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BCC FORMALLY WELCOMES RABBI JILLIAN CAMERON, DEDICATES TIME CAPSULE

BY LARRY NATHENSON, EDITOR

ON THE SHABBAT OF JULY 29-30, 2022, BCC formally installed Rabbi Jillian R. Cameron as our new rabbi. Postponed for some two years until it could be held in person consistent with COVID-19 protocols, this joyous ceremony was led by her childhood rabbi and mentor, Rabbi Elyse Frishman, and our own Rabbi Emerita Lisa Edwards. The weekend was also a fitting capstone to the year-long celebration of BCC's 50th anniversary and included a Shabbat morning study session, an open house in the afternoon, and the formal dedication of our time capsule in memory of BCC pioneer Harriet Perl z"l.

The formal installation took place during the Friday evening service on July 29. With some 60 persons in attendance, the sanctuary appeared full for the first time since in-person services resumed earlier this year. An additional 40 plus attended remotely on Zoom and other platforms. Cantor Juval Porat, accompanied by Leeav

Sofer on piano and percussion and Sarah Mori on percussion, set the celebratory mood with his mix of traditional and modern liturgical melodies.

Rabbis Frishman, Edwards, and Cameron delivered inspiring addresses for the occasion, all of which are reprinted in this issue of G'vanim. BCC's Czech Holocaust survivor Torah was unrolled and held up in front of the bimah during the service to emphasize the sanctity of the occasion.

Rabbi Edwards, Cantor Porat, and Executive Vice-President Jessica Donath presented Rabbi Cameron with a gift from the congregation, a reversible blue and green tallit. BCC's Lezbtzn Emerita Tracy Moore embroidered the tallit bag with pictures of BCC's stained glass windows. During the service, the tallit served as a canopy for a special blessing for Rabbi Cameron and her family and friends.

Cover: Rabbi Jillian Cameron. Photo: Kenna Love.

Below: Cantor Porat, Rabbi Cameron and Rabbi Frishman during the installation service. Photo: Kenna Love.





Above: BCC's Holocaust survivor Torah is unrolled during the installation service. Photo: Kenna Love.
Below Right: Rabbi Jillian Cameron looks on during the installation service. Photo: Kenna Love.

BCC also presented Rabbi Frishman with the gift of a mezuzah made from fragments of the stained glass windows that adorn our sanctuary and were built by BCC members more than two decades ago.

A festive oneg featuring breads and crackers home-baked by BCC's treasurer, Jim Potter, and a cake incorporating Nerds, Rabbi Cameron's favorite candy, by Joanie and Leigh's Cakes, rounded out the evening.

On Saturday morning, a smaller group gathered under a canopy in the BCC parking lot for a study session with Rabbi Elyse Frishman. Ordained in 1981, Rabbi Frishman served as rabbi of The Reform Temple of Suffern (NY) for 14 years before joining The Barnert Temple of Franklin Lakes, NJ, as its senior rabbi. The search committee that recommended Rabbi Frishman for that job included Rabbi Cameron's father, Richard. Rabbi Frishman served there for 22 years until her retirement in 2017. She was a role model and mentored Jillian Cameron as she grew up in the congregation and explored the possibility of becoming a rabbi. Most recently, Rabbi Frishman served as editor of the Reform Movement's newest prayer book, *Mishkan T'filah*.

The study session focused on the double Torah portion Matot-Masei as the conclusion of the book of Numbers (Bamidbar in Hebrew, meaning "in the wilderness"). We explored the concept of journey as a unifying concept in this book of Torah, which extends over the 40 years from the aftermath of the revelation at Sinai until the Israelites are ready to enter the Promised Land. Rabbi Frishman



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related the communal journey of the Israelites to our individual life journeys with a number of questions for our consideration. One theme of the session was the difference between an upward spiritual journey toward the divine (represented by the name B'nai Yisrael, the Children of Israel) and a more worldly journey of crossing over from one phase of life to another (represented by the name Ivrim, Hebrews, ones who cross over).

The afternoon festivities began at 4:00 with an open house, including a bounce house in the parking lot for children (or the young at heart), a snow cone machine, and chalk and other materials to exercise our artistic talents. BCC's architects Toni Lewis and Marc Schoeplein, BCC member and project manager Ira Dankberg, and former BCC president Bruce Maxwell led a well-received and attended tour through our building, highlighting its many architectural and "green" features.

At 5:30, we gathered in the courtyard just outside the foyer for the dedication of the time capsule in memory of long-time BCC member Harriet Perl z"l. Harriet joined BCC in the 1970s shortly after its founding and was a pioneer in the degenderized liturgy, one of BCC's proudest legacies. Over the years, she served on the Board of Directors and as editor of G'vanim. When she passed away in 2013, she bequeathed her share in the duplex where she lived to BCC. The proceeds from its sale now form the basis of BCC's new endowment fund that was announced by Rabbi Cameron at the 50th anniversary brunch and celebration on May 22, 2022.

The time capsule was created during the construction of our new building in 2011 but was not filled or dedicated until now as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations. Mark Miller chaired the time capsule committee, which also included Stephen



Sass, Larry Nathenson, Rabbi Emerita Lisa Edwards, and Tracy Moore. The dedication ceremony included addresses by Mark Miller, Rabbis Edwards and Cameron, and Stephen Sass (whose insightful remarks are reprinted elsewhere in this issue). Poster boards with photos of the time capsule contents, lovingly prepared by Mark Miller, were displayed on the benches on either side of the time capsule, with a collection of BCC T-shirts hanging on the adjacent fence.

The items deposited in the time capsule were collected over several months and were meticulously prepared and catalogued by Mark Miller. He copied the documentary materials onto acid-free paper and placed them in a notebook, later to be placed in a vacuum-sealed bag for preservation. These included dra-shot (sermons) by Rabbis Cameron and Edwards, Cantor Porat's sheet music for his original song "House of New Life," various newspaper clippings related to BCC, and the first issue of the BCC newsletter and various later issues chronicling significant events in our history. Two BCC coffee mugs, two BCC pushkes



(coin boxes), three BCC t-shirts, a hat with the BCC logo, a swatch from the quilt made by BCC member Naomi Katz that adorned our previous home at 6000 W. Pico, and several pieces of stained glass left over from the windows in our sanctuary also found their way into the time capsule. Some BCC members also deposited personal messages to their future selves, perhaps to be read when the time capsule is opened.

Immediately after the time capsule dedication Cantor Porat led a brief havdalah service, followed by a light dinner of empanadas, bourekas, and pirogis with salad and pasta. The tributes in honor of Rabbi Cameron from numerous BCC members and friends scrolled on a screen in the library during the dinner.

Many thanks to Cantor Porat and Jessica Donath, co-chairs of the committee that planned this amazing weekend and made it happen. Thanks also to our administrative assistant and communications coordinator, Maggie Boyles, and our facilities manager Tim Goad for all their hard work in ensuring a successful celebration, as well as all the volunteers who served as greeters, servers, schleppers, and numerous other essential roles.

Opposite: Rabbi Cameron's new tallit serves as a canopy for a blessing. Photo: Kenna Love

Above: The bounce house in the BCC parking lot on July 30. Photo: Larry Nathenson.

Left: Time capsule committee chair Mark Miller with the lid to be placed on the time capsule. Photo: Larry Nathenson



OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

BY RABBI JILLIAN CAMERON

*Delivered on Friday, July 29, 2022, on the occasion of
her installation as BCC's rabbi.*

“These were the marches of the Israelites who started out from the land of Egypt, tribe by tribe, in the charge of Moses and Aaron,” begins the second of our parshiyot this week, Masei.

And what follows is a forty-six-verse travel log, dots on a map, sparse with detail, save a major moment or two. 46 legs of a 40-year journey, from bondage to freedom to revelation to the fulfillment of the promise given so many generations ago.

OR from trauma to worry to complaining to rebelling to belonging.

OR from reluctant faith to miraculous awe to impatience to resolve.

I wonder about the journey of each Israelite,
who remembers Miriam at each new well of water?
who can't wait to finally settle down after a lifetime of wandering?
who worries still about the future and what lies on the other side of the Jordan?
who already misses Moses as his time grows shorter?

Our Torah, in her great wisdom, left us space to tell our stories, to weave our unique perspectives into the sacred narrative of our people, to discover our own journeys to community, to God.

The Baal Shem Tov was asked why the Amidah, the central prayer of the daily service, begins with “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob.” Isn't that redundant? Why not just say “God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob”?

The Baal Shem Tov answered: “The God of Jacob was not the God of Isaac, and the God of Isaac was

not the God of Abraham. Each grasped God in his own way, and so must each of us. Only then will God's presence continue to dwell in this world.”

How we intertwine our stories together is an endeavor towards the Holy One, the harmony and dissonance, the joys and the sorrows, the diversity and predictability of our humanity, the dance of *k'hillah k'dosha*, of sacred community.

Two years ago, I came to you, to our beloved community, this house of new life, yearning for a home, for a place to set down roots and watch them grow.

I offer my story, myself to you, to share every challenge, to weather every storm, to dance and sing in triumph and joy, to join our voices for change, for justice, and peace, to be stronger together than apart.

And in these two years, the roots have flourished and so many flowers have already blossomed, nourished by our shared values, by our love for this place, for Judaism and one another, by our history, our memories and those on whose shoulders we stand, by our reaching toward the sacred together.

We are a brave, safe, celebratory, deeply inclusive Jewish home for all. We have each planted roots here and the rainbow



garden we tend is vibrant and strong.

I am here to continue our story, to dream and vision with you about who we will be and how we can fill our next 50 years with holiness, opening new doors, welcoming in new faces, filling in the open spaces, telling new stories with the old.

May this be our journey.

And in the spirit of the journey, I offer this poem by Muriel Rukeyser, a Jewish American poet of the 20th century described by poet Adrienne Rich as “...one of the great integrators, seeing the fragmentary world of modernity not as irretrievably broken, but in need of societal and emotional repair.”

I think she would have fit right in here at BCC.

The Way Out by Muriel Rukeyser

Into that journey where all things speak to
all things
refusing to accept the curse, and taking
for signs the signs of all things, the world
the body
which is part of the soul and speaks to the
world,
all creation being created in one image, creation.
This is not the past walking into the future,
the walk is painful, into the present, the dance
not visible as dance until much later.
These dancers are discoverers of God.

So let's dance!
Shabbat Shalom.

Below: Rabbis Cameron and Frishman share a light moment during the installation service. Photo: Kenna Love.



ACTING ON FAITH

BY RABBI ELYSE FRISHMAN

*Address delivered on Friday evening, July 29, 2022, at
BCC for the installation of Rabbi Jillian R. Cameron.*

Rabbi Cameron:

When you interviewed with BCC, you and they acted on faith. You weren't able to meet one another in person, and even after you drove cross-country and arrived, your life together began as a virtual dance.

Now, two years later, you know each other – *and you don't*. There are new steps to this dance, and even more so, a new dance altogether that is a hybrid of virtual and in person. Together, you are shaping a new reality.

And like your interview and acceptance, it's happening on faith. No one can be certain what this should look like. You are the chosen Rabbi to be spiritual guide in this new era.

We should ask: what *is* a spiritual guide?

For Jews, spirituality is all encompassing. No aspect of our lives is devoid of spiritual content – from prayer to economics to politics. Spirituality is the art of living a holy life, a life grounded in relationships, balanced in priorities, elevated to unity.

Who *are* our greatest spiritual guides?

Moses brought us freedom, revelation and vision. He was a politician, an organizer, a teacher, a prophet. He certainly wasn't perfect as a man. He was glorious as God's messenger.

Miriam brought us hope, loyalty and revolution.

She gathered us when we were overwhelmed, held us together when betrayed, spoke out when truth needed to be heard.

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chasidism, re-framed our priorities and renewed our Judaism. He was excommunicated by the mainstream because his teaching was so revolutionary. But because he was *evolutionary*, his spiritual voice changed Judaism forever.

The women rabbis of our time are new spiritual guides. Each of us is different, voicing into being new directions, all for transforming our sense of *others* into *us*. This congregation has been blessed long-term with two extraordinary women – Rabbi Janet Marder and your predecessor Rabbi Lisa Edwards. Brilliant, attentive, loving, guiding women.

You, Rabbi Cameron, are the true successor to their legacies. Your spiritual voice includes all that is demanded from our time: the political, the economic, the practical, the prayerful. Your organizing principle is holistic, and that will guarantee the holy.

A few words about your congregation: BCC has traveled a 50 year journey. A journey is *more* than process – it imagines a destination. The vision of BCC imagines a Promised Land – and yet, it's easy to get lost when we come upon a crossroad or... a pandemic.

Then the rules of the game change, radically.

You know this well from the AIDS crisis. You navigated that with endurance and love.

Now, our nation and world are entering a new era, a time of great uncertainty due to climate change; disease evolution; dangerous, political unrest.

There's a lot of anger around us, and that's never good for diversity – for the LGBTQIA+ community, and the Jews.

BCC, you will be called upon over and again to envision a safe harbor, one that does not close itself off to the world but whose safety lies in your courageous and brave, intelligent response to this spiritual pandemic.

The rules *are* changing.

Inadvertently, for Rabbi Cameron, the rabbinate is changing, too.

Remarkably, *she is the one* to meet this era.

Rabbi Cameron, I've known you since you were in high school.

The values and qualities and skills that you embodied then have blossomed.

Certainly you have the brilliant factor – you are highly intelligent, curious, inquisitive, eager to learn and thoroughly organized. You are a systems thinker, and see the forest as well as the trees – a true gift for a rabbi and her community. It means that you'll intuit how to strengthen the community as an organization as well as a spiritual body.

And your people will embrace you because you laugh fully, love deeply, live with passion. Nothing you do is half-measure. You're all in – and that commitment changes the world.

You are a lover of music, which means that you create harmony, in a chorus of voices. Yes, you will sing the lead metaphorically, and it is your leadership that will inspire other voices to sing and discover new harmonies.

Discordant music is either deliberate or careless.

Let this congregation never allow careless discord.

Together, agree or disagree, but do so in harmony.

When you know that you are seeking to bestow

rather than to receive, harmony emerges.

Rabbi Cameron, you are highly principled. Let no one accuse you of self-centered choices. You act on behalf of others, always. When you are tired, frustrated or worried that you won't serve well enough, let others step in to lift your arms – just as Aaron and Hur stood side by side with Moses. May Cantor Porat, Rabbi Edwards and your leaders be companions in the art of your leadership.

You believe: do it right the first time.

Do it well, make it beautiful, make it meaningful.

You never rest on any given. You inquire: what additional beauty and truth might emerge if our eyes and hearts are open?

Good news, then, for this holy community that is living in the era of pandemics!

There are new twists.

And once again, there is much we cannot control. Previous ways and paths will need tweaking or perhaps even shedding.

This is why the final chapter in the Book of Numbers – our Torah portion this Shabbat – is a repetition of the tale of the request from Tzelophahad's daughters. Earlier they had come before Moses pleading that since their father had died and had no sons, their land inheritance would be lost.

Wouldn't justice best be served by transferring the land rights to the daughters? God affirms this major shift in doctrine.

Most important, as the invisible women become visible, the entire tribe is upheld.

You of BCC know this truth about people in the depths of your souls.

At the conclusion of Numbers, members of their tribe request that the daughters marry within the tribe so that their inheritance isn't lost to another tribe. The daughters agree – and here, they are named: Mahlah, Tirtzah, Heglah, Milcah and Noah. Why now? In naming them, their spiritual

legacy is established. They affirm: innovation guarantees the future.

In time of crisis, we begin with reaction – and then, be proactive: innovate!

Rabbi Cameron is the daughter of Tzelophohad, your Mahlah, Tirtzah, Heglah, Milcah and Noah wrapped into one. She is your spiritual leader for this new era.

Faith is an art. Believing is cultivated. Spiritual voices are nourished.

You, Rabbi Cameron, have a unique opportunity to sculpt a new world with this beautiful BCC community. What will you shape together? What messages will be sung and celebrated? How will you soar above the fray, lifting one another above the storm clouds?

I can't wait to find out.

Blessing:

Even after all this time,
the sun never says to the earth,
“You owe me.”

Look what happens with a love like that:
It lights up the whole sky.
(Hafiz, transl. Daniel Ladinsky)

Holy One of Blessing, guide this Rabbi daily,
Enabling her to hold the purity of light and love
that radiates from the core of her being.

Rabbi Cameron, may you shape a vision for this
community of individuals—
not a flock but an interlocking of hearts, minds and
souls,
each person equally present and visible.
May you lift up the whole, joined in sacred mission:
that all who enter may feel blessed.

Be not an island, but a heavenly firmament,
realizing the stars and galaxies that array with you,
drawing on the experience and insights
of those who have come before you,
and those with you now.

Speak wisely.
Smile often.
Share deeply, thoughtfully, lovingly.

May you be enfolded and embraced in holiness.

Cantor Porat and Rabbi Frishman:

תְּבָרַךְ אֹתָךְ שְׁכִינָה וְתִשְׁמְרֶךָ
May God bless you and watch over you.

תֵּאָר שְׁכִינָה פָּנֶיהָ אֵלֶיךָ וְתַחֲנוּן
May the light of Shechina shine upon you, and may She be gentle with you.

תִּשָּׂא שְׁכִינָה פָּנֶיהָ אֵלֶיךָ וְתִשָּׂם לָךְ שְׁלוֹם
May the Holy Presence be revealed to you in each moment,
And may you be named by peace.

DEFERENCE TO ALL SIDES

BY RABBI EMERITA LISA EDWARDS

Remarks from Rabbi Emerita Lisa Edwards to Rabbi Jillian Cameron on the occasion of her installation as Rabbi of BCC, July 29, 2022/ 2 Av 5782, followed by the presentation of the gift from the congregation.

SOME OF YOU MAY REMEMBER THE MUCH-LOVED TALMUD TALE, often titled the Oven of Akhnai. It tells of a dispute between a group of sages and their colleague Rabbi Eliezer. It's a story I would often tell you on Yom Kippur morning...

About how Rabbi Eliezer gave every answer in the world to support his opinion, but the Rabbis did not accept his explanations.

Whereupon Rabbi Eliezer turned to the supernatural to try to sway them – causing a carob tree to move, a stream to reverse course, and the walls of the Beit midrash, the study hall in which they sat, to lean in until the walls began to fall. His colleagues were unimpressed.

One of his opponents, Rabbi Yehoshua, snarled at the walls, telling them to mind their own business.

And then comes **MY** favorite part: Talmud tells us that the walls did not fall because of the deference due Rabbi Yehoshua, but neither did they return upright because of the deference due Rabbi Eliezer, and they **STILL** remain leaning.

Friends, it is not entirely a coincidence that the sanctuary we are in right now has a wall that leans in. If you can't see that from where you are sitting or standing, you can walk over after services and look at the edge of it.

Rabbi Jillian – quick study that you are – when we first showed you that wall you got the message immediately. In truth, you already knew its truths.

If your installation had come at a normal time – not postponed for two years by a world-wide pandemic – I would have taken this occasion to give you **advice**.

Instead, I'll take this occasion to note **publicly** what I and others have been experiencing for two years already – and that is, how right you are for this position – for our Beth Chayim

Chadashim – our House of New Life – our beloved community – because without knowing about our sanctuary wall, you came here already knowing what it teaches us – about deference to both sides – to all sides. About how everyone's opinion matters, about how everyone has something to teach and something to learn, about whether the walls are made of gorgeous stained glass or antiqued plaster or reclaimed wood and copper strips with our own words written on them with our own hands, or projections of the prayers of our hearts, or little screens filled with our faces lit up by glowing computer screens all over the world – the walls at BCC tell stories, tell our stories.

And I couldn't be happier that tonight officially, but in reality two years ago, the stories told by these walls and the people embraced by and within them include you, Rabbi Jillian R. Cameron, as our rabbi, our teacher, and our spiritual leader.

Welcome home, Rabbi Jillian.

Cantor Juval and Jessica – would you join me here?

LISA:

As many of us know, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Eliezer of leaning wall fame were not the only sages in our tradition who sometimes disagreed with each other.

JUVAL:

And the gift we have chosen for you, Rabbi Jillian, turns out unexpectedly but beautifully to reference yet another of those zugot – those rabbinic pairs who did not always agree with each other.

JESSICA:

Hillel and Shammai were perhaps the most



Above: Rabbi Cameron admires her new tallit as Rabbi Edwards looks on. Photo: Kenna Love.

famous pair of sometimes “dueling rabbis” – they were two leading teachers from the 1st century of the common era. Their famous disagreements led their students to continue along that path for more than another century.

JUVAL:

Jewish tradition holds both Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai in high esteem in part for the respect they had for one another. In Mishnah [Pirkei Avot 5:17] their arguments are held up as an example of arguments for the sake of heaven and as such will endure.

JESSICA:

Wendy Light is a local tallit artist, and in our visit to her studio, Tracy, Cantor Juval, Rabbi Lisa and I were smitten with one tallit in particular. Wendy gives a title to each of her creations, and this tallit – which is fully reversible! – is called the Hillel & Shammai Tallit.

LISA: We have BCCified it a bit (including the bag) – we’ll tell you more about that later.

And Rabbi Jillian, we know that the tallit you’re wearing now, given to you by your grandfather as an ordination gift when you became a rabbi, is very special to you.

JESSICA: Now that you are OUR rabbi, we wanted to present you with an additional, BCCified, option and we hope that this one – which is really two! – will strike your fancy some days.

JUVAL: Another thing Talmud tells us about the students of Hillel and Shammai is that despite their disagreements, they “practiced affection and camaraderie between them, to fulfill that which is stated: *‘Love truth and peace’*” (Zechariah 8:19, Yevamot 14b:10)

May this tallit – from both sides – encourage us all in those pursuits.

SUBMISSIONS WELCOME

We welcome you to contribute to this magazine! Here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing. Have you recently attended an amazing (virtual) event or art exhibit? Did you read a book or watch a TV show that everyone should know about? Do you have an idea for a new column? Do you think your bubbe has the best rugelach recipe? Please be in touch, we can’t wait to hear from you!

Please follow these submission guidelines:

- Articles should be more than 500 words, letters to the editor can be shorter
- Please do not write about officeholders, candidates, or general international, national, state, or local political issues.
- Be respectful of anyone you reference, directly or indirectly, by name or anonymously.
- Please do not advertise any product or service in an article or letter.
- Submissions should be sent by email to the editorial team at gvanim@bcc-la.org as a Word attachment, in the body of the email, or as a Google doc.
- Include your name and phone number.
- All submissions will be proofread and edited for length, clarity, style, and tone.
- Note: Late submissions may not be considered for publication.
- Deadlines will be published in the BCC Weekly News and Updates.

THE HOLINESS OF TIME AND THE IMMORTALITY OF INFLUENCE – THOUGHTS ON THE DEDICATION OF BCC’S TIME CAPSULE

BY STEPHEN SASS

Remarks delivered at the dedication ceremony for the BCC time capsule in memory of Harriet Perlz”l on July 30, 2022 (2 Av 5782).

I’M SO GRATEFUL THAT WE’RE HEALTHY AND THAT WE’RE ABLE TO BE HERE TO SEE THIS DEDICATION HAPPEN – I think this is a true Shehecheyanu moment!

As we share the waning hours of this Shabbat and prepare to greet a new week together, you might ask, why are we dedicating our time capsule now? In reflecting on this, I thought of this slim but exquisitely moving book, “The Sabbath—Its Meaning for Moderns,” written by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, of blessed memory, some 70 years ago. I urge you to read it if you haven’t yet had the opportunity.

We learn from Rabbi Heschel that “Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time,” to be attached to days and events we make sacred, “to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year.” For Rabbi Heschel, “the seventh day is a palace in time which we build” each week; the Shabbatot are “our great cathedrals...the architecture of time.”

Rabbi Heschel writes that “unlike the space-minded person” – or perhaps, what we might refer to today as the spaced-out person—“to whom time is unvaried, to whom all hours are alike, quality-less, empty shells, the Bible senses the diversified character of time. There are no two hours alike. Every hour is unique and the only one given at the moment, exclusive and endlessly precious.”

To Rabbi Heschel, “the meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week, we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath, we try to become attuned to holiness in time... This is the task of [people]: to conquer space and sanctify time.”

And indeed, as you’ll see shortly, our committee had to conquer a very small space in order to sanctify time!

Rabbi Heschel goes on to say that “each Sabbath is a reminder of the two worlds—this world and the world to come; it is an example of both worlds. For the Sabbath is joy, holiness, and rest—to which we add, it is moon bounces and snow cones—”joy is part of this world; holiness and rest are something of the world to come.” [Heschel, quoting Al Nakawa, Menorat ha-

Maor]

We marry this time capsule dedication to Shabbat because its contents celebrate not only 50 years of BCC and those on whose shoulders we stand, but this special Shabbat of Rabbi Jillian’s installation and the holiness of time and gives us a taste of the world to come as well.

For centuries, there are those who have erased and, sadly, even now, attempt to erase our LGBTQ+ and Jewish tribes from existence, from memory and from time. Today, we make a positive statement and a sacred commitment. We sanctify this Shabbat and all of



Above: BCC t-shirts and Mark Miller’s posters of time capsule contents on display at the time capsule dedication. Photo: Larry Nathenson.



Above: The Time Capsule Committee (left to right): Tracy Moore, Larry Nathenson, Mark Miller, Rabbi Emerita Lisa Edwards, Stephen Sass. Photo: Jessica Donath.

the Shabbatot—the palaces of time—that we and others inspired by BCC’s founding 50 years ago have built and celebrated ever since—Shabbatot that countless numbers of people would not have celebrated but for BCC and the inclusivity in the larger Jewish world it inspired and continues to inspire. And we look forward to the Shabbatot, and the weeks and years that connect them, that we hope and pray will follow, and our dreams, aspirations and actions that will fill the time capsule of the next 50 years and beyond.

As we dedicate this time capsule and do so in tribute to our beloved Harriet Perl—and we’ll hear more about Harriet from Mark Miller in a moment—I think too of what one of Rabbi Heschel’s students, our teacher Rabbi Harold Schulweis, *zichrono livracha*, called “the immortality of influence.”

Rabbi Schulweis taught us that no gesture of goodness and godliness during our lifetimes goes into oblivion. While none of us can live forever, we can live on in what we create and how we express our values, in how we invest our time and resources, in the organizations and causes we nurture and sustain, and in those we impact, both while we are alive and after.

Through her many gifts of intellect, leadership and passion during her lifetime, and her incredible gen-

erosity in leaving her home to BCC as a legacy to form the basis of our new endowment fund, Harriet is a shining example to all of us of the immortality of influence.

In our coming in to BCC and in our going out, every Shabbat and at other times, may we see this time capsule and be reminded of the palace of time that is Shabbat, of the importance of sanctifying time, of the immortality of influence and the ability each one of us has to live our lives in ways that touch the future. Shabbat shalom and almost Shavua tov!



Above: The time capsule plaque as installed. Photo: Mark Miller

WAKING UP TO WHAT IS

BY CANTOR JUVAL PORAT



THE MONTH OF ELUL CALLS US TO (RE) TURN TOWARD THE HIGH HOLIDAYS AND ALL THEY REPRESENT: celebration, creation, introspection, repentance, forgiveness, community, prayer and togetherness.

We prepare ourselves anew to wake up to that of which we remind ourselves (at least) yearly: our interconnectedness,

our being part of something greater than ourselves, our humanity, our imperfections, our flaws and our triumphs, the better version of ourselves and the memory of loved ones who are no longer with us.

Even without two years of a global pandemic, the unrest and upheaval that has forever changed the way we worship as a community, we are all changed as we find ourselves yet again at this particular point of the Jewish yearly cycle that is the month of Elul. What has changed for you? How can Jewish tradition support you in affirming who and where you are at this particular moment? What words of liturgy, what melody, what ritual, what observation will be there for you to comfort, to soothe, to encourage, to inspire, to wake you up to your life as it is now?

“How can you be sleeping so soundly?” is both a quote from the book of Jonah, which we read on Yom Kippur afternoon and the first line of a *piyut**, which opens up the *S’lichot*** service according to the *Mizrahi* community. In the book of Jonah, our hero allows anxiety and fear to shut him down. So much so that he finds himself in the belly of a ship, unaware that a storm is about to challenge the ship and those on board. At this point, the ship’s captain asks Jonah “how can you be sleeping so soundly?”

The *piyut* re-contextualizes the verse from Jonah by inviting/instructing the reciter to rise up and voice their pleas:

Human beings, How can you be sleeping so soundly?
Rise up and voice your pleas!

Pour out your words, seek forgiveness
From the Source of All.

— based on a translation by Rabbi Nancy Flam (to read the entire *piyut*, click here: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/513b9fc4e4b0b5df0ebd941d/t/56a4fd7869a91a8ab60dcf68/1453653368877/Ben+Ad-am.pdf>)

To listen to a variety of musical settings from Jewish communities across the world, click here:

https://www.nli.org.il/en/piyut/Piyut1media_010029600064405171/NLI

Maimonides uses a similar sentiment to explain his reasoning for blowing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah:

Notwithstanding that the blowing of the ram’s horn trumpet on Rosh ha-Shanah is a Scriptural statute, its blast is symbolic, as if saying: “Ye that sleep, bestir yourselves from your sleep, and ye slumbering, emerge from your slumber, examine your conduct, turn in repentance, and remember your Creator!”

— Mishneh Torah 3:4

While it’s very easy for the human ear to hear Maimonides’ request sound like a demand, let us turn toward the invitation within those words: What might we gain by shifting from a state of sleepiness to a state of awakening? How would we be enriched by waking up to the mystery of our being? What is needed for us to wake up and what ripple effects might waking up have on us and the people in our lives?

As we’re all invited to contemplate those questions, we’re reminded that the ways that lead toward awakening are as diverse as our communities. The sources worth waking up to are as rich as our traditions. So, be comforted knowing there isn’t one “right” way of waking up.

Sometimes we find ourselves too comfortable in our metaphorical warm beds, immersed in a dream, that we actively hit the snooze button to continue the state of sleep for just a few more moments. Sometimes waking up is difficult. Sometimes we simply don’t hear the wake-up call. There is a reason why many of us choose to stay asleep. And for many, waking up requires dedication and work. While there’s ample space, encouragement and permission to just “be” and just rejoice in one’s existence without looking for purpose or justification (just look at our weekly Shabbat rituals), this angle of Elul, with its variety of “wake-up” calls, is different – giving us the entire four weeks to actively wake up to a new year.

Let us use these instructions to our advantage. Let us wake up to the accomplishments and failings of our lives and let us recognize them. Let us wake up to the possibilities of allowing sacredness into our lives. Let us wake up to the sound of life all around us. Let us wake up to the certainty of godliness within ourselves.

Wishing us all meaningful weeks of Elul.

B’shalom,
Cantor Juval

*A Jewish liturgical poem, usually designated to be sung, chanted or recited during religious services

**Penitential poems and prayers, especially those said in the period leading up to the High Holidays

GONE/HERE

BY AHAVAH MAGAYNA BROOKS

Gone

My first feelings of teenage love for Ruth

Here

A friendship so strong it withstands the tests of time and distance

Gone

My love and need to be needed by Joanne

Here

A memory of when she walked out of a window

Gone

My love for Susan that became like that of a mother for her daughter

Here

Two women living in two different worlds yet trying to remain connected in some way

Gone

My love and spiritual connection to Yael, the first woman to whom I expressed my love

Here

A tie across the miles from time to time

Gone

My love for Liss who could not handle her love for me

Here

Two women who meet occasionally and talk of matters extraneous to our souls

Gone

The depth and intimacy of my love for Jackie

Here

Two women working to retain a common bond of friendship and love

Here

The love and connectedness to myself that enables me to know I will love again
Thank you, Ruth, Joanne, Susan, Yael, Liss, Jackie for helping me to grow
and become the woman I am today

People Love Dead Jews by Dara Horn

Reviewed by Larry Nathenson

Anne Frank's diary is read the world over, and the house in Amsterdam where her family hid from the Nazis for two years is a major tourist attraction. Would those statements be true if she had survived the war and pursued a career as a writer, giving the world her adult perspective on her teenage experience? Would she still be "everyone's (second) favorite dead Jew," as Dara Horn calls her (presumably Jesus is the first) if she had died decades after the war? Cities around the world make money off their Jewish heritage sites while paying little attention to the few (usually poor and elderly) Jews who still reside there or to the fact that all their Jews have fled. This is what Horn means by the title of her book – that it is easy and satisfying to memorialize Jews who are no longer around. It is much harder to face the lingering anti-Semitism directed at living Jews, which often accounts for their absence.

The title may be off-putting, and the tone is at times didactic and angry, but this collection of essays amply demonstrates its thesis. Covering a range of topics, some based on her own experience and travels, Horn criticizes those who try to use dead Jews for their own purposes – to make money from tourists, to make themselves look good or feel good for memorializing them, to atone for their past sins to the world at large rather than to Jews specifically. Reflecting on the Auschwitz exhibit at the New York Jewish Museum, for example, she says it does everything right. Still, it turns dead Jews into metaphors, forcing them to teach something about morality and historical responsibility rather than portraying them as flesh and blood people with their own lost culture.

Horn is critical of those who pay outsized attention to the small number of Gentiles who were "rescuers" during the war, who hid Jews or helped them escape, as if that makes up for the vast majority who did nothing and the significant minority who collaborated with the Nazis. One of her essays is about Varian Fry, an American who mainly helped elite Jews (scientists and writers) escape from occupied France. As dangerous as his actions were, they provided him with a sense of purpose that his postwar life lacked as he returned to an America that had no place for a

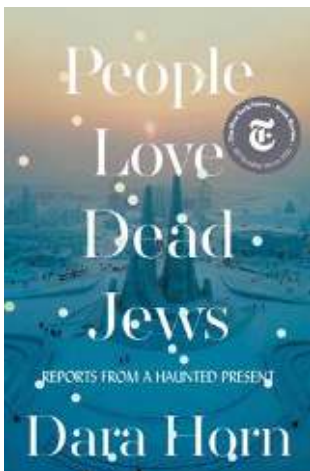
gay ex-diplomat like him.

Not all of the essays are about the Holocaust. Horn introduces us to the extinct Jewish community of Harbin, China, the synagogues of Syria and other Middle Eastern countries that can only be visited today through a 3-D website called "Diarna," and the Stalinist persecution of the Moscow Yiddish theater in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The United States does not escape her attention; she offers thoughts on recent attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and San Diego and on violent reactions to the gentrification of inner-city neighborhoods in Jersey City by Hasidic Jews. To demonstrate the underlying anti-Semitic perceptions that make such attacks possible despite the American ethos of religious tolerance, Horn cites her experience of having her Jewish identity challenged at summer camp because she is blonde and blue-eyed. Her campmates told her (in the 1990s!) that Hitler had said all Jews had dark hair, oblivious to how a Jewish girl would react to such a statement.

Horn is primarily a novelist; this is her first non-fiction book. The BCC book group has read and enjoyed her five novels – *Eternal Life*, *All Other Nights*, *The World to Come*, *In the Image*, and *A Guide for the Perplexed* – some historical fiction and some about contemporary American Jewish life. As a Jewish novelist, she brings a different perspective to the criticism of Holocaust fiction written by Gentiles. She says that much of it is not true to the Jewish experience because it reflects a Christian desire for redemptive endings and a Greek or Western focus on heroic action. Jewish fiction, including Holocaust fiction, tends to be more about endurance and resilience, with endings that reflect the ambiguity and uncertainty of real life.

People Love Dead Jews is not an easy book to read. It will disturb you and make you question the motives of those who write about the Jewish past and create memorials to Jewish heritage. But it is well worth the effort if you care about the questions it raises.

BCC's Books and Bagels discussion group has met continuously since January 1995. The group met monthly in members' homes for a bagel brunch and discussion, although now we are meeting by Zoom until further notice. We read a variety of books: fiction and non-fiction, American and Israeli, historical and contemporary. The only requirement is some Jewish content (LGBT content is a plus, but not required). The group is open to BCC members and non-members, and you are welcome to join us for a particular book that may interest you. RSVP is required. For upcoming books, see the BCC Weekly News and Updates or check the [website calendar](#). To register for the Zoom link, contact Larry Nathenson at larrynath@aol.com.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ...

*In this column, BCC members share things they do or love on a typical day in their lives. In this issue, Board member, camera person, producer, food pantry volunteer, writer, and property manager **Marie Pedersen**, tells us about her day.*

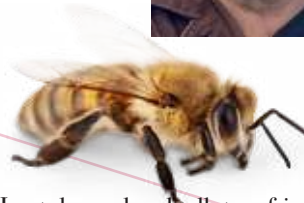
6:00 - I wake up and work on my duolingo (Danish, it's a mystery to me). I get up, grateful for another day with my health, home, friends, family and LUGGAGE (yes, I was notified that my luggage missing for 2 months arrived at 1:30 am on to my doorstep)



Marie pictured on the left.



6:30 - I feed my cats (Raisin and Max) and wash their dishes out so as not to have an ant attack. I have a spoonful of bee pollen, it is the source of my superpowers.



6:45 - I get dressed and talk to a friend on the east coast who has been having a hard time. She is doing much better – that makes me happy.

7:00 - I check my texts and get dressed for a bike ride, its going to be hot so the earlier the better. I call my friend Dawna and we discuss our plans for shooting a portion of a teaser for our short film *Yachatz*, in Connecticut.



7:10 - I check and my luggage has indeed arrived I take a picture and post it on Facebook.

7:20 - I pick a few figs from my tree (they are ripe and fantastic)



7:30 - I get on my bike and ride up to Dukes in Malibu (10 miles) and turn around and come back. It is a beautiful day.

8:50 - I come back home; eat fruit and yoghurt and granola.



9:00 - finish my duolingo and call my girlfriend, who is finally awake.

9:20 - Take a shower.



9:30 - The credit union calls me to say my wire transfer of my son's tuition has gone through (Twente T.U., the Netherlands)

10 - 11:00 - I have a zoom meeting.



11:20 - I call a friend who is having a health issue.



11:45 - I text with a tenant about some furniture.



12:00 - I start thinking about finishing my taxes.



12:15 - I talk with Dawna about the script (Yachatz) which is up for an award from Slamdance (one of many awards it has already received)



12:30 - I make lunch, a sandwich (open-faced, with turkey, cheese, tomato, lettuce and mustard with gluten free bread). I have it with Iced tea.



12:40 - I talk to Jessica, who suggests I write a day in the life...

1 - 5:00 - I work on finishing my taxes

4:00 - I take a break, practice my duolingo, and walk to my neighbors to discuss politics.

4:45 - My cat Raisin comes by looking for a treat so I give her a few, she's hot too.



5:15 - I make a salad then decide I don't want to eat it, it's too hot, so I drink iced tea and eat carrots, and listen to some jazz. Still trying to work on my taxes.

6:00 - A friend comes over and we pick figs from my tree.

7:10 - Dropped something at a friend's house and played with her dog, "Grilled Cheese"



7:20 - Finally, ate my salad.



7:30 - Sat down and watched a few episodes of "Better Things". Checked my emails.



9:30 - Talked to my girlfriend and fed the cats



10:00 - Reading my book "Circe" and getting ready for bed. Call my girlfriend to say goodnight.

BCC QUESTIONNAIRE:

RABBI EMERITA LISA EDWARDS

Asking a set of questions to learn new things about old friends was a popular pastime in 19th century Europe. At 14, future French novelist Marcel Proust became one of the first to fill out a questionnaire in his friend Antoinette Faure's book Confessions; An Album to Record Thoughts, Feelings, & co. In modern times, Inside the Actor's Studio host James Lipton created a set of questions as a fun and not-too-serious way of getting to know his guests better. Vanity Fair published a Proust-inspired questionnaire on the last page of the magazine for more than 20 years that became one of its most successful and popular columns. Since its heyday, [Karl Marx](#), [Terry Gross](#), [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#), and [David Bowie](#) have all participated in a version of the classic question-and-answer parlor game. At G'vanim Magazine, we are pleased to introduce the BCC Questionnaire!

1. What is your idea of Perfect Happiness?

World harmony. everyone respected. equal rights. Also laughing really hard every day.

2. What is your greatest fear?

That the opposite of #1 will remain the standard worldwide

3. What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

I can tell by looking around that I've never come close, so I can't really describe it.

4. Where would you most like to live?

In LA, with Tracy, in the house we currently occupy.

5. What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

I don't get things like BCC questionnaires done unless there are deadlines looming and promises I've made to people I care about.

6. What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Getting things done ahead of deadline.

7. What is the quality you most like in a person?

That when they say they'll do something, I can consider it done.

8. What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

Being organized.

9. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

I'd be neater — not more organized necessarily, just neater.

10. Which living person do you most admire?

I don't have a "most admire," but I admire Tracy Moore, Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, Heather Cox Richardson (<https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/>), Krista Tippett (<https://onbeing.org/>), Stacey Abrams, Rachel Maddow to name a few

11. On what occasion do you lie?

Usually when I take a nap or go to sleep for the night. Or do you mean tell an untruth? Sometimes to protect someone's feelings or to protect myself from embarrassment or harassment by a telesales person.

12. Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

Tracy says I overuse "Awww..."

13. Which talent would you most like to have?

Being good at other languages and/or being able to sing.

14. What do you consider your greatest achievement?

My years as rabbi of BCC.

15. What is your most treasured possession?

I have many treasures. Family photos among them. items we've acquired on our travels. Art I

started collecting as a child that has buoyed me all these years.

16. What is your greatest extravagance?

I often buy myself things I want, even if it's not my birthday.

17. What is your favorite TV show?

Not sure -- I've enjoyed many through the years

18. What is your favorite sound?

I like many sounds in nature -- waves, thunder, a breeze through leaves (especially dry leaves). I also really like the sound of velcro being pulled apart. And I like the sound of Cantor Juval singing.

19. Which book do you wish you had written?

The Talmud and the Internet: a Journey Between Worlds by Jonathan Rosen.

20. Who is your hero of fiction or Torah?

I really like Ruth and Esther in the Tanakh.

21. Which historical figure would you most like to meet?

Abraham Lincoln.

22. Who are your heroes in real life?

All of those people mentioned in #10. At the moment, I think Heather Cox Richardson above all.

23. What are your favorite names?

I like some coupled names: Sam and Alice, Simon and Schuster, Tracy and Lisa.

24. What is your favorite age?

The Ice Age sounds interesting; also the Renaissance, but I'm glad to be alive now, and I've enjoyed most of the ages I've been.

25. What is your favorite childhood memory?

Too many to list -- witnessing my mother and her sisters laughing 'til they cried. When my brother, father and I played catch is a pleasant one. Going to High Holy Day services with my

parents and brother is another. Laughing with my brother until we cried. I like to laugh.

26. What turns you on (creatively, spiritually or emotionally)?

So many things -- good stories well written.

27. What turns you off?

Having to answer too many questions.

28. What is your favorite curse word?

Rats! Also, years ago one of my little cousins would say "oh, duck!" a lot -- that was a fun one.

29. What is your favorite language?

English.

30. What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

I'd still like to be a clown.

31. Who would you like to see on a new banknote?

Frances Perkins.

32. Which invention do you admire most?

My grandfather most admired air conditioning (he was born in 1875). I think I admire glasses (the kind that help you see better).

33. What is the first thing you do in the morning?

Try to think of what day it is and what's on the calendar without looking at it. Then try to remember my dreams. Sometimes, not always, I recite modah ani -- a waking up prayer.

34. What is the last thing you do before going to bed?

Check to see if I'm anxious about anything.

35. How would you like to die?

Gently, painlessly.

36. If you were to die and come back as a person, an animal or a thing, who or what would it be?

I'm not sure -- surprise me!