



Vine

FROM RABBI ZEMEL

USED SHABBAT CANDLESTICKS, A LIVING SYMBOL

DEAR FRIENDS,

Louise and I were talking about the old brass candlesticks that we light each week on Shabbat. We have lit them every Friday for almost our entire married lives. They belonged to Louise's grandparents and were passed down to Louise, the grandchild who married a rabbi. Someday, they will go to one of our children.



Who knows how many of Louise's relatives lit them, as we do today? Who knows how many generations they span?

Their special beauty is found in their multiple layers of symbolism. Not only do they represent Shabbat and all it entails, they seem to capture the enduring quality of Jewish life and of Ahad Haam's insightful statement, "More than Israel has kept Shabbat, has Shabbat kept Israel."

I find myself wondering about the people who chose to bring them to America from Europe. These candlesticks are family, generations, Shabbat, holidays, memories, the past, present and future—all rolled into one.

Whenever a student becomes a bar or bat mitzvah, Rabbi Lederman or I meet privately with the family just before services begin. We present each bar and bat mitzvah with a set of simple, contemporary, Israeli Shabbat candlesticks, a gift from the congregation. I frequently tell the students that the candlesticks only become beautiful after they have had wax dripped on them. In other words, once they have been used to welcome Shabbat or a holiday. It is at that point that they become a living symbol that can connect past to future.

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'Dangerous Ideas' at Shavuot: Build Community

BY SHELLEY GROSSMAN

LATE THIS SPRING Rabbi Lederman gave Rabbi Zemel a print with this quote from Oscar Wilde: "An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all." Rabbi Zemel framed the print, hung it in his office and started thinking dangerously—actually, continued his usual pattern of creative thinking which Wilde would call "dangerous."

What makes an idea dangerous, the rabbi reasoned, is its ability to push us out of our comfort zone. It changes us and by doing so can actually save us, he said.

All of this took place in the weeks before Shavuot—the holiday that celebrates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai—and his mind made a crucial connection. It occurred to him that what Shavuot actually commemorates is, "the most dangerous idea in Jewish history—maybe in human history. There is only one God who is served through dedication and adherence to a moral code." In the ancient Middle East, "the idea was radical, far-fetched, provocative," he wrote in the *Vine* (May/June, page 3).

That realization led the rabbi to another dangerous idea: Modern Judaism desperately needs new dangerous ideas. What pass for ideas today are merely techniques, he says. So he decided to dedicate the erev Shavuot service on June 3 to sparking fresh ideas. He invited Micah members Nicky Goren, Judy Hurvitz and Robert Weinstein to share with the congregation a dangerous idea of their own.

The three ideas were quite different in their specifics but all of them aimed to build community, an endeavor high

on the temple's list of values. Hurvitz looked inward at the Micah community and suggested an approach to bring the generations together in our long-standing love affair with food. Weinstein saw Micah in relation to its urban setting and urged members to join together in a project to enhance the broader DC community. Goren took the broadest view, analyzing the seemingly intractable income, education and life-prospects gaps between Washington neighborhoods. She described her dangerous vision of an overhauled nonprofit sector—which she gave the more positive label, "social-profit organizations"—with the capability of closing those gaps.

That Hurvitz, oneg coordinator and initiator of the Save the Oneg campaign, sought her dangerous solution in Micah's passion for food also turns out to be seasonally appropriate. In *Exodus*, after God reveals the ten commandments to the people, Moses, Aaron and some of the elders go back up Mt. Sinai where they, "beheld God and they ate and drank" (verse 24:11).

"You can't separate food from religious activities," Hurvitz said. "We all love food and all do a lot of food preparation whether for onegs or Machon Micah All Community pot luck meals." She suggested that, "we create ways to meet up and work together. For example, we can form groups to host onegs. Some of us don't drive, some can't schlep, some can't come early because of work hours or traffic, some can't stay late because of kids. With a group, everyone's situation

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"Every person shall sit under
his grapevine or fig tree with
no one to make him afraid."
MICAH, CHAPTER 4, VERSE 4

Vine

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ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

A FRUITFUL YEAR FOR MICAH RETOLD IN STORIES AT ANNUAL MEETING

BY DORIAN FRIEDMAN

It was an extraordinarily fruitful year in the life of Temple Micah, the congregation's leaders emphasized at the 2014 Annual Meeting on June 1. But they agreed that much work remains to be done.

Over a generous buffet breakfast, Rabbi Lederman employed several recent "stories of Micah" to explain what is unique and special about our traditions, our worship and our meaningful participation in Jewish life. "These stories tell the ways we are succeeding as a community," she said. In other stories, however, she also showed connections that have yet to be made.

Rabbi Zemel also focused on the power of stories to define ourselves as Jews and, more broadly, as participants in "the human project"—a subject he explored in a recent column for the *Vine* (May/June 2014). Despite our considerable progress, he said, the Jewish community must figure out how to tell our story in a more compelling way. "We haven't yet learned how to make Judaism a 'positive addiction', to create the desire to keep coming back for more."

Board president Jodi Enda listed signature achievements during Micah's 51st year. Chief among them: Completing our "Campaign for Micah's Future" fund-raising campaign, which raised enough money to pay off the building's mortgage at the first opportunity in 2016. Doing so will free up an estimated \$100,000 yearly—savings that can be redirected to enhanced programming and other ways to enrich the community.

Enda discussed some of the board's priorities for the year ahead. A Member Engagement task force will work to enlist a wider array of members in the life of the temple, with a particular focus on families of school-age children; and a Member Recognition task force has explored and will recommend innovative ways to acknowledge the considerable contributions of time, energy,

ideas (and money) of so many congregants. The board also will be focusing on ways to improve youth engagement and the temple's involvement in the wider community. The temple's many other exciting initiatives in the year past and the year to come are detailed in Enda's May letter to the congregation, available on the Micah website or upon request from the temple office.

In his final treasurer's report, David Adler quantified the progress made as well as challenges ahead. See the full report on the Micah website under "2014 Annual Meeting," or get a print copy from the office.

The meeting closed with board elections. Two members elected to three-year terms are: **Patty Brink**, a member since 2002, a leader of the *Forging Micah Connections* group, an enthusiastic volunteer on numerous temple projects and, in daily life, a longtime attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice's Antitrust Division; and **Jeff Davis**, an active member since 2003 who among other things, assisted with parking zoning issues affecting the temple. He leads a global team of attorneys at the NASDAQ Stock Market.

Current board members **Larry Bachorik**, **Lynn Bonde** and **Joel Korn** were reelected to three-year terms. The congregation thanked all of them, and offered special thanks to outgoing board members **David Adler** and **Kate Kiggins** for their dedicated service and commitment.

Meanwhile, Korn replaces Adler as treasurer. The rest of the officers and board members remain the same. They are: **Jodi Enda**, president; **Ira Hillman**, vice president; **Marc Levy**, secretary; **Sheri Blotner**, **David Diskin**, **Helene Granof**, **Victoria Greenfield**, **Alison Harwood**, **Ed Lazere** and **Mary Beth Schiffman**.

The President's Column will return as usual next issue.

STAFF PROFILE

Daniel Reiser Makes Micah Home through July

BY DORIAN FRIEDMAN

DANIEL REISER, the temple's new rabbinical intern, has arrived for his partial summer at Micah. Reiser, a Tisch Rabbinical Fellow, is a rising fourth-year student at Hebrew Union College in New York City. During the school year, he's also a rabbinical intern at Temple Shaaray Tefila in Manhattan, where he has been working primarily on programming for families and teenagers.

"I feel lucky and privileged to be joining Micah," Reiser said. "My fellow rabbinical students have had nothing but rave reviews about the congregation, its rabbis, and its commitment to community and spirituality." He follows in a distinguished line of Tisch students, including Micah's new Director of Congregational Learning Rabbi Josh Beraha, to make Micah home during a summer.

The Tisch program offers promising students intensive seminars in leadership skill-building, a focused rabbinical residency, and mentorship by prominent rabbis around the country. Its goal: to cultivate and develop "transformational

Jewish leadership" for the Reform movement.

Reiser (pronounced REE-sir) hails from Tallahassee, Fla., which he calls a "surprising cultural oasis" with a small but vibrant Jewish community. As a Jew, he said, he felt unique among his classmates, and Judaism "became a really big part of my identity from a very young age." That bond was strengthened at URJ's Camp Coleman where he spent each summer from age 8 into his mid-20s first as a camper and then a counselor. During those years, "I really grew into myself and discovered more about who I was, and the fact that it happened in a Jewish setting had a huge impact on my identity," he said. His deep commitment was also molded during college at the University of Florida and a yearlong Jewish studies program in Prague.

In a fitting Micah connection, Reiser and his wife Leah have enjoyed getting to know Beraha and his wife Nani. Until recently, they lived in the same neighborhood in Brooklyn and shared an occasional dinner together. Leah, a



yoga instructor, will begin postgraduate social work studies at Hunter College this fall. In his spare time, Reiser loves riding bikes, travel, playing bocce, drinking coffee, listening to NPR, discovering new music, Torah, and playing with dogs.

At Micah through July, Reiser will assist with general programming and services. Rabbi Zemel has also asked him to help with an exciting new project to create a new cycle of Haftarah readings to replace the traditional Shabbat readings. "It is my strong

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE ►

Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1 ►

Unused Shabbat candlesticks, conversely, are more akin to memorials or museum pieces. The same ritual object, but two very different symbolic meanings.

Those of you who were at the annual meeting in June heard me speak about something that I like to call "meaningful addiction," an unbreakable habit that contributes to a spiritually enriched and purposeful life. Lighting Shabbat candles and adhering to other rituals are meaningful addictions, ways to connect past to future, to give direction and meaning to life.

I want Jewish life to become a meaningful addiction.

I tend to think that, as humans, we somehow know when something is meaningful. It has an effect on us: we laugh, we cry, we are moved to take some action or to learn more. Meaning hits us someplace.

It makes a connection within us.

Meaning is the repetition of a Shabbat ritual each week that connects us to the Jewish past. It is giving oneself over to an inherited gift. Meaning is found in giving away, in selflessness, in connecting one's own individual story to a larger tapestry.

I am interested in making Jewish meaning addictive so that we have to have it, so that it is integral to who we are, so that we feel diminished without it. How do we do that?

There are routines in life that are so ingrained in us that we feel metaphorically naked without them. Can a ballgame begin without the singing of the national anthem? Can we drop our children off at the school bus without saying, "Have a good day" or "stay safe"? This is the kind of meaningful addiction that I am look-

ing for. A meaningful addiction makes the world feel right.

Meanwhile, summer is here. Summer is that great American icon. It is picnics, beach getaways, mountain hideaways, family vacations, car trips and more. It is fireworks, grilling, baseball, a cold bottle of beer and a leisurely stroll at dusk.

My summer is a great pile of books and the time to read them, knowing that even as I attack the pile, it will continue to grow. This summer my pile includes works by Peter Watson, Jonathan Lear, Adam Phillips—and my annual secret agent thriller.

Have a great summer. Here's hoping you find that unbeatable combination of some vacation time away, a lazy couple of days and a really great book that grabs you.

Shalom,
Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

COMING ATTRACTIONS

For a detailed schedule of all upcoming events, check out www.templemicah.org.

THURSDAY, JULY 3 • 5:15 PM

Temple Micah Honors Independence Day

A moving Micah tribute at Arlington National Cemetery. Meet at the entrance to the Metro stop at 5:15 pm and walk to a pre-selected spot in the cemetery for a short service to honor our country and those who have given their lives in defense of freedom.

SATURDAY, JULY 12 • 10 AM

Young Family Outdoor Shabbat at Butler's Orchard

A musical outdoor Shabbat service with Rabbis Lederman and Beraha (and his guitar) at Butler's Orchard in Germantown, MD. Berry picking, wagon rides, potluck meal. Cost: \$10 per person, children aged three and under free. Please register online or with the temple office as soon as possible.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16 • 7 PM

Informational Meeting for New Machon Micah Families

Parents planning to enroll their children in Machon Micah come and get the scoop on this innovative and dynamic education program from Rabbi Josh Beraha, director of congregational learning.

MONDAYS in JULY and AUGUST • 12 noon

Vigil for Alan Gross

Continuing weekly through the summer, join other congregations and give voice to your support for Gross's release from imprisonment in Cuba. Meet in front of the Cuban Interests Section, 2639 16th Street, NW.

MONDAY, AUGUST 4 • 7:30 PM

Erev Tisha B'Av

Candle-lit, meditative service commemorating the destruction of the two Temples in Jerusalem and other disasters through the ages. Chanting of Lamentations (*Eicha*) and poetry reading. If you wish, bring candlesticks, candles, cushions or low chairs to sit close to the floor (ancient Jewish mourning tradition).

INTERESTING SPEAKERS!

Temple Micah normally features two monthly lecture series—on Sunday morning and Wednesday noon. Wednesday's Lunch & Learn series continues this summer; Sunday speakers resume in the fall.

LUNCH & LEARN

Wednesdays from noon to 2 pm

A monthly program sponsored by the Aging Together Team of Temple Micah. Reserve online at www.templemicah.org. Please contact Nancy Raskin, lunchandlearn@templemicah.org, or call the temple office, 202-342-9175, for details.

July 9—Miriam Grogan, on “What’s a Dog Doing at Temple?”

Micah members Miriam and Sean Grogan have raised six puppies for Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Miriam will discuss why the dogs come to temple, what's involved with raising future guide dogs, and what's happened to her previous canine “students.” She'll be joined by Anakin, current puppy-in-training, and some of his canine classmates.

Miriam Grogan is principal of Stellar Coaching, an executive coaching firm.

August 13—Julie Galambush, on “Everything You Never Knew About Adam and Eve”

The Adam and Eve story, one of the best-known texts in the Torah, seems straight forward. But over the centuries the text has acquired layers of interpretation. Eve tempting Adam? It's not actually in the text. The cute little outfits they make out of leaves? They make something out of leaves, but it's not outfits. Find out how different and more interesting the real story is.

Julie Galambush is Professor of Religious Studies at The College of William and Mary.

Daniel Reiser FROM PREVIOUS PAGE ►

feeling that the current Haftarat, on the whole, do not capture the prophetic message in a way that connects to us and our Judaism,” Rabbi Zemel said. “I would like to see if, with Daniel, we can conceptualize a new structure for a Haftarah cycle and then fill it in with powerful, inspirational readings from the prophetic books.”

He added: “I am greatly looking forward to our summer with Daniel. Micah's participation in the Tisch Fellows summer internship program has been a highly rewarding one for me personally, and a real source of stimulation to the congregation. We are very lucky to be a site congregation for the Tisch Fellows and I think that they feel exactly the same way.” ●

Summertime Shabbat Services

It's summer and the bimah is full of different faces.

A gratifyingly large number of Micah members know the ropes of leading Shabbat services, the Hebrew to chant (or read) Torah and Haftarah and/or the substance of the week's Torah portion to deliver a d'var Torah. And, better yet, they are eager to take the time to prepare and perform those mitzvot. And, still better, during the summer months the rabbis graciously yield the bimah to these enthusiastic congre-

gants. Before they take over, however, Daniel Reiser, Micah's summer rabbinical intern, will lead Shabbat morning services on July 5 and July 12.

Here is the schedule of this summer's volunteer-led Kabbalat Shabbat services (Friday evenings at 6:30 pm, preceded by an oneg at 6 pm) and Shabbat morning services (Saturdays at 10:15 am, with a kiddush/oneg following the service). Come pray with your friends at these special services.

Saturday, July 19

Leader: Catherine Lynch
Torah: Ed Grossman
Haftarah: Barrett Newman
D'var Torah: Catherine Lynch

Saturday, July 26

Leader: Emily Aronson
Torah: Laura Tomez
Haftarah: Miriam Grogan
D'var Torah: Emily Aronson

Friday, August 1

Leader: Liz Poliner

Saturday, August 2

Leaders: Ed and Shelley Grossman
Torah: Shelley Grossman
Haftarah: Alan Carpien
D'var Torah: Shelley Grossman

Friday, August 8

Leader: Josh Seidman

Saturday, August 9

Leaders: Matt Cutler and Jessica Katz
Torah: David and Livia Bardin
Haftarah: Sharon Salus
D'var Torah: Matt Cutler and Jessica Katz

Saturday, August 16

Leader: Peggy Banks
Torah: Virginia Spatz
Haftarah: Sonia White
D'var Torah: Virginia Spatz

Saturday, August 23

Leader: Virginia Spatz
Torah: Donna Lloyd-Kolkin
Haftarah: Catherine Lynch
D'var Torah: Ivan Sindell

Saturday, August 30

Leader: Noel Salinger
Torah: Genie Grohman
Haftarah: Miriam Grogan
D'var Torah: Noel Salinger

Rabbi Zemel, a past member of Behrman House Editorial Advisory Committee, currently is involved in a Jewish education project involving the publisher. During a recent meeting with president David Behrman, Zemel received hands-on education... in operating the fork lift. Behrman House is the leading publisher of books and digital learning materials for synagogues and religious schools throughout North America.



TZEDAKAH

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Schiffman and David Tochen
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David Goldberg, by Nancy Raskin
Lilyan and Herbert Barchoff, by
Kate Kiggins and Jared Blum

Lucille M. Katz, by Richard
and Martha Katz
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Fitz and Kathy Spiegel, Skip
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Mollie M. Ulmer-Pace,
by Stephani Pace

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Myron Goren, by Nancy Lang

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IN HONOR OF
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IN HONOR OF
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Her father Sidney and her brother
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Betsy Broder, Shira Zemel and Adam
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IN MEMORY OF
Suzanne Blotner, by David and
Barbara Diskin, by Susie Blumenthal
Minette Knopman, Irving
Fine, by Susie Blumenthal

Dangerous Ideas FROM PAGE 1 ►

can be accommodated and we can get the job done together.

Weinstein also suggested that Micah members engage in a common project, “where we each contribute, where we bind ourselves together as we build our community, not just for its own sake but where we engage in the work of making a better world,” he said. Weinstein is an architect—he and wife Judith Capen designed the temple—whose practice focuses on maintaining, preserving and restoring DC’s monumental federal buildings. He observed that for many years, Micah members pitched in and did many of the routine jobs required to run the temple, a process that created community. “Now we are 500 strong and hire everything out,” he said. “The volunteer community is vanishing.” To reconstitute that family feeling, his dangerous idea calls for “a project that everyone can contribute to that will make a difference” to the larger community. “We need to become less comfortable and self-indulgent, and focus on tikkun olam.”

Goren is well positioned to come up with dangerous ideas to help nonprofit organizations make a bigger impact on the local and regional community. On July 1, she took over as president and CEO of the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, whose mission is

to invest in organizations and leaders working to better the lives of low-income people locally.

At the Shavuot service, Goren cited dramatic statistics to illustrate the dichotomy between areas with the “smartest, most highly educated, wealthiest” people “many of whom are deeply committed” to social justice just “blocks away from deep pockets of poverty.” Yet, decades of effort by well-meaning people and organizations has yielded less progress than we want and need to see, she said.

She proposed two dangerous approaches to create “a new paradigm.” First, get all the parties involved in this work—government, philanthropies, religious institutions, secular nonprofits—to cooperate and coordinate their efforts. Instead of each group doing its own thing, sometimes to cross purposes, they would all join forces to concentrate their considerable resources on solving the problems. This isn’t a utopian dream. Strive Partnership, a collaborative effort, is doing just that in Cincinnati to improve education.

Second, donors and investors in the organizations need to rethink the way they envision how the groups do business. “They expect these organizations to change the world on a shoe-string budget,” Goren said.

Every dollar is expected to go directly into programs instead of being invested in such a way as to multiply its impact. “They need to move from thinking of their gifts as charity to thinking of them as investments that will have a social return for our region,” she said.

So, where do these dangerous ideas lead? “I think the purpose of the program was to stir up our thinking, and I am happy to say that ideas are bubbling about steps we can take toward becoming a model cross-generational community,” Hurvitz said after the session.

Rabbi Zemel agreed that “the first thing we need to do is think—absorb these ideas.” But he is already planning to act. With Rabbi Josh Beraha, Micah’s new Director of Congregational Learning, he wants to “create a new way of thinking about how to do multi-generational education.” He also sees a way for Weinstein’s idea of a Micah-wide project to fit into Goren’s concept of a broad-based collaborative effort to “create a cradle-to-career pathway” for low-income local residents.

In the meantime, he’s pleased with the sparks ignited. After the service, when asked how he thought the evening went, he exulted, “It was perfect!” ●

CONDOLENCES

The Temple Micah community extends its deepest condolences to:

DAVID BLOTNER on the passing of his mother, Suzanne Blotner

GARY DICKELMAN on the passing of his mother, Florence Dickelman

DEBRA KNOPMAN on the passing of her mother, Minnette Knopman

JOSIE LIPMAN on the passing of her brother, Fred Jaretzki, Ruth Simon’s uncle

DOUG MEYER on the passing of his father, Alvin Meyer

SUSAN MORGENSTEIN on the passing of her husband, Robert Morgenstein

May their memories be for a blessing.

A HEARTY MAZAL TOV TO:

Rabbi Josh Beraha on his ordination by the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion

Mark Lerner and Shawn Chang on their marriage

Susannah Nadler and Zachary Weingarten on their marriage

Joey Sima and Jocelyn Roberts on their engagement

Laura Tomes on her new position as Associate Director of Jewish Experience at Hillel

Margaret and Jeff Grotte on the marriage of their daughter, Miriam, to Ben Jacobs

Vanessa Harper on her engagement to Josh Rosenberg

Susie and Harvey Blumenthal on welcoming a grandson, Asher Hayden Abramowitz

Stephanie Levy and David Feinman on their marriage

Mary Haber on completing her master’s degree in education from Johns Hopkins University

Shira Zemel on her new position as Assistant Program Director at the Religious Action Center

Emily Brown on graduating from SUNY Purchase with a bachelor’s degree in fine arts



New York, New York!

Machon Micah 8th graders—with Rabbi Lederman, Laura Tomes and Caitlin Brazner—traveled to New York City in May for a fun weekend of Jewish learning. Highlights: Visits to Ellis Island, the Tenement Museum, and Congregations B'nai Jeshurun and Romemu for Shabbat services.



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