

Kehilath Jeshurun Bulletin



Volume LXXI Number 2

November 16, 2001

1 Kislev 5762

We Welcome Our Shabbat Scholar
RABBI AVI WEISS
one of the leading Jewish activists of our time

November 16 - 17

Friday Dinner, following Mincha at 4:30 p.m.
"Coping with Adversity: A Torah View"

Shabbat Morning, at the conclusion of services at 9:00 a.m.
"Keeping the Dream Alive"

Seudah Shlishit, following Mincha at 4:00 p.m.
"From A Family to a Nation"



Rabbi Avi Weiss

DR. RAYMOND TANTER TO ADDRESS ISRAEL BOND SHABBAT DECEMBER 1

At our Annual Israel Bond Shabbat this year on Saturday, December 1, we will have the privilege of hosting Dr. Raymond Tanter, one of the foremost experts on terrorism today. Professor Tanter can truly be considered a righteous gentile.

Dr. Tanter served on the National Security Council staff in the Reagan/Bush White House and as Personal Representative of the Secretary of Defense at arms control talks in Europe. He is Professor of Political Science at the Middle East Center at the University of Michigan.

He has also taught at Stanford and at Hebrew University. He recently published *Rogue Regimes: Terrorism and Proliferation*.

Professor Tanter is particularly outspoken regarding the developments in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attack. We anticipate that Professor Tanter's address will be both timely and impactful.

The Israel Bonds Committee is chaired by Isaac Sherman, along with co chairs Chaim Edelstein, Helen Potaznik, and David Stonehill, and Honorary Chairman Ed Low.



Dr. Raymond Tanter

MEN'S CLUB SUNDAY SUPPER LECTURE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

The Men's Club Sunday Supper Lecture will have the honor of listening to Howard Kohr, the Executive Director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). He will discuss *"Israel, America, and the World: What Happens Next?"*

Widely recognized as a leader in working to strengthen the vital U.S. – Israel strategic partnership, Howard Kohr became AIPAC's Executive

Director in 1996. Under his tenure, AIPAC has been consistently ranked as the most influential foreign policy lobbying organization on Capitol Hill. The New York Times labeled AIPAC "the most important organization affecting America's relationship with Israel."

The dinner will begin at 6:00 PM and the cost is \$20 per person. The Men's Club Sunday Lecture is for the entire KJ community. Please join us.

A CHANGE IN THE KJ ANNUAL DINNER

Out of respect for the victims of the September 11th attacks, and in appreciation of the personal sorrow felt by Rabbi Haskel Lookstein after the passing of his sister, Dr. Nathalie Friedman, the ANNUAL SYNAGOGUE DINNER has been moved from December 8th to February 23rd. Please save the new date.

CHANUKAH BEGINS SUNDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 9

While the practice of gift giving has become an integral part of the Festival of Lights, the lights themselves are the principal observance of the holiday and should be highlighted as the central feature of Chanukah in the home.

The following are a few items which should be kept in mind:

1. *The Menorah.*

While one Menorah suffices for the household, it is customary — and desirable — for each member of the household to light his or her own Menorah. This is particularly recommended for the children of the family who will take special delight in kindling their own Chanukah lights.

2. *The Time for Lighting.*

The candle or oil lights should be lit as soon as possible after nightfall (30 minutes after sunset). They should be allowed to burn for at least 30 minutes.

On Friday afternoon, the flames are lit before the Sabbath candles and they should be large enough so that they will remain lit for about an hour and a half. Special Friday evening long candles for Chanukah are available in the Judaica shop in the synagogue lobby. On Saturday night at home, the candles are lit after Havdalah.

3. *Arranging the Candles.*

The candles or flames are set from the right side of the Menorah as the candle lighter faces it. One flame is lit the first night, in addition to the Shamash. Each night an additional flame is lit.

4. *Lighting the Flames.*

The candles or oil flames are lit from left to right — starting with the newest candle first. We begin by lighting the “Shamash.” Then the blessings are recited — three on the first night and two on the other seven nights. After the blessings are recited, we light the flames by the light of the “Shamash.”

The reason for using the “Shamash” is in order to avoid any practical use of the Chanukah flames. These lights are holy and their sole purpose is the ritual one — to proclaim the miracle of Chanukah.

5. *Concluding Songs.*

Following the lighting of the candles, we sing “*Ha-Nerot HaLalu*,” which explains the reasons for the ceremony, and *Maoz Tzur*, a ballad which describes in several stanzas how Divine Providence has intervened at various points in history to save us from our enemies.

CHANUKAH CANDLES

Through the courtesy of the Kehilath Jeshurun Benevolent Fund, Chanukah candles have been sent to every recipient of the KJ Bulletin.

The proceeds of this Fund are used for deserving individuals who might not otherwise come to the attention of public charity.

Those who receive candles are urged to make a contribution to the KJ Benevolent Fund and send it to the synagogue office.

May you and your family have a happy Chanukah.

CHANUKAH WORKSHOP MONDAY, DECEMBER 3

The various workshops conducted throughout the year give members of the congregation and the general community an opportunity to brush up on their knowledge of the particular holidays and prepare for their observance.

Each workshop offers an overview of the laws and customs related to the holiday, an examination of the

historical events that we commemorate on each holiday, an analysis of the texts used, and honest-to-goodness real explanations of why we do the things we do.

The Chanukah workshop, presented by Rabbi Joshua Cypess will be on Monday evening, December 3 at 8:00 PM at the synagogue.

THE FEW. THE PROUD. THE HASHKAMA MINYAN.

“We Do More Before 9:00 AM. Than Most Do All Day.”

Convinced of a real need in the community for an early Shabbat morning minyan, Rabbis Lookstein recently gave their blessing to this initiative which has drawn over forty “early birds” each time it has convened.

The Hashkama Minyan, which meets once a month at 7:15 AM in the Max J. Etra Chapel, is a serious minyan for serious minded Jews who would otherwise not have a proper Shabbat morning experience, such as couples who both want to come to the synagogue but find it difficult due to child rearing responsibilities. At the conclusion of services, around 9:00 AM., Rabbi Eliezer Rubin teaches a special version of his weekly Talmud class.

The finest KJ traditions are upheld at the Hashkama Minyan: it is a quiet, decorous environment, with high standards of davening and leining to match that found in the Main Service. Rabbi Joshua Cypess regularly officiates at each service. Thus, the Hashkama Minyan is in every way a part of K.J., not apart from K.J. So come join the Hashkama Minyan next on Dec. 15, Jan. 26, Feb. 16, Mar. 16, Apr. 27, May 11 and June 15, and see for yourself. You won’t be disappointed!

KEHILATH JESHURUN BULLETIN

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A NEW INTERMEDIATE SERVICE ON SHABBAT

This year we have introduced a new option on Shabbat mornings — The Intermediate Service. Designed to be ‘user-friendly,’ the service features a full davening complete with Torah reading while providing explanations of the different aspects of the service. Instead of a sermon, Rabbi Joshua Cypess, our Educational Director, and Dr. Steve Rudolph, explain the Torah reading after each person has been called up to the Torah.

All aspects of the davening - from beginning to end — are explained (time permitting) and questions about what happens during the service are encouraged. We welcome everyone in the synagogue community to try the service out — especially for the parsha discussion.

The Intermediate Service will be on the following dates: December 15, January 19, February 16, March 16, May 25, and June 22.

HISTORY AT HOME

A number of years ago, KJ offered a History Lecture Series hosted in members’ homes on Saturday evenings during the winter. The series was a huge success and attracted impressive crowds. We are pleased to revive this fun and exciting series this year. Over the course of four Saturday nights this winter, we will have had the opportunity to hear from dynamic scholars who are renowned experts in their fields of study. The first lecture was given by Rabbi Adam Mintz, the Rabbi of Lincoln Square Synagogue,

former Associate Rabbi at KJ and a doctoral candidate in Jewish History at New York University.

The next lecture will be given by Dr. Shnayer Leiman on December 1 at the home of Judy and David Lobel.

Save the following dates as well:

February 2 – Dr. David Shatz

At the home of Adrian and Leonard Silverman.

March 2 – Dr. Elisheva Carlebach

Location to be announced.

MUST BRING PHOTO ID.

Where are you going to be at the end of December?

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that we stand behind them
and that we stand with them**

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**“THE PRICE
OF TERROR”**

**AM HASEFER BOOK
DISCUSSION CLUB**

With Author Allan Gerson

Sunday, February 3, 2001

At 8:00 PM

*Dr. Mark Meirowitz,
Moderator*

KJ SYNAGOGUE PHONE DIRECTORY

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Rabbi Joshua Lookstein, <i>Assistant Rabbi</i>	5660
Florence Cohen, <i>Office Staff</i>	5648
Rabbi Joshua Cypess, <i>Educational Director</i>	5630
Suzanne Hersher, <i>Office Staff</i>	5655
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A HALAKHIC APPROACH TO SUFFERING

A ROSH HASHANAH SERMON BY RABBI HASKEL LOOKSTEIN

(Based on the Rav - Torah U'Madda Journal, Vol 8, 1998-99)

What is the *Halakhic* approach to tragedy and suffering? The subject is often raised when personal tragedy occurs. But it gains particular relevance in the suffering in Israel during the past year and the devastating trauma to all Americans in the past week.

The Book of Job is fundamentally a refutation of evil.

What are we to make of this suffering? Hundreds of Israelis randomly killed since last Rosh Hashanah and thousands of Americans murdered in the air and on the ground in two hours a week ago. Does God play a role? Is He responsible for this evil or, at least, for not preventing it?

The question is not new nor can it be adequately answered. But I found an approach that Rav Soloveitchik presented 40 years ago at a symposium on Religion and Mental Health, which I think can be instructive for us on this very difficult and painful Rosh Hashanah.

There are basically two religious, Jewish approaches to the problem of suffering. The first approach is metaphysical. It essentially denies evil entirely. The Book of Job is fundamentally a refutation of evil in the world. What the book says, in effect, is that if Job really understood the world he would come to terms with evil and he would understand that it

with words devoid of understanding?"
איפה היית ביסדי ארץ? - "Where were you when I created the world?..."
המימך צוית בקר? - "Did you ever command the morning to arrive?..."
הנגלו לך שערי מות ושערי צלמות תראה? - "Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Have you seen the portals of

darkness?"
הגד אם ידעת כלה? - "Declare if you know it all!"

This metaphysical approach of Judaism says that our understanding is limited. If we had God's understanding we would realize that evil in the form of suffering and tragedy does not exist.

According to Maimonides, at death, the soul is liberated and enabled to live a purely spiritual existence.

And, furthermore, if we had eschatological vision, we would see this even more clearly. Says the Talmud (*Kiddushin* 40b), "To what are the righteous compared in this world? To a tree standing in a place of purity (טהרה) but whose branches overhang into a place of defilement (טומאה). Cut off the branches and the tree stands entirely in purity. Similarly, God brings suffering on the righteous in this world so that they might inherit the

approach into the *halakha* of prayer. In the morning, we quote a verse from Isaiah

יצר אור ובורא חשך עשה שלום ובורא רע
"I form light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil." But the way our sages formulated this in our morning prayers introduces a subtle change.

יצר אור ובורא חשך עשה שלום ובורא את הכל
"God who forms light and creates darkness, who makes peace and creates all things." The word "*ra*" - evil - was replaced with the word "*ha-kol*" - all things. *In the perspective of totality, evil vanishes.*

Those familiar with Plato's dialogue, *Phaedo*, will recall that Plato quotes an oration delivered by Socrates on the day of his execution, saying the same thing. "Death is nothing," he says, "but the deliverance of man from

the cave, from the valley of shadows. Death is an ascent to the heights from which many behold the ideas, the true Being... the real, true, genuine Being." The same idea is articulated by Maimonides at the conclusion of the "Guide to the Perplexed." During life, the soul is, as it were, limited by the body and bodily needs. At death, the soul is liberated and enabled to live a purely spiritual existence נהנה מזיו השכינה - basking in the Divine presence. So even death is not evil.

Such a metaphysical approach "has worked miracles with our people whose history is a continuous tale of martyrdom and suffering," wrote the Rav. The Jewish community found, in this metaphysic of evil, relief, hope and courage.

However, such an approach does not bring solace and comfort to a human being who finds himself or

doesn't exist. This is clearly expressed in God's oration to Job near the conclusion of the book.

ויען ה' את איוב מן הסער
"And God answered Job out of the whirlwind."

מי זה מחשיך עצה במילין בלי דעת?
"Who is this who gives dark counsel

future world..." The Rav explains that this approach is embarrassed by evil and so it responds by disposing of it. Human suffering is an illusion. A fuller understanding would show that suffering, tragedy and evil do not actually exist.

Our sages actually codified this

A ROSH HASHANAH SERMON BY RABBI HASKEL LOOKSTEIN

(Continued)

herself in crisis, facing the monstrosity of evil either in the historical arena of war and terrorism or in the personal arena of illness. The Rav acknowledges something very interesting: "I can state with all candor that I personally have not been too successful in my attempts to spell out this metaphysic in terms meaningful to the distraught individual who floats aimlessly in an all-encompassing blackness, like a withered leaf on a dark autumnal night, tossed by wind and rain. I tried but failed, I think, miserably, like the friends of Job."

And so there is another approach of Judaism. We might call it the pragmatic approach of *Halakha*. This approach is interested in pragmatic man, his body and soul, his day-to-day activities, his small, narrow world, unrelated to metaphysics. The pragmatic *halakha* acknowledges

One must never acquiesce to evil.

boldly the reality of evil and accepts the absurdity of evil. It faces it squarely and does not try to explain it away.

The *Halakhot* of mourning exemplify this realistic approach. Death is *not* the liberation of the human being to some kind of an ideal existence. Death is terrible, monstrous, absurd. One tears one's garments in the face of death. One sits on the ground for seven days and denies oneself bodily comforts in a total expression of mourning and bereavement. If the pragmatic *Halakha* had agreed with the metaphysical approach then why tear clothing? Why sit *shiva*? Why mourn for thirty days, or for twelve months? The pragmatic *Halakhic* approach faces evil and suffering squarely, in all of its poignancy and absurdity.

The *Halakhic* ethic of suffering, asserts the Rav, rests upon three propositions: First, evil does exist, and

it is bad. The world in which we live is not free from deformities and inadequacies. People develop illnesses, suffer accidents, are in the wrong place, at the wrong time. None of this makes sense, but it is a reality and it is indisputable and it must be

faced honestly.

Second: One must never acquiesce to evil. Scientific intervention to control the environment and disease and society - yes, and terrorism - is fully endorsed and justified. Suffering is not good and it should be avoided at every reasonable cost.

There have been religious views

that did not agree with this. They maintain that if a person gets sick that's what God wants and we shouldn't fight it. Judaism firmly rejected that approach. The same is true of poverty. As Tevya said: It is not a blessing to be poor; one should avoid it at all cost. The same is true of resistance to terror and to persecution. The Pope said on Sunday that the United States should practice restraint in its response to the monstrous attack

manner in which our forefather Jacob engaged in combat with the mysterious antagonist on a dark night on the other side of the river."

"If someone comes to kill you, says the Talmud, rise up early in the morning to

The pragmatic Halakhic approach faces evil and suffering squarely, in all of its poignancy and absurdity.

kill him first." Sadly, many Americans, including our government, have learned the validity of this policy - indeed, the necessity for such a policy - only in the aftermath of the greatest tragedy in the history of our country. We must remember this truism. In the fight against Amalek - root evil - prevention, interdiction and eradication are mandated. They are just as essential as are inoculations against polio and chemotherapy against cancer.

So evil exists and it is bad. Evil must be fought persistently and heroically. But what happens when we lose the battle? Here we come to the third proposition. When we cannot triumph over evil, the pragmatic *Halakha* instructs us to accept defeat with dignity and humility. The Rav stresses the word *dignity* rather than equanimity. Mental health professionals advise us to resign

Suffering is not good and it should be avoided at every reasonable cost.

of a week ago and the massive loss of life. Another major religious figure preached that Americans should be forgiving. Nonsense! Rubbish! The *Halakha* has never been able to accommodate a philosophy of passive resistance to evil. Rather, we are commanded "to fight evil in the

ourselves to an evil that we cannot defeat, with stoicism and *equanimity*. The *Halakha* prescribes *dignity*.

What is the difference between equanimity and dignity? Rav Soloveitchik suggests that equanimity is a psychological term, while dignity is a religious category. Dignity comes

A ROSH HASHANAH SERMON BY RABBI HASKEL LOOKSTEIN

(Continued)

from our relationship with God. We are created *b'tzelem E-lokim* - in the image of God. We are able to commune with God, to reach Him in the most personal and intimate way in

person to the third person reflects the intimacy and the withdrawal within the space of a single blessing pronounced over food, over a *mitzvah*, or over an experience. Maimonides, in his Book

In the world of carnal pleasures, Judaism has always considered sexual activity to be a *mitzvah* and a very important part of a marital relationship, but there are limits and rules concerning which we must accept defeat and denial - it is to be enjoyed only in marriage, and, even in marriage, only in accordance with the rules of *nidah* and *mikvah*. Embrace and retreat!

Shabbat is another example. God said to us "Rule over the earth and conquer it," which we do six days a week. אך את שבתתי תשמרו - "however, keep my *Shabbat*." Enjoy, the world, exploit it, and rule over the entire earth, but on *Shabbat* withdraw, restrain yourselves, and accept the fact that it doesn't belong to us but to God.

The Halakha has never been able to accommodate a philosophy of passive resistance to evil.

prayer and in a life of *mitzvot*. This is part of the glory of a human being of whom the Psalmist says: "You have made him only a little less than the angels." It indicates our potential for achievement, accomplishment, control of the world and, yes, extensive power.

However, as soon as we experience the fullness of this power and accomplishment, as soon as we achieve victory, as it were, in our relationship with God, we have to be able to withdraw and recognize that, as close as we are to the angels, we are also, in the words of Abraham, *afar va'efer* — dust and ashes — when compared to the Almighty.

There is a strange confirmation of this tension between power and powerlessness, victory and defeat, achievement and withdrawal in every *bracha* that we make. We start every *bracha* with the words "*baruch ata Hashem*" - blessed are You O'God. "You" is in the second person singular, the familiar, the close, the intimate.

of Law, summarizes this tension in describing the essence of the love and fear of God. "When a person contemplates His great and wondrous works and creatures..., he will immediately love Him, praise Him, glorify Him and long... to know His great name. But when he ponders

Dignity comes from our relationship with God.

these matters he will recoil, frightened, and realize that he is a small creature, lowly and obscure, endowed with slight and slender intelligence, standing in the presence of Him who is perfect in knowledge (הל יסודי התורה בב).

In conclusion, the dignity of the human being and his or her divine character assert themselves, on the one hand, in triumph and power and, on the other, in defeat and failure.

This dialectic, which is so closely related to our acceptance of an evil that we cannot overcome, is taught to us through many of the *mitzvot*. For

All of this, says the Rav, is encapsulated in the thrilling and frightening story of *Akeidat Yitzchak* - the binding of Isaac. Abraham had it all

"ויה' ברך את אברהם בכל" - and God blessed Abraham with everything, especially the blessing of a son for whom he longed. Isaac was his heir, his future, his continuity. With his birth, Abraham had reached the pinnacle of achievement, accomplishment and power. And just at the moment when he reached it, God commanded him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering on "a mountain that I shall show you." And Abraham rose early in the morning to do God's bidding. At the moment of reaching the pinnacle Abraham knows how to withdraw and how to accept defeat. In the end, there is no tragedy; but Abraham was prepared to accept tragedy, *not with equanimity*, but *with dignity*, with the understanding that in our relationship with God there will always be a tension between victory and defeat, achievement and withdrawal.

The pragmatic Halakha expects us to accept suffering in dignity.

And then we always change to the third person singular in the rest of the *bracha*: *ha-motzi lechem min ha'aretz* - who brings forth bread from the earth. Or *she'asa li kol tzorki* - who has provided for all of my needs. This grammatical shift from the second

example: *kashrut* is a way of saying that we have a right to enjoy the world fully except that there are limits beyond which we may not go. We can have almost everything but there are certain things which we may not enjoy. Possession and withdrawal!

A ROSH HASHANAH SERMON BY RABBI HASKEL LOOKSTEIN

(Continued)

What, then is an authentic Jewish approach to suffering? Rav Soloveitchik suggests that there are two. The metaphysical approach essentially denies the existence of suffering and evil. This may be

possible and to take every measure available to us to fight it and defeat it. Finally, when we cannot defeat it, the pragmatic *Halakha* expects us to accept suffering in dignity, a dignity which reflects our understanding that

world of *mitzvot*, with *kashrut*, *taharat ha-mishpacha* and *Shabbat*. We understand it in the Biblical narrative of Abraham and Isaac. And then we hope that this way of life will help us to deal with personal tragedy and

We hope that this way of life will help us to deal with personal tragedies and national calamity, individual suffering and universal evil with the dignity that is the blessing of humanity created in God's image.

adequate or even consoling as we look at the broad sweep of history. However, for the individual human being who experiences pain, anguish, suffering and evil, whether historical or personal, the pragmatic *Halakhic* approach is of greater help. It consists, first of all, of a realistic acceptance of evil. Second, it urges us to prevent it or overcome it to whatever extent

in our relationship with God and the world we have to be able to live with the tension between victory and defeat, accomplishment and withdrawal, achievement and helplessness.

- ה' נתן וה' לקח יהי שם ה' מברך
"The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the Name of the Lord."

We learn to do this through the

national calamity, individual suffering and universal evil with the dignity that is the blessing of humanity created in God's image.

Let us hope that the old year with its terrible excesses of evil, suffering and tragedy will end and that the New Year will usher in a period of health, happiness, peace and blessing for us, for all Israel, and for all mankind. Amen.

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Sunday, December 1st

9:30 am - 12:00 pm

BLOOD DRIVE

"GIVE A PINT AND SAVE A LIFE"

ages 18-76 (17 with parental consent)

"WHOEVER SAVES ONE LIFE IS CONSIDERED BY GOD AS HAVING SAVED THE WHOLE WORLD."

MEZUZAH CHECK

An unkosher mezuzah is one that either was not written properly by a scribe, OR one in which a word or even a letter has become marred or erased.

**HAVE ALL YOUR MEZUZOT
CHECKED BY THE SCRIBE AT KJ.**

"And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates."

TEFILLIN DRIVE

Your TEFILLIN should be checked every seven years.

**HAVE YOUR TEFILLIN
CHECKED YEAR BY YEAR**

"You shall bind them as ornaments before you."

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- ♦ sweaters, slacks, skirts, dresses
- ♦ accessories (scarves, gloves, hats)
- ♦ Children's Items:
high chairs, toys, cribs, strollers,
books, bikes, etc.

Please: No shoes, underwear, or torn garments.

MITZVAH MALL

December 2

3:00 pm

DRIVE AND SAVE A LIFE”

(with parental permission)

“THE TORAH AS IF HE SAVED AN ENTIRE WORLD.”

IN CHECK

be checked twice within every

LLIN CHECKED THIS
E SCRIBE AT KJ.

*“...as a sign upon your arm and
between your eyes”*

SHATNEZ CHECK

One cannot wear a garment that is made with both wool and linen fibers. Any wool or linen garment must be checked for shatnez prior to wearing it.

**HAVE YOUR CLOTHING CHECKED FOR
SHATNEZ AT KJ TODAY.**

*“A garment that is a mixture of combined fibers
(wool and linen) shall not be worn.”*

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- ♦ Stationery
- ♦ Tablecloths
- ♦ Hair Accessories
- ♦ Kids' Hosiery and Accessories
and more

זה היום תחילת מעשיך

ROSH HASHANA 5762

SERMON BY RABBI JOSHUA LOOKSTEIN

זה היום תחילת מעשיך the verse in זכרונות reads. Today is the anniversary of the day that life began. But זה היום תחילת מעשיך could mean something else. This is the day when your, meaning our, life begins anew.

Of all of the stories, both tragic and miraculous, which have been circulating during the last week, it is the phone calls that have been getting to me the most; the last minute calls from airplanes and offices to spouses, parents and siblings, the 'I don't think

***This is the day
when our life begins anew.***

I'm going to make it home' phone calls, the 'I love you and I always will love you' phone calls, the 'tell the children that I love them' phone calls. The courage that it took to make those calls, the ability to look death in the face and say, 'I still have a few moments to do something important and you cannot deny me that,' to even have the composure to dial the number and admit to one's self that the end is in sight, was sheer heroism in and of itself.

But it's not the phone calls per se that have been on my mind. It is the moments that surrounded the phone calls, to be exact, the moments between the time that the victims realized they would not make it and the actual time of their passing. As morbid as it sounds, I try to imagine how I would have felt, what I would have thought about, and I have an idea of what it would be. I would have wondered if I were happy with the way I lived my life. Did I do everything that I could have? Had I become the best person I could have been? Was I good to people? Was I as good as I could have been, to family, friends and others I encountered? And I would hope that my answers would have been yes to all questions, because I

don't know what I would have done with myself if the answers were no,

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and I knew I had lost all chance to change. In addition to a few other things, that's what scares me about those last moments for the victims of Tuesday's attacks. What if their answers were no?

You know, often, when I hear of a terrible death or illness, I find myself saying, "There's nothing worse than that." If it's a baby, or a child, or a parent, or a spouse, or a sudden death, or a prolonged illness, it's always the same. "There's nothing worse than that." But for us, right now, Tuesday is the terrible death, so that is today's "nothing worse than that." Rabbi Yechiel Michol Tykocinski, the author of גשר החיים, a book on the laws of mourning, makes a daring and controversial statement by referring to illness as God's *gemilas chesed* to a

***I would have wondered
if I were happy with the
way I lived my life***

person, his act of kindness, and he quotes a *medrash* on the words in *Bereishit*, "הנה אביך חולה," behold, Joseph, your father is ill. The *Midrash* says that before *Yaakov Avinu*, there was no illness in the world. Instead, a person would just suddenly expire in the market place or anywhere. It was *Yaakov* who asked God for mercy in giving him an illness so that he would have advanced warning when he would die so as to enable him to gather

his children to give them a final blessing, and get his affairs in order.

That same idea is echoed much later, at the heart of the famous book *Tuesdays With Morrie*, about a man stricken with ALS who is visited by a former student, for the last few months of his life. The first line of the chapter is, "Forgive yourself before you die and then forgive others."

"Do you see that sculpture...That's me," Morrie said. "A friend of mine sculpted that maybe 30 years ago. His name was Norman. We used to spend so much time together. We went swimming. We

***Had I become the best
person I could have been?***

took rides to New York. He had me over to his house in Cambridge and he sculpted that bust of me down in his basement...Well here's the sad part of the story...Norman and his wife moved away to Chicago. A little while later, my wife, Charlotte, had to have a pretty serious operation. Norman and his wife never got in touch with us. I know they knew about it. Charlotte and I were very hurt because they never called to see how she was. So we dropped the relationship. Over the years I met Norman a few times and he always tried to reconcile, but I didn't accept it. I wasn't satisfied with his explanation. I was prideful. I shrugged him off." His voice choked. "Mitch...a few years ago...he died of cancer. I feel so

Was I good to people?

sad. I never got to see him. I never got to forgive. It pains me now so much... It's not just other people we need to forgive, Mitch, we also need to forgive ourselves...Forgive

ROSH HASHANAH SERMON BY RABBI JOSHUA LOOKSTEIN

(Continued)

yourself. Forgive others. Don't wait, Mitch, not everyone gets the time I'm getting. Not everyone is as lucky." Lucky? "I mourn my dwindling time, but I cherish the chance it gives me to make things right."

I would have wondered if I were happy with the way I lived my life

There are a few people very close to me who are seriously ill at this moment, and I would give anything for them not to be. I do not wish illness on myself or anyone else, but I do wish everyone 'the chance to make things right.' Not just to say goodbye, but to forgive and to give, to become better people, and to make those around us better as well.

This year, we, thank God, do have that chance. As long as we have been forced into this mindset this year, let's at least realize that, while we don't really want to feel this way, this is the feeling we are supposed to have during this season, the אימת הדין, the fear of impending judgment, the possibility that at some point during this year, we could lose our lives as well. We have been given the motivation and, thank God, the opportunity to reflect on our lives and improve it. Rabbi Joseph Telushkin writes in his book of Jewish Values that he knows a rabbi who prepares for Yom Kippur by writing two versions of his obituary. In the first, he sets down how he thinks it would be written, and in the second, how he would want it to be written. His goal, every year, is to narrow the gap between who he is and who he would like to be. Morbid, but effective.

Chazal had a suggestion as well. There is a famous question about this subject that has been debated by ethicists throughout history. If you knew you had one day to live, how would you spend that day? One camp,

the epicureans, say, Eat drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die, and become fatally self-indulgent. The other camp says do acts of kindness, pray to God, spend time with family. The *Mishna* in *Pirkei Avot* says, "שוב יום אחד לפני מתתך." Repent one day before you die. The Talmud in *Sabbat* asks the obvious question, "וכי אדם יודע איזה יום ימות?" Does a person know on what day he will die? And the Talmud answers, "וכל שכן ישוב היום," all the more reason to repent today. "שמא ימות למחר," perhaps he will die tomorrow. We Jews, therefore, fall on the side of *Mitzvot*, acts of kindness, praying to God, spending time with the family.

While there are many ways to understand the difference between the two sides of the debate, one is to say that the person who goes out and

Was I as good as I could have been, to family, friends and others I encountered?

drinks and parties is a person who fundamentally views himself as an individual responsible only to himself, an island as Donne says, whereas one who goes in the opposite direction sees himself as part of a community. And there are many communities that we as Jews see ourselves as a part of. Each community brings with it responsibilities and rewards. Acknowledging the rewards, and accepting upon ourselves a new responsibility, is a first step in seizing the opportunity we have been given. זה היום תחילת מעשיך.

The first community that encourages us to be conscientious with our lives is the man-God community. In this community we are rewarded with a God who is *Imo Anochi B'Tzara*, with us during times of

difficulty. He forgives us as a parent would a child. He is there to protect us. And we also have responsibilities to live for. We must pray to him. We must follow His commandments, those we understand and a whole host of them that we don't. We must follow His laws even when we do not agree with them. We must believe in him. We must maintain that faith during the most trying times. In certain situations we must ask ourselves, what would God want me to do?

Another community of which we are a part is the community of Jewish History. Again, the rewards are many. Our existence, God's patience with us, extends from Akeidat Yitzchak, from the test of tests which Avraham and Yitzchak passed. When we falter, we use Zechut Avot, the merit of our patriarchs and matriarchs. We are part of a glorious tradition. Yehudah, Eliyahu, Dovid Hamelech, Esther, Hillel and Shammai, Rabbi Akivah, Rashi, Rambam, Chofetz Chaim, Theodore Herzl, Chanah Senesh, the partisans, the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Menachem Begin, Natan Scharansky, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the Israel Defense Forces, the citizens of Israel. Our history is bursting with heroes who made the continuity of the Jewish People their life's work. They give us pride and courage to face

We must follow His commandments, those we understand and a whole host of them that we don't.

whatever the world throws at us, be it the intifada or the anti-Semitism of the United Nations.

Our responsibility is simple. Maintain that tradition. Be the transition between history and future. Be the heroes of our generation, heroes

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(Continued)

for our children, heroes of continuity, of learning, of growth, of *Teshuvah*, of *Mesirut Nefesh*, giving one's self to a cause. Model a life of Torah, of Mitzvot and ethics, and transmit values. Show pride and consistency. Maintain familial relationships. Repair severed ones. Bring back public displays of affection and private ones.

And may God bless us with a long life, filled with meaning and peace.

Foster a closeness between the generations, an open and comfortable relationship where issues can be discussed. We gain so much from this community and it seems like we have to give even more. זה היום תחילת מעשיך.

But maybe the most important community that will inspire in us a desire for a meaningful life is the physical community in which we have our homes. The difference between this community and the others is that in this community, the rewards and responsibilities are intertwined. Yes, a reward is the security of a community that will take care of us if we are ill or if we need comforting, but those who do the visiting and the comforting as part of their responsibility may gain more than the receiver. The reward is in the giving. The responsibility is finding new ways to give, or just tapping into old ones. In this sense we need only to look down 85th at the firehouse. There are heroes everywhere there, people who give selflessly to the point of no return. But we don't have to emulate the heroes inside the firehouse, we could just emulate the heroes outside the fire house, the throngs of people who are so concerned about the welfare of the firefighters, KJ children who after they made honey at Sunday's Hello Yellow program, walked down the street to give some to the firefighters, members

of the KJ Chesed Committee who are the first call from organizers at Ground Zero when they need something that they can't find, let alone the members of the KJ *Chevra Kadisha* who had volunteered to assist in the makeshift morgues around the city. Some of it is heroic, but some of it is just looking for an opportunity and being ready when one presents itself.

Rabbi Telushkin spends half of his book listing different giving opportunities. Here are a few that he lists. Pick one, or create your own. A woman in Encino, California who runs drives to collect infant car seats to pass on to families who cannot afford to buy them, a collector of wigs for cancer patients, a man in LA who collects unsold bagels and delivers them to soup kitchens, 322,000 bagels, and finally, in the book, under the supervision of Victoria Ginsburg, the

Our history is bursting with heroes who made the continuity of the Jewish People their life's work.

fifth grade at the Ramaz Yeshiva has collected and donated more than 250,000 pounds of food over a period of 6 years. These are your children. Heroes, yes, but in a way that we all could be.

I dated a girl once who used to incessantly ask me if I had given my leftover food from Shabbos to a homeless person. It drove me nuts. And I didn't because I was embarrassed to do it. What would I say to the person? Imagine that. I deprived a homeless person of food because I couldn't figure out the best way to present it. Just give it! Clothing too. Teach, tutor, read, assist, drive, write, almost anything we do can have a giving component.

So that's why we won't go and party on our last day in this world, because think of how much good can

be done in one day, let alone a lifetime, no matter when it begins. As Rabbi Aaron Lichtenstein said, the statement of Jon Donne, that no man is an island but a part of the continent is both a statement of fact and an imperative demand. These are our rewards and our responsibilities. These are our communities. Through these we fulfill our potential. Through God, the Jewish People and the world around us. These are our answers to the questions about our lives. זה היום תחילת מעשיך more so this year than any other one, today is the day when our life begins anew.

There is a *Midrash* that says that Adam lived to the age of 930 but he was supposed to live until 1000. What happened to the other 70 years? He saw in the future that there would be a baby who would die as an infant so he gave that baby 70 years of his life. The baby turned out to be King David. Based on that *Medrash*, a custom developed in Europe that when someone was sick people would donate to them hours off of their lives. Once when a man took ill, members of the community came to the Chofetz Chaim and said, How much time will you donate? And he said, A minute and a half. What? they exclaimed, Is that all this man is worth to you? Said the Chofetz Chaim, You'd be amazed at how much one can accomplish in a minute and a half.

המקום ינחם את האבילים בתוך אבילי ציון וירושלים.

May God comfort the mourners along with those who mourn for Zion and Jerusalem.

הרחמן הוא ירפא את החולים בתוך חולי ישראל

May God heal all those who are ill.

הרחמן הוא יברך את כולנו בשנים ארוכות מליאות משמעות ובשלום

And may God bless us with a long life, filled with meaning and peace. Amen.

JESS WARD LIBRARY REORGANIZED AND EXPANDED

After much hard labor and expense, and dovetailing with our recent rollout of the 5762 Adult Education program featuring dozens of challenging and stimulating classes, we are pleased to officially invite you to make use of K.J.'s completely reorganized and improved synagogue library.

Located adjacent to the Max J. Etra Chapel, the K.J. library now houses multiple copies of popular linear translations of Rashi, the complete 7-volume Nechama Leibowitz parshanut (biblical exegesis) series, both the Kahati and Artscroll English translations of the Mishnah, a large type Mishnah Torah that you won't go half blind reading, every available tractate of the Artscroll Talmud, two beautiful "Talman" editions of the entire Babylonian Talmud, two complete sets of the Mishnah Berurah (Minukad), the Arba Turim as published by Machon Yerushalayim, as well as many, many new and compelling works of halacha, mussar, tanach, etc.

In addition to the above referenced mainstream resources, the library's far wall boasts an impressive collection of books and audiotapes geared towards those with slightly less background, all arranged in a helpful, organized fashion.

We invite you to peruse and use our much improved library the next time you are in K.J. In return, all we insist upon is that you respect the communal nature of this facility. Because it is meant to be used by everyone, it is expected that the following rules will be adhered to: (1) under no circumstances may resources be removed from the building for any period of time, and (2) if items are removed from the library (say, to enhance one's appreciation of the parsha as read in the main synagogue during Shabbat morning services), they must be returned and properly

reshelved that day. Casually leaving sefarim in synagogue pews, the shul office, the coat room, or anywhere other than their proper place in the library, is grossly discourteous and shameful.

We are proud to offer this restored library as part of our Adult Education program, and if there are any resources that you would like to have available there in the future, please do not hesitate to contact us with your recommendations.

Rabbi Josh Lookstein
Rabbi Joshua Cypess

SHIUR BY RAV HERSHEL SCHACHTER

“Jewish Medical Ethics”

NOVEMBER 14

8:00 PM

in the

MAX J. ETRA CHAPEL

Save the Following Dates:

JANUARY 16

MARCH 6

SENIOR MEN AND WOMEN DO LUNCH AND LEARN TOGETHER 2001-2002 KJ LUNCH AND LEARN SCHEDULE

Come to lunch. Come to learn. And, come to offer your opinion too!

Members of the congregation 55 years of age and older are invited each Wednesday from 12 noon to 1:30 PM to “Lunch and Learn”. An impressive array of speakers will be offering presentations on a broad variety of topics of Jewish interest. The speakers are informative, the discussions are lively, and the lunch tastes good too. Please join us and note the schedule of this year’s presenters below:

LUNCH AND LEARN 2001-2002

Oct. 17	Dr. Gilbert Kahn	Feb. 20	Rabbi Eliezer Rubin
24	Rabbi Joshua Cypess	27	Robert Leifert
31	Jennifer Roth	Mar. 6	Dr. Gilbert Kahn
Nov. 7	Dr. Gilbert Kahn	13	Rabbi Joshua Cypess
14	Rabbi Joshua Cypess	20	Rabbi Eliezer Rubin
21	Hon. Jerome Hornblass	Apr. 10	Morris Wyszogrod
28	Rabbi Eliezer Rubin	17	Dr. Gilbert Kahn
Dec. 5	Dr. Gilbert Kahn	24	Rabbi Joshua Cypess
12	Rabbi Joshua Cypess	May 1	Robert Leifert
19	Rabbi Eliezer Rubin	8	Rabbi Eliezer Rubin
Jan. 9	Dr. Gilbert Kahn	15	Dr. Gilbert Kahn
16	Rabbi Joshua Cypess	22	Rabbi Joshua Cypess
23	Rabbi Eliezer Rubin	29	Daniele Lassner
30	Janie Schwalbe	Jun 5	Dr. Gilbert Kahn
Feb. 6	Dr. Gilbert Kahn	12	Rabbi Joshua Cypess
13	Rabbi Joshua Cypess		

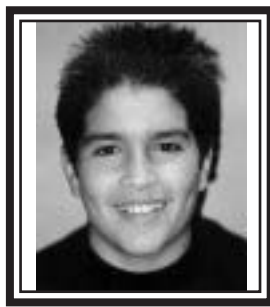
BNAI MITZVAH



ELIANNA POLLAK

Mazel Tov to Bonnie and Isaac Pollak on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Elianna, which took place on Saturday, November 3rd at the Women's Tefillah Group in the Max J. Etra Chapel. She read from the weekly portion of Vayera and the Haftorah. She also gave a Dvar Torah on "Women in Zimun".

Elianna is a student in the sixth grade of the Rabbi Haskel Lookstein Middle School of Ramaz.



ZACHARY FENSTER

Mazel Tov to Jan and Dr. Daniel on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Zachary which took place on November 10th in the Main Synagogue. He read the weekly Torah portion of Chaye Sarah and the Haftorah and delivered a Dvar Torah on "Avraham and the Maarat Ha'Machpela."

Zachary is a student in the seventh grade of the Rabbi Haskel Lookstein Middle School of Ramaz.



RACHEL SHNAY

Mazel Tov to Gabriela and Jack Shnay on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Rachel, which will take place on Saturday, December 1st at KJ. She will give a Dvar Torah on "The Matriarch Rachel."

Rachel is a student in the sixth grade of the Rabbi Haskel Lookstein Middle School of Ramaz.



ARIELLA MESSING

Mazel Tov to Noemi and Danny Messing on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Ariella, which took place on November 3rd at KJ. She delivered a Dvar Torah on Parashat Vayera.

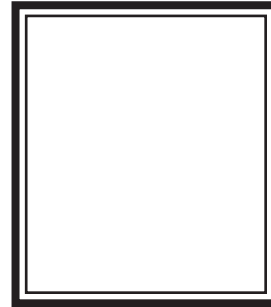
Ariella is a student in the seventh grade at the Abraham Joshua Heschel School.



REBECCA KREVAT

Mazel Tov to Randy and Mitchell Krevat on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Rebecca which will take place on Saturday, November 17 at KJ. She will deliver a Dvar Torah on Parashat Toldot.

Rebecca is a student in the sixth grade of the Rabbi Haskel Lookstein Middle School of Ramaz.



IAN SETH MARK

Mazel Tov to Dr. Vivian and David Mark on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Ian, which will take place on Saturday, December 8th in the Main Synagogue. Ian will read the weekly Torah portion of Vayeshev and the Haftorah. He will also deliver a Dvar Torah on "And Joseph was Sent from the Depths of Hebron."

Ian is a student in the seventh grade of the Rabbi Haskel Lookstein Middle School of Ramaz.

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WITHIN OUR FAMILY

BIRTHS

Mazel tov to:

Suzie and Sandy Eisenstat on the birth of a granddaughter, Gabriella Dora, to their children, Jennifer and Jacob Eisenstat.

Gille Ann Rabbin and Jeffrey Birnbaum on the birth of a son, Schuyler Rabbin-Birnbaum.

Michele and Stephane Ifrah on the birth of a son, Samuel Daniel.

Judy and Dr. Hirshel Kahn on the birth of a daughter, Beth Sarah.

Arlene Rubin and Jeffrey Klores on the birth of a son, Joseph Benjamin.

Leslie and Michael Kule on the birth of a son, Oscar Joseph. Similar good wishes to the proud grandparents, Wilma and Stephen Kule and the elated great grandmother, Mrs. Goody Dane.

Ray and Matthew Lindenbaum on the birth of a son, Noah Joshua. Similar good wishes to the proud grandparents, Belda and Marcel Lindenbaum.

Edith and Salomon Lipiner on the birth of a grandson to their children, Karen and Robert Rom.

May these children grow up in the finest tradition of Torah, chupah and maasim tovim.

ENGAGEMENTS

Mazel tov to:

Jan and Andrew Groveman on the engagement of their daughter, Ariel, a Ramaz graduate, to Eytan Seidman, son of Shoshana and David Seidman of Skokie, Illinois.

Robert Katz on his engagement to Jane Friedman.

May their weddings take place in happiness and blessing.

WEDDINGS

Mazel tov to:

Zella and Glenn Goldfinger on the marriage of their son, Justin Reuben to Marla Elaine, daughter of Ilene and David Braverman of Los Angeles.

Joyce Hirsch and Richard Hirsch on

the marriage of their son, Daniel, a Ramaz graduate, to Carolyn Lechter, daughter of Judith and John Lechter of Montreal.

Barbara Waitman on the marriage of her son, Jonathan Alexander to Rebecca Chana Amaru, daughter of Betsy Halpern-Amaru and Louis Amaru.

May they enjoy their marriages with happiness and blessing.

CONDOLENCES

Our condolences to:

Nancee Bloom on the passing of her mother, June Haft.

Bernard Cohen on the passing of his mother, Helen Miller Cohen.

Esther Davis on the passing of her brother, Naftali Frankel.

Barbara Eigen on the passing of her father, Leonard Goldman.

Russell Kagan on the passing of his father, Seymour Kagan.

Louis Orwasher on the passing of his sister, Sarah Rubin.

Isaac Pollak on the passing of his mother, Ettus Pollak.

Sue Robins on the passing of her mother, Celia Starkman.

Miquette Schrader on the passing of her mother, Dina Viterbo Tiktiner.

Herman Smilow on the passing of his brother, Alex Smilow.

May they be comforted among those who mourn for Zion and Jerusalem.

ACADEMIC

ACCOMPLISHMENT

Mazel tov to Odelya Edith Pagovich, daughter of Talia Pagovich, who recently presented a paper at the 109th Annual American Psychological Association Convention in San Francisco. Her research focused on Israeli Perspectives on Abuse in Families.

In Memoriam

DR. NATHALIE FRIEDMAN

Nathalie Friedman was always a part of KJ and KJ was always a part of Nathalie Friedman. The daughter of the late Gertrude and Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein and sister of Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, she took a vibrant and varied role in this congregation.

Nathalie brought us leadership by serving on our Board of Trustees and was a spark in the development of our Women's Tefillah Group. She was a creative chairperson of our revived and expanded Adult Education Committee and gave dynamic leadership to our 125th Anniversary celebration over which she served as chairperson. Nathalie was one of the most beloved speakers at our Seniors Lunch and Learn. Its participants always looked forward to her knowledgeable insights and the warm and authoritative way in which she made her presentations.

Nathalie Friedman also used her

academic expertise (a Ph.D. in Sociology and a member of the faculty of Columbia University) to the benefit of the larger Jewish community. She conducted studies for Ramaz, and the National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY) to determine their effectiveness and impact upon Jewish youth. She also studied another vital issue, the growing rate of divorce in the Jewish community.

Nathalie was the devoted mother of Steven Schacter, Jessica Gribetz, Judy Tykocinski, and Naomi Price as they in turn were children devoted to her. She had a most loving relationship with her husband, Israel Friedman, as they were both exceptionally dedicated to each other.

We will miss Nathalie, not only for her contributions to our community, but for her warm and smiling presence in our shul.



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SHABBAT SCHEDULE

		<i>Lighting of Candles</i>	<i>Friday Evening Services</i>	<i>Saturday Afternoon Services</i>	<i>Sabbath Ends</i>
November					
16-17	Toldot	4:19 pm	4:30 pm	4:00 pm	5:16 pm
23-24	Vayetze	4:15 pm	4:30 pm	4:05 pm	5:12 pm
30-Dec. 1	Vayishlach	4:12 pm	4:25 pm	4:05 pm	5:09 pm
December					
7-8	Vayeshev	4:11 pm	4:25 pm	4:05 pm	5:09 pm
14-15	Miketz (Shabbat Chanukah)	4:11 pm	4:25 pm	4:05 pm	5:09 pm
21-22	Vayigash	4:14 pm	4:25 pm	4:05 pm	5:12 pm
28-29	Vayechi	4:18 pm	4:30 pm	4:10 pm	5:17 pm
January					
4-5	Shemot	4:24 pm	4:35 pm	4:15 pm	5:22 pm
11-12	Vaera	4:31 pm	4:45 pm	4:20 pm	5:29 pm
18-19	Bo	4:39 pm	4:50 pm	4:30 pm	5:37 pm
25-26	Beshalach	4:47 pm	5:00 pm	4:35 pm	5:44 pm

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Weekday mornings	7:30 am
Sunday mornings	8:30 am
Mondays and Thursdays	7:15 am
Rosh Chodesh Weekdays	7:00 am
Sabbath mornings	9:00 am

EVENING SERVICES

November	11-22	4:30 pm	January	6-10	4:30 pm
	25-Dec 20	4:25 pm		13-17	4:45 pm
December	23-27	4:30 pm		20-24	4:55 pm
	30-Jan 3	4:35 pm		27-31	5:05 pm

DATES TO REMEMBER

Friday, November 16
Rosh Chodesh Kislev
Morning services at 7:00 am

Thursday, November 22
Thanksgiving Day
Morning services at 8:30 am

Monday-Friday, December 10-14
Chanukah I-V
Morning services at 7:05 am

Saturday, Dec. 15 & Sunday, Dec. 16
Rosh Chodesh Tevet, Chanukah VI & VII
Shabbat morning services at 8:45 am
Sunday morning services at 8:30 am

Monday, December 17, Chanukah VIII
Morning services at 7:00 am

Tuesday, Dec. 25, Fast of 10th of Tevet
Fast begins at 5:50 a.m.
Morning services at 8:30 am
Evening services at 4:10 pm.
Fast ends at 5:10 pm.

Tuesday, January 1, New Years Day
Morning services at 8:30 am

Monday, January 14
Rosh Chodesh Shevat
Morning services at 7:00 am

KEHILATH JESHURUN BULLETIN
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun
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