
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

APRIL, 2021

NISAN/IYYAR, 5781

Due to Covid, services are not being held in the Synagogue. For information on joining virtual services and events, please see our website.

<http://www.etzchayim-hsv.org>

FROM THE RABBI

How I Read

Here's an insight into how I read. I reprint for you four sentences from the obituary of the conductor James Levine. It's in The New York Times, Thursday, March 18:

James Lawrence Levine was born in Cincinnati. Though his heritage was German, Latvian and Hungarian, all of his grandparents were born in the United States. His father, Lawrence Levine, under the name Larry Lee, was a bandleader and pop crooner in Los Angeles during the 1930s... Mr. Levine's mother, the former Helen Goldstein....

Issues of identity are vexing enough these days. In my view, people should identify as they wish. Live and let live. But I will admit to this idiosyncrasy: As I was reading the newspaper I'm saying to myself "I suspect that his heritage is not 'German' but Jewish; not 'Latvian' but Jewish; and not 'Hungarian' but Jewish." For all that, the word 'Jewish' does not appear in

his 'heritage.' (If you read the full obituary you will find, *13 paragraphs later*, that Levine conducted Wagner and in that context he is finally identified as Jewish.)

And now just for comparison's sake, here is the lead sentence the same day, March 18, from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. The emphasis is mine: James Lawrence Levine was born in Cincinnati. His father, Lawrence, was a violinist and dance band leader in the 1930s, and his mother, Helen Goldstein Levine, **the daughter of a cantor** ...

In my opinion, The Times is adept at suppressing, ignoring or circumventing a person's Jewish identity. And I have no idea just what Levine himself thought of his Jewish identity. I repeat, 'live and let live.' I have no idea what goes into the preparation of an obituary for a celebrated though problemated genius.

But still I offer my shrewd hunch that in Germany, James' forbears were exclusively JEWS. In, Latvia, ditto. And in Hungary, the same thing. Plus, if

your maternal grandpa was a cantor, you're probably a Jew. I offer this to you as an insight into how I read.

Stephen Listfield

SISTERHOOD

Hi all,

I hope you have a happy Passover celebration and Seder. Thank you to Millie, Sandra, Donna, and the rest of the Sisterhood Board for coordinating and handing out Kosher wine alongside the Haggadot to our Members.

Our next Sisterhood "gathering" is a Zoom Talent Show! Everyone has a talent, whether baking a cake or playing a piano...Let's have fun and display our talents! Prepare some popcorn or cookies and join the fun on April 26th at 7pm. Thanks to Manya for making Zoom events creative and fun!

See you then,

Amy

DONATIONS

Rabbi Fund

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal

To: Nannette Schwartz - Best wishes and a speedy recovery.

To: Beverly Weiner- Glad that you are on the road to complete recovery now that your shoulder is feeling much better.

From: Shirley Roberts

To: Nannette Schwartz - Hope you are doing well, have a speedy recovery.

To: Beverly Weiner - Glad your shoulder is starting to feel much better, continued good health.

Outdoor Lighting Fund

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

BOOK CLUB

On April 29th at 11:30 AM, please join us for a discussion of Phillip Finkelstein's book, *Love Always: There's no upper age limit on love and adventure!*

Reserve your seat at the Zoom Virtual Table at Book.Club@etzchayim-hsv.org

HADASSAH EVENT

Hadassah Huntsville invites you to join, along with Birmingham and Atlanta chapters, in a special documentary presentation and follow-up panel discussion about Julius Rosenwald, philanthropist, businessman, and part owner and leader at Sears Roebuck and Company.

From Sunday, April 11 through Wednesday, April 14, you will have access to view a documentary about Rosenwald, son of German Jewish immigrants, who was a huge proponent of education for the underprivileged at the time. After meeting Booker T. Washington and recognizing the inequalities raised by Jim Crow Laws,

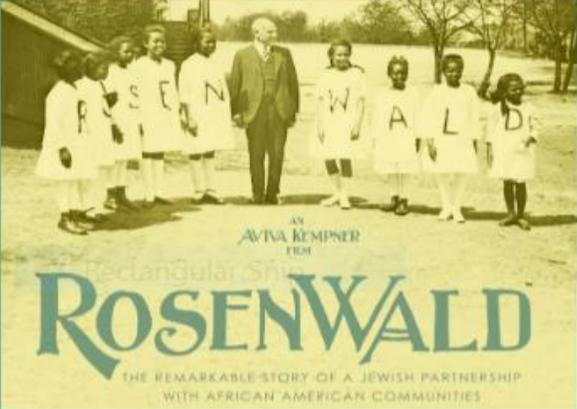
Rosenwald created the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which, among other initiatives, built schools for African Americans in the South. By the 1930s, nearly 5,000 Rosenwald schools were covering the Southern states, with Madison County homing nine of those schools. Currently Burritt on the Mountain is home to a replica Rosenwald school, continuing to teach about his legacy. The documentary goes into more depth about Rosenwald and his generosity.

Then, on Thursday, April 15, at 6:30 p.m., we invite you to join our Zoom panel discussion, featuring the documentary's filmmaker, Aviva Kempner, and Peter Ascoli, Rosenwald's grandson and biographer, along with many others (see attached flyer for more details).

While this documentary and follow-up panel discussion are FREE, donations are being accepted and all monies raised will be donated to Hadassah's Youth Aliyah Villages, a tribute to Rosenwald's generosity toward educating those who are less fortunate. We would also like to thank the Jewish Federation of Huntsville and North Alabama (JFHNA) for their financial assistance in making this event possible.

Please join us for this educational and informative event. To Register, and should you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Michelle Persons either by email (weisspersons@gmail.com) or telephone (719-238-3409).

Hadassah Birmingham & Hadassah Huntsville
Invite You to a Panel Discussion of



Watch the documentary and then join us for a
Zoom Panel Discussion
Thursday, April 15th, 6:30 PM Central

Once registered, you will receive a link to watch the Rosenwald Documentary
on your own, only available for viewing for 4 days,
(Sunday, April 11 at 9:00 AM - Wednesday April 14 at midnight)
& the Zoom link for the Panel Discussion on April 15th

Thursday, April 15th Zoom Panel Discussion:

Moderator - **Janis Plotkin**, founding member San Francisco Jewish Film Festival
Aviva Kempner, Filmmaker
Dr. Evelyn Causey, National Register Coordinator, Alabama Historical Commission
Guy Trammel, Tuskegee Historic Preservation Commission, Macon Stories founder
Peter Ascoli, Rosenwald's grandson & Biographer
E. Ethelbert Miller, Writer & literary activist, Host of ON THE MARGIN (WPPW 89.3 FM)

In Partnership with Education Equity Project



THANK YOU,
FROM HOWARD & DIANA

Howard and I send our heartfelt thanks to all who are involved regarding the Zoom capability for everyone to be at Virtual Sabbath and various other Services and functions.

We also can hardly imagine the hours it takes to plan and prepare the paper Booklets for whomever doesn't have Etz Chayim Synagogue's books and other Zoom paper requirements.

We are very proud of our Synagogue and Sisterhood adapting to changes

necessary due to this frightening Covid plague.

Howard and I feel more and more primitive as "CHANGE" is the key word. Hey! We "A-K's" do our part.

WE ARE YOUR CHEERLEADERS!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Apr 04 Rabbi Listfield Pesach services
9:45 with Yizkor ~ 11:30
- Apr 09 Rabbi Listfield Shabbat
evening service, 7:15
- Apr 15 Yom HaAtzma'ut
- Apr 15 Hadassah Birmingham &
Hadassah Huntsville Zoom
panel discussion of *Rosenwald*
at 6:30 PM
- Apr 20 Rabbi Listfield Gathering, 6:45
- Apr 24 Rabbi Listfield Havdalah, 7:15
- Apr 26 Pesach Sheni
- Apr 26 Sisterhood Talent Show, 7 PM
- Apr 30 Lag B'Omer

BIRTHDAYS

- Apr 02 Dr. Arthur Polin
- Apr 04 Dorothy Goldberg
- Apr 06 Eli Sacks
- 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

Yahrzeits**

- Apr 02 Nisan 20 Henry Sevin
- Apr 04 Nisan 22 Simon Blum*
- Apr 05 Nisan 23 Jeffrey Weinman*
- Apr 05 Nisan 23 Leo I. Goldberger
- Apr 10 Nisan 28 Isidore Casuto
- Apr 11 Nisan 29 Joseph Goldstein*
- Apr 12 Nisan 30 Leo Ginsburg
- Apr 13 Iyyar 01 Frieda Margol Katz
- Apr 14 Iyyar 02 Goldie Fuerst
- Apr 15 Iyyar 03 Robert F. (Bob) May
- Apr 17 Iyyar 05 Alvin Hollenberg
- Apr 21 Iyyar 09 Mitchell Fuerst
- Apr 23 Iyyar 11 William Polin*
- Apr 23 Iyyar 11 Rose Harrison*
- Apr 24 Iyyar 12 Harriet Herbin
- Apr 24 Iyyar 12 Eidele Sainker
- Apr 26 Iyyar 14 Perry M. Schlein*
- Apr 27 Iyyar 15 Sarah Kauffman*
- Apr 28 Iyyar 16 Ruth Cohen*
- Apr 28 Iyyar 16 David Kopkin
- Apr 29 Iyyar 17 Sherri H. Cassuto
- Apr 30 Iyyar 18 Al Meyer
- May 01 Iyyar 19 Anna Polin*
- May 01 Iyyar 19 Alex E. Streit*

* **Plaque**

****Light Memorial candle sunset of
previous evening**

THE MASK

By Ted Roberts, (1930-2020), the
Scribbler on the Roof



My friend, Herb, likes to get an early start. On the golf course, he stands 20 feet in front of the tee. When he eats out, he brings a

drink from home so he doesn't have to wait for a turtle-speed server to bring one. And as the months slip by before the High Holidays, he uses a similar philosophy.

Why wait for those awesome ten days to be engraved in the Book of Life? Why not a head start and begin in July or August to rack up mitzvah points? And Herb is no minor leaguer when it comes to mitzvahs. So, in early July he gives \$25 to the Rabbis discretionary fund. Later in the month he skips the All Star game on TV to help the kids with their geography homework. He even passes on the Auburn/Tennessee game so he can visit his aging aunt in Memphis.

No sacrifice is too much to get a head start on those ten days of awe. He even takes his wife out for supper and I don't mean kosher hamburgers.

Now, besides his own fate, he's also concerned about his dear wife. Why not teach the same philosophy? No need to wait for Rosh Hashanah. She can begin this very morning. Instead of plain scrambled eggs for breakfast, she can show her bountiful love for Herb by adding sliced salami and onions to the mix. And better yet, take out the

garbage (usually Herb's job). A wife wheeling out a 100-pound garbage can to the street must be mentioned somewhere in the Talmud.

But the awesome and admirable thing about Herb is his concern for his wife. He shares his spiritual philosophy with her. Why restrict yourself to ten days? So little time to correct so many moral missteps since last Yom Kippur. If you only pretend to be good – go through the motions – an evil heart that simulates goodness is credible.

A great essayist/philosopher, Max Beerbohm, tells a fable: An evil man lusts after a fair and virtuous maid. But everybody knows he's a world-class philandering louse. And besides this weakness of the flesh, he's a dishonorable, lying, cheating, all 'round nogoodnik. His reputation as a scum bag is so well known that even his naïve beauty of a target is aware of his evil heart.

So, how to seduce the object of his lustful attention?

Ah, he's got it!! He'll wear a mask – a mask that glows with goodness. He'll also trick the world and even his Creator. All who look upon him will admire the radiance of his false face.

He wears it so long and he wears it so well that his villainous nature turns saintly. His real face becomes the face of the mask. "The mask worn long enough becomes the man," says Joseph Epstein, who tells us the Beerbohm fable. The ex-sinner throws away the now superfluous mask. It momentarily lies in the grassy meadow

– then melts in the rays of the morning sun. Sometimes you become what you pretend to be.

And maybe that's good enough.