people with whom I interact will benefit.

We can still know on some level that we did our best, and, blame ourselves for falling short. Working through this guilt and blame and shame and regret requires forgiving ourselves. It isn't easy. For wisdom in approaching this goal, I turn to Jewish values, and I go back to Pirkei Avot, or Wisdom of our Sages, which I did yesterday as well. Pirkei Avot comes from tractate Nezikin, damages, from the Mishnah, in which Rabbis interpret the Torah. Pirkei Avot discusses Middot, Jewish Values, and Middah is the singular. **Khessed**, lovingkindness, proves one of the most important values to forgiving oneself. We need to love ourselves and treat ourselves with Khessed if we want to move forward. We must hold up to ourselves our deeds about which we feel guilty or ashamed, look at them, recognize that they cause these feelings, decide what to do about them, and then put them down and pack them away so that we don't have to carry them around with us all the time.

One thing our Torah teaches us that helps in these situations is to lift our eyes, to change our perspective. I spoke yesterday about the Torah portion we read this morning, about speaking words and creating new bridges and building better relationships with each other by asking forgiveness. The alternative Torah portion for this morning, which we did not read, is the Akedah, the Binding of Isaac.

At the last minute, just before Abraham sacrificed his son, an angel of God stays Abraham's hand. Abraham looks up, shifts his gaze, and sees a ram to use as an alternate sacrifice. Our ancestor sacrificed the ram instead of his son, and God blessed him for his willingness to give up his beloved son due to his awe of, and obedience towards God. This Torah portion is problematic for many reasons. What it does offer that helps here is its wisdom on changing perspective. If we only pick up our gaze, we might see new ways in which to view events about which we feel badly, and find ways to reframe the narrative and forgive ourselves.

In the coming year, let us find ways to perceive and believe that we do our best, and to shift our gaze when we view our past deeds, to unburden ourselves of shame, embarrassment, regret, guilt, and all of the negative, heavy emotions. Let us reframe our stories and learn to tell them to ourselves without using "stinky thinking." Using all these tools, I hope that we can forgive ourselves, and move forward to keep trying our best, and "doing the best we can, dears."

Ken Y'hi Ratzon, Be this God's will,

Amen

Shanah Tovah

YK EREV SERMON; ISRAEL

Those who were here last Friday for Shabbat Services will remember this poem by Aaron Zeitlin:

"Praise Me, says God, and I will know that you love Me.

Curse Me, says God, and I will know that you love Me.

Praise Me or curse Me,

And I will know that you love Me.

Sing out My graces, says God.

Raise your fist against Me and revile, says God.

Sing out graces or revile,

Reviling is also a kind of praise, says God.

But if you sit fenced off in your apathy, says God,

If you sit entrenched in, “I don’t give a damn,” says God,

If you look at the stars and yawn,

If you see suffering and don’t cry out,

If you don’t praise and you don’t revile,

Then I created you in vain, says God.”

This poem speaks about engagement with God whether critical or praising, engaging in dialogue is what matters. This poem also points to the fact that a relationship with God is complicated. Perhaps the closer we feel to God, the more complicated it becomes actually. The same goes with Israel, the more we learn, the more complicated our relationship becomes.

After studying about Israel from the 4th grade, on up through Senior year of High School, I felt awe-struck when I visited the Western Wall, The Wailing Wall, that summer before college. Touching those stones that shored up the foundation of the Temple, putting in a prayer written on a scrap of paper, it felt like nothing I’d ever experienced before. Like something out of sci-fi novel, being teleported back in time. This experience I retain and value, and, it’s difficult to reconcile it with my experiences at the Wall when I lived in Israel for the academic year 2016-17, for my first year of rabbinical school. At that point, and still, it proved very very very contentious for women to read from the Torah at the Wall in the main Plaza. This is something very polarizing there, between Reform Jews

from around the world, and the Israeli Orthodox who don't believe women have the right to read from Torah at the wall. I went there and stood in the back in solidarity on the days of the new moon, when Women of the Wall, the movement of women who want the law to protect their right to read Torah at the main part of the Wall, gathered to read. The emotions that this raised proved very different than those that came up during my first experience at the wall. Women should have access to read Torah at the wall. Period. And, there are those that disagree, to the point of screaming, and blowing whistles, trying to interrupt the women's Torah service. I am angered that this is part of life in Israel today, and, instead of turning away, I turn towards the conflict, and lean in, and try to engage.

It's our role, as American Jews, to educate ourselves, get involved, go there, find ways to learn more and fall in love with Israel and come back and teach others. We may disagree with their politics and the way that they treat those in our movement there. We may disagree with the way the Orthodox dominate religious expression, and limit the freedoms of Jewish couples to marry whom and how they choose. We may strongly disagree with the way that the Israeli Government, and by extension the Israeli Army's role in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Like the poem says, praise or revile, these are both acceptable reactions to Israel's actions and policies. I implore you not to sit back and yawn, to change the channel, or click on a different link before reading the article. Take time to learn more, figure out ways to get involved.

Many many many organizations exist which enable and encourage American Jews to get involved and learn more about Israel. Below I list and describe only a few:

ARZA, Association of Reform Zionists of America; part of an international network of like minded, Progressive Jewish voices, working in unison, to build a better Israel.

IMPJ, Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, and **WUPJ**, or as I like to call it, triple-U PJ, World Union for Progressive Judaism, which are affiliated. The Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism is the organizational branch of Progressive Judaism in Israel, their tagline is, There is more than one way to be Jewish

AJC American Jewish Committee, does non-denominational Global Jewish Advocacy
AJC's mission is to advocate for the Jewish people and Israel, and to defend democratic values for all.

IRAC - Israel Religious Action Center, addressing issues of religion and state in Israel.
IRAC strives for freedom of religion and conscience, human equality, social justice, religious tolerance, and individual rights.

AIPAC - The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is a lobbying group that advocates pro-Israel policies to the Congress and Executive Branch of the United States

ZOA Zionist Organization of America, the Zionist Organization of America ("ZOA") is the oldest pro-Israel organization in the United States. ZOA is also committed to promoting strong U.S.-Israel relations.

These and many other organizations that have much to offer for American Jews looking to learn more and engage. SHORTY members and other youth, please look into NFTY and Birthright trips to Israel, Think about these as serious possibilities in the future. I implore you to speak with your folks, research these trips, come talk to me about these, and options that may be available for you.

Why you ask, why this push for Israel?

Three main reasons:

Am Yisrael - The People of Israel

Medinat Yisrael - The State of Israel

Eretz Yisrael - The Land of Israel

Am Yisrael, EXPAND we are the People of Israel,

and we are bound into Israel by our ancestors' covenants with God, and by our family passing it down to us, or by our choice to embrace it ourselves.

Medinat Yisrael - EXPAND the State of Israel needs our support, politically, socially, economically - in any way possible. The only way to get the State of Israel to recognize and engage more with Reform Judaism is to embrace Israel and get involved first.

Eretz Yisrael - The Land of Israel, this land, flowing with milk and honey, promised to our ancestors as a reward for their keeping their covenant with God, this land is passed down to us as our inheritance.

We read in this and recent portions of the people of Israel about to enter the land of Israel, and God, through Moses, saying final words words of warning to us, the blessing, good, and life, vs the curse, evil, and death, choices before us, building up the suspense and the tension, the anxiety and the energy, as we take this huge step, into the land promised to our ancestors, to finally claim our inheritance. It's the ultimate click-bait, teaser, in the Bible, a now-standard trope method for emphasizing the importance of what's about to happen. The our connection to the land of Israel is codified in the Torah. Using all of the now studied, tried, and true literary devices, the Torah builds up to and emphasizes the importance of our inheriting this land. If we want to honor the Torah, I recommend we engage with our inheritance. If we believe that the Torah is worth reading and teaching, Then it is incumbent upon us to at least explore our connection to the Land of Israel.

Whether you think Birthright is your birthright, or if you believe it's more of a political platform, If you've been to Israel already, or, you're reluctant to leave the US, I hope that you will find a way to increase your engagement and involvement with Israel. When I ponder my connection to Israel, I think of my family. My Dad's parents, my Bubby and Zeidi were ardent Zionists, and my Bubby worked for the ZOA for many years. The organization has changed some since then, and, they still have the same

mission to support Israel, and strengthen ties between the US and Israel. My Bubby passed down her commitment to Israel to her children, and they to me.

In addition to my family connection, I also rely on Jewish Values, Middot, from Pirkei Avot in the Mishna to guide me as I ponder my connection to Israel. The Middah that I find most instructive in this case, is Akhrayut - Responsibility. We **ARE** our siblings' keepers. We are responsible for them, And they are responsible for us. And I don't mean just the Right of Return, that any Jew world wide can always go to Israel and claim citizenship and move there, make Aliyah. I also mean that they are responsible to us; we are responsible to each other, and all world Jewry. It's why Israel sent missions to rescue Ethiopian Jewry, and why we worked so hard for the cause of Russian Jews, so that they could be free to leave their oppressive environment and choose to live freely elsewhere. Many came to the US, and many moved to Israel. Currently, Israel and many US based Jewish Aid Organizations spend over a **Billion Dollars** to help Jews around the world strengthen their own communities wherever they are. Jews look out for each other look after each other and look towards each other, for we see ourselves in each other. That's why we can get so angry, and/or sad when we see other Jews doing things we don't agree with; like the saying goes, "Nobody knows how to press your buttons like family." We are one big world-Jewish family, and Israel is the other location where many of us live.

So let's search our hearts this year, and find a way to start, build, strengthen, extend, and help others to build their connections to Israel as well. If your primary connection to Israel is through criticism or distrust, then you can channel that into trying to help Israel become the Israel you want it to be. If the relationship is love and praise of Israel, how can you help others understand why you have this love. Let us make plans and get there, to explore, learn about, engage with, and deepen our love for Eretz, Am, and Medinat Yisrael.

Ken y'hi ratzon, be this God's will,

Amen

YK_SERMON_AM_2018SEP19_Religion and Soc. Action

Riding the subway in NYC, coming back home after a long day, I just snagged an extra apple from school to have as a snack while studying that evening. On the medium-full subway car, the B train, someone jostles through asking for change, or food, whatever people can spare. Sometimes they tell a story as to why they need to ask. I don't always believe them, and, it's hard not to listen and start to care. What starts going through my mind is, do I have anything to give? Should I give? I usually don't give money, I donate my time to my school's soup kitchen when I can instead. I do sometimes give them my piece of fruit.

Other times the urge to hang onto it is strong. This apple is mine! Even though I didn't pay for it, and certainly didn't grow it, I sometimes hesitated to give it to another. What should we do? Would we want someone to give you the fruit if our positions were reversed? The line about the golden rule comes to mind. I'll come back to that later.

The Torah readings around Yom Kippur all have components regarding the Israelite community and how we should treat each other. Don't put stumbling blocks in front of the blind; leave the crops in the corners of your fields, they are for the poor and the stranger. Do not steal. Do not lie or act deceitfully. Our liturgy during these High Holidays also discusses the communal aspect of our religion. In these cases, it's the communal sins for which we repent. I'm about to give you page numbers for different prayers. We're not going to read them together here, but feel free to turn to them and peruse.

Avinu Malkeinu - WE have sinned against you

- pp 339-340;

Al Kheit - For the sin WE have committed against you

- pp 327-331;

The Vidui, Ashamnu, Bagadnu, Gazalnu -

an alphabet of sin that WE have committed

p 269 -

communal sins; we're all in this together.

These are pretty basic, moral, rational instructions. Do not lie, cheat, steal. It's wrong, a sin.

When we do sin, repent.

Religion has more to offer us than just instructions for right actions. Religion gives us some perspectives to guide us in the choices we make as we deal with the heavy emotional burdens

I referenced on Rosh Hashana. How do we deal with grief? Loss? Pain? Also, religion helps us to deal with joy and gratitude. In his article, from June 3, 2018, Stephen T. Asma, a professor of philosophy, Says the following about alternative reasons that religion is important:

“According to prominent neuroscientists like Jaak Panksepp, Antonio Damasio and Kent Berridge, as well as neuropsychologists like Mark Solms, our minds are motivated primarily by ancient emotional systems, like fear, rage, lust, love and grief. These forces are adaptive and help us survive if they are managed properly — that is if they are made strong enough to accomplish goals of survival, but not so strong as to overpower us and lead to neuroses and maladaptive behavior. [The article's author's] claim is that religion can provide direct “access to this emotional life in ways that science does not.there are many forms of human suffering that are beyond the reach of any scientific alleviation. Different emotional stresses require different kinds of rescue. Unlike previous secular tributes to religion that praise its ethical and civilizing function, I think we need religion because it is a road-tested form of emotional management.

....most religion is actually helpful to the average family struggling to eke out a living in trying times.

Religious rituals, for example, surround the bereaved person with our most important resource — other people. Even more than other mammals, humans are extremely dependent on others — not just for acquiring “resources and skills, but for feeling well. And feeling well is more important than thinking well for my survival.”

Connecting these themes, Torah, Liturgy, Haftarah, and Jewish Values can be difficult because they’re all so enmeshed and interwoven. I’m literally preaching to the choir here (wave to them), and the rest of you who are already here on Yom Kippur, here because you believe in the power of this day. Where can we go from here? I spoke about Israel engagement last night. Today I’m looking closer to home. Let’s figure out ways to leave the corners on our fields, to give our apples. More than righteous and commanded giving, we are commanded to take an active role - tzedek tzedek tirdof justice, justice shall you pursue. We can do our part to metaphorically remove the stumbling blocks from in front of the blind.

Anchoring these thoughts in Jewish values proved difficult for this morning. Not because these themes aren’t covered, but because so many of them address these issues mentioned above. Choosing the Middah, taken from Pirkei Avot, one rabbinic commentary on the Torah, was hard because I had eight of them in front of me, and, I finally narrowed it down to “love your neighbor as yourself, V’ahavta l’reh’akha kamokha” the same v’ahavta that we have after the Shema. This phrase comes up in this afternoon’s Torah portion in a string of commandments God gives us through Moses. They all have to do with right-acting towards one another, Jew and non-Jew alike, in our communities. Whether we’re talking strictly within religious situations, like the article discussed, and we utilize religion as a way to cope with the stresses of life, or, whether we think of it more as a universal way to treat people, this midah speaks to how we deal with others, and why. We’re also told to love the stranger as ourselves, since we were strangers in the land of Egypt. “The stranger,” in Biblical language, the non-Jew in our midst, also deserves to be treated and loved as we want to be treated and loved.

I mentioned in my initial story the apple that I had, and how possessive I sometimes felt over it, struggling with myself to give it to another. This parallels the end of the Jonah story, which we'll read this afternoon. Spoiler alert, and I hope you'll come back to hear it soon, if you don't want to know the end, do the earmuffs, (demonstrate), and I'll let you know when I'm done. Jonah is distraught when a gourd and leaves that God provided that gave shade to Jonah one day, then died the next day at dawn. Hot and faint, Jonah begged for death, distraught about the loss of the plant and its shade. God then said: "You care about the plant, yet you did not work on it, nor cultivate it; it appeared overnight and perished overnight. And should I not care about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left...?" The value of a person living in Nineveh is so much more than that of the plant; Jonah desperately needed some perspective. (give all clear signal) We can learn from these: Torah, Haftarah, Liturgy and Jewish Values the value of human life, and the need for loving our neighbors as ourselves.

This year, let's love ourselves, and then begin to better love our neighbors, and the strangers in our midst. Let's work to make their lives better, and to figure out ways to give our apples more freely.

Ken y'hi ratzon; be this God's will,

Amen

OCTOBER 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
Religious School Simchat Torah Sukkot VII/Hoshanah Rabah	Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah				Community Awareness Shabbat led by Rabbi Dyme	
	6:00 pm Sisterhood Meeting					
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Columbus Day (regional holiday) 10amFmir apps due Oct 15				6:30pmPotluck lay services @7:30pm	10amSnacks for jack soccer
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	6:30pmBoard Meeting	Yom HaAliyah School Observance		6-8 pm No Excuse For Abuse Court Square	6:30pmPotluck lay services @7:30pm	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
12:30pmSHORTY MEETING	6:30pmBeth El board meeting				6:30pmFamily Shabbat activities lay services @7:30pm	
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
12:30pmSisterhood LuLaRoe Clothing Show			Halloween			