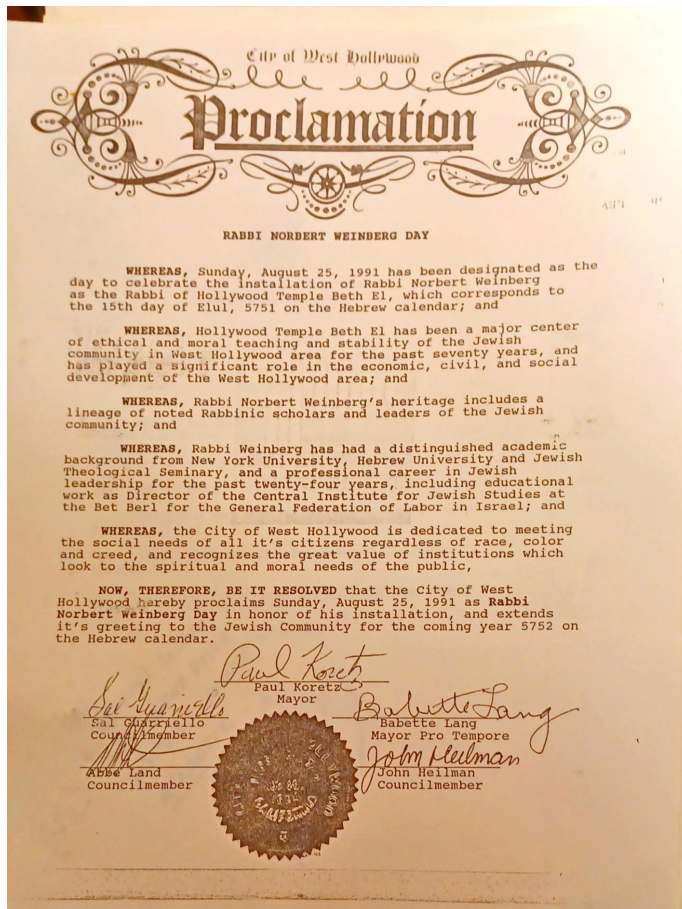


1990-2021

## Rabbi Weinberg articles

Rabbi Weinberg came to Hollywood Temple Beth El after serving as Director of the Center for Jewish Studies at Bet Berl in Israel. Here are selections from press over the years.

First, he was warmly welcomed by West Hollywood City Hall:



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1991 Jerusalem of Gold Celebration with Pat Boone at Hollywood Temple Beth El under the auspices of the World Zionist Organization

## 'Jerusalem of Gold' comes in many colors at choral event

In the finale of the Los Angeles celebration of Jerusalem Day, some 250 singers jammed the stage at Hollywood Temple Beth El and in American-accented Hebrew belted out a stirring rendition of "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" (Jerusalem of Gold).

Giving an extra fillip to the songfest, the vocalists represented an ethnic kaleidoscope of the city — Black, Hispanic, Native American, Filipino, Japanese, Indonesian, Anglo, and even some local Jews and Israelis.

Except for the final number, each ethnic group, represented by different church, had its own moment in the spotlight, alternating its own hymns with Israeli songs.

It is safe to apply the overworked adjective "unique" to the program, for it is doubtful that any among the 900 listeners had ever heard of the Spanish

Seventh Day Adventist Choir in "El Yivneh HaGalil" (God Will Build the Galilee), or the Indonesian Anklung Players render "Hallelujah" on their clapper-like bamboo instruments, or another "Halleluja," this one a Native American song, performed in the Creek language by the Indian Revival Center Choir.

None of the multiethnic choirs had ever sung in a synagogue before, let alone at an emphatically Zionist event. Two large blue-and-white, ceiling-to-floor banners flanked the stage, one with the name of the sponsoring World Zionist Organization, the other proclaiming "And Come With Singing Unto Zion."

Despite the unusual locale and the ethnic tensions frequently found in the Los Angeles politics, leaders of the various groups said they felt excited to be part of the evening and flattered that they had been asked to participate.

Abigail Gonzales, director of the Blessed Hope Choir drawn from four Filipino Seventh Day Adventist churches, said she was recruited by a fellow nurse at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. "Now when I tell my Jewish patients that I can sing a Hebrew song, they get very excited," Gonzales said.

Being in a synagogue "is part of our culture. Where would we be without the Old Testament?" asked Amelia Moody, a willowy blonde who could have stepped out of a Hollywood movie. She said that the 30 youngsters, ranging in age from 6 to 12, of her Southern Baptist Shepherd of the Hills Children's Choir had spent six weeks rehearsing "Jerusalem of Gold" in Hebrew.

Arthur Branch II, director of the African-American Crenshaw-Imperial Foursquare Church Mass Choir, said he had no hesitation whatsoever in partici-



**SHARING THEIR VOICES** - Uri Dromi, back row at left, poses with directors of choirs that represented the ethnic and religious variety of Los Angeles during a "Concert for Jerusalem" on May 6 at Hollywood Temple Beth El.

pating in the event. Alluding to Black-Jewish strains in Los Angeles, Branch said that "politics don't enter into this."

Victor Sitompel of the Indonesian Anklung Players observed that as Seventh Day Adventists, he and his group, "feel a special kinship to the Jewish people because we are all Sabbath keepers."

Singer Pat Boone, who soloed with music from the film "Exodus," described the event as "a microcosm of what must happen around the world," adding, "as a Christian, I am an adopted Jew."

Holding up the Israeli end of the show were Meskee Shibru, a talented Ethiopian immigrant, singer Hedva Amrani and a local singing group, Shir Shalom.

As part of the evening, California Gov. Pete Wilson sent a proclamation hailing Jerusalem as the "truly indivisible, eternal capital of Israel." Mayor Tom Bradley accepted the Jerusalem Award and linked Los Angeles and Jerusalem as "two of the ethnically most diverse communities in the world."

Although the actual date for Jerusalem Day is May 12, the Los Angeles celebration was set one week earlier to allow a

video of the event to be shown on Sunday over Israel Television.

Like other recent imaginative events on the West Coast, the Jerusalem Day celebration was the brainchild of Uri Dromi, the *shaliach* (emissary) of the World Zionist Organization. He and his associate, Rachel Farber, selected and recruited most of the church groups by listening to their performances at an all-day Christmas caroling at the Los Angeles Music Center and during Easter Sunrise services at the Hollywood Bowl.

Next year, on the 25th anniversary of a united Jerusalem, Dromi plans similar celebrations in key cities throughout the United States.

*Typical of caliber of events at Hollywood Temple Beth El*

*Left: Herbert Winberg opened the evening and received the Proclamation from the Mayor*

## Jewish Heroism in Holocaust Recorded

A Proclamation from Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley and a plaque from the City Council were presented on the occasion of the 50th Year of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising at a Sabbath of Heroism Service sponsored by the American Congress of Jewish Survivors of Concentration Camps at Hollywood Temple Beth El, 1317 N. Crescent Heights on Saturday, April 17, 1993.

Mayor Bradley proclaimed the week of April 17-23 as "Week of Heroism" in honor of the spiritual and physical courage of the heroes of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Partisan resistance movements, and Allied Defense forces who fought against Nazism.

The theme of "Not Sheep to the Slaughter—Accounts of Heroism and Resistance" was highlighted by a panel discussion with Holocaust survivors Max Cuckier and Leo Egan on the physical and spiritual courage of the Jewish people in their darkest moment. Joining in the service were representatives of various organizations of Holocaust survivors, veterans of the American and Soviet armed forces, and Deputy Consul Tsurriel Raphael for the State of Israel.

## Hollywood Celebrates Jerusalem- Summer 1993

**View on Vimeo:**

<https://vimeo.com/36329897?share=copy>

Program of June 9, 1993-Jerusalem Day at Hollywood Temple Beth El, located in the heart of West Hollywood, the entertainment capital.

This program was the creation of Rabbi Norbert Weinberg of Hollywood Temple Beth El and Marina Waks, Producer and Musical Director of the event

## JERUSALEM DAY Show For Harmony and Unity

*Produced by Hollywood Temple Beth El under the leadership of  
Rabbi Norbert Weinberg and with the cooperation of the American Congress*

A rainbow coalition of some 150 children of various ethnic origins raised the roof with the Song "Children of the World" in the presence of a thousand celebrants, including guest of honor, Los Angeles' leading lady of philanthropy, Mrs. Sybil Brand, at Hollywood Temple Beth El in West Hollywood on Wednesday evening, June 9, for "Hollywood Celebrates Jerusalem."



*Israel Consul General Uri Oren and Rabbi Weinberg*

The variety program of music, song, and dance, was the product of Rabbi Norbert Weinberg, of the Temple, the evening's MC, and Marina Waks, noted pianist and

composer, who both composed the music and performed as well that evening. It's purpose was to use the idea of the Holy City of Jerusalem as an ideal to bring together in harmony the many different peoples of Los Angeles.



The evening opened with 14-year old vocal prodigy,

Laurie Rubin's national anthems and closed with opera singer and choir conductor, Erica Tannenbaum's rendition of "Jerusalem of Gold".

Israel's "Ambassador of Song," Ron Eliran, graced the evening, together with the LA Shir Choir, a 40-voice chorale conducted by Netta Klein, the highly acclaimed Israeli folk dance ensemble, Keshet Chaim, and popular entertainer, Sinai Eilat.

Proclamations from Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles, Mayor Joe Guariello of West Hollywood, and former President Ronald Reagan were presented to Israeli Consul General Uri Oren to be conveyed to the people of Jerusalem. The Consul General also delighted the audience with a musical medley on the harmonica.



*Photo by Ms. Orly Halevy*

That evening, the Miracle Baptist School's choir was presented by the Los Angeles Unified School District with a trophy for their earlier performance of the evening's theme song at a conference on the aftermath's of the LA riots. Also joining in evening's choir were the Korean Youth Choir, The Russian Children's Choir, Yaldehy LA Israeli Children's Choir, Solomon's Children of Yemen, the Sikh Dharma Children's

Jatha, and the Philippine folk Dance Ensemble of the St. Peter Chanel Church.



The evening continued until late into the night, with folk dancing led by Keshet Chaim and the music of DJ Israel Yakovee.

*Photo by Ms. Orly Halevy*

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#### 50th Year of Liberation Commemoration

The American Congress of Jewish Survivors of Concentration Camps, sponsors a three-fold celebration of the Fiftieth Year of the Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camps.

Saturday morning, May 13, 1995, during the course of services, 9:30 AM, at the Temple, 1317 N. Crescent Heights at Fountain, West Hollywood, there will be with special prayers and the

reading of proclamations by President Bill Clinton and Senator Dianne Feinstein to mark the occasion. Veterans of American and Russian armed forces will be honored for their part in the war against Nazism. The 47th Anniversary of the Independence of the State of Israel, as the Jewish response to the Holocaust, will be marked, as well.

That Saturday evening, at 7:30 PM, also at the Hollywood Temple Beth El , the American Congress of Survivors will host a gala dance to celebrate both their personal survival and that of the Jewish people .

These events follow their participation in a nationwide broadcast on Sunday, April 30, at 3 PM on KSCI-TV Channel 18, and again on Sunday, May 7, at 1:00 PM,\* Century Cable Channel 72, marking their establishing the " Camp of Life" of the Jewish National Fund in Israel.

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#### New Director Comes to Religious School

Dalia Orion-Oz, Israeli-trained educator, welcomes parents seeking Jewish and Hebrew education for their children to visit the newly reorganized Judaic studies program at Hollywood Temple Beth El, 1317 N. Crescent Heights Boulevard at Fountain.

This program, offered on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:00 to 6:30 PM, for youngsters age 5 till 13, emphasizes Hebrew through Hebrew, the learning of Jewish traditions and values through celebration, and special interest activities. The teachers are all native Hebrew speakers .

Orio-Oz, who recently took over as Director of the school, is also Judaic Studies coordinator for Herzl High School, and has 22 years of experience in education. She received her professional training at the Bet Hakerem Teacher's College in Jerusalem, and has served as administrator of a youth center and as vice-principal of a middle school. She also has training and experience in drama and public relations.

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#### Jule Rivlin to be Honored

Jule Rivlin, former basketball star and new executive director of Hollywood Temple Beth El,

will speak on " Jewish Basketball" at Shabbat Services and Dinner at the Temple, at 1317 N. Crescent Heights, West Hollywood, on Friday, January 20, at 6:30 PM.

Rivlin , who played and coached the Toledo Jeeps in the National Basketball League, and coached high school, college, and Army basketball teams, was voted Most Valuable Player in World Professional Tournament, 1947 and has been inducted in Basketball Hall of Fame. He was the second highest scorer in the country in 1937-38, and led in assists during that period. He has also served as executive director of the Temple during the 1960's and 70's.

Reservations must be made and paid for in advance at the Temple offices, no later than January 16; costs are \$12 for adults, \$7 for children.

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#### Registration for Nursery School Begins at Hollywood Temple Beth El

Registration is open for pre-schoolers for the Nursery School of Hollywood Temple Beth El fall session, beginning on Thursday , September 7, at 8:00 AM.

Registration is open for 3 or 5 days per week. The day begins at 8:00 AM, and children can stay as late as 5:30 PM, depending on the option that parents choose.

Harriet Levins , Director of the Hollywood Temple Beth El Nursery School, seeks to "to develop each child's individual ability to his or her greatest potential, in a nurturing ,loving atmosphere which encourages the child to explore and grow at his or her own pace."

The history, traditions, festivals and music of the Jewish people are a special feature to give the child a love of the Jewish heritage . Many of the staff and the children are native Hebrew speakers, which enriches the Judaic atmosphere.

The curriculum, for children from 2 year old toddlers through 4 year old pre-kindergartners, includes reading and math readiness, arts and crafts, music, and dramatic play.

Limited space is still available for the fall semesters. 656-3150.

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HTBE served as a springboard for several LA political figures. West Hollywood Council Member Paul Koretz spoke at HTBE and went on to become an LA City Council Member. Years later, HTBE hosted A sheriff's candidates forum, and participant Villanueva went on to become County Sheriff . Mike Feuer started with the Jewish Free Legal Service, Bet Tzedek, also spoke at HTBE and went on to other major civic positions:

Hollywood Temple Beth El Welcomes New Councilman Mike Feuer



Memorial Services for the Late Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, were held on November 11, 1995 at Hollywood Temple Beth El, in conjunction with the Creative Arts Temple. Participating in the service were Rabbis Jerry Cutler and Norbert Weinberg, singers Nolan Porter, Rivka Seiden and Ahuvah Zadok, pianist Bonnie Jonafsky, Mayor Pro Tem of West Hollywood Paul Koretz, long-time Rabin friend, Shimon Erem, Rev. Arthur Grey of the Crenshaw-Imperial Church, Chaver Nathan Dender, and Rachel Farber of the WZO.

There will be a service marking the end of the month of mourning for Prime Minister Rabin, sponsored by the Creative Arts Temple here on Friday, Dec. 1, at 8:00 PM.

Followed up by this discussion:  
December 27, 1995  
Probe the Psychology of an Assassin

Clinical and forensic psychologist, Dr. Hy Malinek, will probe the "Psychology of an Assassin," such as Yigal Amir, on Sunday, January 21, 1996 at 10:00 AM at Hollywood Temple Beth El, 1317 N. Crescent Heights Blvd, West Hollywood.

He will examine the what drives a fanatic like Yitzhak Amir to murder a leader like Rabin, whether it is ideology or pathology, and in what ways is Amir similar to and different from an Oswald or Hinckley?

Malinek, a trained Clinical & Forensic Psychologist, has served as expert witness on criminal behavior in many major court cases.

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#### Rare Books Display

A three century old Bible dictionary in five languages is among the rare books which Rabbi Norbert Weinberg will exhibit and describe from his personal Judaica library, on Sunday, February 25, 1996, at 10:00 AM at Hollywood Temple Beth El, 1317 N. Crescent Heights, West Hollywood.

These books symbolize the history of the Jewish people. Among these books are:

A hand-written Book of Genesis from Yemen.

A women's Yiddish Bible, Tzena Rena.

The first work of modern Jewish philosophy, Jerusalem, by Moses Mendelsohn.

The prayerbook published by the abolitionist rabbi, David Einhorn.

The first Talmud printed in Germany after the Holocaust-- published by the United States Armed Forces.

For more information, please call 213-656-3150.

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December 27, 1995

Hollywood Temple Beth El Dedicated the North Sanctuary Lobby as the  
Leo and Frances Kogan Memorial Room

on Saturday, December 9, 1995 in tribute to the generosity of the late Frances Kogan, who bequeathed \$100,000 to the Temple. This is in addition to \$100,000 which her husband, the late Leo Kogan bequeathed several years ago.

It is the kind-hearted act of loyal members such as these that will keep our Temple doors open for future generations. May the memory of Leo and Frances Kogan be for a blessing.

Other wings of the Temple are available to be dedicated in honor or in memory of those who are able to help us reach our commitment to the future generations who will come here to pray, learn, and celebrate.

1996

A Message from the Rabbi:

On Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our society is geared to distributing "the goods" to every group that has a special interest. Thus, the Irish nationally have a St. Patrick's Day, Mexicans have their Cinco de Mayo, Italians love Columbus Day, and each one has its official parades and speech making events. We, as Jews, get Hannukah as our " day", to be sure that we get a fair deal from the Christmas spirit.

The designation of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a national holiday may seem to be a comparable social gesture to the African-American public.

If we see it as a "Black" holiday, however, we do ourselves, as Jews, as Americans, a disservice.

This coming Monday, January 15, is the late Dr. King's official holiday, and we will dedicate our services that Shabbat to his teachings. They are significant to us because Dr. King did not preach to the white ruling establishment to be " nice" or "kind" to their black neighbors. He preached to all of us to remember our common shared humanity, a shared humanity that can cross the barrier of race, ethnic group, religion, sex and class.

It is for this message that my teacher, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, marched arm in arm with Dr. King in Selma , Alabama.

Dr. King and Rabbi Heschel marched against the message preached by the Nation of Islam, on the one hand, and the Aryan Nation, on the other.

It is obvious that for the Jewish, Hispanic, Italian, Oriental " nations" ( and dozens others) who share this country and government that it is only through Dr. Kings' vision that we are able to live and flourish in this great land. This is true for rich and poor, for religious and atheist, male and female alike.

May Dr. King's memory be for a blessing, and may his teachings be taken seriously by all. Amen.

April-after Terrorist Bus Bombings in Israel

Rabbi's Message ( Rabbi Weinberg's daughter was a student at the Hebrew University at that time).

This coming April 24, the Fifth of Iyar, will mark the 48th anniversary of the State of Israel.

The celebration always come eight days after Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. The celebration is always preceded in Israel by the Day of Remembrance for those who fell in defense of the State of Israel.

The juxtaposition is intentional.

The rise of the State of Israel was a response to the helplessness of the Jewish people to either resist, in the lands of Nazi horror, or to rouse the nations of the world to come to the rescue. The State of Israel was a vital response that never again would the Jewish people play the passive sacrificial offering of world politics.

The rise of Israel was also possible only at a tremendous price. That price is marked by the Day of Remembrance.

That price was, in the past, a price of war.

Now, in our day, it has become a sign of the price of peace.

The terrible massacres which took place in recent weeks with the indiscriminate bombing of men and women, adults and children, civilians and soldiers, Israelis and non- Israelis, teaches us that, just as the wars of Israel had their terrible price, so to does peace.

While among the Israelis, one isolated, lone zealot murdered Prime Minister Rabin, among the Palestinians , it is an entire network of fanatics that has taken responsibility for mass butchery. Israel has done its utmost to quell those who call for extremism and violence; the Palestinian leadership till now, in time of peace, has quietly acquiesced or even encouraged the activity of these zealots. The

Palestinians must now take action to prove that they are worthy of the peace they seek by crushing the forces of hatred.

The people of Israel now face serious decisions ahead--

To continue with the peace process or not.

To keep the current government or not.

To rely upon the Palestinian Authority and Yasser Arafat or not.

To wreak full vengeance or not.

That is their decision to make.

It is, however, in our hands, as it has been since the rise of the modern vision of Zionism, to show our solidarity, our financial and organizational support of the people of Israel, and to keep open our ties, through visits, through study programs for our youth in Israel, through supporting those who would make Israel their home.

This is our answer to all those who have sought and still seek to do us ill.

Then, in the days to come, soon, we will celebrate with our brethren, children of Israel, and with her neighbors, the children of Ishmael, in a true redemption of the land of Israel, as the prophet assured us, " Violence shall no more be heard in the land, Neither desolation nor destruction within your borders." Amen.

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Letter to Members at change of leadership at HTBE: This occurred as the Temple was forced into a bankruptcy proceeding because of a lawsuit brought against it by the retired Cantor, Nathan Katzman. The congregation was required to mortgage the property in order to pay off pension funds and legal expenses incurred.

Dear Members ,

The summer season approaches, and with the change of seasons, a sense of wrapping up the year, both Jewishly and administratively.

Jewishly, the cycle of the festivals--Sukkoth, Pesah, Shavuot-- has run its course, and synagogue life begins to look toward to fall, with the High Holy Days season.

Administratively, one set of books closes, and another now is opened. One administration leaves, and another comes in to take over.

The incoming administration will now face serious challenges.

Fortunately, all outstanding disputes have been resolved.

There is the simple task of now meeting the regular expenses of the mortgage and other outstanding obligations, as well as the usual burden of keeping open the doors of such a large facility.

Bigger challenges lay beyond this.

Leadership:

Good people, with good will are plentiful. Good people with good will and the TIME to devote are rare.

Alienation:

It is no secret that Los Angeles in general has one of the lowest affiliation rates (for any association) of the country. While people claim to seek spirituality today, they generally seek it with no obligations attached.

Members:

In the West Hollywood environs, the typical family, of two parents and one or two children, is a statistical rarity--only 7% of the population. Most of them are struggling hard to meet payments on their house and car and on their children's education. The rest are elderly, new immigrants, or young people seeking their fortunes in the Hollywood industries who are not yet ready to put down roots and make any commitments, not to individuals( as in " marriage ") nor to organizations( as in " member").

The needs, however, are far greater. Members of each group are in great need. Young families need a place for Jewish education for their children. The elderly need a place to gather both socially and for spiritual nourishment. New immigrants need a center that will enable them to become American Jews. The young and the restless need a source of comfort when their " Young and

Restless" lives collapse.

To this, we need to keep in mind the advice of Rabbi Tarfon:

The Day is short, the task is great. The laborers are sluggish, and the boss is anxious. You are not expected to complete the job, nor are you free to quit. The boss can be relied on to pay you for your efforts.

I offer my blessings to the incoming leadership as it faces the challenges ahead.

Rabbi Norbert Weinberg

(Pirke Avoth 2:20)

Letter to leadership upon end of service:

Dear Frances, members of the Synagogue Executive and Board of Trustees

I thank you for your warm words and your expression of good wishes.

Just as, in Biblical times, one worked the fields for six years, and then rested in the seventh, so to I have labored in the fields, and office, and Bimah, of Hollywood Temple Beth El.

Now, is the seventh year, the Sabbatical year, and it is the time to take my leave of the pulpit.

It has been a challenging six years, overcast by problems with which we are all too familiar, but also lighted by some very special achievements, which I wish to call to mind:

The first Bar Mitzvah class for Russian new-comers out of the collapsing Soviet Union.

Pat Boone and Mayor Bradley up here on the Bimah to celebrate Jerusalem, and the Children of the World Choir, which began here, with us and just performed last night at the Hollywood Bowl.

The memorial service for the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, with the address given by his childhood friend, Shimon Erem.

Behind events such as these, there have been the day to day highlights, such as watching our Bnai Mitzvah up here on the Bimah, or dancing at the wedding of the daughter of our Shames, Bill Berger, or honoring our Torah reader, Nathan Dender with the title, "Haver". It special joys as these that light up the day.

It is now time, as I said, to leave the fields alone.

My wife Ofra, and I, are turning our efforts and attention to education. We will be administering a unique education center which will enable children who are struggling in school to become successful students, and, with that, happier human beings. Rabbi, is after all, teacher, and I thereby continue in my calling, by leading young people to wisdom and knowledge.

We pray for you who have struggled to keep the synagogue afloat, that you be rewarded for your efforts--not the reward of a lottery ticket, but the reward of the satisfaction of keeping this Temple viable as a center for Judaism in the midst of Hollywood and Tinsel-town. May you all be blessed with health, long life, and well-being, Adonay Oz... Amen.

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Official announcement of Rabbi Weinberg leaving his position at HTBE

Hollywood Temple Beth El Bids Farewell to Rabbi Norbert Weinberg

Rabbi Norbert Weinberg will be honored for completing his six years of service to Hollywood Temple Beth El at Saturday morning services at 9:00 AM, June 29, 1996, at the synagogue at 1317 N. Crescent Heights Blvd., West Hollywood.

Rabbi Weinberg served the Temple with distinction and was active in outreach to new immigrants, young entertainment professionals, and the general West Hollywood area public. During his tenure, the Temple received special grants for programming from Jewish Federation agencies and commendations from Los Angeles City and County, and he had his own "Rabbi Norbert Weinberg Day" from the City of West Hollywood.

He came to the Temple after a four year stay in Israel, where he had served as Director of the

Institute for Jewish Studies at Bet Berl for Israel's Histadrut( Federation of Labor).

He received his ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he had served as student assistant to noted theologian, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Rabbi Weinberg will be involved in education, lecturing and writing in the Los Angeles area.

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June 20, 1996

At that point, Rabbi Weinberg went into private supplemental education, under the Huntington Learning Center in Encino, working with students on a private basis and also by special contract with the Los Angeles Unified School District for the next decade.

Hollywood Temple Beth El building was sold to the Iranian American Jewish Federation under a special arrangement that allowed the congregation to continue functioning on the premises. The congregation was led for several years by Rabbi Zvi Dershowitz ( Associate Rabbi emeritus of Sinai Temple), Rabbi Seth Rosen, and Rabbi Ira Rosenberg. The Temple continued to fall into financial difficulties and Rabbi Weinberg was asked to come back to serve as the Rabbi once again on a part time basis in 2014.

## Temple Beth El plans open house Shabbat service

Cantor Alexander Berkovich will lead an open house Shabbat service on Saturday, Sept. 6 at 10 a.m. at Temple Beth El in West Hollywood. Rabbi Norbert Weinberg will also hold a discussion titled, "Are We Happy Yet" in advance of the High Holy Days season. Hollywood Temple Beth El is a conservative synagogue serving the West Hollywood, Hollywood, Fairfax and northern Beverly Hills areas. Berkovich will offer a musical "appetizer" with High Holy Day themes, and there will be light refreshments and displays highlighting the temple's programs.

The sanctuary is known for its Art Deco style, and the temple is also home to the Iranian American Jewish Federation, the Touro College and the West Hollywood Preparatory School. Hollywood luminaries such as Edward G. Robinson, Hal Wallis and Carl Laemmle formerly attended the synagogue.



Rabbi Norbert Weinberg

Weinberg, an educator and historian, recently published a book titled "Courage of the Spirit" Berkovich trained at the St. Petersburg Choral Synagogue and was an opera singer in Russia prior to moving to the United States.

Temple Beth El is located at 1317 N. Crescent Heights Blvd. RSVP requested to (323)656-3150, or email to [temple@htbel.org](mailto:temple@htbel.org).

There were programs carried out to attract a broader public once again Feb 2015



photo courtesy of Julie Waller

A special presentation honoring Marthe and Major Cohn for their efforts to educate students about World War II was made at the "Stand Up For the 2015 Senior" Golden Living Fair. Pictured at the fair are Belmont Village community relations associate Tracey Paulk (left), Major Cohn, Marthe Cohn and Rabbi Norbert Weinberg, of Hollywood Temple Beth El.

## Seniors appreciated Golden Living Fair

Belmont Village Senior Living and Hollywood Temple Beth El hosted their first Golden Living Fair — titled "Stand Up for the 2015 Senior" — on Feb. 16 at the temple, located at 1317 N. Crescent Heights Blvd. in West Hollywood.

The fair offered seniors educational and lifestyle experiences. Sponsors included Sherman Oaks Hospital, Encino Hospital Medical Center and Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles.

"Because the culture of youth is all around us, I wanted to bring attention to the oldest generation," said Rabbi Weinberg, of Hollywood Temple Beth El. "From the seminars to the activities, we could tell from their smiles, all of the seniors who attended felt appreciated."

The opening ceremony featured Dr. David Stern, who discussed Los Angeles' first Geriatric Emergency Room — known as a "Senior ER" — which officially opens on Monday, March 2 at Encino Hospital Medical Center. The Senior ER will address specific issues that occur as patients age and their medical issues become more complicated. Each patient may have several major medical conditions and may be taking multiple medications, and functional and cognitive impairments may complicate treatment.

"The physical features of the Senior ER and of the geriatric specific inpatient rooms provide additional comfort and safety for seniors," Stern said. "These include

pastel colored walls, thicker mattresses, nonskid floors and extra handrails."

Specially trained nurses will assess the medical and functional conditions of geriatric patients in the new Senior ER. It will also incorporate a broader team of experts, including physicians, physical therapists, pharmacists, case managers, social workers and dietitians.

Belmont Village also hosted a discussion at the fair titled, "A Day in the Life of Circle of Friends", which highlighted the company's activity-centered program that meets the needs of seniors with early stages of memory loss.

A special presentation was held during the closing ceremony honoring Marthe and Major Cohn, as well as several nonagenarians. Marthe Cohn is an author and renowned former French spy who wrote, "Behind Enemy Lines: the True Story of a French Jewish Spy in Nazi Germany". The Cohns visit local schools to educate students about World War II. State Assemblyman Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica) issued a special proclamation recognizing Marthe Cohn.

More than 30 vendors offered information on senior-specific topics ranging from specially-adapted telephones and health-related businesses to Granny Nanny and chair yoga.

For information, visit [www.belmontvillage.com](http://www.belmontvillage.com), or [www.htbel.org/goldenliving](http://www.htbel.org/goldenliving).

The Temple experimented with shared services and programming with the Creative Arts Temple under Rabbi Jerry Cutler and Makom LA under Cantor Danny Masseng in the years that followed.

**Rabbi Weinberg appeared on line via the Jewish Journal:**

**Rosner's Torah-Talk: Shirat Hayam with Rabbi Norbert Weinberg**

[Shmuel Rosner](#) April 9, 2015

Our guest this week is [Rabbi Dr. Norbert Weinberg](#), leader of Hollywood Temple Beth El in Los Angeles. Rabbi Weinberg served as Rabbi to Hollywood Temple Beth El from 1990 to 1996 and returned to that position in 2013. He has also served as Rabbi in Whittier, California, Newport-News, Virginia, and Houston, Texas. He directed the Central Institute for Jewish Studies at Bet Berl College, Kfar Sava, Israel. Together with his wife, Ofra, he directed the Huntington Learning Center in Encino, providing educational support to hundreds of students on a private and federally funded basis from 1996 through 2013. He recently published *Courage of the Spirit*, a book which tells the story of the Jews of 20th Century Europe through original family documents and accounts ([www.courageofspirit.com](http://www.courageofspirit.com)). Rabbi Weinberg was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinities, honoris causa, as well as his rabbinical ordination and MA, from the Jewish Theological Seminary and his BA from New York University.

This week's talk focuses on two traditional poems read on the second holiday of Passover, the Song of the Sea (Shirat Hayam) and the Song of Songs. We will discuss the connection between the two texts and their relation to Passover.

<https://youtu.be/9VJfKQ9Z25o>

The pandemic, which required shutting down group activities from spring of 2020 and into 2022 , meant that the entire service and programming had to move online, and when public gatherings were once again allowed, the attendance was restricted because of distancing regulations.

Rabbi Weinberg moved the entire service on line, from his home study , via Zoom, with live-streaming to You Tube and Facebook. This required truncating the service, supplementing it with a shareable online text, and adding musical selections from a variety of sources. It enabled the participation of guest speakers from the outside, such as representatives of the Jewish communities of Warsaw and Jamaica. With the help of the synagogue director, Carmen Fraser, when live attendance was once again permitted, the services were videoed and live streamed, still utilizing the new format.

The past services can be viewed on line via You Tube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@templehtbel5978/featured>

And Rabbi Weinberg's lectures can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxjc3h0xSwvPyfOCfgEFAcPhqz1frLijK>

This essay in the Jewish Journal examines what happened during the pandemic years

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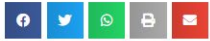
## Rabbi Weinberg Reflects on Pre- and Post-Pandemic Experiences

After more than a year of Zoom, enough already. It's time to be together again.



Ari L.  
Noonan

June 17, 2021



In a conversation we had at a café on Robertson Boulevard, Weinberg recalled the days leading up to the pandemic.

“My wife Ofra and I were in Shanghai on a tour the last week of October 2019, two weeks before the first official reported case of COVID,” he said.

Since COVID was not in anyone’s vocabulary at the time, “we were on the crowded subways and in the market there. Although Wuhan [the alleged source of the virus] was far away, it is a busy and major city.

“All it would have taken,” said Weinberg, “was for one infected lab worker to have been on our subway—bychance. You get what I mean?”

“We dodged a bullet,” he said, before noting that “it was a fascinating trip. And we did receive a beautiful reception at the Shanghai Ghetto Museum.”

Almost 20 months later, Weinberg is in the eighth year of his second term at Temple Beth El, and his focus is on North Crescent Heights Boulevard, West Hollywood, home of the Conservative synagogue.

Hollywood Temple Beth El may be one of the smaller, older synagogues (approaching 100 members) in this sprawling community, but it is also a pacesetter.

Under Weinberg’s leadership, it was one of the early sites to offer in-person services. Was the decision to reopen last month a tough call? “We were anxious, very anxious,” the rabbi said.

In this final month of spring, he has concluded, “People are Zoomed out. They’re worn out from watching screens, little screens, big screens. People are hungry to see each other.

When the rabbi reflected on the start of Zoom life, it didn't sound that bad. "We went into lockdown a year ago March, when almost everyone else did. Then we established an online presence. This took trial-and-error 'til we got a formula that worked."

Even though he, like everyone else, was entering largely unexplored territory, "it was a nice experience. I could play back *hazzanim* [cantorial renditions] and musical versions of different kinds. We did a series with guest speakers. It was easy online because they didn't have to schlep their way up to the synagogue. We have people from Poland, people from Jamaica. We did themes on Jewish communities around the world."

But all new experiences have a shelf life.

"We did a series on Hasidism. It's hard to explain Hasidism, though," said Weinberg, "when you can't hear the music."

In other words, all of that was nice—but after more than a year of Zoom, enough already. It's time to be together again

The disruption of contact during the pandemic, changes in the neighborhood and economic realities of Los Angeles, however, chiseled away both at attendance at services, and at the congregational finances.

At one point, the landlord, the Iranian American Jewish Federation, felt the financial burden of the building was too much, and almost shut it down, leading to a large community uproar:

The News of HTBE demise-Premature

Death Knell for Temple Beth El? ( Weherville)

Friday - August 4, 2023 by Linda Cauthen (<https://wehonline.com/author/linda-f-cauthen/>)

West Hollywood is better known for its dens of inequity than its houses of worship, which may be why the troubles of Temple Beth-el have often been overlooked. This beautiful building has served the Jewish community from its location on Crescent Heights Blvd. for half a century, which may not be enough to save it from the wrecking ball. Alas, the temple's days as a temple seem to be numbered.

It's pretty common knowledge that the movie industry was founded by a group of mostly Jewish merchants who moved their business from the NYC area to LA in search of sunny weather that allowed year-round filming outdoors. Louis Mayer, Carl Laemmle, Lewis Selznick, Samuel Goldfish (Goldwyn) and Adolph Zukor were among the early pioneers who brought their Jewish faith with them to the West Coast, bringing the need for a new synagogue serving the Hollywood community.

Temple Beth El had its beginnings back in 1920 when services were first held in a bungalow located at 1414 North Wilton Place, which is now the site of a Home Depot. In 1922 a brand new synagogue was erected at 1508 North Wilton Place, a location not far from the very successful new Hollywood movie studios. An early president of Temple Beth El was Benjamin Warner,

patriarch of the family that founded Warner Brothers Studios. Contributors to a New Year's tribute book honoring him included Loretta Young, Joan Blondell, Edward G Robinson, Joe E. Brown, Barbara Stanwyck and many more.

This site was well-suited for its purpose until the 1950s, when the state of California began building a brand new freeway system. Unfortunately, 1508 North Wilton Place sat at the exit ramp of the 101, the Hollywood Freeway. This is when plans began for moving Temple Beth El to a less congested neighborhood. In 1952, a brand new, much larger Temple Beth El opened at 1317 North Crescent Heights Blvd., on the corner of Fountain Ave. An addition was built in 1972.

Over the following years, the temple hosted a religious studies program, a nursery school and various social programs in addition to Jewish learning and worship. Temple Beth El has also been the site of many banquets, weddings and Bar Mitzvahs. The temple has received numerous honors for its service to the community.

Change came in 1997 when the building was acquired by the Iranian American Jewish Federation. In February 2020, the IAJF submitted a request to develop the site and in November received permission to redevelop Temple Beth El into a five-story, 90-unit residential building. Appeals were filed stating the building's rich history and the fact that the temple serves many elderly Holocaust survivors.

Surprisingly, a 2016 Commercial Historic Resources Survey failed to declare Temple Beth El a historic landmark, a decision questioned by Victor Omelczenko, board president of the West Hollywood Preservation Alliance. He stated, "Temple Beth El warrants having a specific historic resource assessment conducted before any decisions are made about its demolition."

No historical designation was forthcoming and, as our esteemed editor Brandon Garcia reported on July 18, "In a move that underscores the tension between preserving local history and addressing pressing housing needs, West Hollywood City Council voted to deny an appeal and approve a residential development at a site that currently hosts a building of community and historic significance." (<https://blockpartyweho.com>)

This isn't a major shock since "development" trumps history any day of the week in today's West Hollywood as another piece of our history is destroyed. I'm sure that some of our WeHoville readers have opinions about the demolition of a beloved landmark, so let's hear them. Fortunately, Rabbi Doctor Norbert Weinberg has lovingly documented the long history of Temple Beth El and has recorded it on his website, <http://www.rabbinorbert.com/>.

## **Beverly Press: July 19, 2023**

Temple Beth El likely to be demolished, redeveloped

An appeal to save Temple Beth El was defeated by the West Hollywood City Council on July 17. The decision came after a lengthy public hearing that saw arguments from all sides of the situation.

"The appeal before us last night was focused on one issue regarding the historical importance of the site that we all unanimously agreed lacked merit after understanding that multiple historical consultants all came to the same conclusion," Mayor Pro Tempore John Erickson said. "This doesn't mean that the congregants lack in merit about their feelings regarding their religious home, and it is important that we ensure that they have relocation plans reviewed by the city prior to building permits being issued as well as a construction management plan so the community can be aware of the forthcoming project."

## **BUT—The IAJF held back**

**BY [RANCE COLLINS](#) / DECEMBER 14, 2022**

Temple Beth El holds on, continues to operate

In spite of an alarm sounding over an upcoming demolition of Hollywood Temple Beth El, located at the corner of Crescent Heights Boulevard and Fountain Avenue, officials from the synagogue say that congregants should not be concerned.

“The news of the demise of the temple is greatly exaggerated as Mark Twain said about news of his dying,” Iranian American Jewish Federation president M. Elie Alyeshmerni said. “We just repaired the whole roof fully. We are about to renovate the Sapper Hall and have been doing everything we can to increase income and decrease expenses and keep the building in good shape.”

**And-**

**Jewish Journal-Ari Noonan—Aug 17, 2023**

Assessing the Future of Hollywood Temple Beth El

There’s been a near-constant death watch since the IAJF purchased the property from Hollywood Temple Beth El in 1998. None of the unconfirmed reports panned out. It’s happening again.

For more than 25 years, there have been reports — unreliable reports — that Hollywood Temple Beth El would soon vanish. Often called “The Temple of the Stars,” the Conservative shul, has counted among its members the Warner Brothers, Louis B. Mayer, Carl Laemmle, Samuel Goldwyn (né Goldfish) and Edward G. Robinson (Emanuel Goldenberg) would be displaced by an apartment building.

“The news of the demise of the temple is greatly exaggerated — as Mark Twain said about news of his dying,” M. Elie Alyeshmerni, president of the Iranian American Jewish Federation (IAJF) — the building’s current owners — said. “We just repaired the whole roof fully. We are about to renovate Sapper Hall. We have been doing everything we can to increase income, decrease expenses and keep the building in good shape.”

There’s been a near-constant death watch since the IAJF purchased the property from Hollywood Temple Beth El in 1998. None of the unconfirmed reports panned out. It’s happening again:

“The fate of Temple Beth El is uncertain after the West Hollywood Planning Commission approved the site for demolition,” the weekly Beverly Hills Press reported last month.

According to the Press, in February 2020, the Iranian American Jewish Federation “submitted a request to develop the property. On Nov. 17, West Hollywood’s planning commission approved a permit that would allow the site to be redeveloped with a new 90-unit, five-story residential building.”

Rabbi Norbert Weinberg led Beth El in the ‘90s and returned to the bima 10 years ago.

For much of that time he’s had to fend off, sometimes vigorously, against reports of its impending demise.

“Understandably,” he told the Journal, “our members are upset, but we are working with the Iranian American Jewish Center to keep the building.”

“Our members are upset, but we are working with the Iranian American Jewish Center to keep the building.”- Rabbi Norbert Weinberg

He noted that when the Iranian American Jewish Federation purchased the property from Temple Beth El in 1998, a condition was attached that has been called “confusing.”

For 15 years — until 2013 — when the IAJF completed its purchase — there would be a joint directorate, under the auspices of the IAJF.

“At that point,” Rabbi Weinberg said, “we officially became tenants on a lease basis.”

The proposal to tear it down, he said, “only came to our attention last year.” The IAJC denied the report, according to the Beverly Hills Press.

The Press reported that a 2016 Commercial Historic Resources Survey did not find the structure, built between 1952 and 1968, to be eligible for landmark preservation.

West Hollywood Preservation Alliance board president Victor Omelczenko said the city should reconsider this decision.

“Temple Beth El warrants having a specific historic resource assessment conducted before any decisions are made about its demolition.”

Alyeshmerni told the Press that the fate of the property is far from sealed.

Geoffrey Buck, a member of Temple Beth El’s board of directors, said that when Temple Beth El sold the complex to the IAJC, it was done with the understanding that the temple would be preserved.

“When you destroy a building,” he said, “you’re destroying history. You’re just wiping it out.”

“We are not going to throw anyone out of the building,” Iranian Federation representative Shahla Javdan said. “We’re here to help.”

After living through years of rumors about Temple Beth El’s future, several longtime members told the Journal that its future could accurately be measured in years.

Perhaps they are reflecting the optimism of their rabbi, who is known for his sunny approach to life.

Hollywood Temple Beth El in West Hollywood, Rabbi Weinberg said, was “the first synagogue in Hollywood, founded by leaders in the film industry, has provided religious and social services to the Jewish and general community for the past century.

It has managed to keep up activities, adding live-streaming to a broader audience for the 21st century.” Echoing the IAJC’s Alyeshmerni, he said “the news of our demise is premature. We have been operating under the aegis of the Iranian American Jewish Center for some time.” There have been, he admitted, discussions “on the future of this historic building.

While we believe this historic structure must be and can be preserved, we will continue to work with the Center to serve the needs of the Jewish and the general community.”

Hollywood Temple Beth El, he assured his congregation, will continue to be open for services on Shabbat, and the Center will continue its active programming and events. “Our doors will be open for you on these High Holy Days, beginning Sept. 15.”

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**The future of Hollywood Temple Beth El as a conventional synagogue is still up in the air, as a new relationship is being sought with the Iranian American Jewish Federation.**

### **Rabbis of LA | Rabbi Norbert Weinberg Is Not Slowing Down**

Rabbi Weinberg is best known in Los Angeles for his two separate terms as the rabbi of Hollywood Temple Beth El.

[Ari L. Noonan](#) *January 4, 2024*



As Norbert Weinberg entered the 50th year of his rabbinate, Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7 reminded the Frankfurt, Germany native of the realities of war he thought he'd left behind. He told his congregation at Hollywood Temple Beth El "these have been harrowing days for us. Our grandson Eitan now is in Israel. He was starting a college program and was full of excitement. Now his dreams are in abeyance." The children of his nephews and nieces are on the frontlines awaiting orders to move forward. His nephew and daughter intended to attend the tragic Nova Festival. "By chance," Rabbi Weinberg explained, "they had to go back home. They returned the next day only to hear shooting sounds. They immediately turned back before it was too late." "Very scary."

Three months later, he describes himself as "personally comforted" by the way Israelis have been displaying national unity. Rabbi Weinberg's family has forwarded videos showing Israelis – secular, religious and ultra-Orthodox – delivering food and supplies to vulnerable communities on the battlefield. "There is now a government of national unity," he believes. "Former political enemies who had said 'Never,' now are talking with each other."

He has called out hypocrisy where he saw it: "I have not minced my words," he said. "Silence on the rape and massacre of Israelis, those condemning Israel for self-defense while being silent on the massive bloodshed in Yemen, Syria, Sudan and elsewhere. Finally, there is the rush by the media to accuse, and the betrayal by our own quislings."

Rabbi Weinberg is best known in Los Angeles for his two separate terms as the rabbi of Hollywood Temple Beth El, a huge iconic stone structure on the corner of Crescent Heights and Fountain Avenues. At 75, he shows no sign of slowing down. Except for working internationally on both U.S. coasts, three American states and adapting his career among education, business and Judaism, he could be an ordinary rabbi. How does he want to be identified? "Primarily, I want to be a mensch." was his immediate response.

"When I function as a rabbi, I am guiding and teaching. My business, in the interim, when I went out of the rabbinate and back into the rabbinate, was to help students learn."

His interest in education started during his peripatetic youth. "As a rabbi's kid," he said, "we lived lots of places, New York City, Ohio, a Washington, D.C. suburb and high school in West Virginia." Following his 1974 ordination by the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary, Rabbi Weinberg began traveling the globe for himself.

A half-century after opening his career at Beth Yeshurun in Houston, the largest Conservative congregation in the U.S. at the time, his ties to the community remain. "My brother-in-law moved there and stayed," said Weinberg. "Our first daughter was born there, and our youngest son has moved there for business reasons."

After a few years in Houston, he was seeking a shul of his own. Newport News, Va. beckoned. When the clock again announced time for a change, "I decided to move to the West Coast." Weinberg landed at Beth Shalom, "a beautiful community in Whittier."

Next, "I decided to try my hand at making aliyah." The Weinbergs spent four years in Israel where the rabbi led an adult Jewish education program for the Histadrut, the Israeli labor union, at Bet Berel College. The rabbi shook his head at the memory. "Interesting work," he concluded. "After dealing with Israeli bureaucracy, after navigating big politics and little politics, I told myself, 'Okay, that's my Zionist experiment.'"

That was 34 years ago, and he still considers himself an Israeli. "But I wanted something with my feet on the ground," Weinberg said. The rabbi decided he had to come back to the United States for the financial security, arriving at Hollywood Temple Beth El in 1990.

After six years, storm clouds struck. Bankruptcy hit Beth El. "I sometimes ask myself if I could have prevented it." Soon another door opened. "We went into the education business with the Huntington Learning Center," Weinberg said. "In 2012, we sold off the Center – the nature of the business had changed. It was running out of steam for a variety of reasons. We didn't have the energy to replace the (affected parts) of the business. Let someone else take care of it."

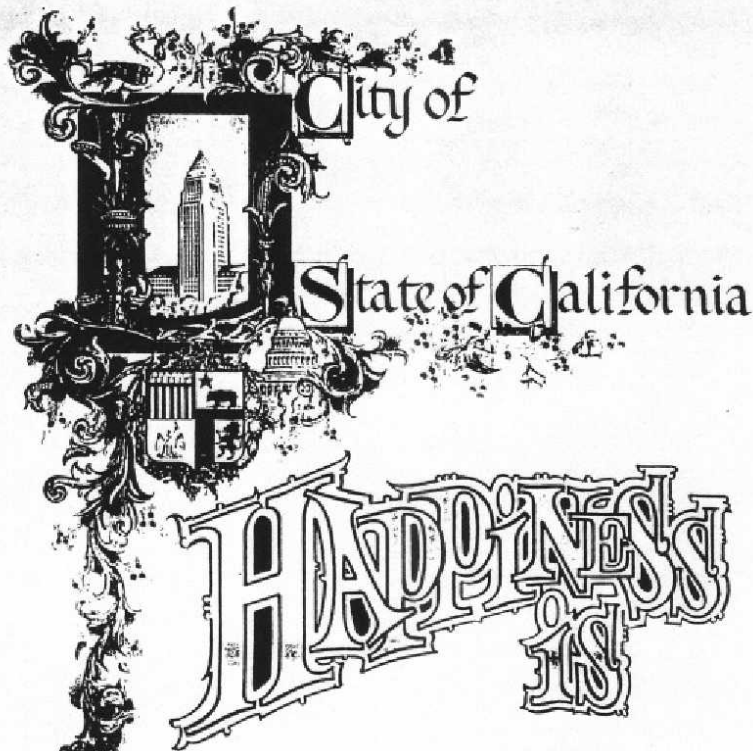
A year later, Rabbi Weinberg was back at Beth El and tutoring at the Center.

Proclamations:

Supervisor Ed Edelman on 50<sup>th</sup> Year of HTBE



Mayor of LA, Tom Bradley , on 50<sup>th</sup> Year of HTBE



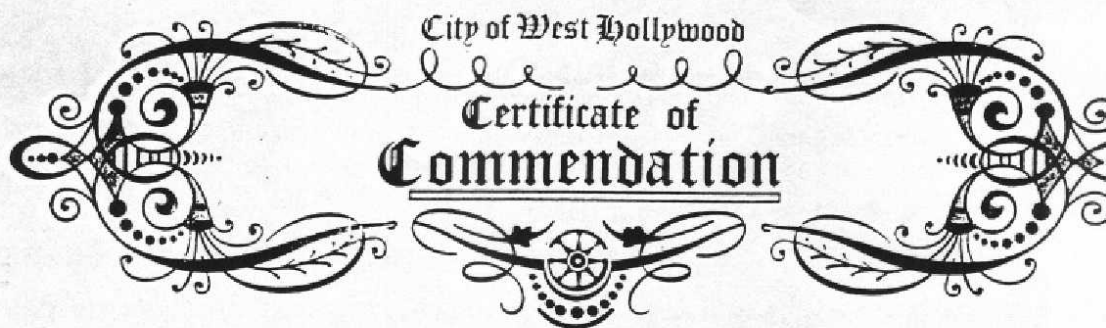
*Hollywood  
Temple Beth EL*

CELEBRATING THEIR 70TH ANNIVERSARY!

APRIL 5, 1992



*Tom Bradley*  
MAYOR



**COMMENDING TEMPLE BETH EL FOR ITS SERVICES TO  
THE WEST HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY**

WHEREAS, Temple Beth El has served the West Hollywood/Hollywood area since 1922; and

WHEREAS, it assists senior citizens, families, and immigrants from across the world; and

WHEREAS, its Herzl School provides education for children ages 2-13, and is a participant in the City's ground-breaking Families and Communities Program; and

WHEREAS, the Temple hosts arts programs and other community-based programs, which provide entertainment and education to a wide-range of participants; and

WHEREAS, it is "home" to the American Congress of Jewish Survivors of Concentration Camps;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this 9th day of February, 1995, that we the members of the City Council of the City of West Hollywood do hereby commend Temple Beth El for its good services to our community. We look forward to many years of partnership with the Temple and to continuing to work on the issues and concerns that impact our City.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Abbe Land".

Abbe Land  
Mayor

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "John Heilman".

John Heilman  
Mayor Pro Tempore

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Paul Koretz".

Paul Koretz  
Councilmember

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Sal Guarriello".

Sal Guarriello  
Councilmember

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Steve Martin".

Steve Martin  
Councilmember

