
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

FEBRUARY, 2023

SHEVAT/ADAR, 5783

For information on joining
virtual services and events, please see our website:
<http://www.etzchayim-hsv.org>

FROM THE RABBI

Abba Eban Thought So!

February 2 is the birthday of the late Israeli ambassador and foreign minister, Abba Eban (1915-2002). The memorable aspect of Eban's career was his marvelous command of the English language. Certainly, the South African accent of this Israeli politician enhanced the magic of his oratory. But Eban's eloquence was not a function of his accent. His eloquence came from his remarkable erudition and his moral persuasiveness.

I think of the late Minister Eban in connection with a question that goes on around the world today: Is it anti-Semitic to be against the existence of the state of Israel? Does anti-Zionism automatically equal anti-Semitism?

In future months I might give this space to other people with other opinions. But for this month's column I turn to the birthday

celebrant. What was his opinion on our question? This appeared in the New York Times in 1975: "There is no difference whatever between anti-Semitism and the denial of Israel's statehood. Classical anti-Semitism denies the equal right of Jews as citizens within society. Anti-Zionism denies the equal rights of the Jewish people its lawful sovereignty within the community of nations. The common principle in the two cases is discrimination."

In his speeches and writings, Eban often reminded the world that the Arab nations comprise 99% of the territory of the Middle East. The Jews occupy 1%. People of good will toward Jews may differ on questions of political dispensation. But I stand with the late Foreign Minister. Indeed, why are there 193 member states in the United Nations, while so many people are agitated at the existence of one Jewish state that occupies all of 1% of its segment of the globe? Anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism? — Hmm, could be!

I look forward to seeing you the weekend of February 10-12,

Stephen Listfield

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope we are moving on from the wacky weather extremes in Huntsville during December- January as I look forward to the first flower blooms to welcome springtime.

Our next Congregational meeting will be held in hybrid format February 7 at 7 pm. Please plan to attend if you can, whether in person or virtually. We would be thrilled to see more congregation participation at services and meet our new members.

We have four more Rabbi weekend visits and upcoming springtime holiday celebrations (Purim Potluck Dinner and Shpiel on March 6, 2nd night Passover Community Seder on April 6) where you can participate. We hope to see you in person.

Speaking of Purim, we are looking for a Purim Spiel Producer/Director. Let us know if you would like to help. We are still seeking volunteers to serve as our IMS representative and Men's Club Officer.

If interested, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

L'shanah Tovah!

Steve Goodman, President

ONEGS & RABBI SHABBATON REFRESHMENTS*

Feb 03 Wiederecht/Honan, Oneg Shabbat
Feb 10 Petroff, Oneg Shabbat
Feb 11 Hancock/Liles, Rabbi Luncheon
Feb 12 Goodman, Brunch with Rabbi
Feb 17 Oneg Shabbat, TBD
Feb 24 Edmondson, Oneg Shabbat
Mar 03 Schindler/Reese, Oneg Shabbat

*Onegs Shabbat are generally sponsored by those who prepare them, Shabbaton Luncheons are sponsored by the EC Sisterhood and prepared by volunteers, and the Shabbaton Brunch with the Rabbi is sponsored by the Roberts Family and prepared by volunteers.

PURIM SHPIEL (PLAY)

On Monday evening, March 6, we will be celebrating Purim at the synagogue with a Pot Luck Supper and a Purim Play. The play will feature dazzling costumes, beautiful women, manly men, and a 20-piece band (OK, a guy with a drum). We sincerely hope that you will attend and that when asked by the director to participate, you will. No memorization required, all parts are short and can be read, so be a good sport and say YES. And even if you are not in the play, wear a costume for Purim.

Max

DONATIONS

General Fund

From: Natha & Scott Hancock

To: Shirley Roberts - In Honor of her 90th birthday.

To: Janet Schindler - In Honor of her 90th birthday.

From: Sandra Lieberman

To: Shirley Roberts - In Honor of her 90th birthday.

From: Annette & David Fisher

In Memory of the Yahrtzeit of Charlie Fisher, David's father.

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal

To: Brenda & Cliff Liles - In Memory of Gladys Liles, mother of Cliff Liles.

From: Janet Schindler

To: Brenda & Cliff Liles - In Memory of Gladys Liles, Mother of Cliff Liles

From: Shirley Roberts

To: Natha & Scott Hancock - In Honor of their granddaughter's naming ceremony.

From: Diana & Howard Polin

To: Brenda & Cliff Liles – In Memory of Cliff's mother, Gladys Liles.

Sisterhood General Fund

From: Nannette Schwartz

Thanks to Shirley Roberts, Millie Rosenthal, Joe Paddock, and Max Rosenthal for a delicious Hanukkah lunch.

From: Sandra Wiederecht

To: Brenda & Cliff Liles - In Memory of Cliff's mother, Gladys Liles.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Feb 06 | Tu B'Shvat |
| Feb 07 | Congregation Meeting, 7 PM |
| Feb 10-12 | Rabbi Listfield Shabbaton |
| Feb 10 | Kabbalat Shabbat, 7:30 PM |
| Feb 11 | 9:45 AM, Shabbat morning Service; Rabbi lead Torah study group at 1:00 PM |
| Feb 12 | Brunch with Rabbi Listfield at 9:45 AM followed by an EC discussion group lead by Rabbi Listfield |
| Feb 20 | Sisterhood Lunch Bunch, Place & time TBD. |
| Mar 06 | Erev Purim with the Purim Shpiel & Potluck Dinner |

BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|--------|-------------------------|
| Feb 01 | Robin Kirby |
| Feb 02 | Rabbi Stephen Listfield |
| Feb 03 | Gordon Sacks |
| Feb 05 | Jan Sainker Reed |
| Feb 08 | Ezra Roberts |
| Feb 10 | Ashley Bostick |
| Feb 10 | Donna Lyonnais |
| Feb 12 | Steve Edmondson |
| Feb 12 | Daniel Yalowitz |
| Feb 14 | Aryeh Roberts |
| Feb 16 | Barry Meyer |
| Feb 17 | Cliff Liles |
| Feb 23 | Benjamin Camenker |
| Feb 25 | Andrew Edmondson |
| Feb 28 | Michelle Lapidus |

ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| Feb 14 | Lynne & Steve Edmondson |
| Feb 15 | Sarah & Richard Shepard |
| Feb 17 | Dr. Adam & Nanci Shafron |

YAHREZITS**

Jan 31	09 Shevat	Ida Bernstein Sidel
Jan 31	09 Shevat	Alice Levine Yalowitz
Feb 01	10 Shevat	Selma Levitt
Feb 02	11 Shevat	William Flank*
Feb 02	11 Shevat	Hersh Schindler
Feb 03	12 Shevat	Henry Fleishman
Feb 05	14 Shevat	Rabbi Jeffrey Ballon
Feb 07	16 Shevat	Jerome L. Richard
Feb 08	17 Shevat	Esther Goldberg*
Feb 09	18 Shevat	Helen Flank Baum*
Feb 10	19 Shevat	Morris Samuel Vitoulis
Feb 11	20 Shevat	Mildred Freedman*
Feb 11	20 Shevat	Jennie Greenbaum
Feb 12	21 Shevat	Bertha Flank*
Feb 14	23 Shevat	Richard Irwin Kolchin*
Feb 15	24 Shevat	Rebecca Treister*
Feb 17	26 Shevat	Rose Belsky*
Feb 19	28 Shevat	Joseph Goodman
Feb 22	01 Adar	Lotta Chester
Feb 22	01 Adar	Mae Green*
Feb 23	02 Adar II	Charles Kopman
Feb 24	03 Adar	Carolyn Greenbaum
Feb 24	03 Adar	Phillip Smolker
Feb 25	04 Adar	Gladys Moiseev
Feb 26	05 Adar	Stanley B. Brown
Feb 26	05 Adar	Benjamin Bierstein
Feb 27	06 Adar	Ted Roberts
Feb 28	07 Adar	Helena D'Acosta Weingarden*
Feb 28	07 Adar	Philip Aronowitz*
Feb 28	07 Adar	Mary Hoffman Baker*
Feb 28	07 Adar	Rose Leites*
Mar 03	10 Adar	Sarah Rachel Schindler

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

TU B'SHEVAT TIME

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



Tu B'Shevat, Tu B'Shevat,

I like you a lot.

Tu B'Shevat.

No tears, no fasting.

Only wonder at G-d's plot.

Tu B'Shevat, degraded, diminished, and deluded by Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Pesach, as we all know, is the New Year of Trees. It's one of the holidays, as we all know, that is not in the Torah, but found its origins in the Talmud.

The New Year of Trees, we call it. Why? Because in Israel, the fifteenth day of Shevat signaled the end of winter. Trees bloomed with joy. Here in the U.S, the trees are black, and Bubbe falls on the icy front porch stairs and fractures her hip, but in Eretz Yisrael, spring reigns.

Originally, this exotic holiday had to do with tithing, which is a euphemism for taxes. It was the modern equivalent of April, in measuring what percentage of the fruit went to government or maybe charity. Jerusalem in 200 B.C.E. or Washington, D.C. in 2016 – government is government.

Tubee is celebrated over a wide range. Some send a fruit bowl to friends – others have Passover featuring the fruits of Israel. Others plant a tree. My friend, Herb, eats an apple and feels he has fulfilled a mitzvah.

All this is nice, but to this heretic, missed the point. To me, Tubeer is a solemn declaration of the power of G-d and therefore His existence and reign over what we loosely call nature, which spans the orbit of Jupiter to the potential of an acorn.

Someday, when I'm the Head Rabbi of America, I shall issue a presidential edict that on Tubeer every parent must take his child into the back yard and plant a tree seed. (Maybe several to ensure success.) What better way to convince a child of the power of the Almighty and to demonstrate the mystic force that enlivens oak trees, puppies, all the animals of the zoo, and your loving parents. This is a feat that makes the Red Sea parting strictly minor league.

When that acorn, lifted by a power we still don't understand, clears his home – the earth – the heavens welcome him. There is a magic in seeds we still don't understand. You might even call it soul – that invisible, undetectable power in the human body. It hides from the microscope and every other human apparatus. It is ethereal, yet transcendental to the physical elements of the body. (By the way, don't use this seed demo to the kids if you live next to a yard full of squirrels – you'll only feed your fellow creatures, which come to think of it, is also a mitzvah.)

The ancient pagans had it all wrong, but given their level of knowledge, you must give them a smidgen of credit. They barely missed the mark. They knew there was a magic that fueled the world. But they worshipped the tricks, not the master magician. They worshipped the grove of trees on the hill – not He who

turned a half-ounce seed into a ten-ton oak tree. The Egyptians bowed and said prayers to the mother cat that fed, cleaned, and instructed the litter. They ignored the Master Creator, who hardwired this behavior into her essence.

They above may be of slight interest to some. But in all seriousness, there's nothing more important to your child – most of whom are growing up in a secular world – than to demonstrate the presence of a Master of the Universe. Keep it simple. Together, plant a seed on Tu B'Shevat. Ten years later, you can say, "I told you so."