Dear Friends,

Last month I had the honor of addressing our Annual Meeting for the 27th time.

The rabbis of old tell us that when God created the world, God determined that it would be governed both by justice, in Hebrew Middat HaDin -- and by compassion -- Middat HaRachamim. The rabbis explain that the rationale for creating the world in such a way is that both qualities are required.

As they explained, if the world had been created only with justice, humankind would always fall short and the world would eventually cease to exist. On the other hand, if the world had been created strictly with mercy, humankind would quickly rely on the fact that we would always be forgiven and sin would become rampant. The only solution, the rabbis realized, would be for God to govern the world with both attributes.

I share this bit of Torah because many of us look at our country and find ourselves in the midst of some dark days. Many of us see a world that, too often, is lacking in compassion; one in which, to use the words of the rabbis of old, the balance between judgment and compassion is far too skewed toward judgment.

The prophet Isaiah taught,

*The fast that I choose is to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free. It is to divide your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; and when you see the naked, to cover him…*

If, like me, you see our tradition through the lens of Isaiah’s words . . . if his words ring as true for you as they do for me . . . then we have an obligation to stand up and speak out. We have an obligation to speak out when a woman’s right to choose is increasingly challenged, to speak out when parents and children are separated from each other, to stand up when the stranger in our midst is treated as the enemy rather than our fulfilling the biblical injunction that we treat the stranger in our midst as one of our own and when programs that help prevent kids from going to bed hungry are being cut. The list goes on and those us for whom Isaiah’s words ring true have an obligation to speak out.

Our Social Advocacy Group is still getting organized and I invite you to be part of it.

Standing on the shoulders of these prophets, our congregation, I believe, takes to heart these important teachings. I know this. I cherish this. And not a day goes by that I am not grateful to be able to serve as rabbi of Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel.
ICE CREAM SHABBAT

Friday, June 22
Friday, July 27
&
Friday, August 24
Service begins at 6pm

ice cream truck to follow services -- our treat!
This past month, our world lost one of its best; Rabbi Aaron Panken, PhD, who died tragically in a plane crash at the age of 53. Rabbi Panken was many things to many people; he was a professor of Second Temple Literature, he was the 12th President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religious, he was a loving father, husband, and friend.

To me, he was a scholar I deeply respected, a teacher who opened my eyes to the world of Talmud, and a mentor I trusted with my worries as a rabbi-to-be. To everyone who knew him though, he was a true mensch; he was warm, accessible, and generous with his time and his spirit, always willing to make the time for you no matter who you were. It is not an understatement to say that Rabbi Panken exemplified everything a rabbi should be, and the kind of rabbi I aspire to be every day.

There is an old teaching from Jewish mysticism about the “lamed-vavniks” - 36 truly righteous souls who inhabit the world at any given time and maintain the world’s balance of goodness and justice. This teaching is drawn from the Babylonian Talmud, where we read in Sanhedrin 97a: “Rabbi Abaye said: The world has no fewer than thirty-six righteous people in each generation who merit to greet the Divine Presence, as it is stated in Isaiah 30.18: “Happy are all they who wait for Him.”

The world “him,” in Hebrew, is lo. Every Hebrew letter carries a numerical value, ascribed through a system called gematria. These mystics derived that since the numerical value of lo, spelled lamed-vav, is 36, then there must be 36 of these lamed-vavniks who merit a face-to-face with God in each generation. The mystics taught that no one knows who these 36 people are, and the lamed-vavniks themselves may not even know that they carry this special designation.

As I, and so many others, have mourned the loss of Rabbi Panken, it’s been hard to describe the enormity of the void left in his absence. Then I realized: he was a lamed-vavnik. Whether we believe the factuality of the lamed-vavniks or not, if there are unique souls in the world by whose merit we all would be lucky to be judged, Rabbi Panken was one of them. His life was a source of blessing not just to our Reform Jewish family, but truly, I believe, to the human family as a whole. Whether you knew him or not, the world is a better place because he was in it.

So what happens when a lamed-vavnik dies? Some believe that another person immediately assumes his/her place; perhaps a new baby, or perhaps one of us. We can bring honor to Rabbi Panken’s all-too-short life, and to his unfinished work, if we each act as if we might be worthy of his place amongst the 36, and if the person next to us might be worthy as well. In the Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 1.12 teaches us to “be among the disciples of Aaron by loving peace and pursuing peace, loving all of the earth’s creatures and bringing them closer to the values of Torah.”

Whether you knew him or not, each of us can aspire to be like the disciples of Aaron, working to bring greater love, peace, and Torah to our world. If we do so, any one of us could be a lamed-vavnik, and it would certainly a fitting tribute to Rabbi Aaron Panken’s life.

Zecher tzaddik liv’racha - may the memory of the righteous be an abiding blessing to us all.

B’Yedidut - In Friendship,
Rabbi Allie Klein
As a teacher, one never really knows the impact a lesson or some words will have on a child. The question I need to remember to ask myself is this: Is the lesson I’m teaching, and the point I’m trying to make, the same lesson that the children are learning?

Case in point: A colleague told me about the first time she found herself in front of a group of preschoolers to tell a bible story. Since she had no experience telling a story other than reading from a book, and she had a few concerns. What if she couldn’t remember the order of the story or one of the main characters? What if her nervousness took over and she forgot the key point of the story? What if she stumbled over her words? What if she couldn’t keep the children’s attention? What if she bombed? So she practiced her story and rehearsed in front of her peers until she felt fairly confident with her material.

As she gathered the small crowd of 25 children, her anxiety rose. She hesitantly began her tale with a soft voice and not much enthusiasm. Her greatest fears were realized; the children were spinning around the floor, looking everywhere but at her, and generally seemed disinterested in what she had to say. Except for one little girl in the front row who had her eyes glued to that newbie teacher. That was all the encouragement my friend needed to become a bit more animated, raising her voice a little, and using her hands to make a point. And the little girl was still watching closely, intently. My friend plowed on and finally, after 5 VERY long minutes, the grueling ordeal was over. And still, the little girl watched her. Feeling very proud of herself, the educator approached the little girl and said, “Thank you for paying attention so closely to my story. You look like you really enjoyed it” To which the child responded, “Oh, I wasn’t listening to the story. I was looking at your bracelets. They’re beautiful.”

Perhaps if the teacher had planned her lesson around the developmental needs and abilities of the children instead of on her own fears and worries, the lesson would have had a better outcome. Maybe the children would have been more engaged had they been asked to participate in the story in some way. They could have been asked to move around the room, repeat key phrases, make a special sound; anything that would entice a preschooler to focus on the task at hand.

All of us, teachers and parents alike, need to remember to check in with the children in our care to see if they are learning what we are teaching, and if what we are teaching is age-appropriate. As my friend has learned over time, if one knows what the intent of the lesson is, what that key point is, then it is easier to build a good framework in which children will hear the message.

Carol Paster
Preschool Director

From the Cantor’s Study

Summer. Finally.

Every year I think I’m going to have lots of time to simply relax and watch my kids run around the yard, to knit, and to catch up with friends and family. Inevitably my plans get derailed by the minutiae of life. In the past I have occasionally resented the intrusion of regular small chores into my long days of sun and family, but I’ve recently had a change of heart.

Just before Shavuot, two beloved members of our community could be found in the temple kitchen busily polishing the silver that adorns our Torahs. They were getting the crowns and breast plates and yads ready for the Festival. These two women, Matty Goldberg and Ann Merin among others, have done this task year after year, holiday after holiday. (See photo, page 6) Both of them have earned their leisure and yet they still make time for this task that could be called obnoxious but could also be seen as a real gift of their time. Something that we all get to enjoy.

One of my favorite concepts in Judaism is called Chiddur Mitzvah, to beautify a mitzvah. The idea is that it’s not enough to simply accomplish a mitzvah. We must also make it beautiful. This elevates our deeds to a different level. For example, we don’t just wrap our Torah’s in a protective cover, we make that cover a piece of art. We don’t just say the words from our prayer books, we add beautiful music.

A few months ago Cantor Finn and I talked about this concept with our 9th grade students as we were making banana bread for the Interfaith Food Pantry of the Oranges. The students understood that we could have collected food. Dayenu. But we went a step further and made something. Dayenu. But to our homemade treat we also added chocolate chips because we thought that the recipients of our efforts would just like it more. It’s that extra step that gets us to the idea of Chiddur Mitzvah.

And so this summer I have decided to bring this idea into my daily, not just Jewish, life. I will try my best to take the example of Matty and Ann and look at the daily tasks that allow my family to enjoy our long days together as not so much drudgery but as an opportunity to bring a little order to our world and therefor a bit more beauty and enjoyment.

From my family to yours, I wish you a great summer filled with blessings both large and small.

Cantor Rebecca Moses
Thank you Leslie…

As I conclude my two-year Presidency there are so many people I am grateful to for the passion and commitment they pour into TSTI. But there is someone very important I want to highlight…

Everyone connected to TSTI has likely met Leslie Sporn, our Executive Director, but I’m not sure everyone knows just how important she is to the health and strength of our beloved temple, the future of our community’s connection to Judaism, and to me personally.

Her guiding motivation stems from a heartfelt, consuming passion for TSTI’s future as our local contribution to the overall future of the Jews and Judaism. She knows that we must welcome, enable, nurture and support our Jewish community by meeting them where they are, folding them in to our synagogue and developing their active participation – an important way the next generations will sustain this lineage.

Having recently entered her 18th year with us, of course Leslie has spent her days (and many nights and weekends) thinking about and working on every detail of keeping TSTI up and running. She puts her heart and keen intelligence into everything from brainstorming our overall mission, to compassionately managing our staff, to fixing leaking roofs, to budgeting, to helping prospective members find a financial way forward…But I can tell you that her work is much more than a job description to her.

Her dedication to TSTI stems from a wholehearted deep place inside that needs to further and nurture and enhance and protect our community’s connection to Judaism – our part of the greater whole. Often our discussions about TSTI come back around to the deeper, “Is this good for the Jews and our collective multi-generational survival?”

But here’s the personal part… where my personal thanks and gratitude pale in comparison to the gift Leslie has given me over many years… I believe that in addition to her own laser-focused safeguarding of TSTI, perhaps the most long-lasting influence on our future is the time and wisdom she gives to develop our lay leadership. She consistently guides us to refine our skills through her examples of compassion, strength of conviction, and quick wit.

It’s likely that I was pre-disposed to wind my way through temple leadership; I grew up in a family of temple leaders… But I can tell you that this is also in large part to my relationship with Leslie over the last 10+ years. Her mentoring and honest nurturing of me is continuously influential on how I think about both the future and the past when evaluating how to make decisions about the present. Leslie pushes and guides me, and acts as a sounding board every day. She is an enormous part of what has allowed me to grow as a temple leader and enjoy my successful tenure for the last few years. And I also just really love talking to her.

Thank you Leslie…

Outgoing President, Sue Wishnow

As this year winds up, I have just completed my ninth year teaching fourth grade in the Linda and Rudy Slucker Religious School of Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel. I have had the privilege of watching my first class of fourth graders graduate from Hebrew High. After hearing them speak at their graduation on May 4, I went back into my files and pulled their fourth grade report cards. What I had said then about them – “always has something interesting to say,” “participates actively,” “irrepressible good humor,” “made thoughtful comments in class,” “is interested in the material,” and “has an original mind” – still applies remarkably well.

The seniors told us about their Jewish Journeys. They spoke about learning “the true value of community” with one student sharing his memory of his first day of third grade, his Consecration, and how that made him “feel totally supported,” and what a unique and special feeling that was for him. Another spoke of her journey starting with “my mother is Jewish,” and how her engagement with our community helped her to arrive at “I am Jewish.” While one shared while at nine years old Temple, “was not her favorite place,” the community was open and accepting of her as she found her points of connection. By Hebrew High she was an eager participant.

Most talked about the clergy, and the support and accessibility they found here. Many also talked about teachers and other members of the community who they met along the way. People who opened their hearts and their homes, created memories of Haggadah coloring books and cow disease stickers and Shabbat and Purim and Chanukah. Several spoke of learning how to “connect Jewish values to the world,” of tzedakah and social action and social justice.

In the end, though, the most eloquent thing I heard was, “thank you.” Thank you for the community, thank you for the support, thank you for being there even when the individual student could not, thank you for the kindergarteners he got to teach, thank you for the values they encountered. Thank you for being TSTI.

So, as I begin my next phase of my own journey as President of TSTI, I want to steal a bit (or a whole Bulletin article) from our seniors and say thank you to TSTI as well. Thank you for sharing (and continuing to share) your children with me. Thank you for all the tasks you have helped with (and will be helping with in these next two years). Thank you for being the community that makes so many and diverse Jewish journeys possible.

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While you are reading this, my husband and I will be celebrating our 35th Anniversary with a European trip that includes Vienna, Prague and Budapest. While we will see many sites, we are taking a Jewish Heritage Tour in each city to get a feel for both former and current Jewish life in these beautiful cities. I have been doing a bit of research on the history of each Jewish community to prepare for the trip. The ravages of war has taken a toll on each city, but there are still many opportunities to experience Jewish life in each.

The Jewish community was known to have been established in Vienna during the Middle Ages. Despite two major expulsions, there was always a large community of Jews in Vienna, with the total peaking at 185,000 before the war. After 1945, a small but active Jewish community reestablished itself; there are about 12,000 Jews who live there now. The focal site of Religious life is the City Temple, known as the Stadttempel, a beautiful, bustling tourist site, with an active congregation. This is the only temple to have survived Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass in 1938.

There are records that indicate that Jews were settled in Budapest since the 13th century. Jews were integral members of the community, and by 1930, Jews represented about 5% of the total population. Since the fall of communism in 1989, there has been a modest spiritual revival. In the Jewish Quarter located near the city’s center, there are both faded as well as many visible remnants of prosperous Jewish lives, as well as thriving new shops and cafes owned by young Jews. The centerpiece of the quarter is the largest synagogue in Europe, the magnificent Dohany Street Synagogue.

Documentary evidence reveals that Jews have lived in Prague since 970 C.E. By the end of the 11th century, a Jewish community had been fully established. Following World War II, about 15,000 Czech Jews remained. By 1950, half of them emigrated to Israel. A revival of Jewish life is occurring. Many Jews found it easier to be quiet and hide their identity during the Communist era and so many people learned of being Jewish only after 1989. The average age in Prague’s Jewish community has dropped from 70 (the average age in the 1980s) to about 55 because of increased involvement of younger Jews. There are seven synagogues open today in Prague; during the Nazi era all seven were used to store Judaica items. Five of those synagogues can be found in the remains of the ghetto, including the Altneuschul (Old-New Synagogue), the oldest functioning synagogue in Europe.
June B’nai Mitzvah

Isaac Samuel Fleischer
June 2, 2018
Isaac is the son of Sandy and Evan Fleischer, brother of Charlie Fleischer, and grandson of Judy and Jerry Fleischer and Marcia Kraut.
Mitzvah Project: Isaac is collecting new and used baseball equipment for “Pitch in for Baseball” benefiting players who would not otherwise have gear. He is also raising money for JNF’s “Project Baseball” to help build baseball fields in Israel.

Abigail Rose Freeman
June 2, 2018
Abby is the daughter of Tracy and Chad Freeman, sister of Hailey, and granddaughter of Estelle and Ronald Freeman and Marilyn Wolchock.
Mitzvah Project: Abby will hold a garage sale to benefit the Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter.

Siena Elizabeth Kaplan
Alexa Rose Kaplan
June 9, 2018
Siena and Alexa are daughters of Rachel and Russell Kaplan, sisters of Chloe, and granddaughters of Norma and Joseph Fisch and Sylvia and Kenneth Kaplan.
Siena’s Mitzvah Project: Siena is knitting blankets to distribute to cancer patients, and is encouraging friends to join her in this project.
Alexa’s Mitzvah Project: Alexa has been volunteering with the Jewish Relief Agency, packing and distributing food to those in need in the MetroWest Community. Both Alexa and Siena will be visiting Israel for the first time and plan to spend a day volunteering with an Israeli agency.

Zachary Sutter Levine
June 9, 2018
Zach is the son of Lisa and Seth Levine, brother of Dan and Josh; and grandson of Margo and Alan Levine and Jenetta and Tom Titon.
Mitzvah Project: Zach ran a 5K race to raise money for the Interfaith Food Pantry of the Oranges. He also interviewed a survivor of the Holocaust and wrote about his life.

Russell Everett Williams
June 16, 2018
Russell is the son of Jill and David Williams, brother of Jonah and Aaron, and grandson of Walter and Naomi Nazimowitz.
Mitzvah Project: Russell participated in a walk-a-thon to raise money for the Make a Wish Foundation, helping very ill children to have a special dream come true.

Fiona Jo Kreizman
Dashiel Curtis Kreizman
June 16, 2018
Fiona and Dash are children of Natasha and David Kreizman, siblings of Oliver, and grandchildren of Arlene and David Katzive and Joan and Ira Kreizman.
Fiona’s Mitzvah Project: Fiona raised money for “Girl Be Heard” an organization that empowers girls from difficult backgrounds through original theater. Dash’s Mitzvah Project: Dash collected food for the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and volunteered by sorting and packaging food to be shipped to other help centers. Both Fiona and Dash plan to volunteer at the Jewish Nursing and Rehabilitation Center of Freehold, assisting and entertaining seniors.

All in the Family
Mazel tov to:

Leslie Kantor on her marriage to Joe Koridek.
Carol and Sanford Cooper on the July marriage of their daughter Alissa, to Eric Stein.
Carol and Bill Schifffman on the July marriage of their daughter, Rachel to Steve Chassen.
Phoebe and Marvin Schwinder on his birth of a grandson, Asa Bernard Galante. Parents are Laura Schwinder and Gianni Galante.
Renee Spelman on the engagement of her son David’s engagement to Carolyn Rauch, and her son William’s engagement to Judy Jansen. David and William are also the sons of the late Edmund Spelman.
Susan Siegeltuch on her daughter, Ariana’s completed residency in Pediatrics at Seattle Children’s Hospital.
Loved Ones Remembered

Contributions in memory of loved ones are acts of loving kindness.
We are grateful for your generous support of Temple through various Temple Funds

Edith Shaw
Remembered by
Arlene Braffman
Marsha Bratter
Remembered by
Philip Bratter
Hilda Marudyks
Remembered by
Bonnie Brauner
Jules Brick
Remembered by
Michael Brick
Bob Brody
Remembered by
Judith Brody
Miriam Rosen
Remembered by
Amy Rosen Connelly
Irwin Cutler
Remembered by
Jacqueline Cutler
Emanuel Yeskel
Remembered by
Helen Decter
Remembered by
Jane & Ed Decter
John Donofrio
Remembered by
Ellen H. Donofrio
Murry Lerner
Remembered by
Deborah Duane
Michael J. Elson
Aaron Elson
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Rachel Rothman
Harvey Feigenbaum
Remembered by
Larry Feigenbaum
Robert Felsenhald, Sr.
Remembered by
Susan Felsenhald
Benjamin Galen
Remembered by
Susan Felsenhald
David Katz
Remembered by
Laura Glasgall
Frieda Kessman
Remembered by
Muriel Goldstein
John Edelstein
Richard Gross
Marian Caplin
Remembered by
Sheldon Gross
Ben Joseph
Remembered by
Phyllis Joseph
Edith Rose
Remembered by
Larry & Judy Kantor
Celia Weinberg
Remembered by
Linda Katz
David Odra
Remembered by
Ita Leach
Dolly Fonorow
Remembered by
David Leit
Leon Chazanow
Nina Marshall Koonz
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Sydney Marshall
Mintsy Agin
Remembered by
Ellen Nolf
George Perlman
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William Perlman
Lester Pfeffer
Sol Feig
Remembered by
Sylvia Pfeffer
Marilyn Podell
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Remembered by
Hope Pomerantz
Dr. William Pomerantz
Barbara Pomerantz
Remembered by
Steven Pomerantz
Muriel Lewis
Remembered by
Ellen Lewis Rice
George Rosenberg
Remembered by
Fred Rosenberg
Toby Safris
Remembered by
Michael Safris
Ruth Salowe
Remembered by
Phyllis Salowe-Kaye
Michael Guterman
Remembered by
Deanna Schey
Bernard Hirshfield
Remembered by
Barbara Schwartz
Tom Slutsker
Remembered by
Sheila Slutsker
Alex Schwartzstein
Remembered by
Doris Spector
Marvin Magaliner
Remembered by
Jillian Stone
Samuel Turen
Remembered by
Elaine Turen
Jason S. Weil
Remembered by
Marjorie Weil
Irving Smith
Remembered by
Lee Weinberg
Moses Weinstein
Laura Weinstein
Remembered by
Jack Weinstein

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TRIBUTES

TEMPLE FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Father of Stephanie Vanderbeck
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Mother of Suzanne Berson
Helene & Jack Fersko
Esther Fisher, sister of Ruth Tenner
Jesse, Leslie & Ariel Bayer
Sharon & Roger Sachs
Ellen & Jay Rice
Robert & Jamie Propper
Bernard Lakritz
Helene & Jack Fersko
Sheldon Boden, father of Mitch Boden
Ellen & Jay Rice
Diane Denburg
Frank Davis
Marvin Zaik, father of Glenn Zaik
Larry & Judy Kantor

IN HONOR OF
Special birthday for Frank Davis
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Speedy recovery to Lew Garely
PrimeConnection

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IN MEMORY OF
DISCRETIONARY FUND

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FUND FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

IN MEMORY OF
Geraldine Kalan, mother-in-law of
Audrey Kalan

Sydne & Elliot Sommer
Statements for the 2018-19 membership year are in the mail. Members 75 years and older can request a 10% reduction in their membership dues by calling Leslie Sporn.
PrimeConnection Happenings

PrimeConnection Wraps Up a Successful First Year

On Sunday, May 6, PrimeConnection hosted a successful Pita Party, attended by more than 40 members, and featuring a dazzling array of Middle Eastern foods, including hummus, baba ghanoush and more, all complementing the evening’s Adult Education documentary, “Letters From Baghdad” that followed. A surprise highlight was a decorated chocolate cake to celebrate the one-year anniversary of our popular and successful group. The event was chaired by Alice and Mel Prager, with assistance from Richard Koch, Ellen Barocas and Rita Marshall.

In this important primary year, PrimeConnection was proud to partner with the League of Women Voters to sponsor an educational forum on May 23 at the Livingston Community Center. District 11 candidates running in the Tuesday, June 5, primary were on hand to help educate the public about the importance of the upcoming election. The forum was organized by Rita Marshall with help from Lois Rose and Ellen Barocas.

We urge you: Don’t forget to vote on Tuesday, June 5.

Wishing everyone a relaxing summer and looking forward to a year filled with exciting PrimeConnection events.

Janet Perlman

Discover the Meadowlands with (RE)Connection

Do you think you know the Meadowlands as seen from the Turnpike, the train or on the Sopranos?

You will change your mind when we discover the lower Hackensack River and the wetlands of the Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management area as we journey on a pontoon boat through the Meadowlands. Our private trip will be narrated by a Hackensack Riverkeeper captain who will guide us through areas teeming with a staggering amount of wildlife including shore birds, water fowl, herons, raptors and terrapins.

The pontoon boats only hold 12 passengers and due to anticipated interest we will offer this opportunity twice, on Saturday June 23rd at 3.00 pm and on Sunday July 15 at 6.00 pm.

To sign up contact Diana Galer-Jaffé at dgalerj@icloud.com

Costs: $36 per person.
Please indicate if you can bring wine/beers/cold drinks/snacks to enjoy on the boat ride.
Meeting time and location to follow
Indicate your first and second choice for departure date.

In Memoriam

ROBERT BOYLE
Father of Jodi Boyle

LEONARD COHEN
Father of Barry Cohen

ROSSYN FINK
Wife of Leon Fink

GERALDINE KALAN
Mother-in-law of Audrey Kalan

ERLE LEVY
Father of Laura Levy

BEA USDIN
Aunt of Beth Haiet Meyer

MARVIN ZALK
Father of Glenn Zalk

May their memories be for a blessing
The Apter family returns to Maplewood, continuing to serve the Jewish Community for four generations.

Services available from $4695*
Up to a $500 donation back to Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel from each funeral.
In home and at need arrangements available from an Apter family member.

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