
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

APRIL, 2017

NISAN/IYYAR, 5777

Friday evening services begin at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday morning services begin at 9:30 a.m.

FROM THE RABBI

ELIJAH FOR IRONISTS

Passover — the season of our freedom — begins this year with Seder on Monday night, April 10. The 8-day festival concludes Tuesday night, April 18.

You can find much of what you need to know in this comprehensive guide from the Rabbinical Assembly, <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/jewish-law/holidays/pesah/pesah-guide-5777.pdf>

During the Seder we open the door for Elijah the prophet, who is supposed to be the harbinger of the Messiah. As a young child in the yeshivah, I was taught that the wine in Elijah's cup diminishes after we open the door for him. That is a sign that he is partaking of the meal, even though we cannot see him.

Perhaps I should have outgrown that charming belief around age 8. In truth, it probably took me until 11 or 12. But either way, I have long been among those who do not literally believe that the Messiah is

imminent. It seems that *Eyn kal chadash tachat ha-shamesh*, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Internecine wars are going on in Syria and other parts of the Middle East; in South Sudan, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in other parts of Africa. Russia, Iran and China are indefatigably meddlesome. And I don't know anyone in our own country who thinks that our political meanness is actually a sign that the Messiah is about to drop by.

I am with those thinkers whom David Brooks called the ironists (in his NY Times column, March 14, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/14/opinion/the-benedict-option.html?_r=0). The ironists, like Reinhold Niebuhr or Isaiah Berlin, believed that life was inevitably messy. A purist might well believe in the Messiah; perfection is real and the age of perfection is coming. The ironists, though, hold that day-to-day life is about balance and trade-offs. In more simple terms, the ironists might say, forget perfect; let's just hope for 'good enough.'

This Passover, I hope that we all feel a measure of faithful ardor as we go through our ancient rituals. But it's alright if we don't

get our hopes too high for Elijah. If people engage around the Seder table with conversation about how we can bring more kindness and civility into our lives, that will be reason enough to get together with loved ones.

This world is intractable, and the Messiah tarries. Limited and vulnerable though we all may be, let us make it our business to each drink a sip, as it were, from Elijah's cup. Change comes in small increments. And it is up to us.

Happy Passover,

Stephen Listfield

EDITOR'S NOTE:

It was brought to my attention that the end line of the Rabbi's article last month was missing some words. I apologize for that careless copying mistake on my part. The last sentence should have read "But our Jewish brothers and sisters in Israel—and the Palestinian people as well—continue to suffer because of terrible Palestinian leadership that refuses to admit even the basic truth."

YOUR GUIDE TO PESACH PREPARATION: DISHES, UTENSILS, FOOD — AND A LOT MORE

The Rabbinical Assembly publishes a fairly comprehensive guide for the complex festival of Passover. Here is the link. You will find that it addresses a lot of our annual questions: <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/jewish-law/holidays/pesach/pesach-guide-5777.pdf>

If you have further questions, Rabbi Listfield is happy to address them. His email is slistfield@aol.com

Happy Pesach!

THE SELLING OF HAMETZ

Ideally, each of us would use up, give away, or destroy all our hametz (food that is not acceptable during Passover) before the start of the holiday. Recognizing that not everyone can remove or destroy all leavened products, the rabbinic sages provided a technical legal remedy. Through mekhirat hametz, the selling of hametz to a non-Jew, we arrange to not own whatever hametz food and utensils are stored in our homes.

We accomplish this by authorizing the Rabbi to act as our agent to sell all our hametz and hametz utensils and by putting away the hametz food and utensils so that we will not accidentally use them during the holiday. The rabbi "buys" the food back at the end of the holiday.

Please mail or scan the form ([on the last page of this publication](#)) to Rabbi Listfield no later than April 7, 2017.

Rabbi Stephen Listfield
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Chag Pesach sameah v'kasher! ~ A happy & kosher Pesach!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

April is a busy month. We celebrate the freedom of our ancestors from slavery in Egypt and our start towards becoming a true nation unto ourselves as we began that long and lengthy journey to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The next stop on that journey for us is the nomination of new officers and board members to serve our Congregation next year. If you are interested and haven't been called by the committee, you can let Michelle know of your interest. Finally, this month, we are kicking off our Social Action Committee. Daniel Wiederecht has agreed to chair this committee, whose initial function is to determine the level of interest within the Congregation and to help facilitate that interest. Daniel can be reached at EtzChayimSAC@gmail.com or 610-202-6163.

Barry

UPCOMING EVENTS

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|-----------|---|
| Apr 02 | Dedication of Hsv Jewish Heritage Center, 2 PM at TBS |
| Apr 03 | Meditation Meeting, 7:30 at EC
All women are welcome. |
| Apr 07 | Joe Sacks Memorial Service |
| Apr 10 | EC Seder, 5:30, Reservations Required |
| Apr 11-18 | Pesach |
| Apr 23 | JFHNA's Yom HaShoah program at the Education Bldg, Space & Rocket Center, 2:00 PM |

SISTERHOOD

Ladies of Etz Chayim,

The Sisterhood has an interesting program planned for all the women of Etz Chayim. It is a relaxation and meditation program (to help us get ready for the Holidays). The program is April 3 at 7:30pm at the Synagogue. It is sponsored by the Heartfulness Institute, a non-profit organization. They are offering us a relaxation technique in a "taster" session.

Guided relaxation and meditation techniques have been around for centuries and are designed to nurture individual wellbeing and balanced living. This introductory session will introduce ways to calm, relax, and rid your mind of the daily negative encounters we all experience. After a brief introduction, you will get the chance to try meditation yourself and experience its benefits. There are no charges for the practice at any stage or any other commercial interest, and it is offered completely free of charge by trained Heartfulness volunteers.

We are also planning a Lunch Bunch for May 15 or 22. The location will be in next month's Shofar.

I thank Brenda Liles for preparing the Purim hot dog dinner (sponsored by the Sisterhood), Lauren Goodman for the homemade hamentaschen and Shirley Roberts for help shopping. We had the largest crowd ever. Also thanks to those who participated in the Spiel, as well as those who organized it. Unfortunately, I don't have the names of everyone, but thank you all.

I wish everyone a wonderful Passover, and I hope to see you at the meditation program.

Natha

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH BBYO?

On March 25, BBYO members met to discuss their plans through the end of the school year, what could be done in Summer, and JServe opportunities. While it's not written in stone, it appears that members will hold a Shabbat dinner on the first Shabbat of every month and meetings on the third Tuesday of every month. Contact Thomas Jones or BBYO members for more information.

April 7th will be the first of the monthly Shabbat dinners. BBYO welcomes people to sign up to host future Shabbat dinners.

BBYO is collecting supplies for the free clinic as part of their JServe activities, which will take the place of the April 16 meeting. Below is the list of what they are accepting.

What Does the Clinic Need?

Clinic Supplies	Clinic Medicines
Brown paper lunch bags	Antifungal cream
Ziploc sandwich bags	Triple antibiotic cream
Disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer	Band-aids, Gauze and gauze tape, Alcohol
Paper towels	Aspirin, Tylenol, Advil
Trash bags (30 gal. and 13 gal. sizes)	Examination gloves (Latex or latex-free)
Toilet paper	Vitamins (especially vitamin D)
	Cough medicines, but no decongestants (for example, no Robitussin D)

ONEGS

Mar 31 Hancock & Edmondson
Apr 07 Sacks & Schindler
Apr 14 Roberts
Apr 21 Schwartz
Apr 28 Paddock

DONATIONS

Rabbi Fund

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal
To: Sarah Drake - We are thinking about you. May healing come soon.

Sisterhood Fund

From: Sandra Wiederecht
To: Sarah Drake - Hope you are feeling better and on the mend.
To: Sisterhood

From: Harriet Sacks
To: Itamar Shapira - Hope you are feeling much better.
To: Sarah Drake - Wishing you a speedy recovery.

Outdoor Lighting Fund

In Memory of Gertrude and Perry Schlein from their daughters, Natha Hancock and Robin Slomka and their families.

Yahrzeits**

Mar 29	Nisan 02	Hersh Tzvi Bayers
Mar 30	Nisan 03	Robert Lukin*
Apr 03	Nisan 07	Paul Schlein*
Apr 03	Nisan 07	Gertrud Schlein*
Apr 04	Nisan 08	Morris Wittenstein*
Apr 05	Nisan 09	Cecile Hollenberg*
Apr 06	Nisan 10	Irwin Goldstein*
Apr 07	Nisan 11	Norman Greenbaum
Apr 11	Nisan 15	Yakov Cszerny Drake
Apr 11	Nisan 15	Yolanda Cszerny Drake
Apr 12	Nisan 16	Millie Goldstein
Apr 12	Nisan 16	Marvin M. Schreiber*
Apr 12	Nisan 16	Lilian Jaffee
Apr 16	Nisan 20	Henry Sevin
Apr 18	Nisan 22	Simon Blum*
Apr 19	Nisan 23	Jeffrey Weinman*
Apr 19	Nisan 23	Leo I. Goldberger
Apr 25	Nisan 29	Joseph Goldstein*
Apr 26	Nisan 30	Leo Ginsburg
Apr 27	Iyyar 01	Frieda Margol Katz
Apr 29	Iyyar 03	Robert F. (Bob) May

* Plaque

**Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening

BIRTHDAYS

Mar 25	Sharon Roberts
Mar 25	Harrison Sacks
Mar 27	Stephanie Hancock Gerlak
Mar 27	Lucy Fisher
Mar 28	Seth Spraggins
Apr 02	Dr. Arthur Polin
Apr 04	Diane Belsky
Apr 04	Dorothy Goldberg
Apr 06	Eli Sacks
Apr 10	Tatjana Copeland
Apr 15	Sandy Kalachman
Apr 15	Howard Polin
Apr 17	Lynne Edmondson
Apr 18	Jacob Sacks
Apr 18	David Rush
Apr 19	Joshua Brigadier
Apr 19	Gavin Hancock
Apr 21	Blake Zelickson
Apr 21	Megan Polin
Apr 22	Lisa Roberts Harris
Apr 23	Susan Levitt
Apr 27	Gary Hall
Apr 28	Louis Weiner

ANNIVERSARIES

Apr 15	Helen & Robert Woodham
Apr 17	Ginger & Howard Nelson
Apr 30	Sharon & Jeff Yalowitz

A PESACH VISITATION

By Ted Roberts

Did your rabbi ever tell you the tale of the thirty-six Tzadiks who secretly circulate in our world? They look like me and you, but inside, they glow with righteousness. They are the spies of G-d; and their mission is surveillance of the human heartscape. Every Pesach they take the ethical pulse of Humanity, then report to the Creator. This determines the fate of the world the following year. If all is ethically well; the harvest is

bountiful, the S&P 500 index zooms, the Winter is mild and Summer is balmy. Except for death and taxes, bliss reigns.

But the Berg family at 2822 Mendel Circle in Fairlawn, New Jersey had no time for rabbinic tales. They were busy planning their Passover. They would have a guest this year, they decided - some homeless stranger. A real Mitzvah it would be.

The next morning found Sarah Berg dialing around to several Jewish agencies until she found her man. Sure, they had a candidate. A young, rootless fellow passing through town.

What a glorious Passover it would be, thought Sarah. A sumptuous meal, the Seder ceremony, and the added Mitzvah of the indigent guest. Just as the Hagaddah says; "let all who are hungry come and eat". But so much preparation and post-meal cleanup. She cringed at the thought of dirty dishes piled in the sink, crusted with the remains of five courses. She'd get a maid. A small luxury.

Now, it's Seder night. The doorbell rings. It's him, the guest. He's in torn jeans, plaid shirt, and a Bull's sports cap.

But the Bergs welcome him into their home with smiles. Uncomfortably, they make small talk as the stranger sits stiffly at the table. They proceed with the Seder, but he seems to have no understanding of the service. Nor is he interested in Daniel Berg's Passover anecdotes directed at both him and the children. "When do we eat?" he says as they pass the matzoh and moror sandwiches around the table.

The guest eats steadily as the family participates enthusiastically in the service.

They talk of ancient miracles as he enthusiastically devours the brisket and roast chicken. The children swing their heads from the derelict to their parents in silent wonder at the sullen guest.

In the middle of this tension there is a horrible crash of china from the kitchen. The floor is littered with the shards of Sarah Berg's wedding china; a gift from her mother, who had died two months before.

The elderly maid had slipped and upset the card table holding the dirty dishes. She stared down at her clumsy handiwork. A silent tear ran down the old lady's cheek as Sarah looked at her mother's heirloom, now splintered china, all over the kitchen floor. A great sadness seized her heart. The failed holiday, the memory of her mother, this incompetent human being who couldn't even clear the table without disaster. But she swallowed the lump in her throat when she saw the remorseful tears in the eyes of the old lady.

"That's OK, that's OK." She patted the shoulder of her Passover helper as the maid swept the remains of Sarah's mother's Lenox china into a brown paper grocery sack.

Sarah returned to the table determined to crown the evening with ceremony appropriate to the holiday. Fitfully, they resumed the singing. And soon, mercifully, the evening came to an end. The maid, still red-eyed, was paid handsomely, in deference to the holiday, and sent home early with a plastic bag full of roast chicken. The kids - sleepy, irritable, appalled by the rude guest - were ordered upstairs to bed.

The family went upstairs to an uneasy sleep where Sarah's dreams were strangely lighted by the bright tearful eyes of the clumsy maid.

A miserable night.

Ah, but what a golden year followed for the Berg family: and the world they inhabited. A warm wind blew over the face of the earth and unlocked the cold heart of humanity. The earth smiled and her harvests were plentiful. The S&P 500 index zoomed, the Winter was mild and the Summer was balmy.

And all for the price of a pat on the shoulder, a plastic bag full of leftover chicken, and a set of dishes. Who would suspect that a Tzadik's duties included sweeping the kitchen floor?

Buy Ted's collected works at Amazon.com or the Sisterhood Gift Shop. Ted can be emailed at: shirlr@hiwaay.net

HAMETZ SELLING FORM

Shtar Harsha'ah ~ Authorization to Sell Hametz

I, the undersigned, empower Rabbi Stephen Listfield to act in my behalf to sell all hametz possessed by me and my household – knowingly or unknowingly – as defined by Torah law. This transaction takes effect Monday, April 10, 11:30 am and will be in effect for the duration of Pesach, which ends Tuesday, April 18 at nightfall.

Signature

Name (print)

Home Address
