

Congregation Beth-EI

The heart of Conservative Judaism

VOLUME 59 ISSUE 9

May 2011
Iyar 5771



RABBI'S MESSAGE IF I FORGET THEE

Rabbi Stephen Listfield

A few weeks ago I attended an Orthodox wedding. So I begin with an odd question: Guess who was the most important figure in the wedding ceremony?

No, it wasn't the bride. Orthodox Jews place men first, but it wasn't the groom. Then perhaps the rabbi? About nine rabbis appeared under the *chupah*, but none of them had primacy either.

So who?

The answer: Yerushalayim. More mention was made of the Holy City of Jerusalem than of anyone or anything else. (The wedding was 6,000 miles from Jerusalem., so it wasn't about the venue.) This was about the fact that the Jewish tradition longs for the re-building of the Temple.

Atop the invitation itself were the words in Hebrew, "We place Yerushalayim above our greatest joy." The seventh and climactic wedding blessing speaks of the "joyous voices of bride and groom that will yet again be heard in the streets of Yerushalayim."

No one under the *chupah* said a word about bride or groom(!) nor about their parents(!). But before the breaking of the glass (a reminder of the Temple of Jerusalem) the cantor sang "If I forget thee O Jerusalem may my right hand wither" [Ps. 137:5].

The above is decidedly not the way that I conduct a wedding. For starters, I emphasize the praiseworthiness of bride and groom and of their families. But I do get it.

The centrality of Yerushalayim in a traditional wedding ceremony is immensely

poignant. Yerushalayim -- I consciously use the Hebrew name -- is the heart of the Jewish people. The city was twice destroyed while in Jewish hands. We pray that it will be re-built.

Here is the Jewish way, the poignant theme: Jews react to tragedy by building anew. We modern Jews look to marriage and children for our own personal posterity. The tradition emphasizes our

"Jews react to tragedy by building anew. We modern Jews look to marriage and children for our own personal posterity. The tradition emphasizes our communal values and communal posterity."

communal values and communal posterity.

This year, Yom Yerushalayim (28 Iyar) falls on May 31-June 1. On that day in 1967, Israel's De-

fense Minister Moshe Dayan proclaimed, "*This morning, the Israel Defense Forces liberated Jerusalem. We have united Jerusalem, the divided capital of Israel. We have returned to the holiest of our holy places, never to part from it again.*"

World politics is intruding upon those stirring words. But that is not my point. My point is that there are certain affirmations, certain values, and there is a certain city, that are the heart of our religion and our people.

In my rabbinate, Jerusalem occurs in the wedding ceremony quite secondarily to the bride and the groom. This is perfectly sensible. But we must always be mindful of the larger purpose.

The city of hope and redemption -- the Yerushalayim that is the heart of the Jewish people -- that is what embodies the larger purpose. I for one am glad to have been reminded, at a wonderful *simcha*, of what it is that makes us Jews. ■

Shabbat and Minyan Calendar

Weeknight Ma'ariv 8:00 p.m.
 Sunday Morning Minyan 9:00 a.m.

May 6-7

Candle Lighting 7:37 p.m.
 Kabbalat Shabbat 8:00 p.m.
 Saturday Morning 9:30 a.m.
 Jr. Congregation 10:30 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv 12:30 p.m.
 Shabbat Ends 8:48 p.m.

May 13-14

Candle Lighting 7:44 p.m.
 Kabbalat Shabbat 8:00 p.m.
 Saturday Morning 9:30 a.m.
 Jr. Congregation 10:30 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv 12:30 p.m.
 Shabbat Ends 8:55 p.m.

May 20-21

Candle Lighting 7:51 p.m.

Bat Mitzvah of Sarah Goklevent

Birthday & Anniversary Shabbat 8:00 p.m.
 Saturday Morning 9:30 a.m.
 Jr. Congregation 10:30 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv 12:30 p.m.
 Shabbat Ends 9:02 p.m.

May 27-28

Candle Lighting 7:57 p.m.
 Kabbalat Shabbat 8:00 p.m.
 Saturday Morning 9:30 a.m.
 Jr. Congregation 10:30 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv 12:30 p.m.
 Shabbat Ends 9:08 p.m.



Monthly Meetings

EXECUTIVE BOARD	BOARD	CONGREGATION
May 5, 2011	May 19, 2011	May 12, 2011
June 2, 2011	June 16, 2011	June 16, 2011
July 7, 2011	July 21, 2011	

Meetings take place on Thursday following minyan at 8:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Dates are subject to change.

**THERE WILL BE A SPECIAL
 CONGREGATION MEETING ON THURSDAY,
 MAY 12, 2011 AT 8:00 P.M.**

**The agenda will be a report from the Rabbi Search
 Committee. Please make every effort to attend.**

Visit our Web site

www.beth-el-massapequa.org

Beth-El E-Mail Addresses

office@beth-el-massapequa.org
 shofar@beth-el-massapequa.org

Send Us Your E-Mail Address

Does the office have your e-mail address for important communications? Don't miss out!

CONGREGATION BETH-EL

Rabbi.....Stephen Listfield
 Presidium.....Howard Belgrod, Harold Lefkowitz, Barbara Ringel
 Sisterhood.....Rhoda Buchwald, Alice Scharf
 Youth Director.....Andrea Moskowitz
 USY President.....Sandi Katz
 Shofar
 Chief Editor and Designer.....Ronni Mordechai-Strongin
 Editor.....Fran Boiko
 Copyeditors.....Jesse Cohen and Marc Miller

SHOFAR DEADLINE: All articles are due by the 10th of the month.

**If you have any ideas, an interesting article or good news, e-mail it to
shofar@beth-el-massapequa.org**

**Submission of an article does not guarantee publication.
 All submissions may be edited.**

516.541.0740 • www.beth-el-massapequa.org • office@beth-el-massapequa.org

Spring is a season of change, and around Congregation Beth-El we are witness to the prospect of great change. As we vacuum up the last of the matzah crumbs, we return to the lifestyle of our "normal" existence. The process of charting a future for the synagogue continues.

Our Search Committee, under the leadership of Marc Miller, continues the difficult job it was charged with many months ago. They have invited Rabbi Samuel Barth back for the first Shabbat in May, giving him freedom to lead us in services in "his way." Please attend services that weekend and share your thoughts with us so you can be part of the process.

In a few weeks we will come together to recognize the contribution of two longstanding and very dedicated congregants, Iris Astrof and Sid Margolis. On May 15 we will roast and toast them for all the effort and support they have provided to Congregation Beth-El. We look forward to seeing many of you there with us to celebrate as a community and to thank Iris and Sid for all they have done.

Congregation Beth-El is here to offer the same spiritual and social activities, under the leadership of Rabbi Stephen Listfield and our hard working volunteers, that we have always offered. It is our hope that we will continue the process of moving forward to create a new and stronger synagogue to serve the needs of our congregation.

"Please say yes when you are asked to be part of Beth-El's future. Without you there is no Beth-El community."

Congregation Beth-El will continue our long history of serving this community. Together, we can insure that we will survive and thrive for many, many years to come. Voice your opinions and continue participating in the decision making processes by sharing your thoughts about all matters that will determine our future. We need to hear all of your voices.

The incoming leadership of our synagogue will be reaching out to all of you for your continued support. Please say yes when you are asked to be part of Beth-El's future. Without you there is no Beth-El community. ■

MEMORIAL AND INDEPENDENCE DAYS IN ISRAEL AND THE U.S.

On May 1st, we observed Holocaust Memorial Day. The full name in Hebrew is Yom Hashoah Ve-Hagevurah—literally the "Remembrance Day of the Holocaust and the Heroism." It marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. The sound of a siren at 10:00 a.m. cries throughout the country and stops traffic and pedestrians throughout Israel for two minutes of silent devotion.

Although the date was established by the Israeli government, it has become a day commemorated by Jewish communities and individuals worldwide. Our own synagogue was the host of the annual community memorial service with Farmingdale Wantagh Jewish Center and Temple B'nai Torah in Wantagh. About 140 people attended the moving service that included the harrowing survival story of the Miller family in Poland told by Survivor Mordechai Miller, a young child at the time.



Yom Ha-Atzmaut, Israel Independence Day, occurs on May 9 this year. It is always preceded by Yom Hazikaron, Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers. The message of linking these two days is clear: Israelis owe their independence — the very existence of the state — to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for it.

Yom Ha-Zikaron is widely observed throughout Israel. Unlike in America, where Memorial Day is often used as an excuse for another sale, Israeli shops, restaurants, movie theaters, etc., are closed. The radio and television stations play programs about Israel's wars and show programming that conveys the somber mood of the day.

As on Yom HaShoah an air raid siren is sounded, but on this day it wails twice. A one minute siren is sounded at sunset to begin the official commemoration at the Western Wall, at which time the flag of Israel is lowered to half staff.

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WITH HEARTFELT THANKS

We deeply appreciate and thank these members for your recent generosity.

ONEG OR KIDDUSH LUNCHEON

Parents of the Bet & Gimel Classes in honor of their children: Eric Dolinger, Samantha Ganzekauer, Alex Mukamal, Jared Mukamal, and Alexa Smoller

Rita & Milton Greenstein in honor of Milton's 84th birthday and **Roberta & Murray Ackerman** in honor of Roberta's birthday

GENERAL FUND

Steven Hyman in memory of Noel Kriftcher

Iris & Samuel Astrof in memory of Noel Kriftcher & Bernard Lipsky

Ellen & Bert Zipkin in memory of Noel Kriftcher

Roberta & Edward Goldfarb in memory of Bernard Lipsky

Paula & Alfred Mindlin in memory of Noel Kriftcher

Roberta & Murray Ackerman in memory of Noel Kriftcher

Rivanna Hyman in memory of Noel Kriftcher and Joan Kowler

Joanne & Michael Schwartz in honor of the bar mitzvah of their grandson

George Mann in appreciation

Judy Gordon in memory of Bernard Lipsky

Roberta & Murray Ackerman in honor of Karen Lichtman's bat mitzvah

Roberta & Edward Goldfarb in memory of Bernard Lipsky

Rosemary & Stanley Gensler in memory of Noel Kriftcher

Steven Hyman in memory of Bernard Lipsky

Phyllis & Fred Cohen in appreciation

Lee & Irving Trelin in honor of Passover and in appreciation for *aliyot*

Marilyn & Martin Schwartz in honor Karen Lichtman's bat mitzvah

Elaine Schmukler to thank God for a speedy recovery and to thank Rabbi Listfield & the congregation for their caring

Alfred Bay and his daughter Fran in appreciation for their *aliyot*

Bobbi & Sam Edelson in honor of Karen Lichtman's bat mitzvah

Ellen & Bert Zipkin in honor of Karen Lichtman's bat mitzvah and in memory of Bernard Lipsky

Rivanna Hyman in memory of Bernard Lipsky

Gary Klinger in memory of Bernard Lipsky

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Robin & Ira Faber in memory of Bernard Lipsky

Resa & Arnold Hauptman in memory of Noel Kriftcher

ALIX RUBINGER

KOSHER FOOD PANTRY

Solomon Schechter Day School

Shirley Briskie

Teri Fields & Fran Katz

Carol Sue Levy

Sheila & Gabe Bartel

And many thanks to all of you who donated groceries.

A donation to CBE can be made by check or online at www.beth-el-massapequa.org/fundraising/synagogue-funds

Dedicate a Prayer Book: \$36

Dedicate a Chumash: \$100

Remember the Alix Rubinger Kosher Food Pantry

**Many people in our area are struggling to
make ends meet.**

**Please donate kosher dry and
canned goods.**

Items particularly needed: tuna, vegetables, fruit,
peanut butter, rice, cereal, oil, sugar, flour, pasta
Cans should be small size (not industrial)

**OR MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO
CONGREGATION BETH-EL
DESIGNATED FOR THE FOOD PANTRY**

PROGRAMS & HAZAK

Barbara Cohen

SISTERHOOD HAPPENINGS

Rhoda Buchwald and Alice Scharf

PROGRAMS

On Sunday May 15th, CBE will roast and toast Iris Astrof and Sid Margolis. Ninety-seven people will be in attendance and we look forward to a wonderful evening, paying tribute to these two giving, long-time members of our congregation.

Sunday, May 22, at 9:00 a.m.: Calling all students and adults of all ages. Join us on Lag B' Omer for planting day. Help us forget the long, cold, rotten winter by beautifying our synagogue grounds with spring flowers. Wear work clothes and bring your own tools.

Friday, June 17, 6:30 p.m.: Shabbat Installation Dinner and Celebration. Join our new officers and trustees for a celebratory dinner and open bar (they'll need it!) and show your appreciation for those who continue to step-up to serve Beth-El. \$20 per person.

Exercise Anyone?

Are you interested in starting an exercise class? Aerobics? Zumba? Send in your survey or e-mail Barbara Cohen at

Bar-
bara0101@optonline.net.

HAZAK

Join Hazak for a walking tour of the Eldridge Synagogue and neighborhood on Sunday, June 5. **Reservations are due by May 20th.**

From www.eldridgestreet.org:

Unlike a traditional museum, we offer an intimate, authentic portal to the past for people of all backgrounds. Step into the footsteps of the synagogue's immigrant founders. Explore digital displays. Discover how the immigrant experience transformed and continues to transform communities today.

We hope you all had a *zissen* Pesach and you have finished sweeping up all the matzah crumbs.

Our book review meeting last month was very well attended. We had a lively discussion and many suggestions for the next book were presented.

Congratulations to Iris and Sid on their forthcoming roast. Keep the good times rolling!

Congratulations to Bernice as she receives recognition as our Sisterhood's Woman of Achievement by Women's League. Several Sisterhood members will celebrate with her at the dinner on May 18th. If you are in-

terested in going to the dinner, please call Alice at 541-9552 for details as soon as you receive the *Shofar*.

Yasher koach to Sharon Shorten who will be stepping down that evening as president of BQLI Region after successfully completing her three-year term. The women of our Sisterhood are proud of her accomplishment.

Come to the May 4th meeting and cast your vote for your new slate of officers. A dedicated group of women have stepped up to lead Sisterhood as we continue to thrive. Thank you Roberta Ackerman for the time and effort you put in chairing the Nominating Committee.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Wed., May 4, 7:30 p.m.: Sisterhood board meeting followed by a Sisterhood meeting at 8:00 p.m. Rabbi Listfield will be our guest speaker.

Wed., June 1: Sisterhood Installation

We hope to see all of you at our May meeting.



The Eldridge Street Synagogue

A Note of Thanks

Karen Lichtman

*I have been contemplating the best expression of my gratitude for several weeks now. Then, with the **Shofar** deadline looming, a chance meeting occurred.*

*I ran into a magician theater friend of mine on the A train, who I happened to work with several summers ago on **Midsummer Night's Dream** in Central Park. He attended my RE bat mitzvah and told me how giving and inviting everyone in my synagogue was.*

Before I could tell him that my synagogue was actually East Midwood Jewish Center in Brooklyn, he added "warm" and "comforting."

So I responded with, "yes, yes we are."

Thank you all so much for making my RE bat mitzvah one of the most incredible experiences in my life. Please know that though I no longer own a house in Massapequa, you certainly have not seen the last of me. In the mean time, feel free to stay in touch.

"Well I'll never be a stranger and I'll never be alone, wherever we're together that's my home."

(Billy Joel, 1976)

Much love,
Karen Lichtman
kazrocks@earthlink.net

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

*Thank you for the gift of understanding
How deep within the heart one's love can go.
A mother is the organ tone of feeling,
Now grounding us in sorrow, now in healing,
Knowing all the passion one can know.
On you all other loves depend, revealing
Underneath our waves, your undertow.*

Youth Education

Jody Goklevent and Howard Talsky

The Hebrew School recently had two family programs. The most recent one was on Sunday, April 10th. The students attended a learning seder where they were taught the meaning of Passover. They also had the opportunity to make *charoset* with their families. Yum!!



The Board of Education would like to thank Melody Nelson for running this inspiring family program.

The other family program was on Sunday, March 27th where the students showed their creativity in making and designing *challah* covers. Both programs were well attended and a good time was had by all.

Member Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב



Mazel tov to Sarah Goklevent on becoming a bat mitzvah on May 21st!

This space is for your good news. Share it with all of us! Send it to: shofar@beth-el-massapequa.org

Food for Thought

Submitted by Benjamin Mordechai-Strongin

Love should be simple but it's not.
Hate should be hard, but it's easy.

—Tanya Tucker

Memorial and Independence Days

Continued from page 3

“Hatikvah” - “The Hope”

As long as deep in the heart,
The soul of a Jew yearns,
And forward to the East
To Zion, an eye looks
Our hope will not be lost,
The hope of two thousand years,
To be a free nation in our land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Kol od balevav p'nimah	כל עוד בלבב פנימה
Nefesh Yehudi homiyah	נפש יהודי הומיה
Ulfa'atey mizrach kadimah	ולפאתי מזרח קדימה
Ayin l'tzion tzofiyah	עין לציון צופיה
Od lo avdah tikvatenu	עוד לא אבדה תקותנו
Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim	התקוה בת שנות אלפים
L'hiyot am chofshi b'artzenu	להיות עם חופשי בארצנו
Eretz Zion v'Yerushalayim	ארץ ציון וירושלים

—Naftali Herz Imber

The second siren is sounded at 11:00 a.m. for two minutes which precedes the public recitation of prayers in military cemeteries. During both sirens, all activity, including traffic, immediately ceases. People get out of their cars, even in the middle of busy highways, and stand in respect for the sacrifice of those who died defending Israel.

The official "switch" from Yom Hazikaron to Yom Ha-Atzmaut takes place a few minutes after sundown, with a ceremony on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem in which the flag is raised from half staff to the top of the pole. The president of Israel delivers a speech, and a dramatic march of soldiers carrying flags forming elaborate structures, such as a menorah, *magen David* and a number which represents the age of Israel takes place. This is followed by the lighting of 12 torches, one for each of the Tribes of Israel. Every year a dozen Israeli citizens, who made a significant social contribution in a selected area are invited to light the torches.

For Israelis, this national holiday is a time for celebration, family outings, barbeques. Municipalities host events and some people engage in Israeli folk dancing and singing. Army camps are open for civilians to visit and to display the recent IDF technological achievements. The day concludes with the Israel Prize ceremony, Israel's most prestigious award, recognizing individual Israelis for their unique contribution to the country's culture, science, arts and humanities.

For American Jews, celebrating Yom Ha-Atzmaut has been a way to express solidarity with the state of Israel. Here in New York, some of us participate in the annual Salute to Israel Parade, which this year takes place on Sunday, June 5, just prior to Shavuot. For more information, go to www.salutetoisrael.com.

Our own Memorial Day this year is on May 30. We enthusiastically look forward to this weekend holiday as the official start of summer and we celebrate this sober day usually with nothing like sobriety. In a country where our sons and daughters are not mandated to serve in the armed forces and our 10-year-old war in Afghanistan is relegated to a box we put away and only look at once in a while, we may too easily forget our own country's sacrifices to ensure our freedom.

With only 6.5 percent of our nation's population serving in the military can we even imagine them as *our* sons and daughters? How many of us have children, relatives or even friends with children and relatives in the armed forces? This Memorial Day, let's remember our veterans who gave their lives in the name of America, and raise a toast to them during our barbeques and to all those currently serving in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and all the world over. ■

“O beautiful for heroes proved
in liberating strife.

Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life.

America! America!

God mend thine every flaw.

Confirm thy soul in self-control,

Thy liberty in law!”

—from “America the Beautiful” by Katharine Lee Bates

MAY YAHRZEITS

The following members will be observing *yahrzeit* for their loved ones this month.
Please help them ensure there is a *minyán* so their prayers can be said.

1-2	10-11	Helen Greenfield	26-27
Bernice Garelick	Arline Gottlieb	Cheryl Scheinin	Hope Closter
Evelyn Fuchs	Roberta Ackerman	19-20	Allen C. Cohen
2-3	14-15	Samuel Astrof	27-28
Sidney Margolis	Martin Schwartz	Paul Precker	Barbara Cohen
Irma Wind	Nina Jacobson	20-21	28-29
Rhoda & Nat Buchwald	15-16	Howard Belgrod	Sharon Shorten
3-4	Sandra Kushner	Murray Ackerman	29-30
Harvey Reibel	Elaine Schmukler	Arthur Zweibach	Elaine Schmukler
5-6	16-17	Sylvia Jaffie	30-31
Rivanna Hyman	Ilene Mindlin	22-23	Samuel Astrof
7-8	Irma Wind	Barbara Wiener	31-June 1
Harold Lederman	Toby Nachbar	23-24	Nathan Buchwald
Sam Lerner	17-18	Marion Razler	Efrom Adler
Roslyn Dunkel	Sam Lerner	24-25	Rose Hochman
8-9	18-19	Edith Kott	
Carol Hirst	Harold Lederman	Murray Ackerman	

Thank you to everyone at Beth-El who reached out to me in one way or another after the loss of my father, Bernard Lipsky. Whether it was a few words, a hug, a card, a donation, a visit or *minyán* attendance, know that you all helped to ease my pain and that of my family.

Debbie Ring



Order Personalized Yahrzeit Candles

\$5.00 each

Get an order form from the office, find one in the synagogue lobby or download it online.

Please provide at least two weeks notice for personalization. You will be called by the office when your candle is ready for pick-up.

PARASHAT EMOR May 7– 3 Iyar

Much of *parashat Emor* is dedicated to the special obligations and elevated status of the Israelite priest, the *kohen*. Rashi emphasizes the hereditary nature of the priesthood by identifying the obligation for *kohanim* to instruct their children in these laws in the opening verses of this *parashah*. Reflecting the Jewish people's preeminent concern with life and with godly behavior in this world – and perhaps as a reaction against the Egyptian preoccupation with funerary ritual and the afterlife – the *kohen* is forbidden direct contact with dead bodies, which are a source of ritual contamination. An exception is made only when the dead person is an immediate relative, and so the priest is a primary mourner.

The sanctity of the priest is also expressed through marital restrictions: the *kohen* is forbidden to marry either a divorced woman or a woman “defiled by harlotry.” The daughter of a *kohen* who engages in defiling sexual behavior, the Torah continues, thereby commits a capital offense, as her conduct impugns her father's sanctity. The high priest's even more restrictive obligations are detailed: he may not defile himself through contact with the dead even in order to mourn for his mother or father; he may marry only a virgin (not, for example, a widow).

A priest is precluded from offering sacrifices if he has any of a variety of physical deformities and blemishes – blindness, dwarfism, and other scars and injuries. Similarly, a *kohen* may not share in the “sacred donations” that are his priestly perquisites if he is in a temporary state of ritual impurity. A number of additional laws regulating the burnt offering and the sacrifice of thanksgiving are given as well.

Parashat Emor continues by giving the schedule of the annual

festivals and holy days; this calendar of observance is introduced by a repetition of the sacred nature of the weekly Sabbath. This chapter serves as the Torah reading for the second day of Passover and for both the first and second days of Sukkot.

PARASHAT B'HAR May 14–10 Iyar

Parashat Bebar begins with an extended discussion of the sabbatical year, the last in an ongoing seven-year cycle. During the seventh year – similar to the weekly Sabbath on the seventh day – the land is given a “rest” – it is not sown or planted, reaped or pruned. What grows naturally is permissible for use. After seven such seven-year cycles, the 50th year is observed as a jubilee. In addition to observing the restrictions associated with the sabbatical year, the jubilee also is marked by restoration of property to its original owners and by the manumission of Hebrew slaves who have not yet been redeemed from servitude. Sellers and buyers alike are told to be scrupulously fair in real estate transactions, accurately adjusting costs and values as they draw closer to the jubilee.

Parashat Bebar's most famous verse – “Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof” (*Leviticus* 25:1), the inscription on the Liberty Bell, refers to the jubilee year. Reflecting the spirit of our Torah reading, the bell was cast in 1751 not just as a celebration of colonial hopes for independence but as an expression of a jubilee observance. 1751 marked the 50th anniversary of William Penn's “Charter of Privileges” – an important early American statement of religious liberty. The famous bell actually was not called the “Liberty Bell” until 1839; the name was

Continued on next page

misheberach



***Refluah shelamah* to Michael Schwartz, George Greenfield, Roz Dunkel, Rachel Grabovsky, Evelyn Star, Marilyn Finger, Fran Liebow, Arthur Zweibach, Darlene Raffo, Miriam Mordechai and all those who are ill. May they only know health and happiness.**

R'fabinu Adonai vnaerafay, hosheaynu v'nevashayab key t'belataynu atab. V'ha-ablay r'fuab sblaymah l'chol macotaynu.

Please let us know if you or a loved one is ill and would like it to go in the *Shofar* (full English names only). You may also add the Hebrew name to the *misheberach* list recited on Shabbat. Call the synagogue office at 516-541-0740 or e-mail office@beth-el-massapequa.org.

inspired by the poem “Liberator” by the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Another interesting connection between the Liberty Bell and the Israelite jubilee is the fact that under the threat of British occupation in 1777, the bell was hidden in the aptly named Zion Reform Church in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The mandate for economic justice and fair business practices associated with the sabbatical and jubilee years is extended to everyday treatment of people in financial straits. It is forbidden to charge advance or accrued interest on loans, and if an indigent Israelite should enter into servitude, he must not be subjected to harsh or demeaning labor. Such indentures are dissolved at the onset of the jubilee. *Behar* concludes with a stern restatement of the prohibition against idolatry and a renewed prescription to “keep My Sabbaths and venerate My sanctuary.”

PARASHAT B’HUKOTAI May 21–17 Iyar

Parashat B’hukotai presents a series of blessings that God will bestow upon the people Israel if they obey His commandments and comply with the covenant. In contrast, a much lengthier catalogue of curses and harsh consequences is invoked as the punishments if the Israelites neglect God’s law.

God’s loyal devotion to the covenant, however, is unflagging. God assures the Israelites that even when they are exiled to the land of their enemies, even when Israel as a nation fails in its covenantal duties and “forgets” God, God never will forget Israel or abandon it to destruction. God will continue to support and to shield Israel out of fidelity to the divine “covenant with the ancients” – referring either to the patriarchs or to the tribes of Israel that gathered at Sinai – or to both. God’s promise to safeguard Israel in perpetuity has inspired a number of writers, among them Leo Nicholaivitch Tolstoy.

Parashat B’hukotai continues with the valuation of possessions and livestock, so that payment can be made properly

and vows can be fulfilled correctly in support of the sanctuary; it describes the procedure for redemption of property and tithes consecrated to the sanctuary and the limitations placed on the redemption process.

With the conclusion of the *parashah*, the *Book of Leviticus* also draws to a close. The divine authority for the sacrificial cult, the fundamentals of significant areas of Jewish ritual practice, and – more specifically – the laws prescribed in the closing chapters of *Leviticus*, is explicitly restated in the final verse:

“These are the commandments that the Lord gave Moses for the Israelite people on Mount Sinai.”

“The Jew is the emblem of eternity. He who neither slaughter nor torture of thousands of years could destroy, he who neither fire, nor sword, nor Inquisition was able to wipe off the face of the earth. He who was the first to produce the Oracles of God. He who has been for so long the Guardian of Prophecy and has transmitted it to the rest of the world. Such a nation cannot be destroyed. The Jew is as everlasting as Eternity itself.”

—Leo Nicholaivitch Tolstoy

PARASHAT BAMIDBAR May 28—24 Iyar

God told Moses to “Take a total count of the entire community of the sons of Israel according to their families, according to their father’s house, counting the names of all males 20-years-old and upward.”

But the Levites were not allowed to number themselves among them. “You shall appoint the Levites over the Dwelling Place of the Testimony. They shall carry the Dwelling Place of the Tent of Appointed Meeting and minister to it and camp around it. All the other sons of Israel shall camp with their own tribe, according to their divisions, at some distance around the Tent of Appointed Meeting.”

God spoke to Moses saying, “I shall take these Levites from amidst the sons of Israel in place of every first-born, for all that is firstborn is Mine. On the day I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified for Myself all that is firstborn in Israel from man to beast. They shall remain Mine.” This last verse is the source for the Jewish practice of *pidyon haben* — redeeming the firstborn male. ■



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