

On the first night of Chanukah, we lit our menorah outside the Temple and proclaimed loudly Am Yisrael Chai. On the last night of Chanukah, one of our biggest parties of the year returned - Latkes, Vodkas and Laughs!



Off the Bimah

Lessons from the Plague of Frogs by Rabbi Jack Dermer



Dear Friends,

During the month of January, our Torah cycle focuses us on the story of the Exodus from Egypt, and in particular on the plagues which Moses and G-d utilized to bring about the freedom of Am Yisrael. One plague in particular gets the attention of our ancient commenta-

tors. Thinking about the second plague, the plague of frogs, our tradition tries to imagine the specifics of exactly what to took place. In one famous version of the story, described by Rashi, the plague of frogs began with a single frog, which when struck by the Egyptian taskmasters, multiplied into two. With each attempt to strike the frogs down, Rashi suggests, the Egyptians continued to multiply the pesky nuisances until – as a result of their stubbornness – the entire country was overrun with millions of frogs jumping everywhere.

It has been suggested that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. January is a time for reflecting on our lives and having the courage to stick to lasting resolution. During this month of January which begins a secular new year, and a new opportunity to make important changes in the way we live, will we, like the stubborn Egyptians, continue to strike the same frogs so to speak, or will we have the courage and the determination to live up to the resolutions we set?

The quality by which the Torah describes Pharoah himself again and again is "Kaved Lev," – hard heartedness. Pharoah, like the soldiers he led, had an inability to open his heart to new possibilities and new approaches to life. His stubbornness was his ultimate downfall, and the cause of the suffering of both the Jewish and the people of Egypt.

Do you have something in your heart that you would like to change about yourself, about the way you treat others, about the way you live your life in 2024? Unlike the Egyptians who are characterized as a stubborn nation that repeat their mistakes, unlike Pharoah, whose heart is closed off to change and who doubles down on what he's always done rather

Christians and Israel by Cantor Scott Sokol



Throughout my life, my best friends have almost always been Catholic, and altar boys to boot. I can't tell you why I've always been drawn to these strongly non-Jewish friends. It's true that I grew up in a largely Catholic hometown, but I think it goes beyond those early experiences. Even later in life I remained

concerned that I not be among Jews exclusively.

As some of you know, like Rabbi Dermer I went to Brandeis as an undergraduate. I did not go there because it was a Jewish school though; indeed, I worried that it might be too Jewish for me, but was told by my sister (then a Brandeis sophomore) that it really was no more Jewish than SUNY Binghamton or many other competitive universities. Her closest friends at Brandeis were Asian American and Irish American respectively, and I followed suit. When I graduated Brandeis, my best friend was an Irish Catholic guy named Joe who grew up not that far from campus.

Joe and I stayed in touch when I was in grad school and a bit after, but lost touch after that for quite a while. We ran into each other years later in a suburban pizza place where I was getting lunch. We got to talking and I learned that his life had taken several turns. Always very spiritual, Joe had tried out various spiritual traditions, and indeed in college, he got me interested in native American spiritual practices and in meditation. By the time we met up again, though, Joe had followed his mother's footsteps and had become a Fundamentalist Christian. Later he became a devout Messianic Jew. I guess neither choice surprised me since one thing that was always true of Joe is that he was what my Aunt Libbie (may she rest in peace) would describe as "Pro-Jewish." Even beyond going to a Jewishly-identified college, he was always uniquely interested in Jews and Judaism. He came to our family seders and always greeted me in Jewish ways, like wishing me Shanah Tovah at Rosh Hashanah. In addition, Joe was always very Pro-Israel, which I guess is my roundabout destination for this column.

How should we as American Jews feel about Mes-

Press from Our Leaders

Press from the President by Nancy Marshall, President



Happy 2024 to all of you! As you may remember from my December article, I mentioned that I have happily noticed more of our members attending nightly minyanim, Friday night and Saturday morning services.

That's true, but I'd like to elaborate on the beauty of participating in Temple Beth

Torah's daily ritual events. Beginning with the time change to Daylight Savings Time, we moved out nightly minyan service to 7:30 p.m. We've gotten good feedback as most people are feeling this is an easier time. Once we return to Eastern Standard Time, due to the time of sunset, we'll return to 8:30 p.m. For those of you who have not or rarely attended these minyans, they take ten to fifteen minutes. This is really a wonderful time to relax, reflect, and see your Temple friends and community.

Around Thanksgiving, our Temple community lost a huge leader of our minyan regulars. Most of you know, Marshall Zakarin passed away and is sorely missed by so many of us. Consider joining us whenever it works for you. You won't be sorry. I stress the importance of this because of how important it is for us to gather at least ten people for the minyan. It is very comforting for your fellow congregants to have you here when then are reciting Kaddish.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the three other weekly services. Kabbalat Shabbat, which is held every Friday evening at 6:30 p.m., is a beautiful and peaceful way to begin Shabbat and your weekend. It lasts about 45 minutes and there's always a nice oneg shabbat afterwards.

Saturday morning services are now beginning at 9:30 a.m. all year round. It's wonderful to hear Cantor Sokol's beautiful voice and hear Rabbi Dermer's inciteful sermons. Don't forget our kiddush luncheon catered in house by our terrific Juan and Ada.

A hidden gem of religious observances at Temple Beth Torah is our Minchah-Maariv-Havdalah service on Saturday evenings. It sounds like a lot, but it just lasts about one hour. We get a taste of the following week's Torah portion during mincha, break for a snack, a little

Rabbi (Continued from Page 2)

than imagining a new possibility, can we instead in our own lives, find a way to tap into what the Jews of the Exodus story realized, the possibility of G-d given freedom? Can we have the willingness to change in all the ways we think we should, rather than merely the desire to change, and in that way can we, each of us, earn the title that our people earned, B'nei Horin, a free people both in a national sense, but perhaps even more importantly, in a spiritual sense?

As a Rabbi, and not a prophet, I don't know what this coming year will bring. I do know, however, what our Jewish faith promises us: That while we cannot control what is out there in the world, we've have been given a gift of freedom when it comes to the direction of our lives – to choose to wake up and better appreciate each day, to choose to find glimmers of light in a world of darkness, to be willing rather than merely want for ourselves what is in accordance with our highest sense of purpose and mission, and in so doing, add a measure of goodness and of blessing to our world, and to a year to come.

With warm wishes for a meaningful beginning to the secular new year,

Rabbi Dermer

Cantor (Continued from Page 2)

sianic Jews and Fundamentalist Christians vis-à-vis the Land of Israel? As I'm sure you know, these communities are among the strongest supporters of Israel. And yet, I remain a bit discomfited by what underlies their love of Israel. At the heart of many Fundamentalists' stance on Israel is a passion for the Second Coming of Christ. Indeed, eschatology – the study of the end of days – is very much related to some Christians enduring support for the State of Israel. But should this fact reduce our sense of appreciation for the Fundamentalist and Messianic communities' attitudes towards Israel?

I'm honestly not sure, and I'm certainly not going to opine anything strongly in this column. One thing I am sure about, though, is that right now we should probably be happy for any allies we can find in the current struggle for the survival of the State of Israel and world Jewry more generally. As we come out of our recent celebrations of the season of light and move into our hopes for the new secular year, I pray that we are able to embrace our kinship with the surrounding religions of the world while maintaining all that makes our faith and culture unique.

Around the Congregation

The Next Step

Bar Mitzvah of Joshua Horowitz Son of Diane Horowitz



My name is Joshua Horowitz, and my Bar Mitzvah is on January 13th, 2024 at Temple Beth Torah. I am proud to be a member of this synagogue and am excited to become a Bar Mitzvah. My Jewish identity has been shaped by my family and my experiences at TBT.

Currently, I am in seventh grade at Jericho Middle School, and I am interested in math and science. I often stay after school to participate in various math

and science after-school activities. Last year I traveled to Arlington, Virginia to compete in the National Science Bee and I was very proud to place 14th in my age division.

For as long as I remember, I have enjoyed art and I hope that one day my art can have a big impact on the world. My artwork has been showcased at the Jericho Schools Art Reception at the Jericho Public Library in 2022 and 2023. My Bar Mitzvah Project is a Guided Paint Lesson that will raise money for the Friends of the IDF. The Friends of The IDF is a nonprofit dedicated to supporting the Israeli Defense Forces. I am very happy that my art can help spread awareness and raise money to support Israel in these uncertain times.

Another one of my hobbies is tennis. I play 2-3 times a week, whether it be with my coach, at a tournament, or with friends from school. I participate in tennis tournaments which have helped me to grow not only as an athlete but also as a person. Learning to control my emotions and nervousness during tennis matches has helped all aspects of my life.

I would like to thank Rabbi Dermer for tutoring me and preparing me for my Bar Mitzvah – it has been a lot more fun than I expected. I also want to thank my family for supporting me in preparing for my Bar Mitzvah and all my endeavors!

I hope that you join me at Temple Beth Torah to celebrate my Bar Mitzvah!



Mazel tov to Linda and Mitch Pochtar on the birth of their grandson, Logan Graham, born to Randi and Jay Alson.

Mazel tov to Robin Garfinkle on the marriage of her daughter Melanie Mahler to Mordechai Gabay, son of Ricki and Yakov Gabay.

Our condolences to the Zakarin family on the passing of Marshall Zakarin, beloved father of Ruth, father-in-law of Dan, and grandfather of Arianne and Benjamin.

Our condolences to the Rapaport family on the passing of Anna Hemd, wife of Mike Hemd z"l; mother of Penny (Harry) Rapaport and Ilene (Michael) Rosen; grandmother of Aimee (Richard) Markowitz, Brenda (David) Propis, Benjamon (Penny) Rosen, Max (Bre) Rosen, David (Abby) Rosen, and Molly Rosen; great grandmother of Madeline and Rachel Propis, Melanie and Jenna Markowitz, Parker, Emmie, Lucy, Landon and Olivia Rosen.

Our condolences to the Toscano family on the passing of *George Toscano*, beloved husband of Arlene, stepfather of Lori and Jodie, grandfather of Julia, Benjamin, and Zachary.

President (Continued from Page 3)

learning and song, and finish with a quick Maariv and beautiful Havdalah. Come hear Rabbi Dermer play the guitar and Cantor Sokol's soulful services. You'll be so grateful that you did. Remember, that service changes each week as the sundown changes so be sure to check the website or your emails.

Don't forget our Sunday morning minyan at 9:00 a.m. every Sunday morning. This service usually lasts about a half an hour and is a great way to start your week.

Please remember that at this time of year, many of our congregants are snowbirding in Florida or elsewhere. Come join us and help make a minyan!

Recent Events

College Connection: Todah Rabah to Lauren in our Temple office, as well as the Temple Beth Torah College Connection Committee, for putting together beautiful holiday gift packages for our Temple Beth Torah students in college. With rising Anti-Semitism on campuses across the country, we are proud to share the gift of Jewish heritage with our students this year in particular! This year's package was made possible by a contribution from the Wohl family – Todah Rabah!

<u>Painting for Israel</u>: For his Bar Mitzvah project, Joshua Horowitz led a guided Paint Night Fundraiser for Friends of the IDF. All were welcome to join Joshua on Sunday, December 3, as he led us through the steps to paint a beautiful picture of the Western Wall.

Communal Menorah Lighting: Many members joined us for the first night of Chanukah on Thursday, December 7 as we lit our menorah outside the Temple and proclaimed loudly Am Yisrael Chai. We shined the light of our public menorah to publicize the miracle of Jewish life and following the lighting, we joined together in the sanctuary for the festive singing of Chanukah songs and Maariv services.

Hopeful Steps for Israel 5K: As we continue to share our light with one another and our larger Jewish community during these dark moments in the Holy Land, we participated in a fun and meaningful event during Chanukah to support our brothers and sisters in need. Fresh off of the excitement of his marathon run, Rabbi Dermer signed up for the "Hopeful Steps for Israel 5K" which took place on the third day of Chanukah on Sunday, December 10 at Eisenhower Park. All of the proceeds from this 5k supported Israel aid organizations, including Magen David Adom, JNF, and the Lone Soldier Center. Many joined Team Temple Beth Torah for this meaningful and fun morning to support life saving efforts for our Jewish brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael. Our lights shined brightly this Chanukah as we walk beyond this moment of darkness with strength and solidarity – one step at a time.

Latkas, Vodka, and Laughs Chanukah Celebration: On Thursday, December 14, one of our biggest parties of the year returned – Latkas, Vodka and Laughs! This year, we were joined by the hilarious Bible Players who preformed stand up and improv comedy. Latkas, sufganiyot, music, and Chanukahthemed cocktails made this evening a gathering not to be missed!

Follow Temple Beth Torah on Facebook to see additional pictures.



Recent Events



Recent Events















Upcoming Events for January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
	1	2	3
	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Rabbi's Class, 7:30 p.m. Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.
7	8	9	10
Morning Minyan, 9:00 a.m. Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Rabbi's Class, 7:30 p.m. Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.
14	Martin 15 Luther King, Jr. Birthday	16	17
Morning Minyan, 9:00 a.m. Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Rabbi's Class, 7:30 p.m. Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.
21 Morning Minyan,	22	23	24
9:00 a.m. Sisterhood Charity Blanket Making, 4:00 p.m. Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Tu B'Shevat Seder Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.
28	29	30	31
Morning Minyan, 9:00 a.m. Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Rabbi's Class, 7:30 p.m. Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.

Upcoming Events for January 2024

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
4	5	6	
Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Candle Lighting, 4:24 p.m. Shabbat Services, 6:30 p.m.	Shabbat Services, 9:30 a.m. Minha Services, 4:25 p.m.	
Rosh 11 Chodesh Shevat	12	13	
Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Candle Lighting, 4:31 p.m. Shabbat Services, 6:30 p.m.	Shabbat Services, 9:30 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Joshua Horowitz Minha Services, 4:30 p.m.	
18	19	20	
Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Candle Lighting, 4:39 p.m. Shabbat Services, 6:30 p.m.	Shabbat Services, 9:30 a.m. Minha Services, 4:40 p.m.	
Tu B'Shevat Jewish Arbor Day	26	Shabbat 27 Shira	
Evening Minyan, 7:30 p.m.	Candle Lighting, 4:47 p.m. Shabbat Services, 6:30 p.m.	Shabbat Services, 9:30 a.m. Minha Services, 4:50 p.m.	

Upcoming Event Spotlight

Our leadership and clergy work tirelessly to craft experiences which will be inspirational, meaningful and safe for all involved.

Temple Beth Torah is still active and thriving. If you haven't come by lately, please do! There's always something going on here at Temple Beth Torah!

We value our members and your opinions.

If you have ideas for future programs or events, or if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to our office, our co-presidents and/or our clergy.

Upcoming Events

TEMPLE BETH TORAH JANUARY EVENTS Monday, 1/1 - New Year's Day - Office Closed Wednesday, 1/3 - Rabbi's Torah Study Monday, 1/8 - Executive Board Meeting Wednesday, 1/10 - Rabbi's Torah Study Saturday, 1/13 - Bar Mitzvah of Joshua Horowitz Monday, 1/15 - MLK Jr. Day - Office Closed Wednesday, 1/17 - Rabbi's Torah Study Sunday, 1/21 @ 4pm - Sisterhood Charity Blanket Making Class Monday, 1/22 - Board of Trustees Meeting Wednesday, 1/24 - Tu B'Shevat Seder Thursday, 1/25 - Tu B'Shevat Wednesday, 1/31 - Rabbi's Torah Study **Contact Lauren @ TBT for more information:** 516-334-7979 or admin@templebethtorahli.org

A Guide to Temple Beth Torah

CONTACT US

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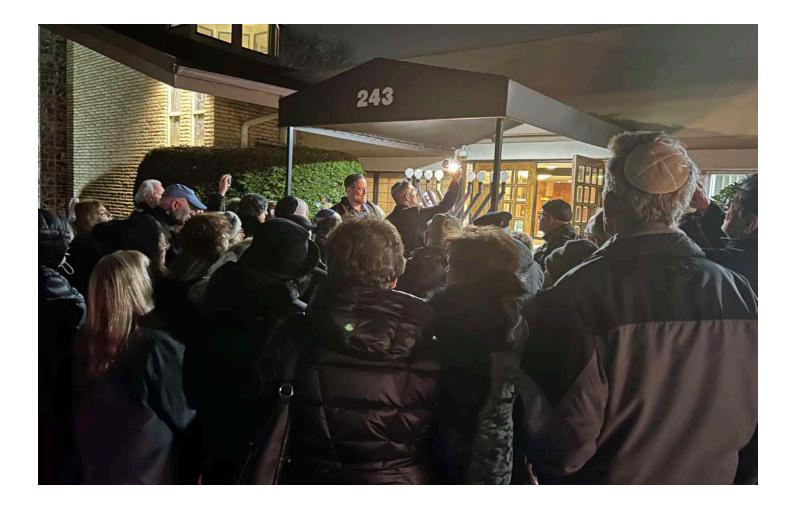


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