

Beth Israel Sinai Congregation Newsletter

January 2010



TEVET-SHEVAT 5770

RABBI'S MESSAGE

There is an old Yiddish phrase that goes “Tze zyn a shvair tzu bin a yid.” **It is hard to be a Jew**”. No better phrase epitomizes the Jewish plight throughout history. No other phrase has been used more often to justify assimilation. From the time of Alexander the Great to the 19th century period of enlightenment, Jews have sought to assimilate into their host cultures. While some maintained their religious traditions, most preferred not to be “too Jewish”. Being traditionally Jewish became too much of an encumbrance for these “modern” individuals.

This had not always been the case. Our forefather Abraham was able to negotiate land deals with his Canaanite neighbors. Though Isaac lived largely off of his father’s inheritance, Jacob and his sons expanded their wealth to include holdings throughout the Middle East. Joseph, despite left for dead by his brothers, rose to become the chief economic advisor to the Pharaoh while maintaining his traditions. In fact, so persuasive was Joseph that his wife, a daughter of the Egyptian high priest, came to follow the customs of her husband.

After Joseph’s death there arose a Pharaoh “who knew not Joseph” (Exodus, Chap. 1). Jews were cast into slavery. So assimilated had they become, despite their onerous burden of slavery, they initially resisted Moses’ attempts to free them. Having enjoyed a prosperous life in Goshen, they thought that Pharaoh would eventually come to his senses. The Israelites would be reinstated to their former lofty position. As the story of Passover indicates this would not happen. Only after the last of the ten plagues, the killing of the Egyptian first born, did Pharaoh let our people go. A forty year journey began. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to return to Egypt. A Golden Calf was built when the people thought Moses would not return from his awesome meeting with the Holy One on Mt. Sinai. Despite these setbacks, the Israelites eventually accepted the primacy of the Torah. This 900 year period of religious renewal (1250 – 350 B.C.E.) would last until the time of Alexander the Great.

The Greek culture appealed to many Jews. An enlightened ruler, Alexander allowed his subjects to practice their customs and beliefs provided they maintained political subservience to the state. Jewish philosophers emerged arguing that perhaps Jews should shed their more obvious differences. Observance of dietary laws and the Shabbat became inconvenient. Saturday mornings, in an age before cartoons, was when all the sport activities were conducted. Synagogues could barely get a minyan despite the fact that the Torah was now read in Greek since few Jews could read Hebrew. Had it not been for the Syrian King Antiochus, who preferred forced conversion to gradual assimilation, Jewish culture might have disappeared from ancient Greece. A Judah Maccabee would have had no one to save from tyranny.

WE ARE
ALWAYS
AVAILABLE AT OUR
WEBSITE,
WWW.BETHISRAELSINAI.ORG

OR SEND US A
MESSAGE AT
BETHISRAELSINAI@ATT.NET

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Rabbi's Message continued

Rabbi's message continued...

This pattern of action and reaction would continue throughout Jewish history. Little evidence of Jewish participation in secular life has been recorded from the destruction of the second temple (70 C.E.) to the end of the 7th century. This allowed for the growth of rabbinical seminaries (Yeshivot) to compose the code of Jewish laws, The Mishneh and the Talmud. From the rise of Mohammed until the Spanish Inquisition, Jews flourished as advisors to both Islamic and Christian rulers. It was not uncommon for a saintly Jew to be simultaneously a Rabbi – Physician – Financial Advisor and General. Interestingly, most of his secular and religious knowledge would come from the 63 volumes of the Talmud. For these individuals it was easy to be both an observant Jew and a proud participant in society. Unlike the Greek Jews, it would never occur to them to change their religious observance in order to become “accepted”. Only the advent of the Spanish Inquisition made their existence as Jews almost impossible. Those who could fled Spain and Portugal. Others converted but maintained their customs secretly (Marranos). Jews in southern Europe and Russia would segregate into ghettos. Their walls would only begin to breakdown after the French Revolution in 1789.

A “Golden Age” for Jews had begun – relatively speaking. Though still not allowed to participate in political life in most European countries until the end of the 19th century, quotas of Jews were allowed to become bankers, doctors and lawyers. To further their acceptance into Gentile society, proponents of a “Reformed” Judaism led by Samuel Holdheim and Abraham Geiger in Germany encouraged Jews to discard many previously observed laws and customs. Observance of the dietary laws were discarded. Shabbat observance was limited to a short service conducted mostly in German. It was the sincere belief of men like Geiger and Holdheim that only a more relaxed form of observance would prevent Jewish conversion to Christianity to achieve their political and social goals. Whether this reduced the number of outright conversions is debatable. As Hitler would later prove, one's particular Jewish beliefs were of no concern to him. The mid and later parts of the 20th century saw a renaissance in Jewish learning and participation. Descendants of classical Reform Jews now light Shabbat candles and observe many traditional aspects of Judaism. Many Reform households keep Kosher while others refuse to eat pork or shellfish. The acceptance of a more traditional liturgy has been incorporated into the Gates of Prayer, Gates of Repentance and Mishkan Tefilla.

While some components of the Orthodox community still remain insular, most have sought a reapproachment with secular society and less traditional Jews. While perhaps not of the intellectual caliber of Maimonides, it is not uncommon to find Orthodox Rabbis and Jews who make their living in the secular world while remaining true to their Torah principles. The Lubavitch movement has an outreach program which won the hearts and minds of many Jews who otherwise would become susceptible to groups like Jews for Jesus.

What does the new decade hold? It is my belief that a greater respect within the Jewish community will replace previous intolerance. The thirst for Jewish learning is at a new high. Day schools representing all the mainstream movements are being built at an unprecedented rate. More young people are visiting Israel. In our community, participation in Jewish activities is required for our survival. Many of our congregants obviously agree. Beth Israel Sinai has seen an increase in attendance Saturday services. _No matter how busy you are, one should try to attend at least one Saturday morning service a month. Make it of equal importance to a Saturday sports event. No longer is it “Hard to be a Jew”. It is an honor to participate in the survival of Racine Jewry and the entire “K'lal Yisroel” - community of Israel.

See You In Shul,

Rabbi Martyn Adelberg

January 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					<i>1</i> <i>Happy New Year</i>	<i>2</i> <i>Service</i> <i>9:45 AM</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i> <i>Hebrew and</i> <i>Adult Ed. Class</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> <i>Service</i> <i>9:45 AM</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i> <i>Hebrew and</i> <i>Adult Ed. Class</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i> <i>Service</i> <i>9:45 AM</i>
<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i> <i>Hebrew and</i> <i>Adult Ed. Class</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> <i>Service</i> <i>9:45 AM</i>
<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i> <i>Hebrew and</i> <i>Adult Ed. Class</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> <i>Tu B' Shevat</i> <i>Service</i> <i>9:45 AM</i>
<i>31</i>						

President's Message

Things were hopping at the Synagogue throughout December. We had our best Chanukah dinner ever. We counted 88 attendees; the food was spectacular and the warmth and fellowship contagious. Thanks to Rebecca, Marion, Gene, Edie, Glenn and Eileen for all the cooking, to Jane & John for the decorations and wine, to Jeff for setting up more and more tables, to Ceil and her crew for serving and to Rabbi for getting desert & leading the celebration. *Yashikoah* to all!

As you all know, we kicked off our first annual High Holiday Appeal this year. We started a bit late, but the response has been heartwarming. A list of donors thus far is included in this bulletin. We will update the list in future issues, so there is still time to be included. All contributions small and large will help sustain our congregation. The Board and I thank each and every donor.

I would like to express my personal condolences to the family of Jean Dorman, who passed away in late December. As several mourners stated, we will all miss her feisty spirit. May her memory be for a blessing.

Shalom
Joshua Bloom

Temple News

DONATION APPEAL

Michael and Wendy Jacobson
Steve and Patti Kushner
Joshua Bloom
Eric Lichterman
Rick Schaefer
Gertrude Hulbert
In Memory of Nathan, Etta, David and Sgt. Leonard Hulbert
Louise Langlieb
David Hulbert
Mark Hertzberg
Natalie Brown-Gutnik
William and Fran Gold
Patricia Harris
Glenn David and Heidi Elson James and Kathleen Schmidt

TO B.I.S.

In Honor of Rebecca Bloom's wonderful Chanukah Dinner
From Bob and Mimi Miller
Chanukah donation
Max Gordon
In Memory of Dr. Reuben S. Grant and Dr. Budd Gorsky
Arthur Gardner



Contributions by congregants and others are really appreciated; however, please keep in mind that mitzvahs remembered should not only be memorials. Also remember loved ones' mitzvahs (birthdays, anniversaries, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, etc.) with a donation to our congregation

Our thoughts and prayers
go out to the family of
Jean Dorman who
recently passed away.

JANUARY CANDLELIGHTING

Friday, Jan. 1	-	4:11 PM
Friday, Jan. 8	-	4:18 PM
Friday, Jan. 15	-	4:26 PM
Friday, Jan. 22	-	4:34 PM
Friday, Jan. 29		4:43 PM

Yahrzeits Dec 26 to Jan. 1:

Celia Woolf Westphall	Dec. 25
Ida Blume Weisman	Dec. 26
Harry M. Blitstein	Dec. 27
Alice Letsche	Dec. 28
Herman Kaplan	Dec. 28
Abraham Grant	Dec. 28
Paula Shovers	Dec. 29
Hans Sternheim	Dec. 29
Evelyn Goldberg Kupperman	Dec. 30
Jeanne Brown	Dec. 30
Herman Levin	Dec. 31
Sadie Kaufman	Jan. 1

Yahrzeits Jan. 2 to Jan. 8:

Harry Gordon	Jan. 2
Toby B. Gorsky	Jan. 4
Morris Mitler	Jan. 4
Irving Schulman	Jan. 4
Bessie Levin	Jan. 5
Ben Mitler	Jan. 6
Solomon Reder	Jan. 7
Dan B. Levit	Jan. 7
Don Gordon	Jan. 8
Marcia Grant	Jan. 8
Rose Hulbert	Jan. 8

Yahrzeits Jan. 9 to Jan. 15:

Nathan I. Silver	Jan. 9
Elaine Adelberg	Jan. 10
Geraldine Shovers	Jan. 10
Hyman Kraft	Jan. 10
David Gottlieb	Jan. 12
Martha Kleffmann	Jan. 12
Beverly Lichterman	Jan. 12
Philip D. Cohen	Jan. 12
Minnie Goodman	Jan. 13
Bertha Julian	Jan. 13
David Schaefer	Jan. 14
Edith Kronson	Jan. 15

Yahrzeits Jan. 16 to Jan. 22:

Anna L. Marks	Jan. 16
Dora Solomon	Jan. 16
Norman Richard Grant	Jan. 17.
Edward E. Rosenzweig	Jan. 17
Joseph I. Levin	Jan. 18
Borosh Hirsh Sidran	Jan. 18
Julius Alperovitz	Jan. 19
Morris Wolf	Jan. 20
Harris Domskey	Jan. 21

Yahrzeits Jan. 23 to Jan 29:

Maurice Davis	Jan. 23
Sidney Glickstein	Jan. 25
Hilda Popkoff	Jan. 25
Ethel Shovers	Jan. 25
Dorothy Shiekstein	Jan. 26
George A. Lang	Jan. 26
Hazel Watt	Jan. 26
Phil Blitstein	Jan. 27
Meyer Gottlieb	Jan. 27
Fanny Kluk	Jan. 27
Idah Schwartz	Jan. 28
Sophie Shovers	Jan. 28
Sgt. Leonard Hulbert	Jan. 29
Ruth Grant Gordon	Jan. 29

Yahrzeits Jan. 30 to Feb 5:

Samuel G. Laufman	Jan. 30
Tillie Sideman	Jan. 30
Elizabeth Goldberg	Jan. 31
Kathryn Raftenberg	Feb. 1
Max Grust	Feb. 2
Harold Tabaksman	Feb. 2
Esther Gottlieb	Feb. 3
Isadore Milch	Feb. 3
Bertha Waisman	Feb. 3
Joseph Popkoff	Feb. 4
David Shovers	Feb. 4
Julius Lichterman	Feb. 4
Oscar Shovers	Feb. 4
Eva Gorsky	Feb. 5
Manfred Oelsner	Feb. 5
Edith Seft	Feb. 5



HADASSAH NEWS

January 2009

DONATIONS

A Certificate from Jeanne Savin To Mrs. Myra Gordon and family In Memory of her husband.

A Certificate from Jeanne Savin to Betty Gottlieb and family In Memory of her husband.

A Certificate from Jeanne Savin to Mrs. Dvorah-Gelin In Memory of Rose Levin.

H.I.E.S., Youth Aliyah, Young Judea,
HMO, Children's Pavilion, Shares

Cards \$5.00

Shares \$10.00

Children's Pavilion \$5.00 & \$10.00

Certificates \$18.00

Trees (JNF) Certificates

Sarah Levin 886-9331

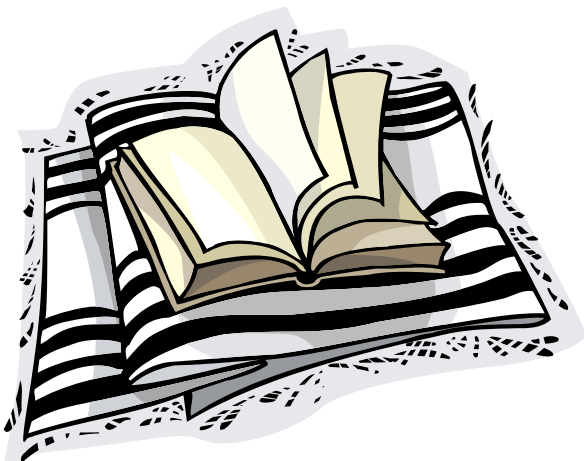
Sidnee Nerad 551-0406

Sisterhood

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions are always gratefully accepted. Please continue to remember the Sisterhood Fund, the Floral Fund, and the Prayer Book Fund, as well as the fund to purchase the new *Etz Hayim*, when you consider donations to the Temple. Contributions are encouraged in honor of a special person, of a special life cycle event, or in memory of a loved one, friend, or neighbor. Just designate your contribution to this fund. Thanks!

Sisterhood purchases prayer books, provides flowers for the bema, and coordinates and provides refreshments for the Saturday morning Kiddush, as well as sponsoring onegs and planning special events for our holidays. We are always open for suggestions of what we can further do to make your membership more meaningful.



Etz Hayim in honor of Rabbi Adelberg from Lucille Bloom

Etz Hayim in honor of Sarah Bloom's Bat Mitzvah from Lucille Bloom

Etz Hayim in honor of Rachel Bloom's Bat Mitzvah from Lucille Bloom

Etz Hayim in memory of Dr. Charles Bloom from Lucille Bloom

Etz Hayim in memory of Dorothy Bissi from Lucille Bloom

Sisterhood Fund: min. \$5.00

Sisterhood Floral Fund: min. \$30.00

Prayer Book Fund: min. \$25.00

Etz Hayim: \$55.00

To make a contribution, please call

Rita Collen

262-752-0223

Or mail contributions to 2811 N. Main St.

Racine, WI 53402

Sisterhood Chair: Jane Brosseau