

# HILLEL HAPPENINGS

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## FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

Here is a short piece I just wrote applying the Creation Story to a small child's life.  
B'shalom,  
Rabbi G.

The Right Place  
A Child's Drash About Genesis 1  
My room can get pretty messy.  
When everything is piled together, it is hard to know where things are.  
It can be a game to:  
Put the socks in the drawer,  
Pick the books off the floor.  
Throw the trash in the tin,  
And the toys in the bin.  
Isn't that what God did?  
Fill the day with light,  
Save the dark for night.  
Put rocks on the ground,  
And water all around.  
God wants everything to be in the right place. God called it good.  
We can be very good when we help.

## SUKKOT



# SIMCHAS

## BIRTHDAYS

Mrs. Rebecca McCann	11/2/2016	Mr. Scott Bettigole	11/15/2016
Mr. Stanley Baskind	11/8/2016	Mr. Shawn Cohen	11/16/2016
Mrs. Alecia Goldfarb	11/8/2016	Mr. Alan Snyder	11/17/2016
Mr Melvin Santiago	11/11/2016	Jessica Dean	11/24/2016
Mr. Albert Wachsmann	11/11/2016	Dr. Bob Rodner	11/30/2016
Mr. Herb Shook	11/12/2016		

## ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Trachtenberg	11/12/2016	Mr. & Mrs. Gabriel Izraelevitz	11/20/2016
Dr. & Mrs. John Baron	11/17/2016	Mr & Mrs Norman Greenstein	11/25/2016
		Dr. & Mrs Michael Serow	11/26/2016

## ONEG INFORMATION

11/4 — Phyllis Frank, June Silver, Judy Bogatz  
 11/11 — Steven & Kimberly Pines, Steve & Chris Brouillard (for Bernstein's)  
 11/18 — **Madeleine Brouillard Bat Mitzvah**, Waldo Family, Pollack Family  
 11/25 — HELP NEEDED

12/2/2016 — Judith Scott ,Judy Fogg  
 12/9/2016 — Marty & Stella Seefer, Susan & Gary Ruchin  
 12/16/2016 — Stephanie & Jeff Levin, Michael & Sherry Skott  
 12/23/2016 — Janet & Rick Miller, Lara & Tim Cote  
 12/30/2016 — Neil & Jess Patterson, Ralph & Amy Patterson

As a reminder, the following items should be provided for each oneg:

- 1 challah
- 3 baked goods (one gluten-free item)
- Cheese and crackers
- Fruit
- White grape juice

Paper goods can be found on the rack in the kitchen. Wine is in the fridge.

**\*\*If you choose to make coffee and/or put out hot water for tea, all of the necessary supplies, i.e. sugar, coffee, tea, cream, stirrers, cups, etc. are located on the rack in the kitchen. Hot water pots can be found to the left of the sink. Please schedule everyone to arrive by 7:00 pm to set up the tables and pour the wine and grape juice. Your team is also responsible to remain after services for clean up. There is a vacuum in the kitchen if it is needed. Additionally, all garbage bags that may contain food should be tied off and thrown in the dumpster. We need your help since the janitorial service does not clean the kitchen after an Oneg.**

## YAHREZEIT DATES

### **On November 5, we observe the yahrzeit of:**

Paul Katz	Father of Jim Katz
Jacob Cohen	Father of Rosalind Cooper
Abraham Gerlis	Brother of Selma Gordon & Uncle of Nancy Gordon
Lynn Rubin	Mother of Carol Mamlok
Simon Frank	Father of Sherry Rosen
Frances Schwartz	Mother of Shelley Haslett
Elizabeth Harris	Mother of Janet Lassman

### **On November 12, we observe the yahrzeit of:**

Fannie Guttman	Mother of Richard Guttman
Elaine Halpern	Mother of John Halpern
Esther Bradbard	Mother of Leland Bradbard
Ruth Liebman	Mother of Howard Liebman
Murray Rosen	Father of Stu Rosen
Richard Rosenbaum	Grandfather of Christine Brouillard
Sidney Weiner	Grandfather of Michael Pollack
Max Wernick	Father of Michael Wernick

### **On November 19, we observe the yahrzeit of:**

Phillip Freedman	Father of Barbara Brezel
Martha Ross	Grandmother of Janet Miller
Therese Baum Wolff	Mother of Maxine Greenberg
Sarah Kessler	Grandmother of Eileen Clouser

### **On November 26, we observe the yahrzeit of:**

Beatrice Kanner	Mother of Judith Fogg
Harry Lingerfelt	Father of Angelica Hoffman
Warren Hansen	Soldier killer in Irag
Aron Israelewich	Grandfather of Gabe Izraelevitz
Martin Turshen	Father of Marcia Andrus
Ted Green	Husbands of Phyllis
Fannie Jacobs	Mother of Len Jacobs
Norman Kaplan	Father of Carrie Ward
Anna Lassman	Mother-in-law of Janet Lassman
Dora Pinhas	Mother of Stella Seefer
Aaron Arthur Rose	Grandfather of Janet Miller
Maurice Snyder	Father of Alan Snyder
Newton Frank	Husband of Phyllis Frank
Estelle Greene	Grandmother of Sheri Swan

## DONATIONS

### **ART FUND:**

Alan & Teresa Platteis in memory of Sidney Platteis, father of Alan

### **ADULT ED FUND**

Selma Gordon in memory of Morris Gerlis, father of Selma  
 Howard & Pam Steinberg in memory of Clara Izraelevitz, mother of Gabe Izraelevits and Nancy Mytych  
 Howard & Pam Steinberg for Barbara & Alan Dworsky--Best Wishes in their New home

### **GENERAL FUND :**

Allen & Judith Goldstein in honor of the Abrahamson Family  
 Phyllis Green in memory of Clara Izraelevitz, mother of Gabe Izraelevitz & Nancy Mytych  
 Phyllis Green for Yizkor in memory of Ted, Blanche & Joseph Green and Ethel & Irving Goldstein & Ray Schor-relatives of Phyllis  
 Phyllis Frank in memory of Clara Izraelevitz, mother of Gabe Izraelevitz & Nancy Mytych  
 Joe & Sheila Alpert in memory of Clara Izraelevitz, mother of Gabe Izraelevitz and Nancy Mytych  
 Michael & Linda Barnett thank you to Rabbi & Cantor for Wonderful High Holy Day Service  
 Karen & Bill Morneault in memory of Clara Izraelevitz,  
 Joyce Ben -Kiki in honor of Levi Govoni's conversion  
 Stanley Goldberg in memory of Clara Izraelevitz  
 Barbara & Mark DeVolder in memory of Clara Izraelevitz  
 Marion Berman New Year Pledge  
 Jason Wasserman in memory of Clara Izraelevitz

### **RETIRE THE MORTGAGE FUND:**

Sue & Gary Ruchin in memory of Clara Izraelevitz  
 Janet Lassman in memory of Anna Lassman, mother in- law and Elisabeth Harris, mother

## TORAH PORTIONS

**Noach —Genesis 6:9-11:32 —** The word Noach is related to the Hebrew word for “rest.” Genesis 5:29 says that his parents named him Noah (Noach נח) because they hoped their son would give them rest (nacham, נחם) from their toil. The contents of section Noah tell the story of Noah’s flood, the tower of Babel and the beginning of the Abrahamic line. .

**Lech Lecha —Genesis 12:1-17:27 —** . The third reading from the book of Genesis is named Lech Lecha a it means “go forth.” The first verse says, “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth (lech lecha ) from your country.” Section Lech Lecha introduces Abraham and tells the story of his pilgrimage in pursuit of God.

**Vayera —** Genesis 18:1-22:24 — The fourth reading from the book of Genesis is named Vayera (וירא). It means “And he appeared” because the first story describes how the LORD appeared to Abraham one day as he sat outside his tent. Section Vayera continues with the series of tests of faith for Abraham, concluding in one great and final trial.

**Chayei Sarah — Genesis 23:1-25:18 —** This portion of the Torah is filled with romance and sorrow. It tells the story of how Abraham mourned his wife after her passing, and how he procured a wife for his son Isaac. At the end of this portion, Abraham is laid to rest beside his beloved wife.

The URJ has much more information about each week’s Torah portion at <http://www.reformjudaism.org/learning>.

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## DONATIONS CONT.

### MUSIC FUND

John & Carol Baron & Family in memory of Clara Izraelevitz

Sharon Greenfield

Tim & Lara Cote in honor of Cantor's guidance and support helping to prepare and celebrate Wyatt's Bar Mitzvah

### MEMBERSHIP FUND:

Judy Fogg in memory of Beatrice Kanner, mother of Judy

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND:

Stu & Sherry Rosen in memory of Betty Frank, mother of Sherry

David Korn happy healthy New Year

Charoltte Toback High Holy Day Donation

Martha Abelow thank you Rabbi for wonderful Service

John & Carol Baron & Family for the Rabbi & Cantors High Holy Day Service

Tim & Lara Cote in honor of Rabbi's guidance and support helping to prepare and celebrate Wyatt's Bar Mitzvah

Melvin Stein in memory of Joan Stein, wife of Mel

### SOCIAL ACTION: CHAIR JENNIFER MARVIN

Lois & Ken Wasserman in memory of Clara Izraelevitz, mother of Gabe Izraelevitz & Nancy Mytych

Rosalind Cooper in memory of Suzette Marla Cooper, daughter of Rosalind

### SISTERHOOD DONATION FUND

Rosalind Cooper in memory of Theodore Cooper, husband of Rosalind

### YOUTH

Teri Beckoff in memory of Joan Stein, mother of Teri

*The next Lunch  
Bunch will be*



*Thursday  
December 29 at  
12:00 pm*

*Hope to see you  
then for delicious  
soup and current  
event discussion.*

*We are always  
looking for  
volunteers to  
provide soup and  
bread....or sand-  
wiches.....and a  
cookie type  
dessert.*

*Let Barb Klein  
know if you can  
help. !!*

## Words about the Greenbergs

On the Friday night Shabbat during Sukkot, Temple Beth Hillel honored long-standing members Bob and Maxine Greenberg. The Greenbergs are moving to Maryland and will be greatly missed by our community. At the service, long-time friends Teri Parrot and Marion Berman shared a few words. With their permission, their comments are provided here.

Marion Berman:

I am proud and honored to speak to this congregation on behalf of Bob and Maxine Greenberg. We came to South Windsor over 41 years ago at the same time and joined a small Temple that had just hired their first full time Rabbi, Neal Komnisky. Our families grew up together and we shared bat and bar mitzvahs and wedding and grandchildren. In fact, their daughter Lauren is proudly sitting in this congregation, herself an established attorney and mother of two.

Maxine grew up in Memphis where she was a member of a very large Germanic Reform congregation where a yarmulke was rarely seen. We served on the religious practices committee together and soon realized she and Bob were quite at home in our warm to tradition Reform Temple. Maxine saw how rewarding it was for Bob and followed him as president. Through the years, TBH has played a prominent role in their lives together.

The texts we study may be in some cases thousands of years old, but the messages are still relevant. Rabbi Hillel Silverman, speaking of Leadership, said that service to others is the rent we pay for the space we occupy.

Exodus 19:14 "And Moses went down from the mount unto the people." This shows that Moses did not turn to his own affairs, did not even go down to his house, but went directly "from mount unto the people."

According to Rabbi Abbahu, "God said: I am called holy and (when you take on authority), you, too, will be called holy. Leading a Temple is holy work; we work for the Jewish people – creating places and spaces for prayer, tikkun olam and study.

Rabbi Gamliel said: All who labor for the community should labor with them for Heaven's sake, for them the merit of the community's forbearers will sustain them and their beneficence will endure forever. And as for you (who labor thus), I regard you as deserving great reward as though you had accomplished it all (on your own).

We are all part of a chain. Those who came before us created the synagogue and it is our job to pass it on to those who come after us.

L'dor v'dor, from generation to generation, our eternal chain of tradition at Temple Beth Hillel continues through your efforts. Shabbat Shalom – Todah Rabba.

Terry Parrot:

In the 1960's, I lived and worked in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I decided to go to a Friday night service at a reform temple near my apartment. I walked in and was greeted by a woman with a big smile. She said "hello" and that her name was Maxine Greenberg. She asked me where I was from and when I said Connecticut, she said her husband was from Meriden, Connecticut. She made me feel very welcome and introduced me to other members.

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## Chanukah Shabbat Dinner

Join us for a Chanukah Shabbat dinner Friday December 30, at 6:15 pm, after dinner we will proceed to the Sanctuary where we can light our *Chanukiot* and welcome in Shabbat. All are encouraged to come and celebrate together.

The dinner will be Semi-Potluck with the *balabustas* providing... chopped liver, brisket, chicken, and latkes!! We are asking our Temple family to each provide one dish to feed 10 people. Some suggestions are; vegetarian options, salads, desserts, rolls, fruit, or other side dishes.

The cost is \$5 per adult and \$2.50 per child under age 10. Reservations can be made by calling the Temple office at 860-282-8466, Barb Klein at 860-871-0532 or Marion Berman at 860-644-9796.

## Blood Drive

The Red Cross will be holding a blood drive at TBH on Monday November 28 from 1:15 pm-6:15 pm. To make appointments, call 1-800-733-2767 or [visitredcrossblood.org](http://visitredcrossblood.org).

Marion Berman is looking for volunteers to help out in 1 hour shifts and a few baked goods as well. If you would like to help, you can contact the office at [Admin@tbhsw.org](mailto:Admin@tbhsw.org) or 860-282-8466 or Marion Berman at 860-644-9796.



## TBH BOOK CLUB

The next Book Club will meet Tuesday, November 15, 7:00. at Nan Lamm's. house. The book is ....Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown.

An irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant.

We hope you can join us!  
Barb Klein



Please welcome new members Sharon & Mike Serow, Alice Capazzi, Mel Stein, and Jamie & Jeremy Serow.

Sharon & Michael are former members of TBH. They live in South Windsor and are the parents of Nicole Bolduc and Jeremy Serow. Welcome Back Serow Family.

Alice lives in Vernon and is the mother of Chris Brouillard. Welcome Alice.

Mel lives in South Windsor, he and his late wife Joan were co founders of Temple Beth Hillel. Mel recently moved back to South Windsor from Westport. Welcome Back Mel.

Jamie & Jeremy live in Manchester with their 2 boys, Graham and Harrison. They are the son and daughter in-law of Sharon and Michael Serow, and brother and sister in-law to Nicole Bolduc. Welcome Serow family..

If you see our new members around Temple be sure to say hello.

## Upcoming Meetings

11/1; *Membership Meeting*

11/10; *Board Meeting, 7 pm*

11/20; *Men's Club 9:30 am*

11/15; *Religious School, 7 pm*

11/17 *Adult Ed, 7 pm*

*For additional meetings and locations, please go to [www.tbhsw.org](http://www.tbhsw.org).*




## Greenbergs Cont.

Fast forward fifteen years. I was now married, living in Vernon, with an eight-year old daughter. We were neighbors of Al and Barbara Klein and their son and my daughter were only two weeks apart in age. They were good friends. My daughter came home one day from school and announced that she wanted to go to Hebrew School just like Marc Klein. My husband and I discussed it and decided to visit a few synagogues in the area with our daughter to see where we might fit in.

Our first visit to Temple Beth Hillel was at the original building on Foster Street Extension. We walked in and were immediately met by a woman who introduced herself as Maxine Greenberg. She welcomed us, introduced us to other members and introduced my daughter to other children at the service in her age group.

On the way home, my daughter said, "can we go back next Friday?" It was several months later after learning that Bob had gone to school in Ann Arbor and that he was from Meriden, CT that I realized that Maxine was the same Maxine who welcomed me in Ann Arbor. In the 30-something years that I have known Maxine, she has always been a very important part of our congregation and has always made members feel like they belong.

Maxine, I thank you for making me see that this was the Temple where I belong.




*"I have peace of mind and mom's happy..."*

**Nancy** loves having mom close by and knows she is being looked after. Hoffman SummerWood Community is CT's premier senior living community. Come and find out how you too can enjoy a care-free lifestyle! Call Valerie at 860-523-3808.

**Hoffman SummerWood Community**

160 Simsbury Road, West Hartford [www.hoffmansummerwood.org](http://www.hoffmansummerwood.org)  
A member of the Hebrew Health Care family.




## Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Temple Beth Hillel will be hosting the annual Thanksgiving Interfaith Service on Monday November 21 at 7:00 pm. All local congregations have been invited. The interfaith service will consist of spiritual leaders from a wide variety of congregations leading different portions of the Thanksgiving Service.

Thanksgiving is the beginning of the holiday season with Chanukah, and Christmas just weeks away.

Hope you can join us.



# S U K K O T



## Help Wanted



We are looking for a couple of families to sponsor the Oneg on Friday November 25. The members scheduled have both moved. If you can help, contact Lori at [Admin@tbhsw.org](mailto:Admin@tbhsw.org) or 860-282-8466



## TEMPLE OUTREACH

Those of us who were able to attend the first day of Rosh Hashana service were treated to a really good talk by our President, Mark Abrahamson, explaining his thoughts on the role that Temple Beth Hillel plays in helping to minimize the amount of anti-semitism in our local community despite its rise in many other locations around the world.

Mark started by welcoming everyone and wishing us a happy, healthy new year. Then, he quickly turned to talking about acts of harm that have been directed at Jewish individuals and at the larger community. We've seen reports of desecration of Jewish cemeteries as well as increased reports of anti-Semitism on college campuses. And while some acts are out in the open, many more, like subtle non-hiring, non-promoting practices still exist.

Then Mark challenged us with the question: Why haven't we seen more in our local community. We're a very small group in South Windsor and neighboring towns. Many people in the area don't encounter Jews in their day-to-day living. Whenever you have a small group, there's bound to be suspicion, distrust and hostilities.

One important reason: the outreach that emanates from our Temple's Rabbi as well as our social action commitment. We are celebrating our 25th year of collaborating with Foodshare to tackle the problem of Food Insecurity. They consider us a very important partner to the cause. We have hosted the most successful Red Cross Blood Drives in the region. After very public attacks on Police, we reached out to the local police and officers from Vernon attended a Friday night service and received a blessing.

Beyond those examples of social action, we have had programs with various churches throughout the area. Rabbi Glickman serves as the respected chaplain for the South Windsor Fire Department. We have supported several Hartford area shelters and have even provided food for dogs.

Temple Beth Hillel's Social Outreach from South Windsor, to Vernon and Tolland, to Manchester and beyond makes the situation better for all Jewish people in all communities. Our actions are what people see and they're especially important for people who see few Jewish people in their daily lives.

To those who are not members, Temple Beth Hillel is here for you. We are a diverse and welcoming community in which you can fulfill your spirituality needs. People join for a host of reasons including: observation of Shabbat, study of Torah, and to have a feeling of connection to our history.

In addition, it is important to support Temple Beth Hillel because ALL of our lives are better because Temple Beth Hillel is here. Help us reach out to even more by moving from High Holiday Guest to Active Member. If you call the Temple office, our membership committee will quickly contact you.

Mark ended his speech with a simple L'Shana Tova.

Jason Wasserman  
jwasserman@tbhsw.org or  
evp@tbhsw.org  
860.324.6757 (personal cell)

## PERSONAL STATEMENT: WHAT DOES IT MEANS TO BE JEWISH?

What does it mean to be Jewish is the question many of us new converts are forced to confront. Before I can answer that question fully, it would help to tell you a little about myself. I was raised in large part by my maternal grandmother in a rather devout Italian Catholic home, but ever since I was a young kid, I was drawn to Jewish people, culture and stories. When I was about 8 years old, there was a show on television called, *The Greatest Heroes of The Bible*. One of the episodes featured Joshua and the Battle of Jericho. While my friends were pretending to be Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, I pretended to be Joshua. I fashioned a makeshift sword out of cardboard and tin foil and succeeded in ridding my grandmother's living room of any and all Philistines. After tearing a hole in one of her vinyl window blinds, my grandmother informed me that unless I wanted to be shipped, one way, to Jericho, I better stop with the nonsense. A few years later, I told this very same woman that I wanted to be Jewish. She asked me why, and I proceeded to tell her it was because all of my favorite people were Jewish: Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Paul Simon, Leonard Nimoy, etc. Not to mention, there was Michele Laitis; the beautiful girl who sat next to me in homeroom. To this day, I wonder where Michelle and I would be if only I went to Hebrew school instead of Catechism. My grandmother took this opportunity to inform me that, perhaps, Mr. Spock and Michele Laitis were not the best reasons to commit to a new faith, and, begrudgingly, I agreed, but then there was the whole Jesus thing. I mean, Jesus seemed like a pretty great guy, but the son of God, I had my doubts. With that, the topic was banned from any further discussion.

As fate would have it, however, I ended up eventually marrying a Jewish woman, and we had my daughter, Cooper. My wife, at the time, was a secular Jew. We didn't go to synagogue or even celebrate the holidays. My wife had grown up in an orthodox Jewish home and, like the Catholicism of my past, the dogmatic natures of our up bring had placed a rather large wedge between ourselves and God. When Cooper was born, however, we sought to bridge that gap by raising her Jewish, albeit in a more open and inclusive way. We enrolled her in Hebrew School, started going to services on the holidays and even practiced the occasional Shabbat.

In an effort to understand more about this faith we were instilling in my daughter, I enrolled in an Introduction to Judaism class where I first met Rabbi Glickman. I started reading books, lighting candles, and learning prayers, but it wasn't until reading Abraham Joshua Heschel's, *The Sabbath* that my calling toward Judaism took full flight. Heschel describes finding God not in space, but in time. Simply put, God was in the moment. The moments not just of lighting candles and saying blessings, but in those times found playing with your child or having a great conversation over dinner with a friend. With this refined concept, the wedge between God and me had been lifted, and I knew I wanted to be Jewish, this time for the right reasons. I contacted Rabbi Glickman, and the process began.

However, around the time of this spiritual epiphany, my life had simultaneously taken a tumultuous turn downward leaving me battling a plethora of demons both personal and professional. My marriage to Cooper's mother had ended several years prior, but I had just graduated law school. I had a beautiful home in Northampton, MA. A new job working remotely for a financial firm out of New York City. I was surrounded by so many loving family and friends. People to this day, who have taught me the very definition of unconditional love and support. The world was my oyster. However, while, I was learning this new job in a field I knew relatively nothing about, I was simultaneously studying for the Bar Exam. For those of you who have taken the exam, you understand it is not a casual endeavor. Suffice it to say, in an effort to do everything, I achieved nothing. I lost the job and failed the Bar. The economy at the time was in the tank. The market was saturated with recent law graduates, and for the first time in my life, I found it exceedingly difficult to get a job. My student loans came due. I could not pay them, and just like that, all that I had disappeared. My home, my car, my bank account, my credit, and most importantly, my self-esteem. I was forced to sell all that I owned, and so as not to be homeless, moved into my sister's basement; not a finished basement, but a dark, moldy basement where I slept on a broken futon I had gotten from the trash. I had taken a small job writing content for websites along with a part time job at a bookstore, but still I was a long way from making ends meet. To make matters worse, my beautiful family had co-signed my massive student loans and when I was unable to pay them, guess who was on the hook? They invested in me, and it turned out, I was a pretty bad bet. To their credit, they never stopped loving me, but in my shame and guilt, I distanced myself from them, as I did many of my friends. Before long, I was not only broke, but alone. People think when you are unemployed or underemployed, like me, that it is the financial burden that gets you, and it does, of course, but really it is the lack of value that is what slowly deteriorates you from the inside. When you feel you have nothing of value to contribute, despair inevitably follows.

## Personal statement Cont...

This feeling culminated not long ago. Feeling like nothing but a taker for years, a burden to all I love most dearly, I picked my daughter up from school one day, dropped her off with her mother and drove to the Hartford Public Library where I proceeded to park. On the seat next to me were a full bottle of painkillers recently prescribed for a bad shoulder, and three letters of apology: one to my daughter, one to my best friends who let me live with them rent free for quite some time, and one to my beloved sister, who cosigned the majority of my loans and still managed to not despise me. Needless to say, I was a very long way from being Joshua. I do not know if I sat in that car for minutes or hours, but at some point, my phone went off. My little girl, prone to stealing her mother's phone to send me random text messages, had sent me a text. Her message did not say anything; it simply contained a picture of a heart. Like a lightning bolt striking from the sky, I realized in that moment how unbelievably selfish I was. Sitting there in that car thinking only of my pain, my struggle, my loss... me, me, me.

Needless to say, I left that parking lot. I contacted Rabbi Glickman shortly after in one of the rawest, most vulnerable emails I have ever sent anyone. Mind you, I was not a member of this congregation yet. I was not even Jewish. I was a practical stranger who had gotten in touch with him some time prior seeking to convert, but got lost along the way. The Rabbi responded like he would, I assume, with any of you. He started meeting me on a regular basis, but more importantly, he put me right to work. With a background in the arts, he had me make a short film for our website and start writing publicity content in local papers for upcoming events and happenings. He put me in contact with Jennifer Marvin who runs our Social Action Committee, and with Steve Brouillard and Glen Zinn who head up our communication efforts, and before long, I stopped feeling like I was so worthless, with little to give. I do not know if that was the Rabbi's intention, but that was the result, nonetheless. He encouraged me to be a regular at services and events. I did not know anyone when I first started coming here. The closest was Joyce Ben-Kiki, a teacher at my daughter's school. Cooper was not one of her student's, but she recognized me, and every time I saw her, she would greet me with a hug, like she had known me for years. I was here for the Shabbat Under the Stars when Rabbi Glickman invited his new Hindu neighbors to join us. I realized then, this was the place for me, and I started taking the Rabbi's advice by being present more often. A process that not only brought me closer to this community and my faith, but to myself as well.

One afternoon, after a recent Lunch Bunch, Marion Berman sent me home with a bag full of homemade soup and sandwiches which fed me for a week. I commented to Sally Goodman one time how much I loved her Kugel, and she invited Cooper and me over to her home to learn how to make it for ourselves. One Friday evening, I accidentally sat in Lois Wasserman's seat. She did what anyone who has had the same seat for years would do, she kicked me out... but, she proceeded to save for me the seat next to her ever since. A seat where I get to witness her husband, Ken, bestow a kiss on her after each and every service. Several weeks ago, to commemorate her ninety-eighth birthday, Rabbi Glickman called up Selma Gordon, a woman I have not had the privilege to meet yet in person. He asked Selma, "What does it mean to be Jewish?" She just kind of chuckled and did not say anything. Around the time, all of us were wondering if she had even heard the question, she responds, "What does it mean to be Jewish? It means everything." I believe Selma hit the nail on the head.

To me, Judaism is so much more than prayers in a prayer book. More than scrolls in any ark or land in the hills of Judea. Judaism is found in the young Hindu family dancing under the stars to the Hebrew songs of their neighbors. It is found in the school teacher who offers a hug instead of a handshake, and in the rabbi who guides a stranger back to himself, without judgement. It is in the bag of food sent home to an empty fridge which not only fills the belly, but does so with the warmth and taste of home. It is in the husband, who after decades of marriage, still seeks the kiss of his wife after an evening of prayer, and in the unconditional love of one's family, who always seems to be there, regardless. It is in the ninety-eight year old woman, alive at a time when the worst imaginable fates were bestowed upon her people, and yet she still has the fortitude to profess her faith with abandon. And, it is found in a daughter's heart offered so generously to her dad. When asked what Judaism means to me, I could quote the Torah, or the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel who led me to where I stand right now, but instead I choose to quote Selma Gordon. It means... everything.

-Levi Govoni, October 7, 2016



## Yoga with Sisters

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Please contact Chris Brouillard at 860-604-1919 or [cebrouillard@gmail.com](mailto:cebrouillard@gmail.com) with questions.



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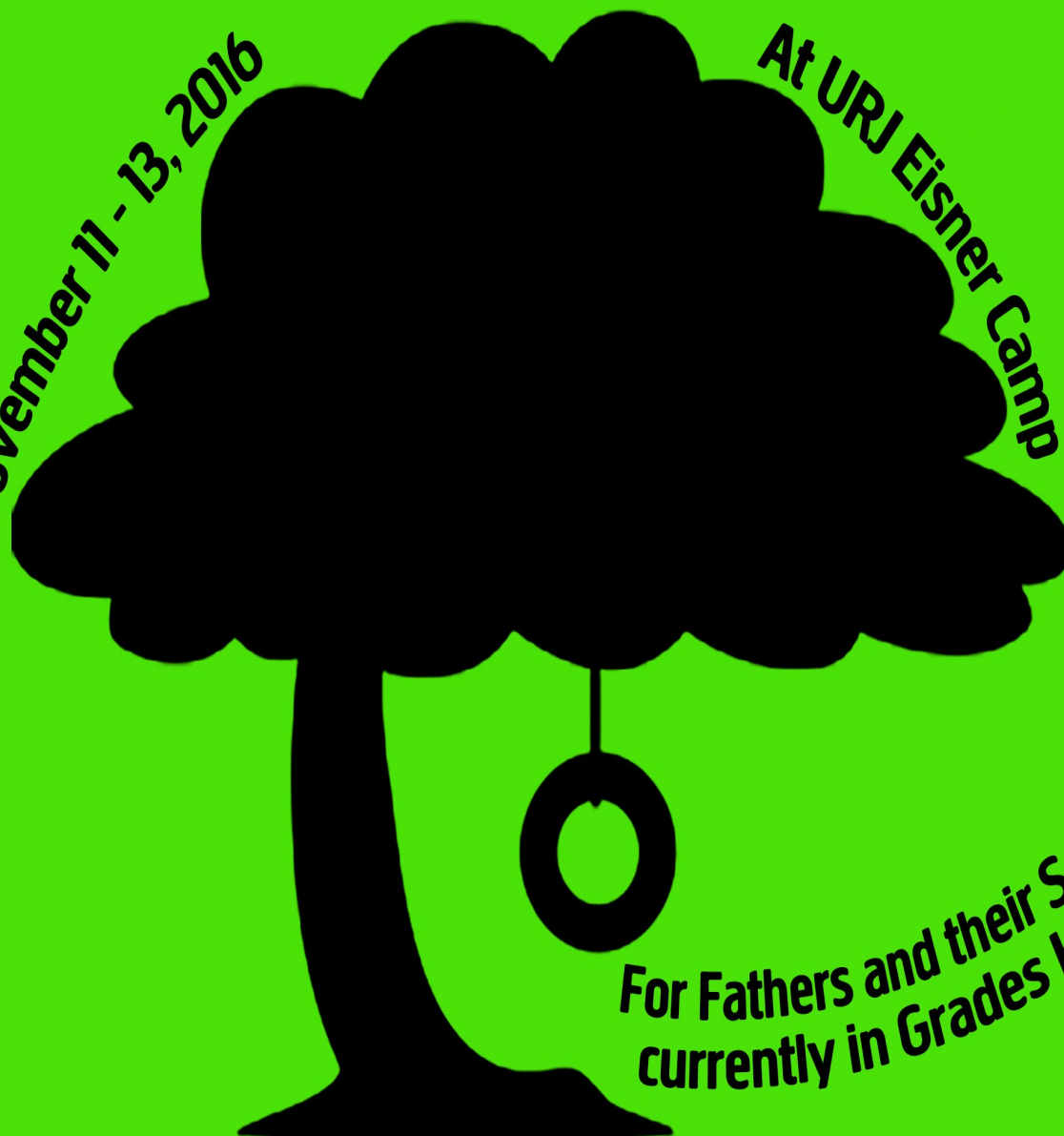
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