

Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam

Newsletter for Month of April 2012

www.shaarehayam.org

Message from the Rabbi:

Dear Friends,

One of the pleasures of being a rabbi is being asked – and doing my best to answer – questions about Judaism. Engaging in dialogue with a sincere questioner is deeply satisfying and so is researching answers to challenging questions that I can't fully answer off the top of my head. The questions that rabbis are asked span just about the entire spectrum of life and living, but one of the ones that I get asked most frequently is some variation on, "What's the difference between Reform and Orthodox Judaism?" It's a good question, and rather than confine my answer to one questioner at a time, I'd like to share it with all of you in this Rabbi's Message. Although an enormous amount has been written about this topic, here's my succinct-but-as-helpful-as-possible answer:

The differences in how Reform and Orthodox Jews practice their tradition come from their differing views of the Hebrew Bible and the status of other sacred texts, such as the *Mishnah* (Oral Law, written down in 200 CE) and Talmud (the *Mishnah* plus several generations of rabbinic commentary known as the *Gemara*, completed in 499 CE). There are also law codes, such as the Mishnah Torah (by Moses Maimonides, 12th century) and the *Shulchan Arukh* (by Joseph Caro, 16th century) which guide the life of Orthodox Jews. For Orthodox Jews, the Hebrew Bible is a divinely-authored text transmitted from God to Moses; because every word in it is God's, following it is non-negotiable. (The Talmud has virtually the same status although it is clearly a human-written document). Reform Jews, however, understand the Bible to have been written by human beings -- our ancestors. That does not mean that, in the thinking of many Reform Jews (myself included), there is no Divine hand in the Bible. It does mean that in this view, the texts are considered to be divinely *inspired*, reflecting our ancestors' encounters with God, their best understanding of those encounters, and their relationship with God; but that is not the same as believing that the Bible was divinely *authored*. While it is a holy document, the Torah is rooted in the past, and we can even sometimes discern the circumstances under which certain sections were written down. The Bible developed at a time very different from our own, and therefore it approaches certain issues (such as the status of women and those with physical disabilities) from a perspective and with an understanding quite different from our own.

So Reform Jews read the texts from the perspective not only of a religious person, but that of a scholar or historian or sociologist as well. In addition, Reform Jews do not ascribe to the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* the same authority which Orthodox Jews do. While the *Talmud* and the law codes may guide the lives of Orthodox Jews, it is more accurate to say that they *inform* the lives of Reform Jews.

Reform Jews have always understood Judaism to be an *evolving* tradition. Judaism is not and never has been monolithic. On the contrary, throughout our history, different ways to be Jewish have been the norm. Even a cursory reading of Jewish history demonstrates this clearly. Different sorts of practices developed in different Jewish communities; the history of Jewish belief and practice has been an incredibly rich, varied, and, at times, contentious one. Why else would the expression, "Two Jews, three opinions" be so widely understood by us? Or the joke about the Jew shipwrecked alone on a desert island who proceeds to build two synagogues – the one he'll attend and the one he wouldn't step foot in? In the absence of a centralized authority such as the

Catholic Church, Judaism has always been – and continues to be – in a state of evolution. Today, as in the past, these differences in perspective can be seen in every aspect of life: how holy days and festivals are celebrated, how kashrut (the laws of keeping kosher) are kept, how the prayer service is organized and conducted, etc. Even though the different Jewish denominations have generally acknowledged differences, it is not accurate to generalize and say "All Orthodox Jews do this..." or "All Reform Jews do that..."

If you're interested in learning more, I can recommend wonderful books and articles; just let me know.

And, by the way, Reform was the first Jewish movement or denomination. Orthodox came after!

Have a wonderful Passover holiday. I look forward to seeing many of you at the *Seder*.

Rabbi Kim S. Geringer

President's Message:

As Passover approaches, the Second Annual Seder will be held, once again, at the Captain's Inn in Lacey on April 7th starting at 5:00 PM. Come and enjoy this Seder with the Rabbi, your Temple community and friends. If you have not responded, please call me at 242-2390 to make your reservation. We must notify the Inn as soon as possible with the breakdown of what to serve. Last year this event was a huge success and let's make it a great success this year too.

On April 28th at the Manahawkin Elks Lodge the Gift Auction will be held. It is set to begin at 5:00 PM and as an added attraction, sandwiches will be available for purchase. If you have new articles to donate, we can always use them. See your local store and get them to donate an item. This is the largest fund raiser of the year. As any good event, it is only as successful as the participation of our members. That means all of our members should be contributing something for this most worthwhile endeavor, as well as, attending the auction.

The annual Jewish Heritage evening will be held at the Lakewood Blue Claws Game on May 22nd. Let Madelyn Dunn, (609)660-1614, know how many tickets you will need. Wear your Temple T shirt to let them know that we all support our heritage.

Lastly, mark your calendar. The annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, May 20th, at 7:00 PM in the Lutheran Church. We will review the past year and have the new budget available for your approval. As a reminder that you must be a member in good standing to vote, i.e., dues and school fees paid in full. Welcome back to all the snowbirds. Of course you realize there wasn't any snow to date this year.

May we all have a healthy year,

Aaron Shapiro, President

Seder Plates

We all know that our Seder plates are the centerpiece of our Passover tables. We are asking members that are joining us for the Second Night Seder who would like to donate their Seder plate for our tables to please contact Cyndy Friedland at cfriedland119@comcast.net or via phone at 609-698-4459. Kindly contact Cyndy before April 4th.

HEBREW 101 UPDATE:

Spring is upon us and it's time once again to introduce our Hebrew 101 course. Iris Harari will be teaching this class on Tuesdays starting in June. Our target date for the first class will be June 12th starting at 5 PM. This will be an introduction to beginners Hebrew concentrating on the alphabet and ritual prayers. To sign up for the class email Cyndy at cfriedland119@comcast.net or call 609-698-4459 with your reservation. There will be a charge for the class.

On behalf of the Hebrew school I would like to thank the congregation for their participation in our Passover candy drive. **Rachel Miller is our "super star"** this year in selling the most candy, and a special thanks goes out to her.

Cyndy Friedland, Director, Hebrew School

WELCOME:

We welcome Judy and Robert Horowitz of Barnegat and Sharon Chropuvka of Waretown as new members of our congregation. Please accept our hands in friendship as you attend services with us.

Cyndy Friedland, Membership Chair

Get Well Wishes to:

Dolly Weiss
Terry Silverman
Rita Gold
Danielle Jonas
Joel Polter
Joe Breeze

Yahrzeit April 2012

April 6	Bernard Lewis	Father of Samuel Hull Lewis
April 10	Samuel Sales	Brother of Maralyn Ricciardi
April 20	Samuel Applebaum	Father of Arlene Armstrong
April 26	Sylvia Chasanoff	Mother of Deanna Bovasso
April 27	Jack Silverman	Father of Terry Silverman

Corrections:

March 21 Samuel Kolb Father of Daniel Kolb
March 27 Yetta Grossman Mother of Fran Breese

PLEASE NOTE: To have the name of your loved one listed in The Bulletin and announced at Services by the Rabbi on the anniversary of their Yahrzeit, contact Phyllis Feather at PO Box 624, Barnegat, NJ 08005 or call **(609) 978-5500**. The list must be updated; even if you have sent in a name/names, response is necessary in order to insure that this process is up to date.

April Birthdays

Jonas, David 11
Goldsborough, Sandy 29

April Anniversaries

Breese, Joe/Fran 7/62

Thank you to my congregation for your prayers, phone calls, emails and visits. It is a wonderful feeling and so appreciated. I am keeping my positive attitude and knowing so many people care is wonderful medicine.

Thank you, *Rita Gold*

Book Corner by Rosalie Donadio

Far from Zion: In Search of a Global Jewish Community by Charles London

This is a story of Jews in far-flung places, and it's through their experiences that London examines his own identity. As he explores widespread Jewish communities struggling with their relationship to the larger world, he too grapples with his heritage and comes to terms with his own connection to Zion. The author was shaken to learn that his thoroughly modern grandmother was born in a small, Orthodox, Yiddish-speaking community in Virginia. A reunion of this now-gone shtetl that had coexisted peacefully with its gentile neighbors inspired him to discover other Jewish communities in challenging circumstances that live peacefully with their gentile neighbors. Raised in a secular, assimilated home, he demonstrates a lack of basic knowledge of ritual however after his "journey" searching Jewish communities in sometimes obscure locations, London reaches the conclusion of the necessity of a Jewish state. The book is interesting and the photographs engaging.

Excerpts I found particularly interesting:

p. 109: “Why was it that I felt so much more spiritually alive in these far-flung places than I did at home? Why did the services seem so much more meaningful to me when I had traveled halfway around the world to witness them? Was it *because* I had traveled halfway around the world? I was beginning to understand the purpose of pilgrimage. By leaving the normal space of your life, by leaving behind language and geography and your own comfort, you open yourself to the possibilities of the sublime. The effort you put in imbues the act with meaning. I could go to synagogue every week in New York, but the ease with which I would be able to do it would never have given me the clarity I needed. I had to uproot myself in order to see the meaning that spiritual practice could have in my life at Home. I had to pack my bags in order to ditch my baggage.”

P. 305: “I thought of the sign outside the sanctuary in Rangoon. “A tree may be alone in the field, a man alone in the world, but a Jew is never alone on his holy days.” I think I understood it now. As long as we shared in these sacred moments, we could defy distances and time. The moment of prayer is an eternal present.”

Jewish Tidbits Fran Breese

Seeing is Believing

A famous actor once quipped, “Who are you going to believe, me or your eyes?”

Even though he was only joking, the answer would be obvious. As long as we can see things for ourselves, we can use our intellect and understanding to make sense of a situation.

So what are some of the things we see going on around us?

We see the Israeli government sending the most advanced medical teams to Haiti to aid in their recent emergency recovery efforts.

We see Israeli scientists teaming up with representatives of other countries to assist them in turning their arid deserts into fertile lands.

We see throughout history the Jewish Fundamentalists, you know - those guys with the long beards, black coats and black hats - building schools, soup kitchens and charity organizations to benefit themselves and their neighbors.

We see thousands of Jews of all backgrounds pouring out into the streets to find one lost kidnapped boy.

We see modern democracies basing their laws and ethics on the principles laid out in the “Old Testament”.

We see Jews at the forefront of every major social movement initiated for the betterment of man – even if they don’t always turn out that way.

We see Jews in every country on the globe living peaceably with their neighbors.

We see more medical innovations and patents coming out of the Jewish nation than all other nations combined.

We see Jews being granted Nobel prizes far in excess of their overall percentage of the world’s population.

We see Jews fighting alongside Christians for school vouchers to benefit all private school children and to protect the moral and ethical standards of our society.

We see Israeli hospitals treating injured suicide bombers, pregnant Arab women and the critically ill of their warring neighbors.

What do we NOT see?

- Jews in Arizona slitting the throats of Mexicans who dare to invade America.
- Jews in London blowing up train stations to protest against escalating anti-Semitism.
- Jews in Mumbai recklessly shooting hotel guests and passersby who differ with their ideology.
- Jewish suicide bombers.
- Jews massacring Nazi, Arab, Christian or czarist children while they sleep.
- Jews destroying religious sites in America, France, England, Russia or even Germany.
- Jews sending rockets into civilian areas to drive their enemies into the sea.

It was the Jews who brought the concept to the world that “He who saves even one life, is as if he saved the entire universe.”

For 2,000 years, no one has ever seen Jews as aggressors anywhere in the world. So what makes the world believe that we are doing that now in the land of Israel?

I ask you - who are you going to believe, the media or your eyes?

(By Shraga Simmons on www.SimpletoRemember.com)

April News from the Fundraising Committee

Oneg Sponsorship: Do you or your family have a simcha to share with our congregation? What better way to celebrate than sponsoring an Oneg! We offer several levels that can be sponsored, \$50, \$75, and \$100. Our Onegs include wine, juice, challah and other desserts. The upper levels include fruit and extras to enhance the Oneg. Kindly contact Madelyn Dunn at 609-660-1614 to reserve your date

2012 SCHEDULE OF SERVICE 7:30 PM (DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

April 7 (Seder) AT Captain's Inn	September 16 Erev Rosh Hashanah
April 13	September 17 Rosh Hashanah
April 27	September 25 Erev Yom Kippur
May 4	September 26 Yom Kippur; Break the Fast
May 18	October 2 (erect Sukkah on Tuesday)
June 8	October 5
June 29	October 19

July 13	November 2
July 27	November 16
August 10	November 30
August 24	December 14 Hanukkah
September 7	December 28

GIFT AUCTION

APRIL 28, 2012

FROM 5:00 TO 11.00 PM

AT THE

MANAHAWKIN ELKS LODGE

SUPPORT YOUR CONGREGATION

PRICE - \$ 25.00 PER ADULT

INCLUDES AUCTION TICKETS, COFFEE,

TEA AND DESERT

CASH BAR AVAILABLE

CALL DAYNA AT 609-978-6581

TO MAKE A DONATION AND

PURCHASE TICKETS

COME OUT AND SUPPORT YOUR TEMPLE

JEWISH HERITAGE NIGHT

AT THE

LAKEWOOD BLUE CLAWS

TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2012

PRE-GAME PROGRAM STARTS AT 5:30PM

GAME STARTS AT 6:35 PM

REPRESENT YOUR CONGREGATION

WEAR YOUR T-SHIRT

TICKETS: \$9.00 PER ADULT

SENIORS & JUNIORS ARE: \$7.00

FREE HOT DOGS FOR SENIORS

CALL MADELYN @ (609) 660-1614

TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS

MUST HAVE YOUR RESPONSE

BY APRIL 15TH