



# Congregation Ahavas Achim

Serving The Jewish Community of Greater Newburyport

Rabbi Avi Poupko  
[www.caanewburyport.org](http://www.caanewburyport.org)

53 1/2 Washington Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

Fall 2014 - Tishrei 5775

## Rabbi's Message

**Z**ombies. That's what our kids will turn into if we send them to elite colleges, at least according to William Deresiewicz in a recent *New Republic* article. I'm not sure I fully agree with his argument but I do agree that our youth culture has become so focused on building the perfect resume that we have perhaps neglected the more important things in life. Who am I? Why are we here? "We've taught them [young people]...that a self is something you just have. But it is only through the act of establishing communication between the mind and the heart, the mind and experience, that you become an individual, a unique being—a soul." The good news for us Jews is that we have the perfect antidote against this zombie attack. The Sabbath. The time and space to do some "soul-building."

Now imagine a whole year of Sabbath. 365 days of blissful rest. No rat race, no work emails, no checking the balance of your bank account. A year of simply existing, contemplating, appreciating, enjoying and, most of all, living. Believe it or not, such a year existed in biblical times. It is one of the most important mitzvot in the Torah. In Hebrew it is called the *Shemittah* year. In English, it is known as the Sabbatical year.

We are taught numerous times throughout the Five Books of Moses to declare every seventh year a *Shemittah* year. Incredibly we have kept the count of the years to this very day. The new Jewish year beginning this Rosh Hashanah, 5775, is a *Shemittah* year. The central features of the *Shemittah* year are: Letting the land rest (no farming); relinquishing ownership of food and other property; unpaid debts are forgiven; and extra time is devoted to the study of Torah. Strictly speaking the *Shemittah* year is only observed in Israel and, amazingly, thousands of Israeli Jewish farmers will be observing this coming *Shemittah* year, beginning on Rosh Hashanah eve.

If the Torah felt that in a world without Twitter, Instagram and email, a period of "soul-returning" rest is needed-not only once a week (the Sabbath) but for a whole year-than how much more is it needed in our day and age?! Recently, neuroscientists have shown that in order for our brains to function properly, deep cognitive relaxation, is needed on a regular basis. A constant barrage of information, no matter how uplifting and important it may be, can be damaging to our brains. What science is discovering now, the Torah has been teaching us for over 3000 years.



CAA Israel Trip Feb '14,  
Avi on Top of Masada

We have spent a lot of time over the last few years discussing the importance of Shabbat. I do hope that some of our learning has spilled over into your lives and that some of you have carved out, on a weekly basis, some real "Shabbat" time. It is one of our most precious practices and, best of all, the "benefits" of it are felt immediately.

This year especially, given that it's a *Shemittah* year, it is that much more appropriate to rededicate ourselves to the practice of Shabbat. A nationwide initiative called "The Sabbath Manifesto" designed to "slow down lives in an increasingly hectic world" created "Ten Principles" to guide an individual or family in their attempt to turn Friday night into Shabbos: Avoid technology; connect with loved ones; nurture your health; get outside; avoid commerce; light candles; drink wine; eat bread; find silence; and give back. This list is of course far from exhaustive but it's a great place to start.

The Talmud tells us that God told Moses, "I have a precious gift among My *hidden treasures*, and *Shabbat* is its name. Go and inform the People of Israel." Shabbat, like so many aspects of Jewish observance, is indeed a precious gift. This *Shemittah* year, let's make sure this beautiful gift we have received doesn't gather dust in the corner. And in that merit may this year be filled with the blessings which were promised by the Torah to all those who keep the Sabbath: "If you call the Sabbath a delight...and honor it...then you will take delight in God, you will ride on the heights of the earth and you will rejoice in an infinite lot." *Shanah Tovah* and Sweet New Year!

- Rabbi Avi Poupko  
[rabbi@caanewburyport.org](mailto:rabbi@caanewburyport.org)

## President's Message

L'Shana Tova,

On the behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to wish a Happy Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to all of our Ahavas Achim members and friends. This past year has been such a productive one for our community: from high spirited celebrations, new memberships, and varied programs to an inspirational trip to Israel for many members! We continue to grow in the scope of our offerings to our congregation.

As we begin to celebrate the High Holidays 5775, let us keep in mind three important words: Repentance, Renewal and Recommitment. Firstly, we can repent for our errors and perhaps ill-conceived choices during the past year. Then let us renew our energies to better our own actions and interactions. Lastly, let's recommit to make our own lives and that of our community better in some way, with time, energy and financial support. We have many new and exciting programs available and can always use volunteer help!

## Synagogue Contact Information

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Hebrew School	school@caanewburyport.org
Membership	membership@caanewburyport.org
Finance	treasurer@caanewburyport.org

## Board of Directors Email Contacts

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Avi Poupko and Jill Gross, newsletter editors;  
Mark Antinoro, graphic designer

I am proud of our Board of Directors, and the dedicated job they are doing to make our community a more religious, social and spiritual place in which to practice Judaism. As a team, along with our vibrant Rabbi, the board has come together as a collaborative and cooperative group. One of our initiatives has been to publish the minutes of each board meeting for the community to read. Stay tuned for the first of these in a month or two!

In closing, I want to reiterate my wish, along with my family, for a happy, healthy New Year to all of you and hopefully a swift resolution to the struggles in the State of Israel.

Good Yontif,

**Paula Pressler**



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## Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Service Times 5775

Rosh Hashanah Eve Evening Services at 6:30pm. Yom Tov Oneg following Services.	Wednesday, September 24	Yom Kippur Eve Kol Nidrei Services at 6:15pm. Fast Begins at 6:15pm.	Friday, October 3
Rosh Hashanah Day 1 Morning Services at 8:45am; Children's Service at 9:30am; Shofar at 10:15am; Tashlich at Cashman Park immediately following services.	Thursday, September 25	Yom Kippur Day Morning Services at 8:45am; Children's Service at 9:30am; Yizkor at 10:30am; Mincha, Ask the Rabbi and Neilah Service at 5:00pm; Shofar and End of Fast at 7:05pm	Saturday, October 4
Rosh Hashanah Day 2 Morning Services at 8:45am; Shofar at 10:15am.	Friday, September 26	Daycare and Playgroup service will be offered on all days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur from 9:00am-12:00pm.	

## High Holiday & Sukkot Programs, Information and Service Times

High Holiday Cemetery Visit High Holiday Cemetery Visit at 11:00am; Rabbi Avi Poupko will be at the Newburyport Hebrew Cemetery, corner of Toll Road and Route 1, Salisbury, MA on Sunday, September 28th from 11:00-12:00pm to assist anyone wishing to visit his or her loved one's resting place and say Kaddish and/or Kel Maleh.	Sunday, September 28	Musical Jam in the Sukkah Bring your instruments, voices and soul to a special evening of song & rejoicing in the Sukkah starting at 7:30pm. All are welcome. Please join us for this special evening	Tuesday, October 14
Sukkah Building & Decorating Help build and decorate the Sukkah from 10:00am-12:00pm; Arts & Crafts holiday projects will be available for kids!	Sunday, September 28	Sleepover in the Sukkah! Bring sleeping bags at 10:00pm; All are invited to spend the night in our beautiful Sukkah.	Tuesday, October 14
Sukkah Potluck Dinner Dinner at 7:00pm; Come join us for a potluck dairy/vegetarian dinner in the synagogue's Sukkah! If you have never experienced this amazing Mitzvah then this is a perfect opportunity to do so.	Wednesday, October 8	Simchat Torah Celebration Community and Hebrew School-Dancing and Completing the Torah at 5:30pm.	Friday, October 17
Sukkot Yom Tov Minyan Yom Tov Services at 8:00am	Thursday, October 9	Please feel free to use the synagogue's Sukkah during the holiday of Sukkot which starts this year on Wednesday evening, October 8th and ends on Thursday, October 16th. The synagogue will be having a number of events and activities this year in celebration of the holiday. Those interested in obtaining a Lulav and Etrog for the Sukkot holiday or if you are interested in learning more about this very special Mitzvah please contact Rabbi Avi Poupko at <a href="mailto:rabbi@caanewburyport.org">rabbi@caanewburyport.org</a> or 978-518-1504	

### Yom Kippur Appeal

We ask members and non-members alike to please consider making a generous donation to our Annual Yom Kippur Appeal. Your generosity is what allows us to maintain our current level of services, educational programs and special events. We are a fast growing community and we need your help to continue our growth. No amount is too small. Please donate to our Yom Kippur Appeal at [www.caanewburyport.org/payment.php](http://www.caanewburyport.org/payment.php) or by mail to Congregation Ahavas Achim  
Attn: Yom Kippur Appeal, 53 1/2 Washington Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

In addition to the Yom Kippur Appeal, if you are not a member and wish to attend High Holidays Services the requested donation is \$118 for individuals and \$218 for families. There is no additional charge for Ahavas Achim members to attend High Holiday Service but we do ask again that you to consider making a donation to our Yom Kippur Appeal.

# Ahavas Achim Israel Trip Photo Highlights



Ark in Arizal's Synagogue



Robert & Fran Kaplan at the Sea of Galilee



Tour Guide Yoav Outside of Tzfat Synagogue



Dr. Hull Breaking Challah on Mt. Scopus



Dennis & Priscilla Eigen on Mt. Bental



Fran in Jerusalem's Arab Shuk



Dancing at Ein Gedi-David's Waterfall



Carina On Top of Masada



Some of the Crew at the Western Wall



Ron & Paula Pressler in Tzfat



Dancing at Ein Gedi-David's Waterfall



Joel Grossman at the Wall



Golan Heights Winery



The Boys with UN Peacekeepers on the Golan

Photo highlights sponsored by:



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# September 2014 - Ahavas Achim Community Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 7pm Board Meeting	<b>3</b> 7:30pm Adult Ed-"Holy of Holies" with the Rabbi	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 6:54pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>6</b> 8:15am Torah Study with the Rabbi 9am Shabbat Morning Services
<b>7</b> 11am Membership Brunch	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 4pm Hebrew School	<b>10</b> 7:30pm Adult Ed-"Holy of Holies" with the Rabbi	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 5:30pm FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS 6:41pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>13</b> 8:15am Torah Study w/ Rabbi Avi Poupko 9am Shabbat Morning Services
<b>14</b> 4pm BBQ-Welcome Back Hebrew School!	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 4pm Hebrew School	<b>17</b> 7:30pm Adult Ed-"Holy of Holies" with the Rabbi	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 6:29pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>20</b> 8:30am Shabbat Morning Services 9am THE SHABBAT MORNING EXPERIENCE 8:30pm Pre-High Holiday Learning, Songs & Selichot
<b>21</b> 6pm FILM CLUB	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 4pm Hebrew School	<b>24</b> EREV ROSH HASHANAH 6:30pm Rosh Hashanah Eve Services 7:30pm Rosh Hashanah ONEG!	<b>25</b> ROSH HASHANAH 5775 DAY 1 8:45am Rosh Hashanah Services 9:30am Children's Service w/ Joan Nagler 11:45am Tashlich	<b>26</b> ROSH HASHANAH 5775 DAY 2 8:45am Rosh Hashanah Services 6:16pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>27</b> Shabbat Shuva 9am Shabbat Morning Services
<b>28</b> Tzom Gedaliah 10am Sukkah Building & Decorating 11am Cemetery Visit w/ the Rabbi 3pm Food Pantry & Social Hour 7pm Israeli Folk Dancing	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 4pm Hebrew School			Calendar sponsored by:	

*Color Key:*

<b>Green:</b> Social Events	<b>Pink:</b> Religious Dates	<b>Blue:</b> Services & School	<b>Brown:</b> Board Meetings
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# October 2014 - Ahavas Achim Community Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
					<b>EREV YOM KIPPUR</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 6:15pm KOL NIDRE SERVICES	<b>YOM KIPPUR</b> 8:45am Yom Kippur Services 9:30am YK Children's Service w/ Joan Nagler 10:30am Yizkor 5pm Mincha, Ask the Rabbi and Neilah
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	4pm Hebrew School 7pm Board Meeting	<b>EREV SUKKOT</b> 7pm Sukkah Potluck Dinner	<b>SUKKOT DAY 1</b> 9am Yom Tov Minyan w/ Lulav & Etrog	<b>SUKKOT DAY 2</b> 5:52pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>SUKKOT DAY 3</b> 8:30am Shabbat Morning Services 9am THE SHABBAT MORNING EXPERIENCE	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>SUKKOT DAY 4</b> 2pm Hebrew Reading Clinic	<b>SUKKOT DAY 5</b>	<b>SUKKOT DAY 6</b> 4pm Hebrew School 7:30pm Musical Jam in the Sukkah! 10pm Sleepover in the Sukkah	<b>SUKKOT DAY 7</b>	<b>SHMINI ATZERET</b> 9am Yom Tov Minyan w/ Yizkor	<b>SIMCHAT TORAH</b> 5:30pm FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS & SIMCHAT TORAH CELEBRATION! 5:40pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	8:15am Torah Study w/ the Rabbi 9am Shabbat Morning Services
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
7pm Israeli Folk Dancing		4pm Hebrew School	7:30pm Adult Ed with the Rabbi		<b>ROSH CHODESH CHESHVAN I</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 5:29pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>ROSH CHODESH CHESHVAN II</b> 8:30am Shabbat Morning Services 9am THE SHABBAT MORNING EXPERIENCE
26	27	28	29	30	31	
2pm Hebrew Reading Clinic 3pm Food Pantry & Social Hour		4pm Hebrew School	7:30pm Adult Ed with the Rabbi		9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 5:30pm FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS 5:20pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	

# November 2014 - Ahavas Achim Community Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> EVA BERNSTEIN'S BAT MITZVAH 9am Shabbat Morning Services
<b>2</b> 10am COMMUNITY TRIP TO BROOKLINE!	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 4pm Hebrew School 7pm Board Meeting	<b>5</b> 7:30pm Adult Ed with the Rabbi	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 4:11pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>8</b> 8:15am Torah Study with the Rabbi 9am Shabbat Morning Services 4:30pm HAVDALLAH PROGRAM
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 7:30pm Adult Ed with the Rabbi	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 4:04pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>15</b> 8:30am Shabbat Morning Services 9am THE SHABBAT MORNING EXPERIENCE
<b>16</b> 10am Values in Action Program for Families 2pm Hebrew Reading Clinic 7pm Israeli Folk Dancing	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 4pm Hebrew School	<b>19</b> 7:30pm Adult Ed with the Rabbi	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 3:58pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>22</b> 8:15am Torah Study with the Rabbi 9am Shabbat Morning Services 4:30pm HAVDALLAH PROGRAM
<b>23</b> 4pm Musical & Mystical Marshmallows	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 4pm Hebrew School	<b>26</b> 7:30pm Adult Ed with the Rabbi	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 3:54pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>29</b> 9am Shabbat Morning Services
<b>30</b> 3pm Food Pantry & Social Hour						

# December 2014 - Ahavas Achim Community Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 4pm Hebrew School 7pm Board Meeting	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 3:52pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>6</b> 8:30am Shabbat Morning Services 9am THE SHABBAT MORNING EXPERIENCE
<b>7</b> 2pm Hebrew Reading Clinic	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 4pm Hebrew School	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 9:15am Friday TALMUD with the Rabbi 3:52pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>13</b> 8:15am Torah Study with the Rabbi 9am Shabbat Morning Services 4:30pm HAVDALLAH PROGRAM
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> CHANUKAH: 1 CANDLE 4pm Hebrew School & CHANUKAH CHAROLING!	<b>17</b> CHANUKAH: 2 CANDLES	<b>18</b> CHANUKAH: 3 CANDLES	<b>19</b> CHANUKAH: 4 CANDLES 3:54pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>20</b> CHANUKAH: 5 CANDLES 9am Shabbat Morning Services
<b>21</b> CHANUKAH: 6 CANDLES 4:30pm Annual Chanukah Dinner!	<b>22</b> CHANUKAH: 7 CANDLES ROSH CHODESH TEVET I	<b>23</b> CHANUKAH: 8 CANDLES ROSH CHODESH TEVET II	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 3:57pm Shabbat Candle Lighting	<b>27</b> 9am Shabbat Morning Services
<b>28</b> 3pm Food Pantry & Social Hour	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	Calendar sponsored by:		

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## 'A Place of Discovery and Rediscovery'

### Group from Congregation Ahavas Achim in Newburyport travels to Israel

By Elizabeth Rose Correspondent

Tossing aside snow shovels and winter boots, 31 Americans, largely from the Newburyport region and associated with Congregation Ahavas Achim, journeyed to Israel following the biblical edict: "Go from your country ... to the land I will show you."

Tour leader, CAA Rabbi Avi Poupko, chose these words from Genesis 12:1 as a governing message for the group. Considered the first words that God spoke to Abraham, the first Jew, they were issued as an apt allegory to the travelers viewing the homeland of their ancestors, many for the first time.

"The Land of Israel is more than just a geographic location, it is a place of discovery and rediscovery — and, according to the Jewish tradition, the place where heaven and Earth meet," Poupko said.

Both Jewish and non-Jewish residents of Newburyport, Newbury, Georgetown and Amesbury joined Poupko and his wife, Carina, in visiting Jewish, Christian and Muslim sites over a 12-day period in mid-February.

Highlights from the excursion included floating in the Dead Sea, hearing the biblical tale of Masada, walking in the path of King David and praying at the Western Wall, as well as stops at all four of the cities considered the holiest in Israel: Safed, Tiberias, Hebron and Jerusalem.

"My first trip to Israel was an unexpected emotional experience," said Sheila Grossman, Newbury resident. "We were a community sharing laughter, sadness, joy, food and connection to each other and to the land. It was a transformative time."

"Rabbi Avi led a group of adults from many walks of life and many religions to a place where the humanity of man really began and showed us all what faith and courage meant to so many," said Sue Christ, who lives in Newburyport.

In addition to sightseeing, the group also engaged in prayer, discussion, meditation, singing and dancing. According to many, it was through these different avenues to both the intellect and the senses that the group grew in intimacy, knowledge and love for the country of Israel and each other.

"One lasting impression for me about the trip was the multiple levels of experience: the community of Israel in an everlasting state of vigilance and anxiety, experienced by a community of 31 people each with a different connection to Israel, deepening our own relationship to each other through the trip," said Ron Trieff, a Newburyport resident.

"As a group, we got along really well," Gene Wintner of Newburyport said. "I think most people had at least someone else they knew pretty well, but for all of us, there were brand-new friends and people we only knew very casually. One reason we bonded so well, I think, was the actual wonderment of our experiences, going together every day to some remarkable place and experiencing something powerful."



Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate

After initially visiting the Sea of Galilee, the group traveled south along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea, stopping at Masada and Ein Gedi, now a protected nature preserve where King David once took refuge. Following a short "hike," the tour held a short service at the 30-foot waterfall terminus, where they said the Shehecheyanu blessing, prayer of gratitude. The stop was finalized with a folk dance led by group member Fran Kaplan of Newbury, accompanied by Poupko on his guitar.



The Gang Floating in the Dead Sea

The sight of the Dead Sea was remarkable for some in the group:

"I thought the Dead Sea would be, well, dead," said Betsy Woodman, a Newburyport resident. "But it blew me away. Instead, it was this gorgeous aquamarine-blue water with this lacy foam of salt."

The itinerary included several active religious sites. Many travelers felt fortunate to witness a Sephardic brit milah while visiting the Cave of the Patriarchs in the West Bank city of Hebron. The celebrating family did not protest the presence of the Americans, and images of baby and mother, kisses bestowed with tears streaming down were added to the collective photo album.

In addition to tracking the Jewish story, the group visited Christian sites, including Tabgha, where the multiplication of the loaves and fish is said to have happened, and the Capernaum, home to one of the oldest synagogues and also the Church of St. Peter's House. Also viewed was the Via Dolorosa, believed to be the path that Jesus walked to his crucifixion, bearing his cross through Jerusalem. The path ends at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the tour group witnessed a Benedictine Mass.

The group also heard the Muslim call to prayer while in the Old City.

"Experiencing firsthand the interconnectedness of the three major Western religions both historically and in the present time made a deep impression on me," Wintner said. "To be in a place where thousands of years of history felt real and alive and relevant was a truly moving experience."

"Also, I was impressed with what Avi pointed out about how most of the time the different peoples in Israel coexist peacefully and get along fine," Wintner said. "And we felt perfectly safe, unthreatened, every minute we were there."

The final day included a sobering visit to the Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem, where each member took a personal tour with the aid of audiotapes. This visit was followed by a trip to the site of Theodor Herzl's grave on Mount Herzl.

"The trip was a transformative experience for every single participant, myself included," Poupko said. "To travel together with friends, peers and congregants to the Land of Israel was an experience I will never forget."

"This trip was made special by the fact that it was the first time that I returned with any group I have lead. The conversation will be ongoing because we will see each other again," Poupko added.

NewburyportNews.com, Newburyport, MA  
March 14, 2014

# Reflections on Past Observances of Yamim Noraim (High Holidays)

By Michael Pearlman

I am a prototypical “wandering Jew,” having spent High Holidays in many places. My childhood memories of celebrating the holidays take me back to Philadelphia, where I was born, and to Silver Spring, MD, just outside of DC, where I spent my formative years. My parents were not joiners, so we (me, my parents and two brothers) roamed from shul to shul, wherever we could be seated without tickets. Eventually, we joined a shul in DC, where I celebrated my Bar Mitzvah. Even then, I don't recall my parents purchasing tickets.

In my college days at Duke University, I recall being welcomed with my Jewish friends at the local Conservative congregation. I also remember going out with my Jewish fraternity brothers for huge meals on Erev Yom Kippur.

After the birth of our first child, Benjamin, I accepted a position in the small town of Eden, NC, in 1973. Shortly thereafter, my young family joined Ohev Zion, a shul just across the state line in Martinsville, VA, where I became an active member. Ohev Zion was a tiny congregation, drawing from several small communities in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Like CAA, it was not affiliated with any stream of Judaism.

There were about 10 Jews total in Eden. One of them, Ceil Kessler, was a member of the Globman family, which founded Ohev Zion and kept it alive. My family befriended Mrs. Kessler, a widow in her late 70's, and we would take her to services and other events at Ohev Zion. One Yom Kippur Eve, we stopped by Mrs. Kessler's house to pick her up for Kol Nidre. When she didn't come to the door, I went next door to summon her neighbor. Together, we entered her house and found her dead in her living room chair. Can you imagine how my wife and I felt when we had to inform the Globman family on Yom Kippur that their beloved aunt and sister had passed away, and explain what happened to our young children?

During the 1980's and the 1990's, I observed the High Holidays with my family at two Reform synagogues, first at Temple Society of Concord in Syracuse, NY, and then at Temple Sinai in Rochester, NY. At Temple Sinai, a congregation of over 500 families, I served

as an usher to greet and seat crowds that sometimes approached 1,000. The services were held at the local JCC, which was within walking distance from my home. I can particularly recall the moving renditions of the Kol Nidre prayer, first played by cello and harp, then sung by the Cantorial Soloist with choir, with the entire congregation joining in for the third rendition.

From 1999 until my first Rosh Hashanah at CAA in 2012, my Jewish journey took me to Reform congregations in North Miami Beach, FL and Reston, VA, back to Temple Sinai in Rochester, and then to Conservative congregations in Atlanta, GA and Gloucester, MA. I learned new melodies for the prayers and absorbed different minhagim (customs) at each stop along my journey. I'll share one anecdote from when we lived in Aventura, FL. I joined Temple Sinai in North Miami Beach, not far away. As was my habit, I volunteered to usher on the High Holidays. This was a large congregation and I knew very few of the congregants. As I was tending to my duties, I asked one attractive lady to show me her ticket. The people around us chuckled. One said, don't you know that's the Rabbi's wife? Whenever we saw each other after that, the Rebbetzin and I shared a good laugh about that evening.

The most unusual Yom Kippur I have experienced was in Santiago, Chile, in 1997. I was in Santiago on business the day before Yom Kippur and was prepared to spend Yom Kippur in my hotel fasting and davening. However, I realized that a young Bolivian man with whom I had been meeting was Jewish. I asked him what he was doing to observe Yom Kippur. He told me that he had cousins in Santiago, and we could go to services together. So we went to the local JCC, where the Liberal (Reform/Conservative) services were being held. To get admitted to the JCC, I had to surrender my passport to armed guards and pay them \$60 cash on the spot. I did, and experienced a fascinating service in Spanish and Hebrew.

And, on that note, let me wish you all a healthy, happy and sweet New Year. L'shanah Tovah

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There's something so wonderful about travel. It invites us to have an open state of mind and be more available to take in our surroundings. I like planning trips, researching bed & breakfasts and neighborhoods, reading up on places to see and finding little gems off the beaten track. I've learned, however, that no matter how well designed, the high points of travel are often the unexpected moments.

This was certainly true for me on February's trip to Israel. It would have been enough to learn about the history and cultures of Israel, to visit ruins and temples and museums. Our trip was all this, but so much more. Hiking Ein Gedi near the caves where David penned his psalms, witnessing the joyful celebration of life at a briss held in the Caves of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, and weaving our group together in song and dance were some of my highlights.

I've had "visiting" relationship with CAA for a long time and have attended holiday services for nearly 30 years. My religious participation has been focused in the church of my upbringing and I found the familiarity with creed and social activism there a satisfying fit for many years. Over time, many of the rituals of religions have left me feeling empty and lacking. It became clear that if I wanted to find more connection between my beliefs and my daily life I would need to energize the way I was approaching my faith journey.

Several different elements have come together for me over the years. Prayer life has shifted from the mechanical recitations of my youth to more intimate conversations.

I read Psalms regularly and find they refresh me. This poetry is a link to thousand of years of the human condition, and these stories

are my stories. Perhaps the most significant change I've made is increased engagement in quiet time. It requires me to put aside the busyness of life I seem to acquire so easily. In silence I find a more satisfying connection to that which is greater than I.

Throughout the Israel trip our Rabbi and guide shared their knowledge and views, and that created more questions in my mind about spiritual dimensions. In small knots or the larger group, conversations flowed. For me, each perspective sparked a new way of thinking about how we find meaning in our lives. One morning, attending a Shabbat Service conducted entirely in Hebrew and struggling to find my place, this phrase came to me: "It doesn't have to be so complicated." The relief in that notion made me smile. When I returned from Israel I felt charged with a sense of duty to explore my "Inner Jew" more thoroughly. Indifference would not do.

Now I find myself on yet another excursion. These past six months have been ones of familiarizing myself with the siddur and interested in Torah study. In the Rabbi's "Judaism 101" sessions I found more that joins me to Judaism than separates. Indeed, it doesn't need to be so difficult. (That is, except for learning Hebrew!)

My personal spiritual discovery is an ongoing process but both my exposure to Israel and my participation at the synagogue are helping me map this trip. My effort continues to love the parts that perplex me, and examine the parts that disappoint.

And, as in every journey, it's what I didn't expect that continues to delight. It is clear to me that in both these experiences, a more profound sense of community is my most cherished souvenir.



*The Whole Group in Capernaum*



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**Don't miss these special events!**

Sukkah Building & Decorating	Sunday, September 28
Sukkah Potluck Dinner	Wednesday, October 8
Musical Jam in the Sukkah	Tuesday, October 14
Sleepover in the Sukkah!	Tuesday, October 14
Simchat Torah Celebration	Friday, October 17
Trip to Brookline	Sunday, November 2
Chanukah Dinner	Sunday, December 21

**Mark Your Calendars!**

Rosh Hashanah Eve	Wednesday, September 24
Rosh Hashanah Day 1	Thursday, September 25
Rosh Hashanah Day 2	Friday, September 26
Yom Kippur Eve	Friday, October 3
Yom Kippur Day	Saturday, October 4

**Special calendar inside  
 pages 5-8!!**

**Please join us for our annual Break the Fast on Saturday evening, October 4th, following services.  
 The Break the Fast is generously sponsored by the Ahavas Achim Board of Directors.**



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