



Rabbi's Message



I am consistently impressed by the sense of family that exists at the Pelham Jewish Center. Moments of joy from our lives outside of the synagogue are celebrated together. We have celebrated weddings, births, *b'nei mitzvah*, and countless birthdays. Each time that we are together, there is a clear and palpable sense of joy and shared happiness that enhances the experience for everyone present. Our children look forward to spending time together and are building relationships that will last their entire lives.

The same is true when we have faced moments of sadness and hardship. I receive calls from members of the community on behalf of someone who is suffering, either to let me know about the situation, or to discuss ways in which we can be most supportive. We are quick to bring meals when someone is sick, or suffering, or in mourning. We make it clear that our community exists outside the walls of the PJC, and is based on real connections and relationship.

In the Talmud (Sotah, 14a), it is written:

Rabbi Hama bar Rabbi Haninah said: How should we interpret the verse, "After the Lord your God you should walk" (Deuteronomy 13:5)? For, can a person walk after the Divine Presence? Doesn't the Torah already say "For the Lord your God is a devouring fire" (Deuteronomy 4:24)? Rather, follow after the *attributes* of the Holy Blessed One. ... The Holy Blessed One visited the sick, as it is written, "The Lord appeared to him [Abraham] in the terebinths of Mamre" (Genesis 18:1). So, too, you should visit the sick. ...

We must continue all of the good that we are already doing. And we must add to it. Hildy Martin runs the *Bikur Cholim* committee, who has taken on the task of following in this attribute of the Divine. Committees such as ours have been central to Jewish communities for more than seven hundred years. This is holy work, and needs our support.

We need volunteers who are able to make visits. These visits do not need to be long; they do not need to have a specific activity in mind. The very act of visiting with a member of our community can have an incredible impact on their mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being. As Rabbi Abba said in the Talmud (Nedarim 39b-40a), "One who visits the sick removes one sixtieth of his or her suffering." These visits will also have an impact on you. You will build a new connection in the community, and tighten the bonds that hold us all together.

On an even more basic level, we need to know whom we should be visiting. So please share what is happening in your lives. If you are sick, or have an accident, or go in for surgery, tell someone. If you feel isolated or are homebound. Call me. Call Hildy. Let us know, and let us know how we can support you. If you need food, or a visit, or a prayer. And call us if you know of someone else in the community who could benefit from a visit or a phone call.

In this way, we can support one another when that support is most important. We can demonstrate that each member of our community is valued and cared for at all times. And we can follow in the path laid out for us by God.

בשלום,

Rabbi Alex Salzberg

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Upcoming PJC Activities & Events

March

5 -- Tot Shabbat/11am

5 -- Women's Group/1pm

6 -- Gloria Horowitz Lecture/10am

13 -- Purim Carnival/1-3pm

16 -- Spiritual Practices Program with Rabbi Pamela Wax/7:30-9:30pm

18 -- Community Shabbat Dinner/6:30pm

20 -- Gloria Horowitz Lecture/10am

23 -- Megillah Reading/7pm

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From the Desk of Our Education Director



April

9 -- Tot Shabbat/11am

9 -- Midnight Run/9pm

10 -- Sheldon Horowitz Lecture/10am

30 -- Women's Group/1pm

May

7 -- Shabbat HaYeladim/9:30am-Noon

14 -- Tot Shabbat/11am

15 -- Sheldon Horowitz Lecture/10am

20 -- Shabbat B'Shamayim/5:30-7:30pm

21 -- Women's Group/1pm

22 -- Tag Sale/10am-3pm

26 -- Israeli Scouts/4-7:30pm

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The Jewish month of Adar Bet, when we celebrate the holiday of Purim, begins this year after sundown on March 10th. The name Adar has the same root letters of the Hebrew word "Adir", which means "strength". In fact, in Jewish Prayer, the Hebrew word "Adir" is generally used as one of the attributes of G-d, and has been translated as exalted, praised; when we say "G-d is *adir*", we mean "G-d is mighty".

Additionally, when in read in the Torah that G-d instructs the Israelites in the desert to build Him a "mishkan", a house of prayer, G-d uses the same root letters in the word Adar to say that "v'edor beineichem" (and I will dwell amongst you).

So why is it that when we celebrate Purim and read the Megillah, the Scroll of Esther, which is one of the four *mitzvot* of the holiday, we cannot find the name of G-d in all of its 176 verses and 10 chapters?

Where is G-d in the Megillah? [Rabbi Michael Hattin](#), from the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem, points out that the story we read in the Megillah has many natural opportunities for G-d to be mentioned: for example, in Chapter 3, when Mordechai refuses to bow to Haman - it would be seamless to add - "because we only serve one G-d"; or in Chapter 4, when Mordechai goes out to Shushan's square dressed in sac and cries out - who does he cry out to?; or when Esther asks that all Jews in Shushan should fast and pray for three days before she goes to the King - wouldn't this be a perfect spot to add the name of G-d to the story? Rabbi Hattin claims that G-d has been deliberately written out from the Megillah since His miracles, which were revealed to us in the Story of the Exodus, Yetzyiat Mitzrayim, cannot take place in the same way when the Jews are in Exile - the Jews in the Megillah story are living in Persia. The Megillah omits His name to make space for humans to act on His behalf. To take charge and change our *goral*, our destiny. To show courage, leadership and... faith and make our own miracles happen.

So, as I referenced earlier, reading the *Megillah* and revisiting the story of the Jews of *Shushan* as they faced destruction and then extreme joy is one of the four *mitzvot* (commandments) of the Purim holiday.

What are the other three? Well, it's easy to learn them by heart, since they all start with the Hebrew letter "Mem" (m): *Mishloach Manot* (exchanging food packages), *Mishteh* (Banquet), and *Matanot l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor). And don't forget - Megillah reading also starts with a "mem"... Is there a connection between the fact that G-d's name is NOT mentioned in the story of Purim and the 4 distinctive ways (*mitzvot*) in which we are commanded to celebrate this Holiday by the *Halachah* (Jewish Law)?

What is the common thread among the 4 *Mitzvot*? They are all related to community. To *Kehillah*. It's as if our actions here, in the realm of the living world, in our community, will establish G-d's presence by performing these four "M" *mitzvot*. A parallel between two realms - the Divine and the Human. How can we fulfill G-d's wish "V'Edor beineichem" (I will dwell amongst you)? (1) By learning and searching for new meanings from our traditional texts (read the Megillah!); (2) by celebrating our survival and the plight for survival of all the Jewish people, having a festive meal in families or in community - feeling empowered by the blessings we have inherited from our ancestors, by rejoicing that we are alive, and free! (have a *Mishteh* - a banquet!) (3) Make sure all in your community CAN celebrate their *Mishteh* (by sending *Mishloach Manot*!) (4) and do not ever forget the neediest - especially in your highest moments of joy - (by giving *Matanot l'evyonim*). So I guess we can see the common thread here - as we

strengthen our community, both in learning, in creating connections and in addressing all people's needs - we are bringing G-d to dwell in our midst. Our actions, our choices, our priorities, matter. This is our opportunity to partner with G-d in this world.

This year, when we celebrate the holiday of Purim together, let's remember that our beautiful traditions are here to enhance our humanity and strengthen our community. The *mitzvot* of Purim are a wakeup call to each of us to see what else we can do to change and improve our lives and the lives (the destiny) of those around us, Jews and non-Jews.

At the Learning Center, we will start the month of Adar Bet with our third "MASA Hessed" on Sunday, March 6. Students and their families will once more come together to engage in acts of love and kindness and contribute to organizations in the Westchester community: [Lift Up Westchester](#), [Bronx Jewish Community Center](#), [New Rochelle Humane Society](#) and [Kid's Kloset](#). This is our modest way to give back to the community, fulfilling the "*Matanot l'Evyionim*" mitzvah.

On that same date, we will also have a visit from the [Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind](#), who will share with us the amazing *Hessed* work they are doing to help blind people in Israel "see" through their guiding dogs. We will learn how we can help them fulfill their beautiful mitzvah.

Please email me: edudir@thepjc.org if you would like to know more about the MASA-Hessed program at the Learning Center and how you may be a part of it if you wish. I wish us all a very happy Jewish month of Adar Bet, or as our Rabbis say, "*Mi shenichnas Adar, marbim b'Simchah*".

B'vrachah,

Ana Turkienicz

Education Director

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President's Message



Jane Eisner, editor of the *Forward*, makes an interesting observation. She argues that whatever one thinks about Bernie Sanders, if he would be elected "he won't be a Jewish president. He'll be a president who happens to be Jewish. This is not an endorsement, nor a criticism -- just an observation. It says as much about the state of contemporary American Jewishness as it does about the senator from Vermont." <http://forward.com/opinion/333706/how-jewish-would-a-bernie-sanders-presidency-be/#ixzz41TOrTkYk>

The column is a worthwhile read because it encourages all of us to take stock of what Judaism means to our lives. We are incredibly blessed as American Jews to have the luxury of considering this as a question at all. But the glory and conundrum of our freedom is that it makes it harder to grapple with Judaism.

For most of my life I had a strong sense that being Jewish was very important to my identity, and yet had an extraordinarily hard time explaining why. It was really important to me to send my kids to Hebrew school, yet I hated Hebrew school. If someone Jewish won a Nobel Prize or I learned that a movie star was Jewish, I *kvelled*. Somehow it seemed important that Art Shamsky of the Mets was Jewish. I loved Adam Sandler's Hanukkah song! Objectively, it's pretty thin support for telling my kids that being Jewish is really important.

Part of my identification was Holocaust driven. I think many people in the early generations after the war had close connections to the Shoah. We knew survivors, and we knew how many in our family were murdered in the camps. But already we were gaining distance from the horror. America defeated the Nazis and American anti-Semitism deflated. Baby boomer Jews have had unprecedented professional opportunities and success. Yet, it is hard to fashion an identity based on the cruel reality that anti-Semitism is a historical fact. (Just read the news about what it means to be a French Jew today and we are sadly reminded of this fact.) Beyond the boomers, the power of the Shoah inevitably dims.

In the end, I think that if we are to be part of sustaining the Jewish people, we need to figure out what being Jewish means to us, individually and collectively. There is no one way to be Jewish, even the Talmud acknowledges that there are 70 faces to Judaism. But today it is not enough to be born Jewish to sustain Judaism. We need to make active decisions about how Judaism fits into our lives.

Our aspiration at the PJC is to create opportunities to find deep meaning in Judaism. This might start with formal adult education. Perhaps it is just coming to services and seeing that normal people can find meaning in prayer. Maybe it is volunteering to deliver food to the needy. And we fully recognize that the PJC is not the only opportunity to engage with one's Jewish identity. Read the Jewish press (I think the *Forward* is a fine newspaper), or go to the Jewish Museum, or take courses at Hadar or Drisha or the JCC.

My deepest desire is that each of us takes some time to think hard about why we care about being Jewish. And if you don't know why -- as I clearly didn't -- take some time to begin trying to figure it out. Like anything worthwhile, it takes some time and energy to cultivate a Jewish identity. But the richness of our thinkers, our artists, our writers, our rabbis, our culture are extraordinary. It is ours to embrace, to use to develop well springs of joy and resilience, to come to fully embrace our Jewish identity. You might say, it is the tree of life for those who grasp it.

B'Shalom,
Steve

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PJC Gala Update



The rescheduled date and time for the **2016 PJC Fundraising Gala** is Sunday, April 10th, from 5:30-10:00 pm. If you already purchased tickets for February 27 and are no longer able to attend, please contact [Donna Weissman](#). Options for refunds or changing reservations to donations or purchasing a journal advertisement will be available. All other reservations will be honored.

If you were not able to attend on February 27, but are now able to join us, please submit your reply card or [register online](#) as soon as possible. The new deadline for journal ad submission is Friday, March 25. The Gala Committee greatly appreciates the community's support for and understanding of this change in plans, and looks forward to gathering together on Sunday, April 10, to celebrate the PJC and our wonderful honorees, Hildy & Steve Martin!

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PJC Nominating Committee 2016-'17

The PJC Nominating Committee is forming now for 2016-'17. If you are interested in serving on the Committee, or on the PJC Board for the coming year, please contact [Michelle Dvorkin](#). Open Board positions will be announced later this month.



Thank you in advance for considering getting more involved in the PJC!

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PJC Purim

Mishloach Manot
Sign up to Give a Purim Gift!
Deadline: Monday, March 21st
Click [Here](#) to Sign Up



One of Purim's loveliest traditions is the giving of a small gift to family and friends. Each year, the PJC delivers beautiful gift bags to our members and staff filled with symbols of Purim--sweets and *hamantashen*. The *Mishloach Manot* project is a way for you to support the PJC while participating in this wonderful tradition!

How does it work? Send a *Mishloach Manot* basket to the whole Megillah (the entire PJC community), for \$180. Your name and holiday greeting will be added to the card included with each gift. To participate [CLICK HERE](#).

Everyone is encouraged to participate and donate at any level--contact [Jill Goldenberg](#) with questions.

Purim 2016 / 5776 Begins Wednesday, March 23rd!

Get into the Purim spirit by sending a *Mishloach Manot* package to your friends in our PJC community. Your name and good wishes will be added to the card included with the bag of goodies each family receives. This is a great opportunity to participate in a Purim *mitzvah* and help raise funds for the PJC! [see details above to sign up]

Wednesday, March 23 -- *Ta'anit Esther* (Fast of Esther)

Wednesday, March 23 at 7pm Erev Purim -- *Megillah* reading and PURIM PIZZA PARTY for all! Jenny Labendz will join us reading the *Megillah* in her wonderful, animated Hebrew. This year we are trying something new and will have a PODCAST of the Purim story in English! Costumes welcome! Prizes in all age groups from infants to adults!

Thursday, March 24 -- *Shushan Purim*



*It's time to
get silly!*

The Pelham Jewish Center's
Annual Purim Carnival

Sunday March 13, 1-3pm

Face Painting! Games! Prizes! Balloons!

Holiday treats! Lunch!

Come in costume for extra prizes

For Kids 2-10 and the young at heart

FREE for Members, Friends & Neighbors

@ The Pelham Jewish Center

451 Esplanade, Pelham

RSVP appreciated by March 9:

Astettner.as@gmail.com



Please bring a wrapped toy to share with a deserving child served by the Metropolitan

*Council on Jewish Poverty this Purim!**

**Mark the gender and age on the outside of the wrapping with a post-it or card.*

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The PJC Torah Guide



The Learning Center's Hebrew High School has created a video demonstrating many of the Honors that are given out during a typical Shabbat morning service, so that anyone can see what is expected, and feel comfortable accepting an Honor at the PJC. Click [here](#) to watch the video; the password is shalom451.

This video is also intended to be shared with family or friends who may be visiting the PJC, and are uncertain about accepting an Honor. Our thanks go out to the members of the Hebrew High School for stepping up to support our community, and our deep gratitude goes to Neco Turkienicz, who filmed and edited what you see.

If you would like to practice any of the Honors before participating, please contact [Rabbi Salzberg](#)--he would be happy to work with you directly.

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Israel News Bits

Israel is Finally Investing in Its Rail Systems

Israel's rail systems lag behind that of other developed nations. To counter that failing, the Transportation Department has approved an investment of approximately \$7 billion over four years, the largest amount in its history, to overhaul Israel's



intercity trains and build new stations. This is in addition to the recently announced second and third light rail routes for Jerusalem. The first light rail line in Jerusalem, which is now operational, resulted in years of delays and cost overruns.

Beyoncé Wears Israeli Designed Dress to Grammys

Beyoncé attended the Grammys this year wearing a wedding dress designed by Israeli designer Inbal Dror. The dress was a high-necked gown with tulle insets.



Arab Journalists Secretly Visit Israel

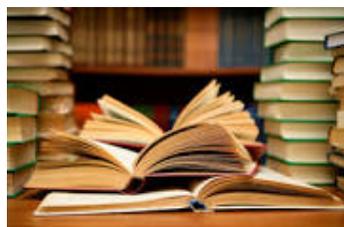
In a major public relations coup, four European journalists of Iraqi, Syrian, and Egyptian descent visited Israel to learn more about the region from Israel's perspective. The journalists publish content in Arabic language news outlets. While one of the journalists commented that the trip would allow them to present a different image of Israel to their readers, their names have not disclosed publicly because of fear that they may lose their jobs or even their lives.

Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Tussle over Mikvahs

The Israeli Supreme Court recently decided that the Reform and Conservative movements could not be blocked by local religious councils from using public *mikvahs* for their conversion ceremonies. The local religious councils controlled access to the *mikvahs*. However, this may not be the end of the battle. Four Orthodox Knesset members have introduced legislation to codify the prior discrimination. Under the proposed law, the chief rabbinate could block use of the *mikvahs* by members of the Reform and Conservative movements.

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PJC Library News



There is a wealth of books on Jewish themes in our PJC Library. Drop in and take a look. Books are arranged by categories and marked by white labels. We have shelves on varied topics: ancient Israel, modern Israel, Holocaust studies and literature, Jewish history, Jewish literacy, Israeli writers, Jewish fiction, Jews & Christianity, biography, children's books, books for youth, *chumashim*, *talmudim*, *siddurim*, and Jews from other lands, to name a few.

Borrowing a book is easy. There is a pocket with a green card in the back of most books. Write your name and the date you take the book out on the card. Hand the card into the Office. Julia will periodically check to see how long books have been out. If a book is out more than a month, she will send you a gentle reminder. To return a book, place it in either of the two blue bins found in the Library and in the Office.

On the bottom ride side on the wall adjacent to the kitchen, below the Israel shelves, is an empty cabinet set aside to keep source books you may need for services. Please make use of it as needed.

Come to the PJC and READ!

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Tributes & Donations





Tributes to the PJC In Memory of ...

- Vivian & Theodor Brown, IMO of Janice Rossman
- Debra Zultowsky Ciaccio, IMO Janice Rossman
- Jill & Barry Goldenberg, IMO Janice Rossman
- Hildy & Steve Martin, IMO Janice Rossman
- Hildy & Steve Martin, IMO Gloria Spivak
- Lydia Read & Dan Mailick, IMO Janice Rossman
- Tina Rubin & Max Rubin, IMO Janice Rossman
- Melanie & David Samuels, IMO Janice Rossman
- Beth & Joel Serebransky, IMO Janice Rossman
- Cindy Silverman & Greg Kost, IMO Janice Rossman
- Beth & Bill Sorenson, IMO Janice Rossman
- Heidi Zultowsky, IMO Janice Rossman

Donations to the PJC from ...

- Anne Field & Geoff Lewis

Donations to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund from ...

- Meryl & Martin Druckerman, in loving memory of Janice Rossman
- Meryl & Martin Druckerman, in loving memory of Rabbi Salzberg's Bubbe
- Meryl & Martin Druckerman, in loving memory of Dina Miriam Kromberg
- Meryl & Martin Druckerman, in support of our very meaningful Women's Group

Make Tributes & Donations [ONLINE!](#)

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