



## Rabbi's Message



As I write this, I am in the final hours of preparation for the PJC's trip to Cuba. This is the irony of newsletters, because by the time you read it, we will have been back for about a week. I'm sure that we will have talked about the trip, and the ways in which it has broadened our perspectives, and given new ideas about our place in the world.

But right now, I am living in anticipation. I am running around, making sure that I have done everything that needs doing, packed everything that needs packing, planned everything that needs planning. As I am working to make sure that everything will run smoothly on the trip, I am also trying to set everything up to run smoothly here while I am gone.

I am optimistic, but I am nervous. I don't know what will happen, either here or there. This is a hard place to be, on the precipice of a major event, and knowing that in less than a week's time, it will be over and will only exist in my memory and in the memories of those who were there with me.

How much control do I have? Can I make absolutely certain that things will go the way that I want them to? All I can do is plan, and hope. We have spent many months organizing this trip, examining each of the details over and over again. But at the end of the day,

we can't know.

I have in my office a set of coasters with witty Yiddish sayings on them. One of them reads:

**א מענטש טראכט און גאט לאכט**  
**A person plans, and God laughs**

Normally, when I read this, I think that it is the Jewish version of Robert Burns' famous quote, "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry." The idea being that we can plan all we want, but if God so chooses, it will all amount to nothing. God laughs at us, and our hubris as we try to control the world around us.

But today, I think that my coaster is trying to impart a different message. God is not laughing at us and our plans, but laughing with us. Our plans are no less audacious, but instead of disrupting them, God is pleased that we are willing to try.

This is my hope and prayer as I embark on this journey. And it is my prayer for all of us as we look to our futures and our lives: May we continue to plan, and may God laugh with us because of our *chutzpah*.

בשלום,

Rabbi Alex Salzberg

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## From the Desk of Our Education Director

As I sit on our flight back home from the HHS Cuba Mission trip, one line from our daily prayers kept coming back to mind: "*letaken olam bemaichut shadday*" - to heal the world in the kingdom of G-d. During Shabbat services at the Beth Shalom Synagogue in Havana, we noticed that when reciting the *Aleinu* prayer, the members of the Cuban community kept saying this line out loud, while in Pelham we aren't used to do so.

These powerful words have more encapsulated into them than the literal translation for each one of them.

Starting from the first two words, *Letaken Olam*, fixing our broken world and working towards its healing, then the concept of *Malchut*, which can be broadly translated as "kingdom", the reign (Kabbalists attribute the idea of *Malchut* as being the worldly realm, where we perform our actions). Next, the word *shaddav*:

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### Upcoming PJC Activities & Events

#### March

**4** -- Spring Party/  
6:00pm

**5** -- Book Group/  
11:30am

**11** -- Women's  
Group/1:00pm

**11** -- *Megillah* Reading  
/7:30pm

**12** -- Sunday Morning  
Lecture Series/  
10:00am

**12** -- Purim Carnival/  
1:00pm

**14** -- Soup Kitchen/  
4:30pm

... of Malchut as being the primary reality, where the person can access; ... the word *shadday*, one of the names of G-d, and an acronym of three Hebrew letters: *shin*, *daled* and *yod*, each letter standing for three words: *Shin*: *shomer* (Keeper, guardian), *Daled*: *Delatot* (Gates, doors, entry ways, our four measurements) and *Yod*: first letter of the name of our people, Israel (or as the name Israel stands for, "those who struggle with the Divine").

So this four-word expression, *letaken olam bermalchut shadday*, which happens to be somewhat unnoticed in our *Aleinu* prayer, actually encompasses a powerful call for meaning and intentionality in our daily lives.

This broken world, *malchut shadday*, the one we live in and struggle with every day, stands in the mixed realm between humanity and the Divine. We delve into its brokenness while grappling with our trust in *El-shadday*, that He may guard our comings and goings, our passages through the different gates that open and close before us at any given moment. How can we keep our intentionality and our own guard on at every life opportunity, every transaction and relationship in our daily journeys?

The more I reflect on those words I think about the strength and the fragility of the triad: humanity, reality and the Divine. And about how much is at stake when walking the thin squiggly lines connecting them.



During our last *Shacharit* prayer services in our Havana Hotel open gallery, I asked Rabbi Salzberg to help me put on *tefillin* for the first time. I had many opportunities to do this before, and have been reluctant about taking on this *mitzvah*. On our last day in Havana I decided I was ready. Rabbi Salzberg taught me how to wrap the three letters of the word *Shadday* around my left hand while saying the blessing for putting *tefillin*, the same way his grandfather taught him. I looked at the three letters on my hand and thought of my own grandfather, whom I saw putting on his *tefillin* every morning. My *zayde* told me he did it "so that everything I do and create with my hands during the day will be connected to my heart and my mind." He walked the *Tikun Olam* walk mindfully, *Bermalchut Shadday*. In the realm of here and now, with the protection of the One who guards our comings and goings.

Rabbi Salzberg pointed to the tiny letter *yod* wrapped on the palm of my hand, as he tied the last knot of the *Yod tefillin*. The *yod* letter, that stands for Israel and for the first letter of the name of G-d (YHVH). As if these two entities were within my fingertips' grasp; so little and yet so powerful. A little *yod* tied inside the palm of my hand. Can I hold both together at once?

26 -- Sunday Morning Lecture Series/ 10:00am

#### April

2 -- Pesach Adult Learning/5:00pm

4 -- Soup Kitchen/ 4:30pm

8 -- Midnight Run/ 9:00pm

11 -- Community Seder/5:00pm

23 -- Sunday Morning Lecture Series/ 10:00am

23 -- Yom Hasho'ah Program/6:30pm

30 -- Yom Hazikaron Program/6:30pm

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pain of my hand. Can I hold both together at once?

When wrapping the *tefillin* for the first time on my arm, hand and head in Havana I agreed to embrace the tension between my heart, mind and actions with the knowledge that these three realms are painfully challenging one another constantly. And all I can do is be mindful of my actions while trying my best. Hoping that when the next door opens, I will know which way to proceed.

The constant tension when trying to "walk the *Tikun Olam* walk" became even more evident in my conversations with Cuba Mission trip participants; many shared their personal frustration for not being able to do more for the people in Cuba. Many decided to make the best of each opportunity, in a "*carpe Diem*" mode; for example, on our last moments before leaving the hotel, Jennie Driesen passed around a big bag and suggested that everyone looked into their belongings and donate those "that can be easily replaceable back home". Jennie walked the street around the hotel and delivered the last round of donations to Cuban women she met in the street: *Letaken Olam bemaichut Shadday*.



I recall looking at Abbie Leonard when we visited the Cemetery at Guanabacoa: how she patiently walked by each grave at the Cemetery, stopping next to those which didn't have a stone on them and carefully placing a pebble in reverence to the many that didn't have relatives on the island anymore. I stood still with teary eyes and followed Abbie as she performed this beautiful *mitzvah*, trying to offset the wrongs of reality: paying visits to the countless left behind due to the painful strikes of history: *Letaken Olam bemaichut Shadday*.

When spending Shabbat with the Jewish community, our teens sought to create relationships with the local teens, intentionally investing their time and energy to create meaningful connections while absorbing the uniqueness of their hosts' reality. As Rachel Radvany shared with us, "during Shabbat services, I felt that though on one hand our living circumstances are so different in every way, on the other hand, we feel so connected, as one people, sharing the same traditions, prayers and tunes in Hebrew."

The plane is now closer to home than to Cuba. The announcer tells us to fill out forms declaring our goods. Our Mission trip group has a lot of good-ness to declare ... and I am sure that we also bring back a lot of pain and brokenness in each of our hearts. As we are about to cross into our new entries, back to life in

America, I hope those four words from the *Aleinu* prayer, the image of the three *Shadday* letters wrapped with *tefillin* on our ancestors' hands and the powerful moments we spent together during these last five days will serve as guiding stars as we head into the next part of our journey, here on *malchut shadday*. Five days, four words, three letters, two realities, one G-d, one people.



Welcome back to America, PJC Mission participants! It's been an honor to share this journey with you.

*Wishing us all Shabbat Shalom,*

**Ana Turkienicz**

Education Director

P.S. - While there, the teens wrote regular blog posts to share their experiences with the entire PJC community. Click [here](#) to read all of their reflections and experience Cuba from their perspective!

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## **Mishloach Manot Deadline Friday, March 3rd!**

One of Purim's loveliest traditions is the sending of a small gift of food to family and friends. Each year, the PJC creates and delivers special gift bags to our members and staff, filled with symbols of Purim -- sweets and hamantaschen. The *Mishloach Manot* program is a meaningful way for you to support the PJC while fulfilling this ancient *mitzvah*!

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. **Everyone is encouraged to**



## Pack it Up for Purim



Hear Ye Hear Ye

By Royal Proclamation  
Of the good Queen Esther

You are invited to

**Pack it up for Purim**

To benefit the

**Bronx Jewish Community  
Council Pantry**

**Bring grocery bags filled with:**

1 box of whole-grain cereal or oatmeal 1 box of pasta 1  
can of vegetables (carrots, tomatoes, corn) 1 bag of rice 1



box of 100 percent fruit juice 1 package of dried fruit or granola bars 1 can of tuna 1 package of dried beans (or canned beans or peas) 1 jar of peanut butter (plastic containers only) 1 dessert (nonperishable)  
to the Pelham Jewish Center  
February 23- March 9



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## Purim 2017/5777 Begins Saturday, March 11th



Join us on **Saturday, March 11th, at 7:30 p.m.** for the **Megillah reading**. We will have pizza and hamantashen, snacks and drinks for children and adults.

There will be another original Purim *shpeil*, and a Purim parade for everyone who comes in costume!

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**Happy Purim!**  
**Pelham Jewish Center Purim Carnival**  
Sunday, March 12 1 - 3 PM  
Free for PJC Members and Friends  
PLUS... 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade “Minute to Win It” Challenges 1 – 2 PM  
Face Painting! Games! Prizes!  
Raffles! Food! Fun!  
Come in costume for extra prizes!

# Midnight Run Scheduled for April 8th



Our next Midnight Run will take place on Saturday, April 8th, at 9:00 p.m. The Midnight Run is a volunteer effort to distribute food, clothing, blankets and personal care items to the homeless on the streets of New York City.

## We need:

- Volunteers to attend
- People to provide bagged meals of 1) a hearty turkey sandwich, 2) a granola bar, 3) a bottle of water, 4) a banana or orange and 5) a package of cookies
- Donations of: Men's pants, men's sneakers/shoes, men's hats/baseball caps, toiletries (especially razors, shaving cream, toothbrushes and toothpaste), men's sweatshirts, new men's underwear/undershirts/socks and backpacks/bags
- Cash donations so that we can purchase the above items

Please contact [Michael Dvorkin](#) or call (914) 433-4850 if you are interested in volunteering, donating or helping in any way.

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## Community Seder -- Save the Date!

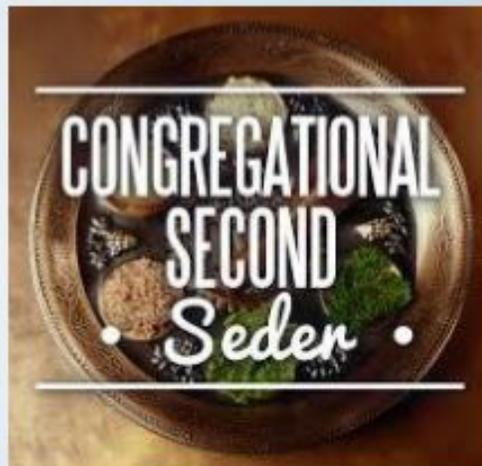
# Join Us!

**Pelham Jewish Center**  
451 Esplanade  
Pelham Manor, NY

**Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>**  
5:00 p.m.

**RSVP by: March 30<sup>th</sup>**

(Weblink available in the  
*Weekly Announcements* &  
on the PJC Website)



PJC families – young and old! – are invited to join us for the second Passover Seder, led by Rabbi Salzberg. All PJC families, and extended family members, are invited to participate. The cost will be \$36 per adult and \$18 per child 6 years of age and older (free for children 5 and younger). RSVP via the webform link in the *Weekly Announcements* or on the PJC website Home Page. Please contact Mimi Steinberg with questions.

***We look forward to leaving Egypt together with you and your family!***

Click [here](#) to RSVP today!

Contact [Mimi Steinberg](#) with any questions.

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## PJC Library News



The PJC Library has seen a remarkable increase in usage!

Thanks to the many generous donations from members, we have a growing array of books on Jewish themes-both fiction and non-fiction. Recommended books can be found on stands around the Library.

It's easy to borrow a library book. At the back of most books, you will find a pocket with a green card. All that is needed is your name and the date the book is checked out. When you return the book, place it in one of the two blue baskets - which can be found in both the Library and the PJC office - so it can be re-shelved.

If you need a particular book, please let our PJC Librarian [Barbara Saunders-Adams](#) know, and she will attempt to locate it. Teachers are welcome to bring classes to the Library. If you want help to locate books in a particular category - such as holiday or holocaust studies - please give Barbara advance notice to confirm her availability. She would be delighted to read aloud to a class!

Last, but not least, the first **PJC Library Book Group** session premieres on Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. It will be held in the PJC Library from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. The book is *Judas* by Amos Oz. All are welcome to participate and/or listen to the discussion.

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## Tributes & Donations



**Tributes to the PJC in Honor of ...**

- The PJC Community & Rabbi Alex Salzberg, with gratitude for the support provided following the passing of Martin Vogelfanger, by Marshall & Naomi Jaffe
- Adam Bukowski on his 20 years of service to the Pelham Jewish Center, by Adam & Kate Lauzar
- Adam Bukowski on his 20 years of service to the Pelham Jewish Center, by John & Leah Leonard
- Lisa Neubardt and the Spring Party Committee, by John & Leah Leonard

#### **Tributes to the PJC in Memory of ...**

- Elaine Goldenberg, by Joshua & Amanda Arcus
- Elaine Goldenberg, by Jonathan & Marjut Herzog
- Elaine Goldenberg, by David & Jeanne Radvany
- Benjamin Lee, by David & Jeanne Radvany
- Elaine Goldenberg, by Neco & Ana Turkienicz

#### **Directed Donations to the PJC ...**

- From the Nathan & Fanny Shafran Foundation, in support of the Learning Center

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

- Marshall & Naomi Jaffe, in recognition of the support provided by Rabbi Alex Salzberg following the passing of Naomi's father, Martin Vogelfanger
- John & Leah Leonard, in honor of Rabbi Alex Salzberg and Ana Turkienicz, for their planning and leading of the Cuba Teen Mission Trip

**Make Tributes & Donations [ONLINE!](#)**

At any time, if you wish to pay by check, please make it payable to **"The Pelham Jewish Center"** and mail it to our bookkeeping firm at: The Pelham Jewish Center, P.O. Box 150, Montvale, NJ 07645.

All donations to the **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**, at any time throughout the year, should be made payable to **"The Pelham Jewish Center -- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund"** and mailed directly **to Julia Coss at the PJC office.**

Thank you!

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