

Temple Beth El^{Electronic} News

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Iyar 5769

May 2009

Thank You

- ✧ Special thanks to Ruthie Silverberg and her family for using the money that was donated in Jerry's memory for a chair lift for the temple's back stairway. This lift will be a big help in allowing people access our lower-level social hall. Now that the lift has been installed, we would like to "spruce up." Anyone with any ideas, artistic talent, or a willingness to help paint that alcove would be much appreciated. Please contact Sheila if interested.
- ✧ Thank you to Jacquie Dyrke for her time and contributions to the Temple Board. Welcome and congratulations to Cindy Mikel and Alan Garfield the new Board members.

New Temple Beth El Board of Directors

Thank you to everyone who is serving on our new Temple Beth El Board of Directors:

Alan Garfield
Phyllis Garfield
Ellie Landau
Lou Landau
Cindy Mikel
Karin Pritikin
Sheila Rudin
Randy Sirk

The congregation greatly appreciates everything you are and will be doing to keep our small congregation moving forward!

Rabbi Selection Committee

The Selection Committee is working hard to find a Rabbi for next year. We have had applications from several very qualified applicants.

Mitzvah Moments

- ✧ Mazel Tov to Barry and Sheila Rudin on the marriage of their son, Joshua, to Marina Voltchenok in Paradise Valley, Arizona on April 26.
- ✧ And to Ellie and Lou Landau on the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter Hannah in Alberta, Canada on May 2.

Rotman Tribute Fund

We are looking for someone to administer the temple's Rotman Tribute Fund. There will be a full explanation of this fund and what the administrator does in an upcoming newsletter.

Sisterhood

Our annual Sisterhood dues are \$25. Any woman affiliated with the Temple is eligible to join Women of Reform Judaism. Give or send your dues for this year to Phyllis Garfield. Our dues help to support regional and national initiatives. For more information, contact Rebecca Gottlieb.

From Rabbi Stephanie

As I write these words, we are preparing for *Shabbat Kedoshim*, the Sabbath on which our Torah portion conveys commandments so powerfully descriptive of what it means to be an ethical and moral Jew that we read them not only on this one Shabbat a year, but on Yom Kippur—*Shabbat Shabbaton* (the Sabbath of Sabbaths)—each year. Consider just this sampling:

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. (Lev. 19: 9-10)

You shall not defraud your neighbor. You shall not commit robbery. The wages of a laborer shall not remain with you until morning. (Lev. 19: 13)

You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your God. (Lev. 19: 14)

You shall rise before the aged and show deference to the old. (Lev. 19: 32)

When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Lev. 19: 33-34)

A wonder that we do not commit these rules and the rest of the rules of Lev. 19, together known as the Holiness Code, to memory as we do, say, the Ten Commandments. There are too many details, too many wonderful and intricate points to each practice, I suppose. And so, more often than any of these particular commandments, you might hear someone cite the overarching rule that appears in verse 18: “Love your neighbor as yourself”—the “Golden Rule,” the guiding principle from which all of the others flow, and a worthy adage indeed.

What principle guides your life and practice? What saying, mantra or motto do you keep in your back pocket? What does it do for you? How does it inspire you? How do you remind yourself of it when you need to remember it most? Many have written about the current state of our world as a storm that needs to be weathered, prompting each of us to identify the sources of strength and stability in our lives to which we can cling and hold fast. Whether it's to be found in this week's Torah portion, the teachings of the rabbis, or the words of the prophets and Psalmists, our tradition is replete with such sources of strength and I remain, as always, available to help mine them.

With all best wishes—
L'shalom,
Rabbi Stephanie M. Alexander

Upcoming Activities

- **Saturday, May 9th, 3:00 pm @ the Temple - Discussion of the book *God Knows*, by Joseph Heller**

“Joseph Heller's powerful, wonderfully funny, deeply moving novel is the story of David—yes, King David—but as you've never seen him before. You already know David as the legendary warrior king of Israel, husband of Bathsheba, and father of Solomon; now meet David as he really was: the cocky Jewish kid, the plagiarized poet, and the Jewish father. Listen as David tells his own story, a story both relentlessly ancient and surprisingly modern, about growing up and growing old, about men and women, and about man and God. It is quintessential Heller.” (*Warning: This is a fascinating example of historical fiction, but most definitely “Rated R”.*)

→ Whether you've started the book, finished the book, or never picked it up at all ... whether you loved it, appreciated it, or outright hated it ... COME as we meet at the intersection of sacred literature and historical fiction for what promises to be a very interesting discussion indeed!

- **Saturday, May 9th, 7:00 pm – Adult Study @ the Rudins': Jewish Values & Torture**

Last week a number of documents regarding the treatment of detainees during the Bush Administration were released. A summary of these documents (termed by some the so-called “torture memos”), with links to their full texts can be found online at <http://www.nytimes.com/ref/international/24MEMO-GUIDE.html>. The release of the memos has reignited the call by many for a deeper look at, and potentially the leveling of charges for, the practices of the United States government and military that amounted to torture. Yet, as Rabbi Benjamin Weiner has written, “Though a few Jewish organizations have welcomed the release of the ‘torture memos’ as a positive step forward, many others have kept silent, perhaps still unable to decouple concerns for Israel’s security from the ‘war on terror’ mentality cultivated over the past eight years. The exigencies of survival, whether real or perceived, have trumped *tselem elohim* [the notion that all human beings are created in the image of God] in the hearts and minds of many.” In this timely study session, we will break the silence and weigh the values of Jewish tradition against the case for torture.



Service and Mitzvah Schedule for 5769

Revised 5/3/09

NOTE: Rabbi Stephanie offers a slew of activities on the weekends she is here. The schedule below does NOT include those specific activities. Refer to each newsletter for the specifics of an upcoming weekend.

Friday, May 8... 7:00pm Shabbat service
Saturday, May 9... 7:00pm adult study

dinner: Gottlieb, oneg: Dyrke
dinner: Dyrke, study: Rudin

Friday, June 5... 7:00pm Shabbat service
Saturday, June 6... time TBD

dinner: TBD, oneg: Alexander
End-of-Year Adult Social hosted by the Alexanders