Rabbi’s Reflections: 3 Questions about TBI’s Talmud Study Group

By: Rabbi David Finkelstein

The Talmud Study Group has been meeting at TBI once a month since November 2018. Each session focuses on one Talmudic discussion. The group has developed a steady following of engaged and enthusiastic participants, and I’d like the group to grow. Here are some answers to questions you may have about the group. I hope you will consider joining us on one of our upcoming Wednesday evening sessions.

What is the Talmud?

We all know about the Written Torah, the basis of which is the Five Books of Moses, read every Shabbat in synagogue. The Talmud, on the other hand, is part of the Oral Torah, which evolves and continues to grow. Comprised of Mishnah (compiled c. 200 C.E.) and Gemara (completed c. 600 C.E.), the Talmud is the basis for halakhah, or Jewish law. The (Continued on page 8)

Mark’s Remarks: Foods For Thought

By: Mark Frydenberg

Round challah and apples and honey aren’t the only symbolic foods for Rosh Hashanah. So are dates, pomegranates, apples, gourds, leeks, beets, and even fish heads. The Hebrew names of these foods symbolize our wishes for many good things in the year ahead, or our hopes that bad thing don’t happen to us but happen to our enemies instead.

The Sephardic machzor edited by Rabbi David deSola Pool provides pun-filled translations for intentions to say before eating each of these foods at a Rosh Hashanah Seder. Unlike a Passover Seder, a Rosh Hashanah Seder is short – no songs or stories. Kiddush, Motzi, a sentence to say about each food, and then we eat it.

(Continued on page 3)
Join our Drive to Help Our Neighbors

The Community Day Center (CDC), the only day shelter for the homeless in MetroWest Boston, continues to be in need new underwear and socks as well as toiletries like toothpaste and deodorant. Temple Beth Israel has been supporting this valuable organization for well over a year now. Your donations have been greatly appreciated. They have gone directly to their clients in need immediately. Please leave your donation in the box near the coat room. Brad Baker delivers from TBI to the CDC on a regular basis.

Thank you,

News from the Social Justice Committee

The members of the Social Justice Committee would like to thank the Board of Directors and the congregants who helped us to become a standing committee at TBI.

We continue to support the Community Day Center, Africano and More Than Words and our newest project, Food Access, which helps bring farm fresh vegetables to families around Waltham.

The Community Day Center, a program for the homeless in Waltham has some immediate needs. They need men’s shoes, T-shirts, underwear, and shorts. In general, we always have a need for disposable razors, travel-size deodorant, fixodent dental adhesive, and round-trip T and bus passes (for 1 trip only). And for one guest, specifically, who is struggling with liver failure, we desperately need XL men’s Depends.

Thank you for your support.
We begin with three fruits that grow on trees: dates, pomegranates, and apples. The Hebrew word for date is *tamar*, which reminds us of the Hebrew verb that means “to cease to exist” – which we want to happen to our enemies. The English playfully reads: “As we eat this date, may we date the New Year that is beginning as one of happiness and blessing and peace for all humankind.” We eat a pomegranate, because of its numerous seeds, which represent our wish for an abundance of good deeds in the year to come. The third fruit of the tree is the apple dipped in honey, for a sweet year.

Next come three fruits of the earth, whose Hebrew names are related to Hebrew words for destruction. *Kra* (a pumpkin, or gourd) means to rip up – which we wish for any evil decree that may come before us in the coming year; *kartey* (leeks), means to cut off – which we hope will happen to our enemies, and *silka* (beets) which means to banish, is what we hope will happen to all who wish us evil. When eating the gourd, we say: "May the coming year grow as a gourd in fullness of blessing. If enemies gird at us, may You guard us as we eat this gourd.” For leeks, "Like we eat this leek, may our luck never lack." And for beets: "As we bite this beet, may those who have beaten us beat to cover in the coming year."

For the fish or sheep's head (or we'll probably have a vegetarian version, a head of lettuce!) we offer the blessing that in the new year, we should be at the head of things, and not the tail.

We will try to incorporate many of these delicacies and other holiday favorites (such as chicken, brisket, and potato kugel) in our first ever Erev Rosh Hashanah dinner before evening services on Sunday September 29. Dinner will begin at 5:30 and services will start at 7:30 pm. I hope you'll join us for a fun-filled dinner with lots of foods for thought.
Shabbat and Holiday Evening Services, Dinners

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, Aug. 9</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Services (no dinner)</td>
<td>Come and share a melody or learn a few new ones.</td>
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</table>
| Friday, Aug. 23 | 6:30 pm      | Shabbat Services and Dinner                                          | **Menu:** Stuffed Shells, Salad, Garlic Bread, Desserts  
Please contact the Temple office if you have special dietary requirements. Vegetarian / non-dairy options will be available at all meals. Cost for dinner is $18 per adult, $40 per family if paid by Weds. before the dinner. $21 per adult, $45 per family for later reservations.  
Register online at [http://tbiwaltham.org](http://tbiwaltham.org) or contact the Temple office to sign up. Prospective members welcome as our guests. |
| Sunday, Sept. 29 | 5:30 pm      | Rosh Hashanah Dinner BEFORE Services                                | **Menu:** Chicken, Brisket, Potato Kugel, and a Sweet New Year  
Please contact the Temple office if you have special dietary requirements. Vegetarian / non-dairy options will be available at all meals. Cost for dinner is $25 per adult, $54 per family if paid by Weds. before the dinner. $30 per adult, $60 per family for later reservations.  
Register online at [http://tbiwaltham.org](http://tbiwaltham.org) or contact the Temple office to sign up. |

TBI Bookshelf by Marilyn Racette

In 1945 some 300 Holocaust survivors, children who were to be on the first flight from Prague to England, were posed for a photograph in front of a fountain. Mark’s father is one of the youngsters posed in front of that fountain. At the very end of June, Mark Frydenberg shared slides of his recent trip to Prague, where he attended a reunion of some of the survivors, their children and grandchildren. In *The Boys: The Story of 732 Young Concentration Camp Survivors* author Martin Gilbert tells their story in their own voices, the years of horror, but also their miraculous and triumphant survival, and the bonds of friendship they forged. You can find *The Boys* in the biography section.

Membership Committee

The next Membership Committee meeting will be on Sunday, August 25th at the home of Mila and Vadim Maystrovsky 101 Kings Grant Rd, Weston) at 1:00 pm.

The committee is planning for an open house on September 8 for prospective members. Please plan to attend! Please contact Mila Maystrovsky with your ideas and suggestions.

RSVP to Mila Maystrovsky  
ramilaMay@gmail.com  
781-439-7135
Looking for a synagogue where you can make a difference? Visit Temple Beth Israel’s Open House.

- Meet Rabbi David Finkelstein, Members, and Board of Directors
- Find out about our warm and welcoming community
- Learn about:
  - Educational, social, cultural, and social justice events
  - Weekday, Shabbat, and Holiday services
  - Programs for families, children, and teens
  - Personalized Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies
- Refreshments served, child care available

**Temple Beth Israel** is an egalitarian, traditional synagogue welcoming all who seek to enrich their Jewish lives. We are a community that celebrates Shabbat, holidays, and life’s daily happenings together; we embrace learning, social, and spiritual growth, and offer a meaningful Jewish presence in the Waltham area. We hold morning minyan on Monday and Thursdays, Shabbat evening services twice monthly, and weekly Shabbat morning services followed by a community luncheon.

All are welcome.

Visitors are welcome to join us for the High Holy Days at no cost. Donations appreciated.

When: Sunday, September 8, 2019, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

Where: Temple Beth Israel is located at 25 Harvard Street, Waltham, MA, opposite Hannaford Supermarket. Parking is available. Temple Beth Israel is accessible via an outside ramp to the lobby, and a lift from the lobby to the social hall.

RSVP or for more information: office@tbiwaltham.org or 781-894-5146

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**Membership Renewal**

Members should have received a letter and annual membership renewal form in the mail in early July. Please complete the membership form and return it to the Temple Office with your payment before August 20. You can also download a copy of this form from www.tbiwaltham.org, fill it out, and return it in person, by mail or email. Thank you for renewing your membership to Temple Beth Israel!
## August Calendar

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<td>Erev Rosh HaShanah Dinner and Service</td>
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<td>Rosh HaShanah Day 1</td>
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<td>Rosh HaShanah Day 2</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 1</td>
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<td>Shabbat Shuva</td>
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<td>Shabbat morning service</td>
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<td>Cemetery Memorial Service</td>
<td>Sunday, October 6</td>
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<td>Service at Beth Israel Memorial Park</td>
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<td>Erev Yom Kippur</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 8</td>
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<td>Kol Nidre Service</td>
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<td>Build the Sukkah</td>
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<td>Erev Sukkot</td>
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<td>Family Event: Decorate the Sukkah</td>
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<td>Sukkot Yom Tov Day 1</td>
<td>Monday, October 14</td>
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<td>Sukkot Yom Tov Day 2</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 15</td>
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<td>Service and Dinner in the Sukkah</td>
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<td>Evening Service and Dinner in the Sukkah</td>
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<td>Hol HaMoed Sukkot</td>
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<td>Shabbat morning service/Kohelet</td>
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<td>Shabbat Morning</td>
<td>Saturday, October 19</td>
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<td>Shemini Atzeret</td>
<td>Monday, October 21</td>
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<td>Simchat Torah Evening</td>
<td>Monday, October 21</td>
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<td>Family Event: Snack and Torah Tour</td>
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<td>Evening Service/Dancing with Torah</td>
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<td>Simchat Torah Morning</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 22</td>
<td>7:00am</td>
<td>Morning Service: Complete Torah Cycle and Begin Bereishit/Genesis</td>
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<td>Saturday, October 26</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Shabbat Morning Services</td>
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Times and Events are subject to change. Please see our website calendar for details.
Rabbi’s Reflections:

(Continued from page 1)

earliest law codes in Judaism - books which teach us how Jews prayed, observed holidays, and conducted Jewish society more generally - relied almost completely on the Talmud for their rulings. But the Talmud is not only a book of legal conversations. The legal conversations are illuminated, supported and often challenged by ethical and inspirational teachings, Biblical interpretations, and stories about the lives of the rabbis.

What sorts of texts do you study in the group?

The Talmudic discussion (sugiyot) we studied most recently was on the subject “When Divine Commands Threaten Human Dignity,” from Berakhot 19b-20a. The Mishnah teaches that when a loved one has died but has not been buried yet, the mourner (onen) is exempt from the obligation to recite the Shema. The implication is that a burial is a precious and limited window for upholding the dignity of the deceased – which supercedes even some of our most cherished commandments. The Gemara (commentary on the Mishnah) that follows raises many instances of this same key principle: human dignity is so important that it takes precedence over some commandments, even negative commandments stated explicitly in the written Torah.

The Gemara takes us to surprising, entertaining and sometimes shocking places in its exploration of the legal significance of human dignity. It fills our heads with images of priests jumping over coffins to greet kings and rabbis doing weird things in God’s name. Were the ancient rabbis models of this principle? Does the principle of human dignity mean the same to us today as it meant to the ancient rabbis? At the end our exploration, we spoke about how the principle of human dignity was used in 2006 by a team of Conservative rabbis to argue that gay men should be permitted to become rabbis.

Why is this called a study group and not a class?

In order to empower participants in their own learning. The Talmud presents discussions, very often without a conclusion. Opinions are offered, rejected, fine-tuned, and elaborated on. Each Talmudic discussion is curated to lead its readers into certain questions in a particular order. But the Talmud is like dry oats. It becomes truly nourishing only when the participants add water by asking one another how the Talmudic discussion relates to contemporary life. TBI offers a Talmud Study Group rather than a class in order to empower participants to discover a spiritual-intellectual process for themselves, with the rabbi as a guide. The Talmud study group is the closest thing TBI has to a beit midrash or a yeshivah.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Talmud Study Group sessions on Wednesday evenings August 14 and September 4, 7:00-8:30pm.

Rabbi David

Save the Date

Sunday Morning - October 27 10:00 am: Inclusion at TBI: A Discussion of the TBI Experience - Details to come.
August Yahrzeits

Andrew Wolf Decker  Tamuz 29  1-Aug
Esther Canter  Tamuz 29  1-Aug
Abraham Caplan  Tamuz 29  1-Aug
Gladya Milesky  Av 01  2-Aug
Sylvia Levin  Av 02  3-Aug
Rita Woolf  Av 02  3-Aug
Fannie Weiner  Av 02  3-Aug
Maurice Tushin  Av 03  4-Aug
Sylvia Seidman  Av 04  5-Aug
Benjamin Sheer  Av 04  5-Aug
Samuel Elkins  Av 04  5-Aug
Mary Simon  Av 04  5-Aug
Sarah Pearl Becker  Av 05  6-Aug
Joseph Bloomthal  Av 05  6-Aug
Abraham Isaac Pedell  Av 06  7-Aug
Roberta Lederman  Av 06  7-Aug
Aaron Sheer  Av 07  8-Aug
Benjamin Smith  Av 08  9-Aug
Etta Meyerovitz  Av 08  9-Aug
Benjamin Lerman  Av 08  9-Aug
Joseph Kaplan  Av 08  9-Aug
Chaya Zacharewich  Av 09  10-Aug
Paul Lewis Ginsburg  Av 09  10-Aug
Hyman Brown  Av 09  10-Aug
Rachel Leah Ingber  Av 09  10-Aug
Ida Katz  Av 10  11-Aug
Bernard Bloomenthal  Av 11  12-Aug
Paul Onigman  Av 11  12-Aug
Howard Mermelstein  Av 12  13-Aug
Evelyn Forbes  Av 12  13-Aug
Albert Chorney  Av 12  13-Aug
Coleman Wexler  Av 14  15-Aug
Ellen Leavy  Av 15  16-Aug
Manehan Snyder  Av 16  17-Aug
Dina Ella Backer  Av 17  18-Aug
Fannie Zelinetsky  Av 17  18-Aug
Karl Meiselman  Av 17  18-Aug
Samuel Tatelman  Av 18  19-Aug
Nathan Ullian  Av 18  19-Aug
Molly Sheer  Av 19  20-Aug
Mulcan bat Yosef  Av 19  20-Aug
Sadye Canter  Av 19  20-Aug
Hannah Mollie Sheer  Av 19  20-Aug
Harold Bloom  Av 19  20-Aug
Hyman Kulin  Av 20  21-Aug
Adele Ullian  Av 20  21-Aug
Esther Davidson  Av 20  21-Aug
Helene Altman  Av 20  21-Aug
Barnard Wolfman  Av 20  21-Aug
Samuel Blackstone  Av 21  22-Aug
Nadia Shirazi  Av 21  22-Aug
Israel Pill  Av 22  23-Aug
Anna Esther Katz  Av 22  23-Aug
Moses Nochemsohn  Av 22  23-Aug
Walter Kaplan  Av 25  26-Aug
William Michaelson  Av 26  27-Aug
Harris Greene  Av 26  27-Aug
Katherine Sidell  Av 27  28-Aug
Corinne Freeman  Av 27  28-Aug
Blanche Levison  Av 27  28-Aug
Jacob Merowitz  Av 27  28-Aug
Aaron Mendelsohn  Av 28  29-Aug
Ethel Griff  Av 29  30-Aug
Oscar Davidson  Av 30  31-Aug

To add a name to our yahrzeit list or purchase a plaque for the Memorial Wall, please contact the temple office by phone 781-894-5146 or email office@tbiwaltham.org.

We wish a long life to our members who are observing a Yahrzeit in the coming weeks. If you would like assistance to arrange a minyan so that you may say kaddish for your loved ones, please contact the Temple office at least two days in advance.

- Caroline Nudelman, August 2, in memory of her mother, Rita Wolf
- Ed Kaufman, August 7, in memory of his sister-in-law, Roberta Lederman
- Albert, Paul and David Smith, August 9, in memory of their father, Benjamin Smith
- Donald Kaplan, August 9, in memory of his father, Joseph Kaplan
- Ed Brown, August 10, in memory of his father, Hyman Brown
- Sheila Lesnick, August 13, in memory of her father, Albert Chorney
- Carol Halberstadt, August 17, in memory of Manehan Snyder
- Ed Kaufman, August 19, in memory of his father-in-law, Nathan Ullian
- Julie Gagnon, August 20, in memory of her grandmother, Mulcan bat Yosef
- Patricia McCue, August 20, in memory of her mother, Sadye Canter
- Ed Kaufman, August 21, in memory of his sister-in-law, Adele Ullian
- Dina Baker, August 21, in memory of her father Barnard Wolfman
- Bobby Shirazi, August 22, in memory of his mother, Nadia Shirazi
- Thehma Kennen, August 23, in memory of her mother, Anna Esther Katz
- Lillian Etkind, August 28, in memory of her sister, Katherine Sidell
Study Groups with Rabbi David

**Torah Study Group: Midrash on The Garden of Eden**

Wednesday mornings, 11:00am-12:30pm
at Temple Beth Israel
August 7, and September 11

With the help of Wilfred Shuchat’s book, *The Garden of Eden & the Struggle to Be Human According to the Midrash Rabbah*, we will explore and investigate the Biblical text, practice our own rabbinic close reading skills, and explore rabbinic homilies on chapter 2 of the Book of Genesis (*Bereishit*). All are welcome, Jew and non-Jew, veterans of midrash and beginners alike.

**Talmud Study Group: The Most Significant Talmudic Discussions**

Wednesday evenings, 7:00-8:30pm at
Temple Beth Israel
August 14, and September 4

Beginning in Fall 2008, Professor Jon A. Levisohn of Brandeis University collected 25 responses to the question, “What are the Talmudic sugyot (topics or discussions) that every Jew ought to know, the most famous or significant Talmudic discussions?” The sugyot were chosen “for their theological and ideological significance, their contemporary practical significance, or their centrality in discussions among commentators. Or in some cases, perhaps their idiosyncrasy.” In this long-term learning project, I hope to learn every one of the 67 sugyot in the list. Let’s take the journey together. We’ll learn slowly and deliberately, taking one discussion at a time. There’s no rush. All texts will be provided in the original language (Hebrew and/or Aramaic) and in English translation. All are welcome. No prior familiarity with Talmud required.
Thank You

Donations:
- Irving Malick, in memory of his father, Rubin Malick
- Judith and George Isaac, in memory of her sister, Arlene Resnick

Shabbat Lunch Sponsors:
- August 3 - Diana Korzenik
- August 24 - Bob Macauley
- September 7 - Susan Baron

Please sponsor a Shabbat lunch in honor of your special occasion. Sharing a light lunch after services each week strengthens and creates community. $150 sponsors one Shabbat lunch for 35 to 40 people. Contact the office to reserve your week today!

Condolences
Condolences to Jim, Andrea, and Michaela Baron, and Audrey, Steven, Joshua and Jared Kennen, Don Kaplan and Edward Kaplan, and their families on the passing of Nessie Baron, on July 30, 2019. Nessie was the president of the TBI Sisterhood for many years, and a devoted member of Temple Beth Israel. May her memory be a blessing.

Thank You:
Thanks to those who read Torah, Haftarah, led a portion of the service, or gave a D’var Torah recently:
- Rabbi David Finkelstein
- Rabbi Sara Meirowitz
- Elie Perr
- Phyllis Werlin
- Caroline Nudelman
- Bruce Trager
- Mark Frydenberg
- Catherine Cantrell
- Dina Baker
- Zachary Rae
- Alan Levine

Please email readtorah@tbiwaltham.org to volunteer to read from the Torah or chant a Haftarah, or susan@theindexpros.com if you would like to give a D’var Torah in the coming months.

Security Update
Temple Beth Israel has installed a new security system. A keypad at the front door allows us greater control over who can enter our building. During office hours, please ring the outside doorbell and Andrea will buzz you in.

During services and special events, we will unlock the front doors and a Temple member will greet anyone coming in. If you are willing to be one of our greeters at Friday night or Saturday morning services or other events, please contact Marilyn Racette at marilynracette@gmail.com.

This is a new experience for all of us; thank you for your help in adjusting to it.

Temple Beth Israel Donation Form
For your convenience, please use this form to make your donations and send to: Temple Beth Israel, 25 Harvard Street, Waltham, MA 02453. You may also donate online at http://tbiwaltham.org/donate. The minimum donation amount is $10. Please add additional information on another sheet.

Attached is my donation check in the amount of $________ Please allocate it to the following funds.

___ General Fund ___ Sanctuary Renovations ___ Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund
___ Goldstein Prayerbook Fund ___ Morris Hollender Torah Fund ___ Children’s Services

This donation is being made ___ in honor of ___ in memory of ________________________________.

This donation is made by: ___________________________ Please send acknowledgment to:
Name: ___________________________ Name: ___________________________
Address: ___________________________ Address: ___________________________
August Highlights — Mark Your Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Torah Study with Rabbi David, 11 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Talmud Study with Rabbi David, 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Friday Night Services and Dinner. 6:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prospective members welcome as our guests. Contact the Temple office to sign up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Shabbat Morning Services followed by Lunch. 9:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prospective members welcome!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Welcome to TBI! Open House 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

**Morning Service Times**
Monday and Thursday, 7 am  
Shabbat Morning, 9 am

Please contact the Temple Office in advance if you would like help arranging a minyan because you are saying Kaddish.

Connect with Us
- office@tbiwaltham.org
- www.tbiwaltham.org
- facebook.com/tbiwaltham
- @tbiwaltham