In the Moment
by Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Despite Rav Tiffany’s allusion to my going on a silent retreat in her Purim newsletter column, in reality I went on such a retreat more recently. Whenever I mention that I do these retreats to folks for whom this is an unfamiliar experience, the first reaction is always “What?! You don’t talk for three (or five or eight) days?!” Actually, not speaking is the easiest aspect of being on retreat. While talking fills so much of our lives, it’s not such a hard thing to part with for a few days. It can feel quite blissful to enjoy the quiet. Not total quiet, to be sure – the teachers on retreat do speak, and there are many sounds to experience, from bird calls to thunder to passing cars to clattering dishes. Not talking is just one aspect of creating a setting in which the mind can begin to focus and settle down. That is the hard part. Our minds are like inquisitive two year-olds, always moving around and poking into new things, with little interest in sitting still. Even focusing on the in-breath and out-breath two or three times in a row can feel like a Herculean effort. So why do it?

My own experience is that calming the mind is the first step towards mindfulness, towards being able to be fully present in the moment, whatever that moment may bring. This in turn has brought with it an ability to return to a place of calm and peace that is somewhere at my core – something that I believe is at the center of each of us, once we learn to access it. Mindfulness can bring wonderful appreciation of the physical senses – the sight of a flower, the sound of a bird, the taste of food. It can also bring a greater capacity to listen fully to another person, and a greater sense of compassion for oneself and for others.

But as you learn fairly quickly on retreat, being present to oneself and to the moment can be hard, even painful. There’s a reason we’ve created a culture which offers constant distractions. Life can be very difficult, and it is
often tempting to cover it over, to pay less attention, not more. But great learning comes with the ability to sit with one’s experience in the moment, whatever that experience may be. First, I’ve learned that more often than not the experience is tolerable, and second, that it inevitably passes, and something new arises to takes its place. I’ve also discovered that very often it’s not the experience of this moment that is so difficult, but the projections and stories that my mind weaves around the experience that cause so much pain. Once I sit and am able to see this, once the sturm und drang of my mind settles, much of the struggle dissipates, or becomes manageable, or just is.

As I reflected on my retreat experience and began thinking about writing this column, my thoughts turned to where we are in the Jewish year cycle. In mid-summer we experience a three-week period of mourning that begins on the 17th of Tammuz (July 20) and culminates on the 9th of Av (called “Tisha b’Av” in Hebrew, August 10 this year). Both of these fast days are connected to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Tisha b’Av commemorates the destruction of both the First Temple in 586 BCE by the Babylonians, and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE by the Romans; the 17th of Tammuz is the day, according to the rabbis, when the Romans breached Jerusalem’s walls. These three weeks are traditionally marked by a cessation of joyous activities like weddings and musical celebrations, and by refraining from cutting hair and buying new clothes. The mourning practices become more intense on the first of Av and culminate with the observance of Tisha b’Av, which includes a reading of the Book of Lamentations (“Eicha” in Hebrew), a recounting of the destruction of the first Temple.

Tisha b’Av is rather strange, on the face of it: 2,500 years after the fact we sit on the floor in a darkened room, chanting the painful verses of Eicha to a mournful melody. Why relive this pain? Why keep telling this story of destruction and exile?

There is something powerful in a practice of consciously re-experiencing a moment of historical trauma, sitting fully with that experience, and then moving on from it. Six days after Tisha b’Av, the 15th of the month (Tu b’Av) is described in the Talmud as a festive day when young men and women would dance in the fields together, and has become a minor holiday. The seven weeks following Tisha b’Av that lead up to Rosh Hashanah are distinguished by

(Continued on page 4)
Tisha b’Av

The Ninth of Av is the date of the destruction of both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, and is a fast day commemorating these events and more generally the Jewish experience of exile. We will mark the day with the chanting of a portion of the Book of Lamentations, and with readings and reflection and special songs. Please join us **Wednesday, August 9, 8:00 pm**, at the home of Chayim and Judy Herzig-Marx (call 617-964-2791 for directions).

Softball and Pot-Luck Picnic with Rabbi Spitzer

A mini Retreat! Mark your calendars! Hold the date! We'll have afternoon softball and an evening potluck picnic, **Sunday, August 20**. Location, time and other details will be sent to members in late July/early August; for non-members who are interested, please call the office in August (617-965-0330 x1).

If you would like to help and/or can bring softball equipment please contact Ilana Mainelli.

Summer Shabbat Services

*Please note: Due to construction at the Unitarian Society, all services and programs in the months of July and August will be held off-site (see below for details).*

**Saturday, July 15, 9:45 am.** Shabbat morning services at the home of Ellen Hemley and Mark Bronstein in Auburndale. Please call 617-332-8424 for directions.

**Saturday, July 29, 9:45 am.** Shabbat morning services at the Hemley-Bronstein home.

**Saturday, August 5, 9:45 am.** Shabbat morning services at the home of Dan Rome and Cindy Shulak-Rome in West Newton. Call 617-965-5722 for directions.

**Friday, August 11, 6:00 pm.** All ages erev Shabbat service, followed by a potluck dinner at **7:00 pm**. After a musical service with story-telling we’ll enjoy good food and schmoozing – so join us for this special summer erev Shabbat service! *Please bring a vegetarian or fish dish to share (bring enough for 6-8 people).* At the home of Mark Bronstein and Ellen Hemley (see above). **Please note: in case of inclement weather, call the office at 617-965-0330 x1 for an update.**

*Weekly Shabbat morning services will resume in September. Enjoy your summer!*
News from Our School

We brought a wonderful school year to a close with a family assembly including several raucous rounds of “Stump the Parents,” in which our students got to show off some of the knowledge they gleaned this year. It was also a time to recognize our teachers for their skills and dedication throughout the year. Our new Co-President, Chayim Herzig-Marx, was on hand to honor Morah Chava (Miranda Phillips), who received a Master’s Degree in Jewish Education, and Morah Elana (Elaine Pollack), who received a Certificate in Family Education from Hebrew College.

We are already in high gear planning for next year. We will be adding a Kitah Zayin (7th grade class), which will be our first group of students to study with us from Kitah Gimel (3rd grade) through the B’nai Mitzvah year. Our student population is growing and we expect to have over eighty students in 5761.

Next year for the first time, the families of Dorshei Tzedek will have the opportunity to participate in the Passport to Israel Program. A joint savings program between families and the CJP (Combined Jewish Philanthropies), this program makes trips to Israel a reality for our students. We are thankful to Barbara Isaacs and Elaine Landes who have volunteered to administer this program for our congregation. Watch for more information in early September.

Todah Rabah to all the members that helped make this a wonderful year at our school. Our gratitude to our Rabbi, our teachers, the members of the Education Committee, and the many, many volunteers who helped whenever and where ever help was needed.

Wishing all of you a fun and restful summer!

B’Shalom,
Judith Wolfman, Education Director, and
Cindy Shulak-Rome, Education Committee Chair
Jeffrey Huenemoerder
Bar Mitzvah

Please join us as we celebrate our son Jeffrey’s Bar Mitzvah on **August 19**. Jeffrey has been diligently working with Ben Weiner on his portion and continues with his volunteer work at the Dedham Animal Rescue. Services will begin at **9:30 am** at Temple *Hillel B’nai Torah*, 120 Corey Street in W. Roxbury, MA. Follow Centre Street from Newton Centre to Parker Street. Turn left and follow Baker Street until the VFW Parkway. Turn north on VFW Parkway for a few blocks, and turn right onto Corey Street. The Synagogue will be on your right.—Leeann Simons and David Huenemoerder

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**July-August Calendar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
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<td>7-9 pm</td>
<td>Book Discussion</td>
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<td>at Temple Hillel B’nai Torah, West Roxbury (see above)</td>
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<td><strong>Softball and Potluck Picnic</strong></td>
<td>to be announced (see page 3)</td>
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Contributions

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions:

General Fund

Gertz-Cohen Family
In memory of Edward Katz, Sherry Katz’ Father
In honor of our new co-presidents, Judy and Chayim Herzig-Marx
In honor of our outgoing co-presidents, Cheryl Sacks and Linette Liebling, who provided us with excellent leadership, dedication and good humor
In honor of Judith Wolfman, on the occasion of completing her first year as Education Director of our wonderful school
In honor of Andrew Schiff and his new role as Chair of the Outreach Membership Committee and position on the Board of Directors

Sherry Katz
Thank you to the congregation for the support and meals after my father’s death

Ellie and Efrem Goldberg
With gratitude for the blessings of community

Debbie Waber and Stephen Leonard
In honor of Judy Herzig-Marx’s Birthday
In honor of Edward Katz

Jill Volk and Steven Lewis
In honor of the 50th birthday of Judy Herzig-Marx
In honor of our 10th Wedding Anniversary

Ken, Delores, Shelby and Deena Kimmel
In memory of Betty
In memory of Sherry Katz’ father

Religious School Fund

Sharon Gorberg and John Holohan
In honor of all the Hebrew School Teachers and Education Director

Debra Rattet
In honor of Miranda Phillips graduating from Hebrew College

The Gan Class
In honor of Elaine Pollack teaching the Gan class this year

Rome Family
In honor of Miranda Phillips’ completing her Masters in Jewish Education from Hebrew College
In honor of Elaine Pollack’s completion of a Family Education Certificate from Hebrew College

Elaine Pollack:
A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People
In honor of Maida Ives’ Bat Mitzvah

Elaine Pollack:
The Book of Legends
In honor of Julian Fader’s Bar Mitzvah

William and Nessa Spitzer:
Computer CD Rom, Encyclopedia Judaica

Holy Book Fund

Katz Farber Family
In honor of Judy Herzig-Marx’s special birthday

Linette Liebling and Peter Demuth
In honor of Cheryl and Jeff Sacks and Family
In honor of Judy Herzig-Marx’s 50th Birthday

Wendy Gedanken and Joaquim Branco
In honor of Judy Herzig-Marx’s 50th Birthday
In honor of my teacher, Chayim Herzig-Marx
In honor of Irv Gedanken’s 80th Birthday

Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund

Sherry Katz
Thank you to Toba for the support and guidance she provided after my father’s death

Michael White
In memory of Irene Balk Rivchin

In memory of Sherry Katz’ father
Retreat Scholarship Fund
Amy Bermar
Debbie Blicher
Marty Bresnick and Paula Kaplan
Marvin and Charlene Brotman
Ellie and Efrem Goldberg
Francis Greenberg
Judy Hersh and Timothy Rosa
Laurie and Jonathan Kahn-Leavitt
Ellen Pashall
Lisa Port White and Malcolm White
Peter and Brenda Roberts
Elizabeth Ross and Caren Smith
Cheryl and Jeff Sacks
Carole Slipowitz and Dan Halbert
Marcia Wasserman
Susannah and Stephen Zisk

Prayer Books
Many of these prayer book donations were given in honor
or memory of special people or events. Space does not
permit us to include the dedications, but all are recorded
on the bookplate of each donated book.

Thank you all!
Amy Bermar and Alex Donnini
Amy Mazur
Beth Brooks
Betsy Hinden and Karen Wasserman
Carolyn Fine Friedman and Jeremiah Friedman
Cindy Shulak-Rome
Deborah Waber and Stephen Leonard
Debra Rattet, Leslie Rubin, Zachary and Alexander
Elizabeth Miller
Ezra Hausman
Francis Greenberg
Geri Blitzman
Gertz-Cohen Family
Gladstone Silver Family

Honor someone or an event with a contribution to support
our community. Contributions are welcome in any amount
at any time. Please make checks payable to Congregation
Dorshei Tzedek and mail them to 1326 Washington Street,
West Newton MA, 02465. Thank you!
News from JRF

Reconstructionism is Now 100 Strong!
The Jewish Reconstructionist Federation is delighted to welcome FIVE new Reconstructionist communities, bringing the total number of member communities to exactly 100! Our newest family members are: B’nai Vail in Vail, Colorado; Havurat Lev Shalem in Atlanta, Georgia; The Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit in Detroit, Michigan; String of Pearls in Princeton, New Jersey; and Chapel Hill Kehillah in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. They were each voted in unanimously at the semi-annual JRF board meeting on May 7-8, 2000.

The Zeigelman Challenge: A Great Opportunity for Dorshei Tzedek and Reconstructionism
In our last newsletter (May-June) we told you about an opportunity for Dorshei Tzedek to earn matching funds for every $100 donation that was made to the Joint Reconstructionist Appeal. The Joint Appeal raises money to support the three arms of the movement: the JRF, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

At this time, another dimension has been added to this fundraising appeal that will directly benefit the growth and development of the JRF: Aaron Zeigelman, committed Reconstructionist and longtime supporter of the institutions that serve the movement, has offered to give $100,000 to the JRF if JRF can raise $100,000 for the Joint Reconstructionist Appeal by August 2000.

Again this year, we have a “triple match” opportunity. Contributions made to the Joint Reconstructionist Appeal will be matched to JRF by Aaron Zeigelman, and to our own community by a small group of members who have together pledged over $2000 in matching funds. This translates into even better congregational, educational, and developmental resources and services for member communities, and a stronger and brighter future for the Reconstructionist movement as a whole. To learn more about how to you can help us meet this challenge, please call Cindy Shulak-Rome (617-965-5722) or contact Lani Moss at the JRF central office at 215-782-8500 or lmoss@jrf.org.

JRF Convention
It’s not too soon to think about planning a fall trip to Philadelphia! The JRF biennial convention will be held this year on November 2-5 in Philadelphia. The convention theme will be “Growing in Spirit, Growing in Community.” Convention is always a wonderful opportunity to get a sense of “the big picture” of our movement, to share in study, worship and sharing of ideas and experiences with other Reconstructionist Jews from around the country. Convention brochures will be sent out in September, or check the JRF website for details this summer (www.jrf.org).
Dear Rav Tiffany...

I am a member at Dorshei Tzedek. I am not on the Exec, the Board or any other committees. I feel like I would like to get more involved, get to know other members better, contribute to the organization and enhance my spiritual experience. But I am not ready to make the year-long commitment that committees require. What do you suggest?

I.B. Part

Dear I.B.: Watch your box for a holiday program mailing! It will be coming soon asking you to sign up to participate on a holiday program team. That is exactly what you are looking for – a fun, spiritual and involving experience that is time-limited.

Let me know how things work out.

Love,
Rav Tiffany

Todah Rabah...

Efrem and I would like to thank everyone in the Congregation for the wonderful sense of community and caring after I broke my hip. We are especially grateful for your wonderful company and phone calls as I was healing at home as well as the delicious soups, stews, breads, brownies, ice cream, complete dinners, a Passover Seder, and shopping. You all made a difficult time much easier. Thanks to Naomi Lev, Pete and Brenda Roberts, Marvin and Charlene Brotman, Cindy Shulak-Rome, Ellen Pashall, Cliff and Tessa Goldsmith, Wendy Gedanken, Jill Volk, Sara Kuhn, Judy Herzig-Max, and David Felson. A special thank you to Karen Wasserman who was a source of information and support and to Elaine Landes who did everything from moving furniture and shopping to cooking. Elaine has a gift for making everything more fun.

Ellie Goldberg

Book Discussion

At the first meeting of the Dorshei Tzedek book discussion group, we had a small but dedicated crew, and generated some lively discussion on Saving Remnants. We are hoping that more people will join us for the next meeting, which will be on Wednesday, July 12 from 7-9 pm at the home of Susannah Zisk, 4 Rose Drive, Newton.

We will be reading Judith Plaskow’s Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective published by HarperSanFrancisco). Of all the books suggested by interested parties at the beginning of this venture, this one was mentioned the most, and certainly has tremendous relevance (even beyond any feminist concerns) to all of us interested in the examination and rejuvenation of contemporary Judaism.

Hope to see you there. For more information, contact Carole Slipowitz (617-964-6572, cwithany@aol.com) or Susannah Zisk (617-332-0977, szisk@concentric.net).

Sunday’s Bread

We need volunteers for the following Sundays: July 23, August 20, and September 24. It is important that we meet our commitment over the summer months. Hunger doesn’t take a vacation. If you would like more information about Sunday’s Bread or wish to volunteer, call Ira Krotick at 617-527-0671.

THANKS!
At-Large Board Position

The Executive Committee proposes to add an At-Large position to the Board. This proposal will be discussed at upcoming Board meetings. “At-Large” means that, initially, the Board member would not have an assigned portfolio. The intent of this position, though, is both to develop leadership for our congregation and to have a Board member available for immediate assignment to a large project; projects can be expected to arise from the work of the Growth Committee, for example. Please call or email Judy or Chayim Herzig-Marx if you wish to nominate a member, including yourself.

WANTED: Committee Volunteers

The Membership Committee is in need of additional help with our outreach efforts and also our in-membership activities. If you enjoy talking with and getting to know new people, this is an excellent opportunity to do so. New members are encouraged to participate as a way of getting more comfortable in the community. We can also benefit from skills in the areas of marketing, public relations, advertising and interviewing. Please call Nancy Gertz at 781-444-2478 if you have an interest and would like to explore it further.

The Newsletter Still Needs Help... Could it be YOU?

Please consider joining the editors of the Dorshei Tzedek Newsletter to help us convert our bi-monthly publication into a monthly. We are looking for people to help collect and edit articles and to help with computer layout. The goal is to get enough people to keep any one person’s responsibilities bi-monthly and minimal. Please give us a call or an email if you have any interest or would just like to talk about what you could do. It’s a great way to learn about our community and we are a really nice group to get to know!
Call Allison Hausman at 617-796-9811 or email us at dtnews@egroups.com.

And a Good Time Was Had by All....

On the holiday of Shavuot, our unseasonably cool spring turned into summer as 47 Dorshei Tzedek member households and five of our beloved staff members headed west to Camp Isabella Freedman for our Third Annual Dorshei Tzedek Retreat Weekend. The weekend was a blissful mix of now established traditions – Friday night and Saturday morning services in the beautiful camp shul with its great acoustics and view of the lake, Havdalah at lakeside followed by a campfire (with s’mores of course!) with hours of singing, the Friday night sing-down (although this year Toba and Efrem had the challenge of battling Hankus!), a community art project designed by Marcia Wasserman, a glorious Shabbat afternoon at poolside, mountain hikes, our now famous intergenerational softball game, capture the flag, fishing and boating at the lake on Sunday and of course the camp food, which once again left a little to be desired.... Sunday afternoon, as everyone packed up their cars, the heavens opened up, the torrential rains came down, and by the time we were all safely back home it was 54 degrees once again!

We are most grateful to Judy Hersh and the Retreat Committee for all the time and energy they devoted to organizing this great weekend. (We’re also very grateful for some divine connection they obviously have to order up such great weather so that all of us could enjoy Camp Isabella Freedman in all its glory!)
Welcome to New Members

Perhaps you didn’t hear the drums roll over the past month, when Dorshei welcomed our 100th member household (we’re actually now up to 101)! Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to schmooze the new members until you find #100. They know who they are – maybe they’re still waiting for their toaster to arrive!!

To all of our new members, we welcome you and look forward to learning more about you and from you. We hope that our congregation is a community that you will cherish as much as we do!

Erica Streit and James Kaplan met in Haifa, Israel on a study abroad program and now live in Brookline. Erica was raised Reconstructionist at Congregation B’nai Keshet in Montclair, NJ. She is finishing up her second of a three year dual-masters program in Social Work and Public Health at Boston University. James was raised Reform in Newton, Mass. and went to Temple Israel. James will graduate with a JD in May and will start work at a law firm in Boston. They will marry this summer.

Bill Shorr and Tania Mireles live with 7 housemates at the Franklin Street Co-op in Allston. They’ve been in the Boston area since 1995; they’re currently both in doctoral programs and working part-time. Tania studies mental health policy at Brandeis, and Bill studies learning and teaching at the Harvard Ed. school. Tania is not Jewish. “We joined because we both enjoy Saturday morning services so much, we like being part of community organizations with progressive politics, and because Rabbi Spitzer was willing to let the kids in the congregation blast her with high-power water guns while she stood outside with an umbrella chanting a Sephardic prayer to ‘Singing In the Rain’.”

Elaine Bresnick and Martin Bresnick are the parents of Anna, a 6th grader at Day Middle School and enthusiastic soccer and basketball player. Elaine, an executive and partner in a small specialty printer company, loves music, especially singing and playing piano. Marty consults on affordable housing, photography and ocean kayaking are his hobbies. Marty’s wife, Paula Kaplan, a counselor and educator, was in Israel during the Yom Kippur War and still enjoys visits and many connections to Israel.

Barbara Ayres is a Sign Language Interpreter. Andy (short for Andrea) Diamond is an administrator in the Education Department at the AIDS Action Committee. “We just emigrated from J.P. to our own home in Maynard with our 2 katz.” Andy loves to “bird,” and Barbara is an extraordinary baker. They both like to go camping.

Lisa Susswein and Amy Entwistle recently moved to Wayland and are learning about the joys and frustrations (like temperature control) of living in an old farmhouse. They are looking forward to becoming a more active part of the Dorshei Tzedek community. Lisa recently began a graduate program at Brandeis in genetic counseling. Her interests include art, decorating, and knitting.

Ann Spanel has two god-daughters, has written about environmental issues, is a community gardener and aspiring artist, and is curious about the ways of the spirit.

In the next issue of the newsletter, look for self-introductions from the St. John-Siegel family, Esther Kohn, Laurie Gould and Stephen Ansolabehere, Judith Wine and Aileen Cronin, and Sally Kolodkin.

Welcome to all!