TEMPLE BETH EL

FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

93nd Year January 2021 Tevet/Shevat 5781 No. 5

Regular Service Schedule - Via Zoom until further notice

Morning Minyan (Monday & Thursday)	8:00 am
Friday Evening Services	5:30 pm
Shabbat Morning Services	.10:00 am

Mazel Toy!







Celebrating the 79th anniversary of Bill Chebot's Bar Mitzvah. Bill chanted his Haftorah masterfully, joined by family & friends from near and far on Zoom!



A message from our Spiritual Leader, Rabbi Mark Elber

Heroes Choose Life

As we enter the secular year 2021, we also enter the next book in our yearly sojourn through the Torah. During the month of January we begin the book of Exodus, or *Sh'mot* as it's called in Hebrew. It begins the story of our ancestors transforming from a clan of seventy people who go down to the land of Egypt because of a famine in the land of Israel to becoming a people on its way back to the Promised Land.

There is a long tradition throughout the literatures of the world of a "hero's journey" in which the "heroes" realize themselves during the course of the trials and tribulations they undergo in their life-changing journey. In the conventional pattern of this type of story, it is one individual who undergoes the journey and the transformation. However, in the Torah it is the entire people who undergo the journey. It is the story of the formation and transformation of the Jewish people as a whole. Similarly in origin stories of religions, it is typically an individual who undergoes a revelation or enlightenment experience and then brings other people around to their new understanding. Here too, in the Torah, it is the entire Jewish people who are standing at the base of Mount Sinai at the beginning of the revelation. Most of our tradition and, similarly, most of our prayers, are formulated in the aggregate - they refer to klal Yisrael, the whole of the Jewish people. The entire corpus of Jewish literature, whether it's the Bible (the Tanakh), the Talmud, Midrash, Jewish Philosophy, Kabbalah, Codes of Jewish Law etc., belongs to the people who commit themselves to it in some way or another.

The word "Torah" itself means "Teaching" and is defined in various ways. Sometimes it is used to refer to the first five books of the Bible (the *Chumash* – whose meaning comes from the word *chamesh* which means "five"). Sometimes the word is used to refer to the entire body of Jewish spiritual literature. Our tradition has always looked to the Torah in creative ways and found new meanings and insights in the very same passages which we read and reread every year. That is part of the way our tradition has evolved over the centuries and millennia. Some parts of the *Tanakh* serve as commentaries on, or reactions to, other parts of the *Tanakh*.

The Psalms comprise the first book in the third section of the *Tanakh* (called *Ketuvim* – the Holy Writings). Psalm 62:12 says "One thing has G!d spoken, these two have I heard..." The Talmud takes this phrase and says (in Tractate Sanhedrin 34a) "One Biblical verse may

convey several teachings.... In Rabbi Ishmael's School it was taught: And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces: i.e. just as the rock is split into many splinters, so also may one Biblical verse convey many teachings." Later a medieval Midrash comes along and says "shivim panim latorah" (there are seventy faces to the Torah) i.e. there are many ways of interpreting and understanding the Torah. Nachmanides (known as the Ramban in Hebrew), who lived from 1194-1270, and was the greatest Talmudist and Torah commentator of his time and a kabbalist, uses the phrase in his Torah commentary. In the early 14th century a book called Tikkunei HaZohar was written which is comprised of seventy different mystical readings of the first verse of the book of Genesis. Basically, you see the trend. Of course, this does not, by any means, imply that interpreting the Torah is a free-for-all, and that anything one wants to find in there one can (or as Shakespeare phrased it "the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose"). One still has to show why one's interpretation is valid.

There's another longstanding tradition of rabbis finding verses in the Torah which address the issues of the day. I think that Deuteronomy 30:19 is particularly relevant to our current moment. It says: "I have placed before you life and death, blessing and curse - choose life!" These winter months will be particularly trying times because of the continuing pandemic. It's harder to be outside during these months and there is increasing fatigue regarding all of the restrictions. However, at the same time, the prospect of receiving a vaccination promises an end in sight to this long ordeal. This is the time to continue to observe the necessary restrictions to limit the spread of the pandemic, even though we're tired of living so isolated from each other, even though we're feeling fatigued by the restrictions, even though we can see the light at the end of the tunnel which may make us feel we can let up a bit. With thousands dying daily, this is the time for our country to seek healing both of the deep divisions we see and read about, and for the victims of the pandemic. It won't come overnight, but it is a time to begin. We can do this despite those who want to continue to seed and exploit divisions among us.

Among the many identities that each of us has, we are citizens of one nation made up of many groups. Our greatest strength is when we are truly a *united* United States. I am hopeful that people will choose life: choose to continue wearing masks in public, continue social distancing, and choose to be vaccinated when the opportunity presents itself. We can never know what the future holds, just as our ancestors millennia ago could not know what life in the Promised Land would be like. However, we can sustain hope by always choosing the path that promises *life*.

President's Message

It is hard to believe, almost miraculous really, that we are already lining up for the new vaccines to beat Covid into submission. It is an interesting vaccine - it is designed to help boost a protein in our cells to fight off the virus before it can take hold. Hopefully by spring we will be well on our way to beating this thing so that we can once again congregate with our families and friends. I, for one, am looking forward to going out to dinner...and eating inside the restaurant!

Most of you know by now that we unexpectedly lost two of our board members. Daniel Schafler, our vice president and our go-to guy for religious matters, died very suddenly of a heart attack. He was such a nice man, very learned in Judaism, a natural leader, and always willing to help wherever he could. We extend our sincere condolences to his wife, Ruth, and his family and friends.

Just days later we lost Judy Berg. She had been hospitalized with Covid but after testing negative had been transferred to a rehab to convalesce. What nobody knew was that Covid had weakened her heart, and just days later she was gone. Judy was a longtime board member, Sisterhood member, and a good friend to many here at Temple Beth El. Our condolences to her children, Paula and Steve, her grandaughter Lila (upon whom she doted), and her friends. May their memory be for a blessing.

It was nice to celebrate a happy occasion, Bill Chebot's 79th anniversary of his Bar Mitvah. Bill invited everyone to attend the Shabbat morning service in the hopes of having a minyan. One of the silver linings of Covid has been conducting services and events via Zoom. Bill not only had a minyan, he had over 30 people attend, including both of his children, several of his grandchildren, and family and friends from all over, including Rabbi William Kaufman and his wonderful wife Nathalie. As expected, Bill chanted the Haftorah like the pro that he is. I think the adage "practice makes perfect" comes into play here! Mazel Tov Billy!

Please join me in welcoming our newest members, Deborah Zalkind Semine and her husband Christian. Debbie is one of three daughters of the late Sylvia & Charles Zalkind, and is returning to the fold after many years away. Welcome back!

Lastly, we have hired another part-time custodian, Christopher Medeiros. Chris is a handy guy who helps us out for a few hours each morning. With our aging building, another set of hands is always helpful, and he will be a great assistant for Henry, who works full time at the First Congregational Church.

> Steve Silverman President

Sisterhood President's Message

It's now January 2021, and I am hoping this new year brings with it a reprieve from the pandemic and the health worries that came with it.

I write this piece with a very heavy heart. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to two members of our Board. First of all, Daniel Schafler. Daniel was our Vice President, and a valuable asset to Temple Beth El. He will be missed.

Next, I want to speak about Judy Berg. I've known Judy since her daughter Paula was in nursery school with my children, Peter and Kim. She was someone who loved life and lived it to the max. Judy was well liked by all who knew her. We had many good times and laughs around the Mah Jongg table. She was a wonderful hostess. It was always a joy to be in her company. She enjoyed reading the Book Club selections, even if she didn't always make the meetings. This lady was a mother, grandmother, and friend. She was a staple at our board meetings. Judy, Judy, Judy, you will be sorely missed!

I do have one Chanukah miracle to report. My grandson, Aaron Reynolds, has made a great recovery from Covid-19. "Boston," as he is known to his friends in the sheriff's department, is back on the job. I firmly believe in the power of prayer. Thank you everyone for all your prayers. G-d is good.



So, until next month, do your best to stay safe and healthy.

Libby Cohen Sisterhood President

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SERVICE SCHEDULE

January 2021 Tevet/Shevat 5781

Services will continue to be on Zoom.

Friday January 1 (17 Tevet)

Candle Lighting Shabbat Service	4:07 pm 5:30 pm
Saturday, January 2 (18 Tevet) Weekly Portion: Vayekhi	10:00 am
Friday, January 8 (24 Tevet) Candle Lighting Shabbat Service	4:14 pm 5:30 pm
Saturday, January 9 (25 Tevet) Weekly Portion: Sh'mot	10:00 am
Thursday January 14 (1 Shevat) Rosh Chodesh Shevat	
Friday, January 15 (2 Shevat) Candle Lighting Shabbat Service	4:22 pm 5:30 pm
Saturday, January 16 (3 Shevat) Weekly Portion: Vaera	10:00 am
Friday, January 22 (9 Shevat) Candle Lighting Shabbat Service	4:30 pm 5:30 pm
Saturday, January 23 (10 Shevat) Weekly Portion: Bo	10:00 am
Thursday January 28 (15 Shevat) Tu B'Shevat (Jewish Arbor Day)	
Friday, January 29 (16 Shevat) Candle Lighting Shabbat Service	4:39 pm 5:30 pm
Saturday, January 30 (17 Shevat) Weekly Portion: Beshalakh	10:00 am



TEMPLE OFFICE

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E-Mail: templebethel@comcast.net
Website: frtemplebethel.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 9 am to Noon

OFFICE CLOSED:

Friday, January 1st - New Year's Day Monday, January 18th - Martin Luther King Day

10 things to consider as we say goodbye to 2020:

- 1. The dumbest thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner.
- 2. 2019: Stay away from negative people. 2020: Stay away from positive people.
- 3. The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!
- 4. This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her dog. It was obvious she thought her dog understood her. I came into my house and told my cat. We laughed a lot.
- 5. Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
- 6. This virus has done what no woman has been able to do. Cancel sports, shut down all bars and keep men at home!
- 7. I never thought the comment, "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!
- 8. I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
- 9. I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to the Back Yard. I'm getting tired of the Living Room.
- 10. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank teller wearing a mask & ask for money.





TBE News & Notes

Our losses: Our TBE community received two great blows in December with the loss of two of our TBE Board members: **Daniel Schafler** and **Judy Berg**. These two board members were great pillars of our congregation; we are thankful for all they have done for us, and wish their families comfort and blessings in their memories.

Thanks to all who joined us in our two **Zoom Chanukah candle-lighting** services last month.
Like everything else this year, it was a Chanukah unlike any other that we have known...we certainly look forward to getting back to "normal" soon!

Looking further in January...there will of course be no MLK community Breakfast this year at BCC, but we will commemorate MLK's birthday in our Kabbalat Shabbat Service on Friday January 15th. In like fashion, due to the pandemic, we will not be able to hold our usual Tu biShevat Seder this year, but we will focus on Tu biShevat themes in our Kabbalat Shabbat service on Friday January 29th. Please use the Zoom link for the regular Friday evening services for both of these special services.

Interested in joining our **Monday morning adult ed class** (on Zoom) from 10:30 to 12? If so, please be in touch with the TBE office, so that we can send you the zoom link. We are still working our way through the book, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, by Jonathan Kirsch (purchase of the book necessary for participating in the class).



Temple Family

- Our deepest condolences to the families and friends of Linda Edgar, Ruth Levin, Daniel Schafler, and Judy Berg.
- Mazel tov to Bill Chebot for chanting "his"
 Haftorah, for the umpteenth time an annual TBE event.

It is with profound sadness that we relate the passing on Tuesday, December 8th, of our dear Temple Beth El member, friend, and vice president of the board of directors, Daniel Schafler. Daniel met and befriended Rabbi Mark and myself in the fall of 2013, just after we arrived in Fall River, and we were both taken with this gentle and Jewishly welllearned man. (Daniel's father was a Conservative rabbi, and Daniel was steeped in traditional Jewish learning). Soon afterwards, Daniel and his wife Ruth joined Temple Beth El. Daniel had a beautiful voice and wonderful synagogue skills, so we could always call on him to read Torah, help out with our Purim Megillah reading, or fill in as prayer leader when Mark and I were on vacation. We all looked forward to hearing him chant the Haftarah on Rosh Hashanah as well.

Daniel loved nature, introducing Mark and myself to Weetamoo Woods in Tiverton, near where he and Ruth were living, and he allowed Mark to store his kayak in his backyard. At least once a year, Daniel and Mark would go kayaking together.

Daniel joined the Temple Beth El board in 2015, and soon was invited to serve as vice-president. He enjoyed a warm relationship with our temple president, Steve Silverman, and was well-liked by all and well-respected due to the depth of his Jewish knowledge and his *menschlikhkeit*.

Daniel was 66 years old; his death came as a shock to us all, as he had not knowingly been ill. We will miss him profoundly, and we want to extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Ruth Hollenbach Schafler.

Cantor Shoshana



Thank you for your donations received through December 23, 2020

YAHRZEITS

For the yahrzeit of my beloved... Donated by:

"Daddy Zaide" Abraham Becker The Winokoors

David Cohen The Cohen/Novek Families

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Ann Wolfson

Mother, Sylvia Zalkind Her 3 daughters, Debbie, Susan & Batsheva

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For the yahrzeit of my beloved brother, Stanley Alpert Sumner Alpert

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In memory of my beloved wife, Gloria Baskin Jerry Baskin

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In memory of Judy Berg

Beverly, Lori & Ellen Sokoll

LEADERSHIP

Mark Elber	Rabbi
Shoshana Brown	Cantor
Stephen Silverman	President
Daniel Schafler	Vice President
Libby Cohen	Secretary
William Chebot	Treasurer
Libby Cohen	Sisterhood Pres.
William E. Kaufman	Rabbi Emeritus

CAPITAL FUND

In honor of Temple Beth El

Cheryl Crossley-Simmons

In memory of Judy Berg

Susan Bender

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Sylvia Eisner Pamela Pierce Paula Shaer Marilyn Sokoll Marie Twomey

In loving memory of our parents, Grace & Harry Cooperstein, our grandparents, Abe & Bessie Dashoff, and our uncle, Everett Dashoff.

Nancy Cooperstein Charney & June Cooperstein Wise

In memory of Steve Feldman

Sylvia Eisner

In memory of George Haire

Dr. Ron & Carol Schwartz

Marcie Smith Marilyn Sokoll

In memory of our loved ones, Jacob Katersky, Sadie Katersky, Hilda Katersky Zaslow, Nathalie Katersky Pfeffer, Lee Pfeffer, Sidney Reuter, Shirley Reuter

Ellen & Ron Reuter

In memory of Daniel Schafler

Norm & Anita Bolski

Sylvia Eisner

Renee Lipson

In memory of Allen Taradash

Sylvia Eisner

For the recovery of Fran Cohen

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WISH LIST - PRAYER BOOKS

In honor of Bill Chebot's 79th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah

Susan Bender

In memory of George Haire

Susan Bender

Judy & Mike Morgenstern

In honor of Steve Silverman, whose leadership as Temple

President during such trying times is unequaled

Bill Chebot

In memory of Daniel Schafler

Bill Chebot

SPECIAL GIFTS

In memory of Lena M. Solotist and Rose & Jacob Dondis

A bequest from the estate of Harriet Grunberg

In memory of Max F. and Edith C. Gold

Max and Edith Gold Foundation

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IN MEMORIAM

LINDA KANE EDGAR OCTOBER 7, 2020 - 19 TISHREI 5781

RUTH LEVIN NOVEMBER 29. 2020 - 14 KISLEV 5781

DANIEL SCHAFLER DECEMBER 8, 2020 - 22 KISLEV 5781

JUDITH BERG DECEMBER 10, 2020 - 24 KISLEV 5781

MAY THEIR MEMORY BE FOR A BLESSING



Having only known Judy Berg for a little over ten years, I did not know all that she was. I knew that she was a special ed teacher, but I didn't know that she fostered one of her students for many years. I didn't know that she was an operator on the Suicide Hotline. I knew she liked to play Mah Jongg, but I didn't know that she had good card sense. I knew she liked to go out to eat, but I didn't know that she had a close group of friends, self-named "The Dinettes" who went to dinner every month for eleven years almost never missing a month. I knew she liked animals, but I didn't know that her pets were all rescues. I knew she was a survivor, but I didn't know all that she had survived. I did know that she loved her family, and positively doted on her granddaughter, Lila. I knew she was very appreciative of her guardian angel. But what I knew best was that Judy made me laugh. Every. Single. Time. She had a wicked sense of humor, and was incorrigibly irreverent. And she would like that I said that! I already miss her witty email responses, but as I send out the next board notices I know what she would say..."Can't wait!"

Marie

Virtual Chanukah

This year in lieu of our annual Chanukah party Rabbi Mark and Cantor Shoshana hosted a Zoom candle-lighting service on the first and last nights of Chanukah. I think you can guess which night these pictures came from!

Hopefully next year we will be able to once again get together for our party, but in the meantime it was fun to be able to light our candles and sing traditional Chanukah songs from the safety of our own homes.







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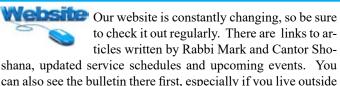
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can also see the bulletin there first, especially if you live outside the greater Fall River area! Go to www.frtemplebethel.org

YAHRZEITS

1/1/2021 17 Tevet 5781

Sophie Cohen Ida F. Kane Louis M. Raffel Milton Reiser

1/2/2021 18 Tevet 5781

Samuel Kay Harry Spiro Murray Taradash

1/3/2021 19 Tevet 5781

George Lustig Dr. Samuel Sandler

1/4/2021 20 Tevet 5781 Samuel Isaac Siegel

Janet Smith

1/6/2021 22 Tevet 5781 Martha Kaufmann

Martha Kaufmanı Sylvia Zalkind

1/7/2021 23 Tevet 5781

Fannie Wilner Aranov Ruth Gerard Harriet Grunberg Mae Hodosh Sarah Kaplan Dolores Leviss Dr. Donald Rotenberg

1/8/2021 24 Tevet 5781

Bruce Kay

1/9/2021 25 Tevet 5781 Robert Chavenson 1/10/2021 26 Tevet 5781

Lillian Kline Anna Ellison Schaffer

1/11/2021 27 Tevet 5781

Sarah Belford Sheila Holtzman

1/12/2021 28 Tevet 5781 Simon Winokoor

1/13/2021 29 Tevet 5781

Victor Field Paula Fox Birdie Phillips

1/15/2021 2 Shevat 5781

Betty Greenberg Dorothy S. Levin

1/16/2021 3 Shevat 5781 Rose Moss

1/17/2021 4 Shevat 5781 George Hodosh

1/18/2021 5 Shevat 5781

Tracy Fleisher Claire Sundel Harry Weissman

1/19/2021 6 Shevat 5781

Max Horvitz Charles Rosenberg Philip Shapiro

1/20/2021 7 Shevat 5781 Louise Macy

1/21/2021 8 Shevat 5781 Dr. Leonard Lechan

1/22/2021 9 Shevat 5781 Augusta Kaufmann

1/23/2021 10 Shevat 5781 Normand Futoransky

Joseph Horowitz

1/25/2021 12 Shevat 5781

Tylda Schwartz Arnold Wolfson

1/27/2021 14 Shevat 5781

Louis Freedman Esther Mickelson William Shriberg Morris Wilner

1/28/2021 15 Shevat 5781

Margot Bogus Adolph Feder Fannie Woloshen

1/29/2021 16 Shevat 5781 Abner Kravitz

1/30/2021 17 Shevat 5781 Jack Mickelson Charles Novek

1/31/2021 18 Shevat 5781 Ada Wolfson

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