

The Kibbitzer

Congregation Beth Shalom of Brandon

706 Bryan Road, Brandon, FL 33511

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www.BethShalomBrandon.org

August 2025 Volume 36 Issue 3



Tu B'Av celebrates the soul's capacity to love across generations and sorrow. "I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach." It is love that rebuilds, renews, and binds us to one another and to hope.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Tisha B'Av

Based on the teachings and writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

This is the saddest day in the Jewish calendar, when the destruction of both the First and Second Temples is commemorated. According to the Mishnah ([Ta'anit 4:6](#)) the following tragic events occurred on this day in Jewish history:



Rabbi Lord Jonathan

1. The twelve spies sent by Moshe to scout the Land of Israel returned, with ten of them bringing a damaging report that led to forty years of B'nei Yisrael wandering in the desert until the entire generation had died out.
2. The First Temple, built by King Shlomo, was destroyed by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE, and the population of the Kingdom of Judah was sent into exile.
3. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, scattering the people of Judea and signifying the beginning of a two-thousand-year exile.
4. The subsequent defeat of the Bar Kochba revolt and destruction of the city of Beitar, killing over 500,000 Jewish civilians in 135 CE.
5. Also in 135 CE, following the Bar Kochba revolt, Roman commander Turnus Rufus leveled the site of the Temple and the surrounding area of Jerusalem.

The fast observed on Tisha B'Av begins at sundown at the end of 8th Av, and lasts for 25 hours until nightfall on the 9th Av.



For more information about Tisha B'Av, visit:

<https://rabbisacks.org/ceremony-celebration-family-edition/the-three-weeks-tisha-bav-family-edition/#three-weeks-in-our-time>

The Gift of Presence: Tu B'Av and Loving-Kindness

Tu B'Av, often called the Jewish day of love, is about far more than romantic connection. It is a celebration of *relationships* in their fullest sense — friendship, community, and the quiet bonds that sustain us. Rooted in ancient traditions of renewal and reunion, Tu B'Av invites us to appreciate those we hold close, to rekindle neglected ties, and to remain open to new connections that may surprise us. Whether through a kind word, an unexpected invitation, or a shared laugh, this day gently nudges us toward gratitude and meaningful togetherness.

Though framed in the language of romance, the deeper resonance of this holiday lies in its devotion to connection in all its forms. Building on our tradition's emphasis on loving-kindness, Tu B'Av gently reminds us that emotional generosity extends far beyond romantic gestures, finding meaning in all forms of connection.

At the heart of Jewish tradition lies a deep commitment to acts of loving-kindness — *gemilut chasadim*. But what does loving-kindness truly mean? It is the practice of going beyond what is required, extending compassion, generosity, and goodwill to others, especially those in need.

Jewish tradition is rich with examples: visiting the sick, comforting mourners, welcoming guests, supporting the vulnerable, and standing with those in times of difficulty. These are not simply kind gestures — they are sacred responsibilities.

According to the rabbis of the Talmud, acts of loving-kindness are even greater than acts of charity, because charity is achieved through monetary giving, whereas loving-kindness embraces both generosity and action. In this way, loving-kindness calls on us to offer not just our resources, but our presence.

As we celebrate Tu B'Av, we are reminded that love in Jewish tradition is not only romantic — it is action, attention, and the daily choice to show up for one another. When we practice *gemilut chasadim*, we affirm that our relationships are sacred and that our presence can be a blessing. May this season inspire us to deepen our bonds, extend kindness beyond obligation, and rediscover the joy of connection, in every form it takes.



J.J. Schacter on the Jewish Meaning of Memory

What does it mean to remember the destruction of the Temples?



We are now in a period in the liturgical calendar of the Jewish people known as the Three Weeks, which begins on the seventeenth day of the Hebrew month of Tammuz, and continues through the ninth day of the month of Av. It is a period of mourning and commemoration of many experiences of tragedy and sorrow in the Jewish past, and it culminates on the Ninth of Av, or Tisha B'Av, because on that day, in the year 586 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar's forces destroyed the

First Temple in Jerusalem. It was also on that day, in the year 70 CE, that Roman forces destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem. These events the Jewish people, together, as a nation, remember at this time of year.

But how can a person remember an event that he or she never experienced? That is the organizing question that the rabbi and historian Jacob J. Schacter asks in his eight-part video course, "The Jewish Meaning of Memory." That course, like all of Tikvah's video courses, is available free of charge at courses.tikvah.org.

This week, to elevate our study during the Three Weeks, we are broadcasting its first episode.

Musical selections in this podcast are drawn from the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, op. 31a, composed by Paul Ben-Haim and performed by the ARC Ensemble.

To listen to part 1 on the course, Jewish Meaning of Memory, click anywhere in the box below.



President's Column

Shalom, everyone.

We paused the Kibbitzer for a month to give our community time to recharge with family and enjoy the summer break. Throughout July, we continued our Friday night and Saturday Torah services, and we were delighted to welcome a new family on July 4th, whose child is preparing for Bar Mitzvah.

At our July Board Meeting, we had a thoughtful discussion about engaging a part-time rabbi. We're currently working with a chaplain from Lakeland Regional Hospital and have invited him to join us on August 2nd to observe our Shabbat Torah service and share the D'Var Torah.

The Ritual Committee met on July 8th and made great progress planning for the High Holy Days and the celebrations to follow. We're always looking for CBS members to perform a mitzvah and help shape these meaningful moments in our Jewish calendar. I also spoke with Rabbi Katz and am hopeful he'll be with us for at least one of the High Holy Days. I expect an update soon.

I want to extend heartfelt thanks and a warm Mazel Tov to Dave and Carol Anne Friedman. Their decades of dedication to Congregation Beth Shalom have left an indelible mark, and as they begin their next chapter in Georgia, we feel both joy and sorrow. Their presence enriched our CBS family, and while we'll miss them deeply, we hope it's "see you later" rather than goodbye. Best wishes from all of us, Dave and Carol Anne!

Please continue sharing your ideas with the Board. We may not be able to act on everything, but your feedback helps guide us forward.

Thank you—*Todah Rabbah*—for being part of our CBS community.

Warmly,

Steve Billor



Dave & Carol Anne Friedman

Gabe's Column

L'Dor Vador in Today's Complex World

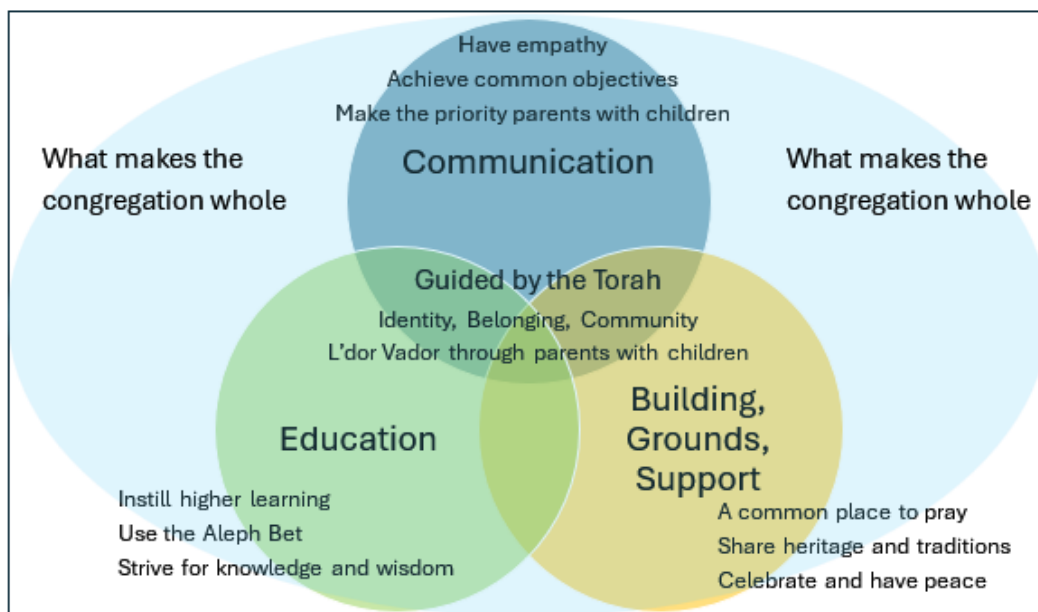
Every day, I'm grateful for the people who keep our congregation alive. A dedicated crew—Steve Billor, Gerry, Toby, and Neil—works tirelessly to sustain our rhythm of services and events. And now, thanks to Eric Rosenthal and his wife Ianna, a new plan is emerging to energize our social calendar and welcome families with children. There's much to look forward to.

In a previous article, I spoke about the challenge of maintaining and growing membership. It's not just our struggle—congregations across the country face similar hurdles. Even finding skilled help to maintain our building has become a pressing concern. This topic recently came up at a brunch, where I shared that our congregation rests on three essential pillars: **identity, belonging, and community**.

Identity and belonging are often easy to grasp. They reflect who we are as individuals and how we connect with our faith. But *community*—now that's a more complex concept. What does it mean in the context of a small congregation? I suggested that we function like a **kibbutz**, leaning on our surroundings to sustain ourselves. We are, in essence, an **ecosystem**—a community of distinct beliefs and culture, interacting with one another and with the wider world.

No, we're not organisms—but our interconnectedness is real. Our heritage, traditions, and history shape who we are, setting us apart yet tying us together. If we hope to preserve **L'dor Vador**—from generation to generation—we must invest in the infrastructure that supports it: communication, education, and continuity.

When our rabbi left, we faced a pivotal moment. What mattered most? What tasks were vital to keep going? Without Shabbat services, our congregation's heart would falter—but other areas were left with gaps. That's when I created a diagram to map out what truly sustains our community. I've included that below.



Gabe's Column

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The diagram I've created highlights three essential areas that sustain our congregation: **communication**, **education**, and **building/property support**. When these elements work together, we strengthen our ability to serve and grow. At the center of this model lies our guiding source—the Torah—and the values of **identity**, **belonging**, and **community**. These are not abstract ideals; they're the threads that connect us from generation to generation.

Our goal, especially now, is to attract and engage families with children. But among these pillars, communication stands as the greatest challenge. Poor communication weakens relationships, fragments focus, and risks isolating members. I believe that communication shapes **99% of who we are and what we are** as a congregation.

It's not just about intent. Many of us carry the weight of personal loss—whether from the Holocaust or other life-altering experiences—and that can affect how we connect with one another. Recognizing this can transform our interactions into meaningful, healing exchanges. Awareness opens the door to healthier relationships and a stronger future.

I also want to acknowledge the lasting impact of Hurricane Milton. The damage was considerable, and we're still working to restore our grounds—securing resources, hiring tree contractors, and calling on volunteer help. By the end of August, we hope to trim or remove vulnerable trees and clear debris. We envision new fencing for greater security and a refreshed space for our community. In the months ahead, **your support will be a true mitzvah**.

Shalom,

Gabriel Lifschitz



Brunch With the Tribe

Get ready for something special! Our next “Dinner With the Tribe” won’t be a typical dinner—it’s an adventure served with a side of culture and riverside calm.

We’re heading to the Wat Mongkolratanaram Thai Temple Sunday Market—yes, it’s a mouthful, but worth every syllable. This vibrant Sunday-only market, nestled along the Palm River, offers authentic Thai cuisine, vegetarian-friendly options, and a peaceful setting to enjoy it all.

Here’s what to know:

Date & Time: **Sunday, August 3rd, beginning at 9:30 AM** (Come early! Food starts to dwindle by 11.)

Cash Only: No credit cards—plan ahead.

Parking: Available but tight—arrive early for the best spots.

Food: Thai specialties made by local vendors, including vegan and gluten-free choices.

Setting: Picnic tables overlook the Palm River—serene and scenic

After we eat, we’ll stroll to the **Thai Temple**, where you’re invited to explore respectfully:

- Shoes off before entering—consider bringing socks.
- Shoulders should be covered.
- A chance to experience a different tradition and appreciate cultural diversity.

We’ve adjusted our usual schedule to make this outing possible, and we hope you’ll join us in experiencing something beautiful, delicious, and just a bit unexpected. Please let Anita know you will be there by sending a note to niewdnarb@yahoo.com

Time: Sunday, August 3rd, beginning at 9:30

Address: 5306 Palm River Road, Tampa, FL 33619-3746



Congregation Beth Shalom

Shabbat Services

Can't make it to services?

Join us online with a live feed from Zoom!

Zoom Link:

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83776565288?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83776565288?pwd=V3RIZzRXWkdaTjhsejBpNWJFTjIBUT09)
[pwd=V3RIZzRXWkdaTjhsejBpNWJFTjIBUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83776565288?pwd=V3RIZzRXWkdaTjhsejBpNWJFTjIBUT09)**

Meeting ID: 837 7656 5288

Passcode: 101324

CBS Office Hours

The administrative office is currently open by appointment only. We can be reached by calling the office, (813)681-6547, email, cbsbrandon@outlook.com.

Although our hours are limited, we are always here for you. Do not hesitate to reach out with any needs, concerns, or questions.

Congregation Beth Shalom

provides a meaningful spiritual home for people of all ages and levels of knowledge, a place to learn and to question, a place to worship and to celebrate, and a place to find a community that cares.

We offer:

- ✧ Friday worship services at 7:00 PM
- ✧ Complete B'nai Mitzvah preparation
- ✧ Adult Education classes
- ✧ Communitywide events
- ✧ Community Food Bank

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Becoming a partner in our congregation offers an opportunity for enduring friendships and a personal spiritual journey. A place in our Jewish community.

Members also have free access to many of our educational and entertainment events.

August Yahrzeits

Harry Feldman	Father of Myron Feldman
Edith Fink	Mother of Felicia Melcer
Richard Glasser	Husband of Babara Glaser
Lilyan Gould	Mother of Sandra Saviet
Leslie Korn	Father of Howard Korn

Donations

Neil Spindel
Gary Uremovich
Viveca Yoshikawa

In Loving Memory:

Michael Plesur
Carole Plesur



Candle Lighting Times

Date	Time	Parsha
Friday, Aug 1	7:49 PM	Devarim
Friday Aug 8	7:44 PM	Va'etchanan
Friday, Aug 15	7:39 PM	Eikev
Friday, Aug 22	7:32 PM	Re'eh
Friday, Aug 29	7:25 PM	Shoftim



Join Us for Shabbat!

Every Friday night at 7:00 PM, our congregation comes together to welcome Shabbat with beautiful tunes and inspiring prayers. After the service, we continue the celebration with an oneg.

Would you like to sponsor an oneg to celebrate a mitzvah?
Please reach out to Toby Koch at (813) 654-0877.



Grand Opening!

THE MARJORIE RICHTER SPINDEL BRANDON JEWISH YOUTH ACADEMY

NOW ACCEPTING ENROLLMENT FOR FALL 2025!

**Q&A/Info Session
at Beth Shalom**

Sunday, July 27 @ 1PM
706 Bryan Rd. in Brandon
Please RSVP by July 25:
(813) 438-3914 | rsvp@bjya.org
Pizza, Ice Cream & Activities for the Kids
Wine, Cheese & Snacks for the Adults

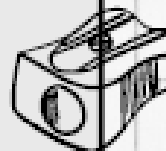


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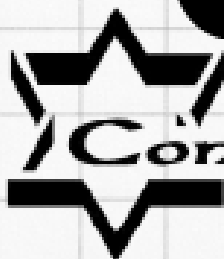
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Security Notice:

A Hillsborough Sheriff's Deputy will be on site.
Names will be checked against a guest list.



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Members also have free access to many of our educational and entertainment events.

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Congregation Beth Shalom
of Brandon

* Brandon Jewish Youth Academy

*Brunch w/the Tribe, see page 8

August 2025



27 BJYA* 1:00–3:00 PM	28	29	30	31	1 Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 	2
3 Tisha B'Av Brunch w/ the Tribe*	4	5 Ex Com Mtg 6:30 PM Board Mtg 7:00 PM	6 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM	7	8 Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 	9 Tu B'Av
10	11	12	13 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM	14	15 Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 	16
17	18	19	20 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM	21	22 Youth Led Shabbat Service 7:00 	23
24	25	26	27 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM	28	29 Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 	30
31	Sept 1	2 Ex Com Mtg 6:30 PM Board Mtg 7:00 PM	3 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM	4	5	6

August "Rabbis"

Friday, August 1	Feldman
Friday, August 8	Billor
Friday, August 15	Schwartz
Friday, August 22	Spindel
Friday, August 29	Billor