
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

AUG, 2017

AV/ELUL, 5777

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jul 31 Tisha B'Av services at EC,
7:45 PM
- Aug 14 Sisterhood (all ladies
welcome) Game Night at EC,
7 PM
- Aug 27 Joe Sacks Unveiling at Maple Hill
Cemetery, time TBA
- Sep 01 Dr. Art Polin will give the Erev
Shabbat talk at EC

FROM THE PRESIDENT

July is a relatively quiet month at the Synagogue, though the Sisterhood and Book Club may disagree. However, it is always a great place to close out the week's activities with a Shabbat service. With various families taking vacation trips over the summer, minyans are often a premium.

I again want to thank all of our board members and volunteers that help to make our experience at Etz Chayim as meaningful as possible. This month's special honorees are two relatively long-standing members of the Synagogue and its leadership: Bill Goldberg and Max Rosenthal. Bill has been serving as the Ritual Committee as well as our religious leader for a long time. The

formation of an actual committee to help guide our ritual and religious services will help Bill ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our community. Among Max's other duties over the years has been his stalwart performance in managing the maintenance of our building and grounds. Despite his customary, "It's no big deal", we are truly blessed to have him with us. Someday, he may allow us to form an actual committee.

שלום

Barry

Dr. Art Polin (yes, Diana & Howard's son) will be visiting Huntsville and will give the Friday Night talk at Etz Chayim on September 01.

SISTERHOOD

While Summer is in full swing, we are thinking about the upcoming year. First of all, this is when we ask the ladies to renew or join Sisterhood for the low, low price of \$18. Contact our SH President, Natha Hancock,

or our Member Chairwoman, Millie Rosenthal, for information about joining. We give a warm welcome to new Sisterhood members: Ann Denbo, Rita Neely and Johanna Veal. Of course, we thank all of our members—new and long-time-- for their support.

We are also thankful for the participation of so many of you in our main fundraiser, the New Year Book. Look for the booklets to be available just before Rosh Hashannah.

On August 14th, we hope to see many of you at the Sisterhood Game Night, where we will play either Mah Jongg or Mexican Train-- your choice. Come enjoy an evening of visiting with other ladies in a relaxed EC atmosphere.

Brenda Liles

DONATIONS

Rabbi Fund

From: Candy & David Rush
To: The Synagogue - A very generous donation in Honor of Noah's Bar Mitzvah preparation by Max Rosenthal.

From: Diana & Howard Polin
To: Beverly & Lou Weiner - Mazel Tov to a wonderful couple on your recent wedding.
To: Raven Livingston - Our sympathy to you on the loss of your mother, Tiny Livingston.

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal
To: Beverly & Lou Weiner - Best wishes and a long and happy life together.
To: Molly Lapidus-Thinking about you and hoping you're feeling better soon.

From: Harriet Sacks
To: Raven Livingston - Thinking about you and am so very sorry for your loss

From: Shirley & Ted Roberts
To: Raven Livingston - So sorry for the loss of your mother, Tiny Livingston.
To: A generous donation to the synagogue - In Honor of the High Holidays.

From: Janet Schindler
To: Raven Livingston - In Memory of your mother, Tiny Livingston.

BBYO Fund

From: Janet Schindler
To: Sandra McGuire - Thinking of you, get better soon.

From: Diana & Howard Polin
To: Sandra McGuire - Looking forward to your speedy healing.

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal
To: Sandra McGuire - Thinking about you and hope your healing will come soon. We miss you at Maj.

Sisterhood Fund

From: Sandra Wiederecht
To: Raven Livingston - Our sympathy on the loss of your mother, Tiny Livingston.
To: Sandra McGuire - Hope you are feeling much better soon.

From: Farimah & Abe Asher

From: Linda Kamisher

From: Nannette Schwartz

Outdoor Lighting Fund

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

Cemetery Funding. The Synagogue Board thanks the Sacks family for funding the new cemetery boundary markers from the Randy Sacks Memorial Fund.

ONEGS

Jul 28 Rosenthal, M&M
 Aug 04 Reese & Schindler
 Aug 11 Veal & Kirby
 Aug 18 Hancock
 Aug 25 Roberts

ALL LADIES WELCOME!
 Join us at EC on Monday, August 14th at 7 PM for Sisterhood Game Night--a night of comfortable gaming and camaraderie. Choose between Mexican Train and Mah Jongg—we'll have both games available.

BIRTHDAYS

Jul 28 Stan Belsky
 Jul 29 Sarah Kirshtein
 Aug 01 Scott Hancock
 Aug 02 Joey Yalowitz
 Aug 08 Richard Berry
 Aug 10 Harriet Sacks
 Aug 20 Andrea Rosenthal
 Aug 22 Lucas Copeland
 Aug 23 Lauren Goodman
 Aug 25 Michael Zelickson
 Aug 29 Daniel Wiederecht

ANNIVERSARIES

Aug 09 Michal & Gary Hall
 Aug 12 Linda & Frederick Kolchin
 Aug 16 Kelley & Jeffrey Zelickson
 Aug 29 Sue & Joe Paddock

Yahrzeits**

Aug 02	Av 10	Sadie Kopkin*
Aug 06	Av 14	Bernard Roberts
Aug 08	Av 16	Beatrice Goldner*
Aug 09	Av 17	Fannie Feldman*
Aug 10	Av 18	Gilbert A. Greenbaum
Aug 20	Av 28	Sarah Fink
Aug 20	Av 28	Morris Martin Singer
Aug 21	Av 29	Dolores D'Acosta Hein
Aug 25	Elul 03	Belle D'Acosta*
Aug 27	Elul 05	Adolph Goldstein*
Aug 28	Elul 06	Caryl Hollenberg
Aug 28	Elul 06	Grete Goldstein*
Aug 28	Elul 06	Milton Levitt
Aug 28	Elul 06	Roland Jordan Krantz
Sep 02	Elul 11	Milton Baum*
Sep 02	Elul 11	Albert Goldner*

* Plaque

**Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening

A HERETICAL VIEW OF TISHA B'AV

By Ted Roberts

Let's take a long, hard look at historical reality. Those ex-slaves called Israelites have escaped their Egyptian prison. And for the first time - like your six year old, toddled off to school alone – in a strange, new world - they wandered eventually into Canaan, a land full of pagan playmates.

The Almighty, who can see beyond the curve of the horizon of time, sees the temptations and snares set by the Amalakites, Jebusites, Amorites, and Philistines to entrap His people. He lectures Israel, His young one, incessantly. He seeks to impress them with His power. He splits oceans, He creates a constitution that we call the Chumash - He uses pillars of fire and smoke to guide them through this sandy deathtrap. He incessantly warns them to stay away from the idol worshipping heathens of the arid wilderness.

He obsesses on loyalty because He is a G-d of morality, while the gods of this new world have no interest in crime and punishment, mercy and justice, mitzvot and goodness.

So what do our primitive ancestors do the first time Father Moses leaves them unattended? Exactly what the mighty G-d of miracles forbade - they build and worship with abandon two golden bulls. Just like their pagan neighbors. Totally oblivious to miracles and sermons, they worship their inanimate idols. G-d must have done a divine double take as He glared down from His mountaintop. So much for loyalty. Well, good thing I sent Moshe with Torah, He's thinking. But maybe it should have been ten books. These people need rules.

Sad to say, our misbehavior continued. We continued to barbecue beasts like our neighbors. Prayer? Unheard of. Beneficial deeds? Who cares. We continue to barbecue so our G-d may enjoy the fragrance. Our Creator's nightmare comes true. We worship randomly and indiscriminately. Dumb and dumber, we send scent and smoke heavenward just like the Joneses next door. Eventually, all this mimicry culminates in the Temple, which I've been trying to get to for two pages. The Temple is a giant butcher shop - a racket for the Levites and a cloud on our history that almost smothers the real Judaism.

Obviously, we can't glory in its destruction since Jerusalem, too, suffered and there was terrible loss of life both in the Babylonian and Roman destructions.

But as our sages say, the fall of a great Oak permits sunlight to nourish a thousand new seedlings on the forest floor. Destruction often clears the ground for follow-on cultural new growth.

The leveling of the Temple took Judaism out of the hands of priests and Levites and put it in our hearts, put it in our home, gave a role to our women. And over hundreds of years we - along with other religions - dropped the sacrificial concept.

High places, sacred groves, granite alters lost their magic. Deeds and morality overturned sacrifice. Who needed a temple? For this invisible G-d is and was a warmth in your heart. Indestructible, never to be destroyed. Let us worship Him instead of feeding him livestock. Our prophets chorus this from 700 BC on.

And who knew - certainly history doesn't comment - but the watching world - seeing our Temple in flames but Judaism, still alive - learned the same lesson. So, maybe there's a bright side to Tisha B'Av.

Sometimes in the study of history we need to reexamine events and institutions that have been acceptable for millennia of dull tradition - not logic, but tradition. Tisha B'Av reminds me that one of those icons is our Temple. From what we read in the Talmud and Chumash, it was the heartbeat of Judaism. Really? An abattoir drenched in the blood of victims - a government employment office for Cohens and Levites. And a shameful identification with the customs of our heathen Canaanite neighbors - maybe not quite as bad. A lamb took the place of your newborn infant. And we disclaimed sexual activity to spur crop and livestock propagation. Yes, we had the good taste to eliminate that. So, let's not be too hard on our forebears. But basically, our Temple was little more than an elaboration of our neighbor's primitive habits of worship. Exactly what our invisible, morally-obsessed G-d in the Chumash told us to avoid.

It was based on the oldest superstition in the world - Jewish or non Jewish. Before you sip your wine, spill a bit on the ground from whence it came. The gods of fire, earth, wind, and sun and fertility need a little graft - a small donation or they'd never give us more wine or rib steak or lamb chops or bread. The gods must be appeased. Furthermore, insisted the heathens, you needed children to help you work the land, so on occasion you'd murder one of them as the ultimate sacrifice. Such were the beliefs of mankind 3,000 to 5,000 years ago.

Don't open a new business on Tisha B'Av - the 9th day of Av. Nothing good has ever happened on the 9th of Av. On 566 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar leveled Solomon's Temple - on 9 Av 70 AD the Romans destroyed the second Temple. And for goodness sake don't get married on the 9th of Av, either, for obvious reasons. I joke. But it was a fateful date - a date drowned in Jewish bloodshed. For that we should mourn.

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