

INSIDE

Learning from Our B'nai Mitzvah
page 3

In Our TBE Family page 4

Accessions Committee Thanks page 4

Tikkun Olam News page 5

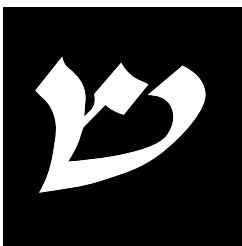
Todah Rabah page 5

Kids Kehillah page 6

Shushan Idol Photos page 7 (and
throughout the issue)

IN APRIL & MAY

- 4/4 – Kids Kehillah
- 4/5 – Encountering Islam: Islam in America
- 4/8 – Fast of the First Born (see page 2)
- 4/8-4/16 – Passover/Pesach
- 4/21 – Yom HaShoah Film and Speaker (see page 6)
- 5/2 – Eliana Finberg Bat Mitzvah
- 5/12 – Lag B'Omer
- 5/23 – Kids Kehillah
- 5/26 – TBE Annual Meeting
- 5/28-30 – Shavuot



“For the progress we have made and the accomplishments we shall continue to make until all people are free, dayeinu.”

—Passover Haggadah

TEMPLE SHOP & FAR

APRIL/MAY 2009 NISAN/IYAR/SIVAN 5769

PURIM: NOT JUST FOR KIDS, PESACH: NOT JUST FOR ADULTS

As I write this I am preparing for Purim, a wonderful, fun laden, topsy-turvy holiday. Many people think Purim is a children's holiday – maybe because of the costumes, the noise, and the general chaos. But, to my mind, it is really an adult holiday. What appears to be a simple story of a daft King, his beautiful (Jewish) Queen, an evil prime minister, and a smart Jewish uncle, becomes a way to speak about corruption in government, the evils of ignorance, genocide, assimilation, anti-Semitism, and sexism. The story of Purim (the Book of Esther) is not even necessarily suited for children! It has sex, violence, dishonesty, and intrigue. There are hangings and massacres, drunken orgies and disobedience. It's a wonder Megillat Esther isn't on a list of banned books (although it wasn't easy to get it canonized into the Hebrew Bible)! Even though at Temple Beth El, we have the pleasure of a mix of elders and youngsters who come to enjoy our celebration, I think many adults don't come, thinking that it's just for kids.

Pesach (Passover), on the other hand, in many ways, is the exact opposite of Purim. True, there is chaos, but the chaos is different. Unlike the rowdiness of Purim, the frenzy we experience is the same frenzy as having a dinner party – lots of cleaning and cooking, and preparing a beautiful table. But by the time we sit at the table, ready to begin the holiday, all is in order. Children and adults sit, listen, read, and

eat as the Pesach story is told. Unlike the constant running around of Purim, Pesach allows us to sit around a table, discuss the fine points of the Haggadah, and eat Pesach foods, which don't necessarily appear to be child oriented. But in fact, this holiday is specifically for children. The four questions, the four children, and the afikoman ritual are all specifically for the kids.

I once asked a group of 13 year olds if there was anything that made them uniquely Jewish. I didn't get the answer

.....
R A B B I
CAROLYN BRAUN

for which I was looking (one rarely does, which is not a bad thing!), but in my mind what makes us specifically 'Jewish' is our connection to the Exodus stories. The concept of being a slave in Egypt – experiencing slave labor, feeling hopeless, being different from the majority population – are a few of the concepts that help us look at the world in a 'Jewish' way. We have concern for the 'stranger,' and for the oppressed. We have developed a way to maintain our heritage, our culture, and our traditions in every corner of the world, and we have the desire to pass on this heritage to the next generation. When I ask kids what their favorite Jewish holiday is, they mention Pesach, and usually not Purim. Now maybe it is because Purim is a minor holiday and not all families attend, or maybe because they see it as a Hebrew School event, and not a holi-

see **Pesach** page 9

TEMPLE BETH EL
 400 Deering Avenue
 Portland, ME 04103
 (207) 774-2649
 www.templebethel-maine.org

RabbiCarolyn Braun
 Interim Religious Professional . . .Dov Goldberg
 Executive DirectorLiz Rose-Cohen
 Rabbi's AssistantJodi Veysey
 BookkeeperStacey Herwitz
 CustodianBob Bradbury
 Kitchen ManagerChristopher Ramos
 Rabbi EmeritusHarry Z. Sky, D.D.
 Cantor EmeritusKurt Messerschmidt
 Senior USY AdvisorRebecca Canter
 Kadima Advisors . . .Robert Levine and Rubin Segal

Officers

PresidentRick Finberg
 Vice PresidentJudy Gatchell
 Vice PresidentPaul Muscat
 TreasurerJon Brier
 SecretaryRachelle Mack

Executive Committee

Officers: Jon Brier, Rick Finberg, Judy Gatchell,
 Rachelle Mack, Paul Muscat
 Immediate Past President: Judy Wilson
 At large: Hedy Cohen, Joan Levy,
 Ellie Miller, Stephen Schwartz
 Ex officio: Rabbi Carolyn Braun,
 Liz Rose-Cohen

Temple Beth El Board of Directors

Steve Alberg	Benjamin Marcus
Adam Arens	Ellie Miller
Joan Barkin	Paul Muscat
Tom Berman	Sam Novick
Anita Bernhardt	Barbara Peisner
Jon Brier	Geoffrey Rice
Hedy Cohen	Elaine Rosen
Barbara Dichter	Shirley Rosen
Rick Finberg	Stephen Schwartz
Tom Froncek	Andrew Shur
Gregg Garson	Ken Silver
Judy Gatchell	Fae Silverman
Linda Jacobs	Olivia Solodar
Debbie Kanter	Virginia Squires-Eklund
Joy Krinsky	Patty Weber
Phil Levinsky	Judy Wilson
Joan Levy	Norman Wilson
Rachelle Mack	

Shofar

Lisa Berman, Editor
 Joy Krinsky, Production Design

“Our vision is to be an embracing, supportive and vibrant community which observes Judaism in the Conservative tradition and which is devoted to the perpetuation of Jewish values and culture. Temple Beth El honors the diversity of its members and is committed to their spiritual growth.”

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Congregants are encouraged to make regular attendance at Temple Beth El a part of their lives.

DAILY SERVICES

Monday through Friday 6:50 AM
 Saturday and Jewish Holidays 9:30 AM
 Sunday and Secular Holidays 8:30 AM

FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES

First Friday Evening, September–June . . . 7:30 PM
 Remaining Friday Evenings 5:30 PM

“Do not separate yourself from the congregation.”

—Hillel, Pirkei Avot, 2:5

CLOSURES

Temple Beth El will be closed Thursday, April 9; Friday, April 10; Wednesday, April 15; Thursday, April 16; Monday, May 25; and Friday, May 29.

The Temple Beth El Hebrew School will be closed Wednesday, April 8; Sunday, April 12; Wednesday, April 15; Sunday, April 19; Wednesday, April 22; Sunday April 26; and Sunday, May 24.

PASSOVER AT TEMPLE BETH EL

Service & Fast of the First Born: Wednesday, April 8 at 6:50 AM – in remembrance of the first born who were killed in the final plague, it is customary for first born to fast from sun up until they participate in the completion of the study of a holy text. We will break the fast together with a bag breakfast following the service.

Pesach (Passover) Services:

Thursday, April 9 from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
 Friday, April 10 from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
 Wednesday, April 15 from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
 Thursday, April 16 from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM, Yizkor.



Temple Beth El is a member of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.



Funding for Temple Beth El Religious School has been generously provided by the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, through its Annual Campaign.

LEARNING FROM OUR B'NAI MITZVAH

During the year prior to their B'nai Mitzvah, those upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah students and their parents join with Rabbi Braun and the Educational Director for a series of classes on the meaning and practicalities of the B'nai Mitzvah experience. On March 1 the B'nai Mitzvah Family Class gathered for a session on "How to Write a D'var Torah." For the final piece of the session students and their parents read together the Haftarah for the upcoming Shabbat. Each student was then given two or three questions about a different section of the Haftarah which they discussed with their parents. With parental mentoring and guidance each student wrote a paragraph responding to the received questions. With a minimum of editing, the paragraphs the students wrote were assembled to form a single complete D'var Torah on that Haftarah.

On the Friday evening of March 6 the students delivered the D'var Torah, each reading the section that he or she had written. That Shabbat was a special Shabbat known as Shabbat Zachor which always occurs the Shabbat before Purim. The Book of Exodus describes how shortly after leaving Egypt the Israelites are attacked by the Amalekites. The people of Amalek attack the Israelites from the rear, meaning that they are targeting the most vulnerable of the people; the women, children, and elderly. While the Israelites ultimately prevail the Torah considers this cowardly attack particularly evil. Later on, near the end of the Torah in Chapter 25 of the Book of Deuteronomy the Israelites are commanded to blot out the memory of Amalek. Since the Book of Esther suggests that Haman was a descendent of Amalek the killing of Haman and his sons would be viewed as part of fulfilling the Torah's commandment to blot out the memory of Amalek. In fact, this commandment is the origin of the custom of

drowning out the name of Haman during the Megillah reading on Purim. Because of this connection between Haman and the people of Amalek, on Shabbat Zachor (the Shabbat before Purim) we read the commandment to blot out the memory of Amalek as a special Maftir Torah reading.

The Haftarah for Shabbat Zachor, is Chapter 15 of the Biblical Book of First Samuel. The events of this Haftarah take place several hundred of years after the time of Moses and concern King Saul,

INTERIM RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONAL
DOV GOLDBERG

the first Israelite King. The prophet Samuel (who earlier anointed Saul as the first Israelite king at the instruction of God) now informs King Saul that God is commanding him to wipe out King Agag of Amalek, every one of the Amalekite people (women and children included), as well as all their flocks. As we see King Saul only partially fulfills God's command. This biblical chapter is clearly chosen as the Haftarah for Shabbat Zachor because of its relationship to the command in the special Maftir Torah reading to blot out the memory of Amalek. It is about this Haftarah that our upcoming B'nai Mitzvah students wrote the following D'var Torah:

In the special Shabbat Zachor Maftir Torah reading the Israelites are commanded to remember to wipe out the memory of Amalek. In this Haftarah we read how several hundred years later the prophet Samuel gives King Saul the message that God has commanded Saul to wipe out all of the men, women, children, and flocks of Amalek. I think King Saul might be receiving this command now because it is a test to see if he will follow God's command. Nevertheless, to me this command seems a little late. (By Rebecca Goodman)

Now King Saul gives the Kenites, who

see **Learning** page 8

Eliana Finberg Bat Mitzvah



Please join Rick Finberg and Amy Rolnick in celebrating the Bat Mitzvah of Eliana on May 2, 2009.

Eliana is a seventh grade honors student at Lyman Moore Middle School. Her interests include music (piano, violin, and flute), drama, and skiing. She also loves attending Conservative Judaism's wonderful Camp Ramah in New England during the summer.

Green Tickets

We have all experienced the frustration of being unable to use tickets to cultural and sporting events and having them go to waste. It is not easy to find someone to put them to good use. The objective of "Green Tickets" is to link those extra tickets to people who would appreciate them. Whenever you have tickets you can't use (sports, symphony, theatre, etc.) or would like to be on the Green Tickets recipient list, email Ken at klevinsk@maine.rr.com with the type of events you are interested in.



Photo: Cliff Kucine

IN OUR TBE FAMILY

Mazel Tov

To Arthur and Judi Slotsky on the birth of their new granddaughter, Gabriella Maya.

To Rebecca Canter on her engagement to Peter Stamps of Richmond, Virginia.

We mourn the passing of:

Sandy Hersh Sime, niece of Elizabeth & Phil Levinsky, cousin of Ken Levinsky, on February 16, in Massachusetts.

Ida Skwire, grandmother of Daniel Skwire, on March 12, in Cleveland.

Fresh Paint Leads to Fresh Donations

The House Committee recently brought back Handy Gal Painting Service to put a fresh coat of paint in many of the Temple offices. Recently the same company did a very professional job repainting the window and door frames in the lower foyer and the entire school wing. Handy Gal has enjoyed working at Temple Beth El and has agreed to make a donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund every time a TBE member hires them for a job. If you have painting needs, please call Holly Kidder for a quote at 632-0662 and say you heard about her from Temple Beth El.



Photo: Cliff Kucine

SHAVUOT SERVICES

■ Friday, May 29

Shavuot First Day

Services: 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM


Kabalat Shabbat / Shavuot 5:30 PM

■ "This I Believe" A Confirmation of Jewish Teen Commitment


Celebrate the Confirmation of Temple Beth El's 10th graders following services with a Shabbat/Shavuot Dinner. After dinner, each student will give a presentation on the topic, "This I Believe." This year's confirmands are: Andrea Levinsky, Lucas Ashbaugh, Jesse Barkin, David Berlin, Samantha Levy, Jeff Peisner, and Lenny Schwartz.

■ Saturday, May 30

Shavuot, Second Day Services,

Yizkor: 9:30 AM – 12:00 NOON 

Sisterhood Gift Shop

Temple Beth El's Sisterhood Gift Shop offers a wide variety of Judaica items: ritual and holiday items, jewelry, mezuzahs, menorahs, candles, and gifts for all occasions. Passover is right around the corner, and we have lots of items for your seder table: seder plates, matzah plates, matzah covers, Kiddush cups, as well as kids stuff. Although the Gift Shop does not have regular hours, the office staff at Temple Beth El can help you during regular business hours. Please keep in mind that all Gift Shop profits benefit Temple Beth El. If you have any questions, you can e-mail or call Debbie Barlock at cestme@aol.com or 774-1080. 

Accessions Committee Thanks

The Accessions Committee would like to thank the following members of the congregation for their gifts toward the new Torah Mantles (two in the Sanctuary Ark and two in the Chapel Ark):


Sandi Goodman-Brown in loving memory of Arnold and Dorothy Goodman, Myles James Goodman, Ernest and Rose Silverman, and Ann Judith Silverman Goodman.

Karen and Alan Lerman in loving memory of Judith Schwey Benjamin,

Morris, and Lillian Lerman.

Bette and Sam Novick in loving memory of Violet and Alexander Stern.

The Temple Beth El Board in honor of Rabbi Carolyn Braun on the occasion of her 20 years in the Rabbinate.

We would also like to thank the Weisberg family for the new Bima Amud Cover, which is on the reading table in the Chapel in loving memory of Harry and Lillian Weisberg. 

CREATIVE IDEAS WANTED!

Do you remember the old doors in the lower lobby which held etched glass engravings of the 12 Tribes? When these doors were replaced the beautiful etched glass panels were removed for future display.

We are looking for suggestions for where and how to display the 24 etched panels. Each measures 10 X 10 inches

and is 1/8 inch thick.

Please email your suggestions to gil-dichter@idexx.com or leave your written suggestion in the Temple office addressed to my attention.


The plaque in honor of Harry Potter will be displayed with the glass panels. Thank you, Gil Dichter, House Committee Chair 

Photo: Cliff Kucine

TIKKUN OLAM NEWS

TIKKUN OLAM TIP: Check out this website, where you can help 6 different causes: www.theanimalrescuesite.com. There are six different tabs – animal rescue, breast cancer, child health, literacy, rainforest, and hunger. All you have to do is click on each tab, then click on the space that says “Click here to give – it’s free,” and sponsors will donate to that cause. When you go to that site, the assumption is that you are looking at all the advertisements, but you don’t need to do that. It takes under a minute. Also, you can sign up for “daily click reminders” – look for the link on the left side of the page.

Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Walk: May 3rd from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. If you are interested in walking or helping with the organization/administration of the walk, please contact Barbara Peisner at 797-6651. More about this to follow.

We are continuing with our ongoing projects:


Collecting Shaw’s receipts to benefit Project FEED – Please bring in your Shaw’s receipts to the Temple and place them in the collection box (or you can send them directly to Project FEED at Woodfords Congregational Church, 202 Woodfords St., Portland, ME 04103).

Collecting food, personal care items, towels, socks, and seasonal clothing for Preble Street Resource Center – We have begun alternating tak-

ing our food collections to Project Feed as well. Please bring a food item, particularly a staple such as rice, beans, pasta, canned tomatoes, or anything else you’d like to contribute.

Volunteering at the Wayside Soup Kitchen – Serve dinner on the fourth Thursday of every month from 5:30 to 7:30 PM along with Bet Ha’am and the Greek Orthodox Church. We desperately need volunteers to help with this project. Children over the age of 9 are able to help and need to be accompanied by an adult. For further information, please contact Harlan Baker at 772-9640, or just show up at the soup kitchen on the 4th Thursday of the month. Please enter the building through the “volunteer door,” which is beyond the first entrance.

If you are interested in volunteering in the community in another way, check out the Tikkun Olam resource binders in the office. This is a great way for the Bar and Bat Mitzvah students, as well as others, to find projects that meet their interests and needs.

The Tikkun Olam Committee meets Sunday mornings approximately monthly, and we welcome new members. Please call Barbara Peisner at 797-6651 or send an e-mail to bpeisnel@maine.rr.com if you’d like more information, or just show up at a meeting...we’d love to have you join us! 




Thanks to the following individuals:

- Phil Levinsky for schlepping bagels for the Sunday morning Shmooze and Schmeer.
- Becky Delois, Merrill Abramson, and Sara Kahn-Troster for their efforts to jump start the Temple Beth El Yad L’Yad program.
- Joy Krinsky and Rebecca Canter for organizing the Purim Celebration.
- Our Megillah readers: Dov Goldberg, Joy Krinsky, David Freidenreich, Fred Farber, and Barbara Dichter.
- Shushan Idol helpers: Ellie Miller, Debbie Kanter, and Norm Wilson (pointing the way); Tom Berman (karaoke dj); Evan Eklund, Zac Hindall and Samantha Levy (helping with children’s crafts)
- Olivia Solodar and Daniela Skalina for their many hours of work on the Shalach Manot project.
- Gil and Barbara Dichter, Lisa and Perri Arens, Rebecca Canter, and Clara Purinton for baking 603 hamentaschen for Purim.

■ All of those who delivered Shalach Manot baskets – including Tom and Marjorie Berman, who delivered a record number this year.

■ All of those who sent Shalach Manot baskets and spread some Temple Beth El good cheer. The Temple Beth El phones have been ringing with thanks for your thoughtfulness.

<p>MICHAEL A. JACOBSON BROKER</p> <p>KRE KING REAL ESTATE</p> <p>46 Depot Road Falmouth, Maine 04105</p>	<p><i>Serving Greater Portland and Southern Maine Since 1985</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential • Commercial • Investment Properties 	 <p>For all your Real Estate needs 207-781-2958 x11</p> <p>jacobson@maine.rr.com www.kingrealestate.com</p>
--	---	---

ANNIVERSARIES

APRIL 2009

- 4 Jeffrey and Tamara Schwartz
- 4 Peter and Barbara Shaw
- 6 Kurt and Sonja Messerschmidt (65 years)
- 12 Leiba Cohen Webber and Walter Webber
- 13 William and Nancy Troubh
- 16 Tom and Ellen Froncek
- 16 David and Barbara Turitz
- 19 Jack and Carol Simensky (50 years)
- 24 Scott and Alice Koocher
- 25 Elliot and Linda Levine
- 28 Joe and June Rubin (30 years)

PORTLAND CHEVRA KADISHA


*In time of need,
one Jew caring
for another*

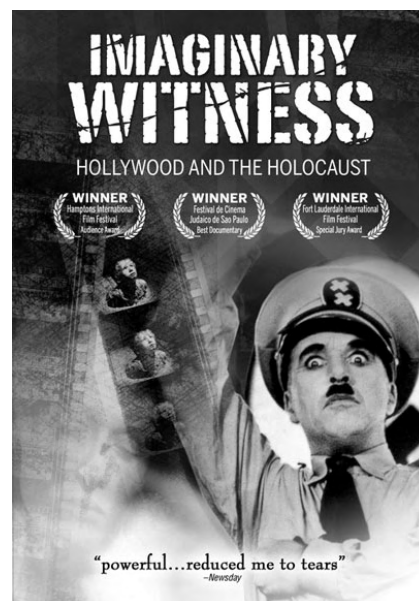


JEWISH FUNERAL HOME
PreArrangement Counseling

471 Deering Avenue
Portland, ME 04103
207•774•3733

ADULT JEWISH LEARNING COMMITTEE TO SPONSOR YOM HASHOAH FILM AND SPEAKER

Please mark Yom HaShoah by joining us on April 21 for a viewing of *Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust*, followed by guest speaker Steve Wessler, Director of The Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence. The program will begin at 7:00 PM and will conclude with a brief service at the holocaust memorial on the Temple lawn. 




Changes in Kids Kehillah Service Schedule

Please note that we have combined grades and revised the remaining Kids Kehillah Shabbat AM service schedule for the remainder of the year. The special participants leading each service will be as follows:

April 4 – Grades 4, 5, and 6 leading (followed by a breakfast)

May 23 – Grades K, 1, 2, and 3 leading (followed by a breakfast)


Please join us at 9:30 AM in the school wing.

As always everyone is welcome to attend. Hebrew School students are strongly encouraged to participate! 

NCJW OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS TO AREA STUDENTS

National Council of Jewish Women Southern Maine Section is pleased to announce that it will again award scholarships to Jewish students from the Greater Portland area that plan to continue their education. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of financial need with consideration for academic achievement, Jewish commitment, and general community involvement. We welcome all students who fulfill the criteria to apply for these scholarships for the upcoming school year (2009-2010).

For further information please contact Patty Weber and Mary Herman at ncjwscholarship@gmail.com or contact Patty directly at Shooz61@myfairpoint.net.

Applications must be received by April 30, 2009. 



Encountering Islam: An Introduction for American Jews

■ Sunday, April 5 – “Islam in America”

Join us on April 5 for the third and final lecture by Rabbi David Freidenreich, Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at Colby College. Rabbi Freidenreich’s first two



texts, its beliefs and practices, and its history from Muhammad to modernity. In this final lecture, he will pay particular attention to Islamic attitudes toward Judaism and the experiences of Jews in Muslim lands. This class will be held at Temple Beth El from 1-3 PM.

SHUSHAN IDOL: PURIM 2009



ANNIVERSARIES

MAY 2008

- 1 David and Amy Goldberg (15 years)
- 2 Doug Chene and Jennifer Elowitch (5 years)
- 8 Ben Marcus and Anita Bernhardt
- 12 Adam and Lisa Arens
- 12 Burt and Barbara Epstein
- 17 Randy and Pam Harding
- 20 Shannon and Gary Auritt
- 25 Leticia and Rhettta Huttman
- 26 James and Martha Burns
- 26 Eli and Katie Small
- 27 Murray and Shirley Rosen (53 years)
- 29 David and Nancy Brenerman
- 29 Becca and Jeff Howes
- 30 Doug and Jenn Goldblatt (5 years)
- 30 Matt and Lynn Goldfarb (40 years)
- 30 Michael and Linda Jacobson
- 30 Jerry and Phyllis Rosen (63 years)
- 30 Richard and Marie Silver



Learning *continued from page 3*

are living among the people of Amalek, a warning to leave before he attacks the people of Amalek. Whether or not he is right to give them a warning could go either way. King Saul doesn't want to kill innocent people. He wants to give them a warning first. On the other hand if he lets out any kind of warning he might be disobeying Samuel's orders which would mean he's disobeying God. It is not necessarily obvious that the Kenites should just leave the people of Amalek, since they were nice enough to let them live there. But I think the Kenites are right to leave because they don't want to get killed.

King Saul's attempt to warn the innocent while still heavily punishing the guilty reminds me of what happened in Gaza with the war. The Israelis sometimes tried to warn innocent civilians that they were going to attack the Hamas terrorists. (By Kayla Berg)

In the attack King Saul saved the best sheep to sacrifice to God. I think he was trying to show off to God. But, King Saul disobeyed God, so he was taken from his post as king of Israel. I think King Saul showed even less mercy than God asked him to. He spared King Agag of Amalek possibly to make him suffer, and keep him as a prisoner.

I think King Saul was wrong because he should have just obeyed. Even though he was king he still had to take orders from God. I also think that that possibly he thought his ideas were better than God's suggesting that he was better than God. You shouldn't just obey, but you shouldn't just disobey. You should question and understand. For example, if your parents ask you to clean your room don't just say no; don't just say yes. Ask why. (By Eliana Finberg)

Because King Saul disobeys the command, God tells Samuel the prophet that He regrets making Saul the king. I think God is right to regret that He made Saul king. King Saul broke God's com-

mand which a Jewish king should never do. However, Samuel might feel bad for Saul. The Haftarah tells us that Samuel is upset when God tells him that He regrets making Saul king. While Samuel believes that God's command has to be followed, Samuel is a man and not God, and so Samuel can feel mercy easily.

We are told at this point that King Saul has gone to erect a monument for himself. Because King Saul went off to honor himself when he did not even do the right job, it probably made Samuel lose confidence in King Saul, even though he may feel some mercy for him.

This reminded me of a time when my dad, my brother Lenny, and I went to a guitar workshop. The guitarist was supposed to teach us his skills, but mostly he just showed off and acted conceited afterwards. He didn't do what he had promised or advertised that he would do. Like the Haftarah, this teaches us to complete a job the way it's supposed to be done and not to pat ourselves on the back for doing the job the way we think it can be done. (By Jack Schwartz)

Although he eventually concedes, for quite a while King Saul defends himself against the charge that he disobeyed God's command. He justifies his actions by saying that he kept the sheep and oxen instead of killing them so they could be used for sacrifices. He also claims that he was afraid of the troops who wanted to keep the sheep and oxen.

In this context his defense was weak. He didn't obey God. He wasn't straightforward with what he was supposed to do. King Saul flip-flopped and showed himself a weak leader.

This reminded me of Governor Blagojevich of Illinois trying to "sell" President Obama's senate seat. He tried to justify himself by saying that the charges against him were untrue and misinterpreted. But, like Saul, his defense was horrible as he was even heard through wiretaps showing the obvious truth of the charges. (By Will Barlock)

When telling King Saul that God is angry with him and is taking away the kingship Samuel says to King Saul, "You may look small to yourself, but you are the head of the tribes of Israel..." Samuel says this to King Saul because although he is only one person he is the boss of a lot of people. Anything he does affects everyone. Also, King Saul is responsible for everyone else's actions. This is why when the troops decide to save the sheep he is punished for their actions.

Sometimes I am in a situation similar to that. For instance, when I am alone with my brother and sister if they beat each other up I am responsible for breaking them up and yelling at them, because I am responsible for them and their actions. (By Sam Freedman)

Throughout King Saul's conversation with Samuel after proscribing Amalek, King Saul defends himself by shifting blame onto various other people. At first when Samuel demands why he hears the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen, King Saul says that the troops were the ones who had captured the sheep. Later, he admits he was the one who captured the King of Amalek stating that he would sacrifice everything to God. Finally, in the last resort after Samuel says the Lord thinks obedience is better than sacrifice, King Saul says that he was afraid of the troops and didn't want to cross them. Only then does King Saul offer his apology.


His apology seems pathetic and conceited. His actions and thoughts are governed by how he believes other people should view him. When Samuel denounces him as king, King Saul begs Samuel to honor him in the presence of the elders, the people, and Israel. His apology isn't sincere and has an impetus of maintaining a positive public image.

One thing I noticed in King Saul's speech was that when speaking to Samuel he refers to God as "your Lord" instead of "our" or "my Lord." King

Pesach *continued from page 1*

day, I don't know. And although I would love for Purim to be a huge family-synagogue celebration (for one reason because it is fun, and it is an example of having a great time with our tradition), I am so glad that Pesach still remains a meaningful experience in our lives. I want to encourage you to add some-

thing new and meaningful to your celebrations (maybe continue the Seder after dinner!) – a song, a dance, a puppet show – something to keep the adults involved too.

A zissen Pesach to all –
 Rabbi Braun 


Learning *continued from page 8*

Saul's military attitude and life crushed all influence of God on his personality, so that he relied on his prophets to communicate with God, instead of directly praying to God himself. (By Collum Freedman)

Perhaps King Saul's apology does not seem entirely sincere because it makes sense to King Saul to take the animals and "anything else that was of value." Why would he kill things that could be of use to the Israelites? It seems illogical to Saul that he should kill valuable resources, but Samuel says that obeying God is the most important thing. So when Samuel tells King Saul that God will not change His mind about stripping Saul of the kingship Samuel might be saying that it is a human fault for someone to change his mind; and that God sees the bigger picture.

When Saul learns that God is taking away the kingship as Samuel turns away King Saul pulls at Samuel's robe and tears it. I think it could symbolize the torn clothing that is worn when someone dies. Maybe we see through Samuel the prophet that King Saul is now "dead" to God." (By Noah Levy)

When Saul didn't fulfill his command to destroy all Amalekite people and their King Agag, he pleads to Samuel that he did wrong and asks for forgiveness. He also pleads that Samuel honor him in the presence of his people and of Israel and come back with him to bow low to God. I think that it is unusual that Saul is pleading forgiveness for not killing the people, considering that nowadays it would be the other way around, although I also understand he was pleading for forgiveness for not finishing God's command. Samuel then follows Saul back to finish his job, killing King Agag, and so Saul can bow low to God.

The situation of King Saul is similar to modern days with President Obama asking Tom Daschle to be Secretary of Health and Human Services at the same time the federal government requires every person to pay the taxes they owe. When it was discovered that Tom Daschle did not pay some of the taxes he owed, the consequence was that he had to withdraw as nominee to be a Secretary in Obama's Cabinet. So too, although King Saul apologizes after the fact, as leader of the people Saul still had to lose his kingship. (By Renata Levine) 



Photos: Cliff Kucine

Prepare for Passover & Enhance your Seder Online

Here are some great sites to start with...

Passover Song Parodies:

<http://kosher4passover.com/parodies.htm>

The Kosher 4 Passover Site:

<http://kosher4passover.com/>

Passover Songs & Music:

<http://kosher4passover.com/songs.htm>

The Chabad Passover Site for Kids:

http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/354750/jewish/Passover.htm

The Chabad Passover Site:

http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/default_cdo/jewish/Passover.htm

An Orange on the Seder Plate:

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Passover/The_Seder/Seder_Plate_and_Table/Orange.shtml

The Shefa Pesach Site:

<http://shefanetwork.org/GateWays/Pesach.html>

The Babaganewz Pesach Site (great for kids):

<http://www.babaganewz.com/holidays/index.cfm?cat=23&sub=pesachcentral>

The My Jewish Learning Passover Site:

http://myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Passover.shtml

Passover Humor:

<http://kosher4passover.com/humor.htm>

DONATIONS TO TEMPLE FUNDS

We are grateful for the following gifts to our Temple Funds. Donations not designated for specific funds will be placed in the General Fund.

Donations to a Temple Fund provide a wonderful opportunity to remember loved ones, honor friends and family and continue to bring strength to our Temple Beth El community. We encourage your donations and welcome your thoughtfulness.

Bima Fund (Adult Education)

Ray & JoAnn Oransky, In Honor of Ellen & Bruce Ruben's Anniversary

Brotherhood

Nancy Finberg, In Memory of Sandy Hersh Sime

Kaplan Company, In Memory of Alice Serotick

Pat Reef, In Memory of Sandy Hersh Sime

Building Fund

David & Ethel Wilson Family Fund

Jerry & Susan Goldberg, In Honor of the 50th Anniversary of Norm Wilson's Bar Mitzvah

Elaine Rosen, In Honor of the 50th Anniversary of Norm Wilson's Bar Mitzvah

Edward L. Weisberg Fund

Abe Benjamin, In Memory of George Darkis

Abe Benjamin, In Memory of Barbara Dvilinsky

Abe Benjamin, In Memory of Morris Lerman

Abe Benjamin, In Memory of Bill McCallum

Joan & Arthur Cope, In Memory of Sandra Hersh Sime

Karen, Alan, Justin, & Brandon Lerman, In Memory of Bill McCallum

Jack & Rose Novick, In Memory of Sandra Hersh Sime

Rita Weisberg, In Memory of Dianne Richman

Rita Weisberg, In Memory of Sarah Schwey

Rita Weisberg, In Memory of Sandra Hersh Sime

Phil & Elizabeth Levinsky, Speedy Recovery to Marcia Cutler

Rita Weisberg, Speedy Recovery to Marcia Cutler

Endowment

General Fund

Lorraine Arsenault

First Parish Church of Yarmouth

David & Beth Strassler

Ivan & Sue Most, In Honor of the 50th Anniversary of Norm Wilson's Bar Mitzvah

Adam & Lisa Arens, In Memory of Gil Arens

Tom & Marjorie Berman, In Memory of Ruth Berman

Tom & Marjorie Berman, In Memory of Samuel Berman

Judy & Ben Bertram, In Memory of Bill McCallum

Dauna Binder, In Memory of Ardyth R. Webb

Libby Blotner, In Memory of Barbara Dvilinsky

James & Martha Burns, In Memory of Rose Burns

Janine Collins, In Memory of Anna Imondi

Gerald & Selma Cope, In Memory of Martin H. Clenott

Wayne Goodman & Jo Ann Miller Goodman, In Memory of Ruth Finn

Larry Kane, In Memory of Gertrude Kane

Shirley Kazon, In Memory of Louis Kazon

Abe & Jean Peck, In Memory of Harry Marcus

Abe & Jean Peck, In Memory of Anna Kolton Peck

Pat Reef, In Memory of Dottie Ann Bernstein Dubin

Elaine Rosen, In Memory of Bill McCallum

Jerry & Maxine Sneider, In Memory of Barbara Divilinsky

Joseph Wildstein, In Memory of Harold Wildstein

Ricki Small, Speedy Recovery to Shelly Dassa

Hebrew School Fund

Debbie Kanter, In Memory of Bella Cope

Debbie Kanter, In Memory of Zaviel Levine

Robert Levine & Vilean Taggersell

Jonas B. Klein Fund

Kiddush Fund

Gail Lerman, In Honor of Arthur Joseph Nemon

Charlie & Ellie Miller, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Charlie & Ellie Miller, In Memory of George Darkis

Charlie & Ellie Miller, In Memory of Bill McCallum

Kol Yeladim

Koocher/Rovinov Hebrew School Scholarship Fund

Ethel Koocher, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Stan & Sherrie Schatz, In Memory of Beatrice Schatz

Kulanu Fund

David & Katharine Stone

Dick & Adele Aronson, In Memory of Joseph Silverman

Jerry & Mary Carp, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Nancy Finberg, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Esther Goldberg, In Memory of Myer Goldberg

Howard & Rose Gunty, In Memory of Mitchell Gunty

Robert Levine & Vilean Taggersell, In Memory of Arthur B. Levine

David & Elaine Lewis, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

David & Elaine Lewis, In Memory of Phyllis Cohen's Brother-in-law

David & Elaine Lewis, In Memory of Louis Weisberg

Steve & Peggy Shapiro, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Mary & Benjamin Lazarus Library Fund

Penny Rich, In Memory of Zelle Rich

Memorial Park Fund

Nancy Finberg, In Memory of Dorothy Ann Bernstein Dubin

Rubin & Sally Laskoff, In Memory of Steven Laskoff

Rubin & Sally Laskoff, In Memory of Israel Rothblatt

Rubin & Sally Laskoff, In Memory of Samuel Rothblatt

Rubin & Sally Laskoff, In Memory of Sylvia Rothblatt

Pearl Levine, In Memory of Edith Bick

Suzi Osher, In Memory of Dr. Alfred Osher

Molly Finkelman Choir Fund

Music Fund

Dick & Adele Aronson, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Dick & Adele Aronson, In Memory of Nissel Byers

Dick & Adele Aronson, In Memory of Martin Clenott

Dick & Adele Aronson, In Memory of Dorothy Ann Dubin

Leah Cohen, In Memory of M. William Cohen

Jerry & Susan Goldberg, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Bob & Judy Rosen, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Stu & Steph Stern, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Stephen & Marlene Webber, In Memory of Gladys Berlowe

Norman Finberg USY Fund

Prayer Book Fund

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Brad Kaplan & Carolann, Bonnie & Arnie Goldsmith, In Honor of Geraldine Isaacson's 90th Birthday

Charlie Young, In Memory of Beatrice Carlin

Charlie Young, In Memory of Manuel Young

Sisterhood

Tikkun Olam

Yad I'Yad

Ilene & Myron Berman, In Memory of Samuel & Ruth Berman

Yahrzeit Fund

Harlan Baker, In Memory of Milton H. Baker

Barbara Berenson, In Memory of Nathan Berenson

Mark & Ellen Bramson, In Memory of Thelma & Udell Bramson

Natalie Brenner, In Memory of Howard Brenner

Esther Chorney, In Memory of Ida Chorney

Nora Ciffer, In Memory of Ana Coman

Thelma Cope, In Memory of Mitchell Cope

Burt & Barbara Epstein, In Memory of Doris Epstein

Marjorie Feinberg, In Memory of David Brownstone

Ruth & Bob Finegold, In Memory of Henry Lucas

Jerry Gillis, In Memory of Barbara Gillis

Jerry Gillis, In Memory of Harry Gillis

Annette Goldman, In Memory of Rose Hechtkop

Honey Goldman, In Memory of Leon Hecht

Arthur & Fran Jacobson, In Memory of Melvin Jacobson

Arthur & Fran Jacobson, In Memory of Robert Jacobson

Arthur & Fran Jacobson, In Memory of Samuel Jacobson

Ronald & Connie Jacobson, In Memory of Sam Jacobson

Ronald & Connie Jacobson, In Memory of Philip Polansky

Nancy & Peter Kaye, In Memory of Dorothy (Bernstein) Dubin

Myer Marcus, In Memory of Frances Marcus

Gilbert & Marilyn Prawer, In Memory of Iona Prawer

Gilbert & Marilyn Prawer, In Memory of Sam Prawer

Eddie Richman, In Memory of Dianne Schwey Richman

Bruce Ruben, In Memory of Max Ruben

George & Ruthanne Singal, In Memory of Clara Sagik Striar

Sarah Weinstein, In Memory of Gussie Mack

Sarah Weinstein, In Memory of Ruth Mack Shulman

Youth Activity Fund

Dick & Adele Aronson, In Memory of Dora Aronson

Donations listed were received at Temple Beth El by February 27, 2009.

shofar

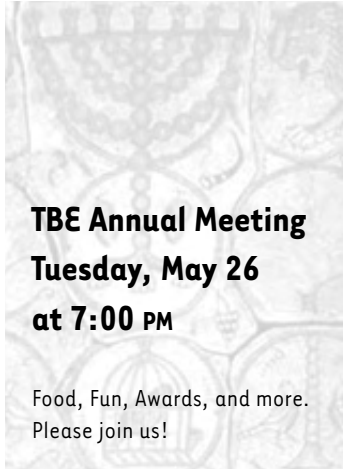
Temple Beth El
400 Deering Avenue
Portland, ME 04103

PRSRTR-STD
U.S. Postage

Paid

Permit No. 1404
Portland, ME

■ SAVE THE DATE!



TBE Annual Meeting
Tuesday, May 26
at 7:00 PM

Food, Fun, Awards, and more.
Please join us!

Temple Beth El Wishes to thank the Brotherhood and Sisterhood for sponsoring this Shofar



חג כשר ושמח

The Brotherhood and Sisterhood
wish our Temple Beth El Family
a Happy Passover.



Shofar Deadlines — May e-Shofar due April 14; June/July issue is April 28.

Please submit material via e-mail as text included in the body of the message or as an attached Microsoft Word document to lisab@maine.rr.com. Submissions on paper will also be accepted.