
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

APRIL, 2019

ADAR II/ NISAN , 5779

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

THE RABBI'S MESSAGE

Cleaning out my own chametz for Pesach

We deplore the prejudice and injustice in our society. People, especially minorities, are mistreated all the time. Women, people of color, gay people — and we Jews as well -- have many legitimate grievances. The Torah demands that grievances be redressed, as it is written, "Justice, justice shall you pursue."

However, just as it is possible to be bigoted and unjust, it is also possible to be over-protected and filled with excuses. When I count up my list of grievances it may be all too easy to conclude that the disappointments of my life are really someone else's fault. But if I am honest I have to admit that at least some of my problems result from *my* behavior. It's self-deceptive to attribute all of them to others. We tend to be defensive. Well, if we want to feel better we can be *defensive*. If we want to grow we should be *honest*.

Today in America we have a grievance culture. Many people feel that they are victimized for their very identity, and so they can easily blame others. Black people can say their problems stem from racism. Gay people can blame homophobia. Women can blame sexism. Straight white men ironically have the best excuse of all — our country is practicing reverse discrimination!

None of this is to deny that there are very deep problems in our society today. I perceive that prejudice and injustice and anti-Semitism are getting worse, not better. The genuine evils of society need to be fought. But for all that, I want to point out that a "grievance society" is not healthy. A society where people see themselves primarily as victims is not healthy. A society that finds it preferable to blame others before looking inward at oneself is not healthy. Pesach is coming. We call it the holiday of freedom but it's really the holiday of freedom-and-responsibility. Freedom, by itself, didn't work out so well for our ancestors who left Egypt (wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, with the "highlight" of that

era being the sin of the dancing around the golden calf.) No, we celebrate the freedom from slavery hand-in-hand with the responsibility of servitude to God and His moral commandments.

We do count the ways that life is unfair and other people are unjust. At the same time, we do not ignore our own role in the events that shape our lives. As it has been wisely said, You can't change anyone else. You can only change yourself. As Pesach approaches one good question to ask is, what can I do in order to overcome that which may be unjust about my life? *That* is what we call responsibility. It's one of the central messages of our great holiday!

A happy and kosher Pesach,

Stephen Listfield

PASSOVER

Passover this year begins with the first Seder, Friday evening April 19. April 20 and April 21 are the first two days of yom tov. The eight-day festival ends on Saturday night, April 27. We wish everyone a *zissen Pesach* (a sweet Passover). May our holiday of Freedom be a time to reflect upon the freedoms we enjoy — and the terrible privations and suffering that so many of our fellow human beings continue to endure.

Below is a link from the Rabbinical Assembly about Pesach:

https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/jewishlaw/holidays/pesah/pesah_guide_5778.pdf

Please see the form to sell your hametz through Rabbi Listfield at the end of this publication.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings,

I would like to thank Scott Hancock and his security committee for their perseverance and dedication. Scott has spent copious hours researching door locks, cameras, and other items that will make our coming to Synagogue less stressful and safer. He has purchased equipment and set it up at home to see if it is feasible for the synagogue. Twice, gentlemen have come to evaluate and make suggestions to increase our protection, several of which were voted on, passed by the board and are coming to fruition. Month after month he has brought detailed reports to our board. Thank you for your patience-- especially when we kept adding new items for you to look into. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

This week we had our Purim celebration and hot dog dinner. Thank you to the Sisterhood for sponsoring dinner and for a wonderful spread. The hamentashen were great. Lauren Goodman and Brenda Liles spent a couple of days preparing dozens of them. We had a great turn out and participation. The Magilla reading was fun. Thank you, Michelle Lapidus. A good time was had by all.

Sandra

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, May 10, Birthday Oneg

Diana,90 Howard,95

Please come to share our joy
in celebrating the ninth DECADE
of our birthdays.

Our 60 years in Huntsville have been
blessed with your friendship, camaraderie
and caring.

SISTERHOOD

Ladies,

Sisterhood once again provided a free Hot Dog supper for Purim. I was unable to attend, but I heard we had a good crowd and a lot of fun. Thanks to Brenda for preparing the meal. Also thank you to Lauren who made the hamentashen with Brenda and to Michelle Lapidus for arranging the shpiel. Thanks to Natalie and Carole Young for help cleaning up.

The Synagogue Seder will be on April 19. Nannette Schwartz is in charge of the meal, and she and her committee are busy making plans. Once again, Brenda will take reservations, which are confirmed with pre-payment. I hope you have made your reservations, because the "drop dead" date is April 1. The price hasn't changed in 5 years (or more). As some of you know, the \$36 does not cover the per person cost of the meal, and the Sisterhood always subsidizes it. Due to recent expenses for the

Sisterhood (new carpet in the sanctuary and new flooring in the foyer amounting to over \$5,000) we have requested donations to help defray the cost of the Seder. Thank you to those who have donated so far.

Just a "heads up" for a fun day. The ladies of all 3 local Jewish congregations plus Hadassah are planning a Challah Bake in May. More to follow, but it should be great fun. Please save the date!

I just want to say thank you to everyone who makes our congregation run so smoothly. It takes a lot of volunteers, and we have so many people who step up whenever needed.

Natha

BOOK CLUB MEETING

The Book Club's next meeting will be at EC on April 11 at 11:30 AM. The autobiography "No Room for Small Dreams: Courage, Imagination, and the Making of Modern Israel," by Shimon Peres, will be discussed.

For more information contact Jon Berger at 256-457-0277 (phone or text) or jonaberger@gmail.com

ONEGS

Mar 29	Liles
Apr 05	Goodman
Apr 12	Kalachman
Apr 26	Roberts
May 03	Brigadier

DONATIONS

General Fund

From: Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Laut
In Memory of Stanley Laut's sister.

Rabbi Fund

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal
To: Yossi Drake & Family – Our thoughts are with you as you go through these trying times.
To: Shirley Roberts – Thank you for the beautiful vase and flower arrangement for the Bema.

From: Shirley & Ted Roberts
To: Yossi Drake & Family – In Memory of Sarah Drake

Shiva Tray

From: Sue & Joe Paddock
To: Yossi Drake & Family – In loving Memory of Sarah Drake.

Sisterhood

From: Diana & Howard Polin
To: Yossi Drake & Family- Sarah was beautiful inside and out and we will remember her with deep affection.

From: Lauren & Steve Goodman
Donation in support of the Seder.

From: Sandy & Marvin Kalachman
Donation in support of the Seder.

From: Diana & Howard Polin
Donation in support of the Seder.

Outdoor Lighting Fund

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Apr 5-7 Rabbi Listfield Shabbaton
- Apr 11 Book Club, 11:30 at EC
- Apr 19 EC Community Seder, 6:30 PM, Prepaid reservations required
- Apr 29 Sisterhood Event, Speaker: healthy diets, eating habits and important health issues, 7 PM, \$5 admission

BIRTHDAYS

- 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 16 Katie Meyer
- Apr 17 Lynne Edmondson
- Apr 18 Jacob Sacks
- 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 03 Leigh & Randy Miller
- Apr 15 Helen & Robert Woodham
- Apr 17 Ginger & Howard Nelson
- Apr 30 Sharon & Jeff Yalowitz

YAHARZEITS**

Apr 01	Adar I 25	Rebecca Sacks*
Apr 02	Adar I 26	Diana Sidel
Apr 03	Adar I 27	Rose Freeman
Apr 03	Adar I 27	Phillip Makower*
Apr 07	Nisan 02	Hersh Tzvi Bayers
Apr 08	Nisan 03	Robert Lukin*
Apr 12	Nisan 07	Paul Schlein*
Apr 12	Nisan 07	Gertrud Schlein*
Apr 13	Nisan 08	Morris Wittenstein*
Apr 14	Nisan 09	Cecile Hollenberg*
Apr 15	Nisan 10	Irwin Goldstein*
Apr 16	Nisan 11	Norman Greenbaum
Apr 20	Nisan 15	Yakov Cszerny Drake
Apr 20	Nisan 15	Yolanda Cszerny Drake
Apr 21	Nisan 16	Millie Goldstein
Apr 21	Nisan 16	Marvin M. Schreiber*
Apr 21	Nisan 16	Lilian Jaffee
Apr 25	Nisan 20	Henry Sevin
Apr 27	Nisan 22	Simon Blum*
Apr 28	Nisan 23	Jeffrey Weinman*
Apr 28	Nisan 23	Leo I. Goldberger
May 04	Nisan 29	Joseph Goldstein*
May 05	Nisan 30	Leo Ginsburg

* Plaque

**Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening

PASSOVER - A HOLIDAY FOR FREEDOM LOVERS

By Ted Roberts

My Christian friends, alerted by the media, are full of Passover questions. I happily explain that it's a celebration of freedom commemorating the flight from Egypt of 600,000 barefoot, fractious Israelite slaves led by a law giver, warrior, priest, politician, named Moses. It's a great holiday. Very simple to observe, ecumenical in its simplicity you might say.

Here are the rules I cite to my pals at the office:

1. You must be a freedom fan; i.e., you must dislike oppression worse than a midnight toothache. Anybody who enjoys laying bricks for pyramids is automatically disqualified as a Passover celebrant.
2. You must be an eater with a wide-ranging interest from muscular matzo balls, whose secret essence is chicken fat, to Rib Roast. Cadaverous fashion models must eat alone at the kitchen table. Nobody wants to be reminded of starvation on the festive night.
3. Now here's the bad news. No bread is allowed during this 8-day holiday. That's because our ancestors bailed out of Egypt in such a hurry that they didn't have time to cancel their magazine subscriptions, or wait for their yeast to swell up in the oven. Instead of yeasty bread, we eat flat slabs of unleavened cakes called Matzo; joyless and tasteless, appropriately called "the bread of affliction" in the Passover narrative.

The mass exit from Egypt started around 1300 BC. The children of Israel, ex-nomadic shepherds who loved the wide-open spaces, suffered the first major problem of their young history. They were slaves in Egypt! We're not talking non-union, or minimum wage, or an OSHAless workplace. We're talking slavery - ownership of one human being by another - a profitable 13th Century BC industry. It was a violent era and swords beat shepherds' staffs every time.

Their escape from bondage is joyfully celebrated at our family feast the first two

nights of the 8-day holiday. Besides the entrees that would warm the heart of King Solomon's chef, many ceremonial dishes are presented. An apple is chopped up and sprinkled with cinnamon and wine to represent the mud mortar of pyramid bricks. Spread on a board of matzo, it improves it like orange marmalade improves dry toast.

Much tastier are two hard-boiled eggs served whole in a soup bowl of salty water. This is a dish full of symbolism. The eggs, round with no beginning or end, like creation itself. The salt water, like our enslaved ancestor's tears and the briny Red Sea crossed by the fleeing Israelites. (One of the great mysteries of Judaism - untouched by the Talmud - is why boiled eggs in salt water only charm your palate on Passover. Any other day of the year it's a dish to run from.) And there's horseradish to remind us of the bitterness of slavery.

At table center there's the lamb shank symbolizing the sacrificial lamb eaten at the first Passover meal - the creature whose blood on the doorpost warned off the Angel of Death. A symbol still embedded in the Christian image of Christ as the Pascal or Passover Lamb.

And, of course, before the feast we tell our children the story of our deliverance: "With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm," says Exodus, HE who made both Egyptians and Israelites plucked these weary slaves out of their bondage. He was their navigator guiding them with a cloud by day and fire by night. And He was their quartermaster feeding them with manna and quail when they lusted for the flesh pots of Egypt.

Even the most skeptical guests, who wonder how the Sinai Peninsula sustained a mob of 600,000 vagabonds, nod in belief; overpowered by the miraculous narrative and the sedative effects of the hot chicken soup.

There's a closing ceremony honored by tradition where we shout, "Next year in Jerusalem!" A reasonable prayer for the Jews of yesteryear in hostile lands awaiting the ominous hammering on the door. But not here in America. Didn't the Pilgrim fathers, who braved a watery waste instead of the sandy Sinai, call their wilderness home the "New Jerusalem"?

Passover, I await thee!

Ted Roberts, "The Scribbler on the Roof," is a syndicated Jewish columnist and longtime member of our Synagogue. Buy Ted's collected works at Amazon.com or the Sisterhood Gift Shop. Ted welcomes your comment and/or critique and 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 Friday, April 19, 11:30 am and will be in effect for the duration of Pesach, which ends Saturday, April 27 at nightfall.

Signature

Name (print)

Home Address
