



Messenger

Volume 159, Issue 9

Iyar-Sivan 5778 / May 2018

Welcoming the Stranger Tikkun Leyl Shavuot Torah Study

Also In the Messenger:

- ✧ *Israel's 70th*
- ✧ *Parents' Family Service*
- ✧ *Tzedaka explained*

Almost every year since Rabbi Daniel arrived, we've held a joint *Tikkun Leyl Shavuot*, a Shavuot evening Torah study, together with Temple Israel.

This year, we're doing so once again, at Temple Israel, on May 19th at 9 p.m.

People are welcome to come to a brief Shavuot service at 8:45 p.m., or



Rabbis Saks, Berman and Swartz



come at 9 p.m. when the study will begin.

Once again, Rabbi Moshe Saks, Rabbi Marjorie Berman, and Rabbi Daniel will all be teaching, this year all sharing the very timely theme, "Welcoming the Stranger."

Just what does that mean, what do our texts say about it, and how are we supposed to do it in an age when, for better or worse, many people are scared of strangers?

Join us for a lively discussion with our Temple Israel friends and learn some of the secrets of the Torah!

Two 'Night of Comedy' Acts Signed

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New York city comedian Joe DeVito headlines the Temple Hesed Fifth Annual "A Night of Comedy" on Saturday, June 9, with his special brand of humor that leaves no subject unturned. DeVito's dead-on timing, unexpected twists and sheer flights of lunacy make him a favorite at the top clubs in New York City and across the USA.

Joe has landed appearances on The Late Late Show on CBS, Comics Unleashed, Gotham Comedy Live on AXS TV, Comedy Central,



Joe DeVito



Meghan Hanley

and a semi-finalist turn on NBC's Last Comic Standing. He's also a regular panelist on FOX News Channel, with other appearances including The Artie & Anthony Show, CNN, truTV's The Smoking Gun Presents and more.

Joe's performance at the prestigious Just for Laughs Festival was rated "9.5 out of 10" by The Montreal Gazette, and his debut album, "First Date with Joe DeVito," is in regular rotation on SiriusXM radio.

(Continued on page 4)

Donations

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zeit of Joan Alperin**

*James and Patricia
Alperin*

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Loss of her Sister,
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penheim for her Hon-
or from Jewish Family
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zeit of Sheldon A. Da-
vis**

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zeit of Nellie H. Wood-
en**

Sherman F. Wooden

**Thank you for an Ex-
tra Ordinary Seder**

Audrey Harrell

**In Memory of Bernard,
Gertrude and Carl
Diener**

*John, Patti and Dana
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**In Honor of the Yahr-
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Deborah and John Orgill

TORAH RESTORA- TION FUND

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Esther B. Adelman

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Fine's Birthday**

Toni Cerra

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accepts these
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most payments or
donations



Rabbinical Reflections — Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz

Torah: Is It Liberal or Conservative?



Whenever a Torah discussion turns to anything remotely political, I often get asked, well, is the Torah's view on this issue conservative or liberal? The short answer is both, and neither.

Any useful answer, however, requires that we consider at least three questions: What does the Torah emphasize? How do we think about the authority of the Torah? And what do we consider to be "Torah?"

What does the Torah emphasize? It outlines, through story, poetry, declarations and rules, what its authors (more on that below) consider to be the path that God wants us to follow.

That path certainly includes many things that we consider "religious," even in the diminished way that religion is often defined today: rituals, blessings, prayers, and holy days.

OPERATING SOCIETY IS FOCUS

But even when it considers such subjects, it often links them to instructions about how we should treat each other, and large swaths of the Torah focus on how our society should operate with little or no discussion of rituals. Thus, for example, there are extensive passages on helping the poor, loving the immigrant, caring for the earth, and protecting vulnerable populations. But it usually doesn't specify how to solve these problems – and even when it does, as with the rules about leaving the corners of the fields unharvested, it makes it clear that these are a minimum and that more will be required to truly deal with the problem.

These shouldn't be conservative or liberal issues – these are human issues, and one can posit solutions to all of them that would appeal more to liberals or to conservatives. What the Torah makes clear however, is that anyone who doesn't try to address these concerns isn't following the right path. Furthermore, the Torah makes it clear again and again, from the story of the first Jew, Abraham, on down, that we are expected to speak out whenever we see an injustice. A Judaism that doesn't address social concerns and speak out about injustice is simply unimaginable to the authors of the Torah.

TORAH IS A HUMAN DOCUMENT

Which brings us to our second question – how do we think about the authority of the Torah? As Reform Jews, we

look to the advances in linguistics, anthropology, archaeology and more that have helped show not only that the Torah was written by human beings, but also that it evolved over generations before reaching the form that we see it in today. We also understand that interpretations of the Torah have changed over time and that much of what is today regarded as "traditional" was at one point regarded as innovative or even radical. At the same time, I believe, as I'm guessing many of you do, these generations of authors were inspired by their faith, just as succeeding generations have been inspired as they have sought to understand the Torah. Their insights, faith, and calls for justice deserve to be taken seriously, even, or perhaps especially, when they challenge present ideologies. Personally, I find that the very humanity of the text, the hard-earned wisdom revealed in our stories, often lead me to consider views that don't adhere to any rigid orthodoxy, whether of the religious or political variety.

WHAT IS TORAH

That human lens brings us to the third question: what do we consider to be "Torah"? If it isn't the received word of God, dictated at Mount Sinai to Moses, does it really end with the last biblical book? Or should we instead consider the entire breadth of Jewish history and culture part of Torah? For example, when we consider Torah teachings on the treatment of immigrants, Jewish historical experiences, including repeated expulsions throughout Europe, migrations to the U.S., and the founding of Israel, are all important parts of the equation. Like the rest of the Torah, Jewish history calls on us to speak out against injustice AND its lessons defy easy categorization into liberal or conservative schools of thought.

This year, as you can read elsewhere in this Messenger, our annual Tikkun Leyl Shavuot will focus on "welcoming the stranger." Whatever your political leanings, I think you'll find the Torah on this subject – Torah taken in the very broadest sense – to be fascinating and enlightening. I hope you'll join us!

In Hesed,

Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz

Presidents' Page by Esther Adelman, co-president

Book Report



Esther Adelman

On Earth Day, Rabbi Daniel and Mark Davis presented a very informative, thought-provoking, often frustrating, program concerning the debate between science and faith on the hot topic of global warming as we feasted on a delicious and imaginative array of pot-luck brunch food provided by the attendees.

Because the Temple would already be open, Rabbi and I had decided that it would be a good time to schedule the first round of the library project immediately afterwards.

This resulted in our ending up with a wonderful group of workers, including those who had already volunteered and others who stayed to help. We sorted and packed books until we ran out of boxes.

During the course of it all, we realized just what we had down there and discovered some interesting stuff. It is quite overwhelming and will prove to be a daunting task. I would guess that we probably went through between one-quarter and one-third of the books. Most are in pretty good shape, although some were a bit moldy. For those of us allergy-prone people, all were also quite musty, which was to be expected. Some will be kept; some will be donated; some, unfortunately, will have to be destroyed or buried.

We are grateful to all those who helped, and we hope that you will return for the next session. Anyone else who would like to join us is welcome. Your willingness to help is the only prerequisite. Watch your inbox for the date of the next round. Sunday seems to be the best day for most of us.

WE NEED BOXES! Please drop them off at Temple during business hours.

THANK YOU!

Esther Adelman

Comedy Night Continued

(Continued from page 1)

Joining Joe will be Meghan Hanley, a National Touring stand-up comic, writer and baseball blogger.

She has appeared on AXSTV's "Gotham Comedy Live," Dream- sTv, as well as Fox's "Laughs," and "Red Eye." Hanley, known for her quick wit and upbeat persona, has been featured in several festivals, including Boston, Austin's Out of Bounds, Atlanta's Laughing

Skull and The Women in Comedy Festival.

Last year's "A Night of Comedy" fundraiser, which also featured top-notch comedians, drew more than 200



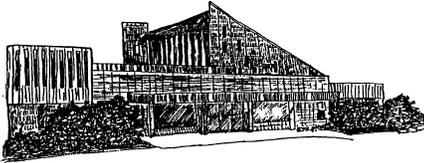
guests.

This year's "A Night of Comedy" is perfect for anyone over age 21 who enjoys a good laugh.

Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. \$60 Patron tickets entitle purchasers to two drinks.

Beer, wine and soda are available for purchase. Snacks will be provided.

The basket raffle will have some incredible prizes up for grabs. Guests must be over 21 to attend.



Yahrzeits and Personal Notes

GET WELLS

Jane Knobel

Jim Mates

Rich Mates

Charlene Ostro

Joel Ostro

Emily Trunzo

Janet Slawitsky

Edward Snitko,
Sr.

Yahrzeits

Week Ending May 5 (Service May 4)

*Louis N. Kramer, Herbert Cummins, *Herman Gutman, *Sarah F. Kline,
*Nathan Young, Benjamin Levy, *Sigmund G. Roos, *John Speir, Gertie Gross,
*Roselle Fine

Week Ending May 12 (Service May 11)

*Samuel M. Friedman, *Blanche Katz, *Sarah Weinberg, *Gloria Magida Schein-
holtz, *Nellie B. Stromberg, Sara Marsha Levy, *Samuel L. Goldstein, Nat
Fragin *Selman Sydansk, Rella Mates, *Bess Linder, *Isaac Sobel

Week Ending May 19 (Service May 18)

Miriam Stern, *Barbara J. Graham, *Edward Bruce Adelman, Samuel Cooper-
man, *Anne Mitteldorf, *Rosemary Minkoff, *Estelle H. Cohen, *Louis Driesen,
*Philip Joseph, Jack W. Heilbrunn, *Sadie Zwass Berger, *Max Pell, *George
Schneider, *Dr. Henry Fish

Week Ending May 26 (Service May 25)

*Charles Ball, Lillian Bernstein, *Louis Meyer, *Sondra Schneider Kaar,
*Harold Gold, *Evalyn Lonstein, *Earle R. Parker, *Max Lerner, Anna Kurzweil,
Ralph Blau, *Israel Davidow, *Fern Smith Tepper

Week Ending June 2 (Service June 1)

Milton Cooperman, *Edna M. Siegel, *William Krotosky, *Simon Smith, *Cora F.
Reinthal, *Rochelle Goldman, *Louis Goldsmith, *Selma Blank Maring, Robert
Baron, *Sophie Driesen, *Rose Slavitz, *Betty Goldsmith

Sheloshim

To Lee Gromer on the loss of her sister, Ruth.

To the family of Odessa Levine, mother of
Temple member, Kenneth Levine and grand-
mother of Joshua Levine.

B'Nai Mitzvah 5778

Reece Weinberg — July 28

Zachary Cahn — August 18

MAY 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Hike 4 pm	2	3	4	5
					SERVICES 8 p.m.	
6	7	8	9	10	11 Parents Day & Family Services @ 7pm	12 Chanting Circle 10:30 am
13	14	15	16 NO Board Mtg in May	17	18 SERVICES 8 p.m.	19 Shavuot Eve service 8:45 pm; Study 9pm at TI
20 Shavuot Chai Mitzvah noon	21 2nd day of Shavuot Yizkor	22	23	24	25 SERVICES 8 p.m.	26
27	28 MEMORIAL DAY	29	30	31		

Holidays 5778

Rosh Hashanah— Yom HaShoah—
Sept. 21, 2017 Apr. 12, 2018

Yom Kippur — Yom HaZikaron
Sept. 30, 2017 Apr. 18, 2018

Sukkot— Yom HaAtzmaut
Oct. 5-11, 2017 Apr. 19, 2018

Simchat Torah — Lag B'Omer —
Oct. 13, 2017 May 3, 2018

Hanukkah — Shavuot—
Dec. 13-20, 2017 May 20-21, 2018

Tu B'Shvat — Tisha B'Av—
Jan. 31, 2018 July 22, 2018

Purim— Selichot —Sept. 1
Mar. 1, 2018

Passover—
Mar. 31-Apr. 7, 2018

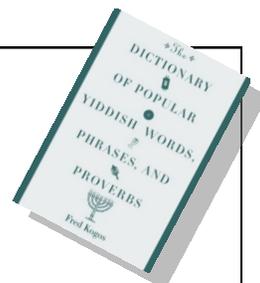
(Holidays begin at sundown the night before)

YIDDISH SAYING OF THE MONTH

“Better to pray for yourself than to curse another.”



Yiddish Proverb from a book by Fred Kogos



Torah Portions

Name	Civil Date	Hebrew Date
Emor	May 5, 2018	20.Iyar.5778
Behar-Bechukotai	May 12, 2018	27 Iyar.5778
Bamidbar	May 19, 2018	5.Sivan.5778
Naso	May 26, 2018	12.Sivan.5778

TEMPLE HESED'S 5TH ANNUAL
A NIGHT OF COMEDY
 STARRING:
 FUNDRAISER




JOE DEVITO



MEGHAN HANLEY

**SATURDAY
 JUNE 9**

Call 570-344-7201 for tickets

No First Friday early service this month— but Parents' Day Potluck and Family Service, May 11th

As a celebration of the end of another year of Hebrew and Religious School, we're having a special Shabbat Potluck Dinner and Family Service on May 11. And since it's the Friday before Mother's Day, we're also making it a Parent's Day celebration!

We'll start with a potluck dinner at 6 p.m., followed by a family service at 7 p.m., which will include a special blessing for all parents.

There is no need to RSVP for the service, but if you are coming for the dinner, please do RSVP so that we can work out the potluck details.

Because we're having this celebration on the second Friday, we won't have a 6 p.m. First Friday service in May.

And if the 7 p.m. time works well for people, we might try it a few more times over the summer, perhaps with additional potluck dinners.

Let us know what you think!

Chai Mitzvah Class will be on *Tzedaka*

Our topic for May (rescheduled from April) is *Tzedaka*.

What's *Tzedaka*? It's often translated as "charity" but with a meaning far closer to "justice," standing part way between philanthropy and taxes.

Join us for our April Chai Mitzvah class as we explore just what *Tzedaka* is, what we're supposed to do about it, and delve into some of the ethical conundrums around giving, such as: what do you do about street beggars? How much giving is enough? How do I set priorities about whom to give to first, since I can't give to everyone? Should Jewish causes come first?

We'll discuss both traditional sources and our own life experiences from noon to 1:30 on Sunday May 20th. RSVP to the Temple office if you'd like to attend, and we'll let you know as a location is confirmed.



Jewish Nature/Prayer Walk for children (and parents) – May 1, 4 p.m.

Our Hebrew School students have been strolling through the Siddur (prayerbook) as the focus of this year's curriculum.

On Tuesday, May 1 at 4 p.m., they'll have a chance to do this on a more literal level – as we explore the natural world around the Temple as a way to better understand the prayer service.

Other children (and parents) are invited to join us as we go exploring – just make sure to wear shoes and clothes that can get muddy!



URJ Marks Israel's 70th

The following is a statement from Reform Judaism on Israel's 70th Anniversary:

"We join with our Israeli brothers and sisters, the worldwide family of the Jewish people, and friends of Israel everywhere, to mark with joy the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel.

We take this moment to renew and reaffirm our Movement-wide commitment to ahavat Yisrael (love for the land and people of Israel), through our words, by personally studying and traveling in Israel, and by providing financial and political support to the State of Israel and our partners there. We work every day to defend Israel when she comes under attack, and we play a key role in advancing the crucial relationships between Israel and the countries in which we serve.

We know this to be true: The State of Israel represents the greatest achievement of modern Jewish history, reuniting millions with the land that gave birth to the faith and people of Israel. Following nearly 1900 years of exile – centuries of persecution and expulsion, that culminated in eras of

both catastrophe and creative growth and innovation – the Jewish people are again sovereign on Jewish soil.

As the Declaration of Independence states, the establishment of the State of Israel "is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State." The Zionist dream has been fulfilled with the ingathering of Jews who sought refuge and fulfillment in a land holy to our people, and is continually renewed by ongoing technological, medical, and economic miracles. We are continually inspired by Israeli creativity and contributions to Jewish life and culture. We will not yield in our pledge to strengthen our ties to the Jewish state and to be strengthened by her.

Across her first seven decades, Israel frequently has been forced to defend herself against stronger and more numerous enemies that have sought her destruction. Israel has sacrificed for peace while maintaining the only democracy in the Middle East. At this



critical milestone in Israel and Jewish history, we recommit to working for a secure and just Israel that exists side-by-side with a future state of Palestine. Additionally, we must work for the future, securing an Israel that fulfills the aspiration of its Declaration of Independence as Israel's founders imagined when they wrote that the Jewish State will "uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of race, creed, or sex." As tireless advocates for religious pluralism, we recognize that religious equality has been far too elusive for Israel's growing Reform and Conservative Jewish movements and we remain committed to an Israeli society that recognizes the rights of all Jewish movements – and all Jews.

In the presence of both triumph and challenge, hope remains our compass. Today, we join with Jews throughout the world, celebrating joyously this milestone anniversary of Israel's independence. We pray for the fulfillment of Israel's promise as a thriving democracy, an exemplar of security and peace, a beacon of light and hope for all the world."

We Must Dismantle Racism Piece-by-Piece...URJ Veep Baskin Tells Rally.

April Baskin, this year's Oppenheim Institute speaker on June 1, addressed the "Rally to End Racism," in Washington, DC, on April 4. Here are her remarks:

Shalom Brothers and Sisters and All the Blessings in Between – It is good to be here with you today. My name is April Baskin and I serve as a Vice President at the Union for Reform Judaism, which leads the largest and most diverse Jewish movement in North America.

As a Black, Jewish woman who is observing Passover this week, I joined my fellow Jews in the retelling of our people's biblical exodus from enslavement in Egypt to liberation. Every Passover, I also viscerally recall the more recent enslavement of my great, great grandparents near Okalona, Mississippi and Clinton, North Carolina and all my relations who came before them who courageously endured the dehumanization and violence of American chattel slavery.

Notice that I didn't say that I recall the enslavement and liberation of my fellow Black people here in the United States, because, devastatingly, liberation has not yet been achieved. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" vision still remains an unrealized dream when more black men are behind bars or under the watch of the criminal justice system than there were enslaved in 1850.

And it remains an unrealized dream when our nation remains deeply segregated, disparities between the rich and working poor are at an all-time high, and voter suppression is once again in full affect. It is time to justly and lovingly hold ourselves and this country accountable to creating a new paradigm outside of the enduring plague that is white supremacy. But we aren't going to do it via denial. We aren't going to accomplish it via attack and humiliation—those are the master's tools.

We must Reflect, Relate, and Reform.

Reflect - We must courageously, directly stare racism and white supremacy in the face, take time to learn about all the ways racism is operating in society, and within ourselves, today and historically.

Relate - We must face and dismantle racism piece by piece not in isolation, but working together, particularly with those who are most directly targeted by racial oppression. In beloved community, across lines of difference, we can take action with a loving, justice- and equity-focused ferocity that many of us have rarely seen our lifetimes, but that I know we possess.

Reform - What do I mean by Reform? I mean ACTION. Honoring and being informed by the leadership of people of color, particularly women and trans folk of color, we need to take both individual and collective action to mindfully, lovingly and accountably dismantle the master's house of white supremacy, together, arm in arm. And when we encounter oppression or bias within our movements, rather than using the masters tools of distancing and attack, we can LOVE ourselves and each other into greater accountability. Not one of us disposable and we can maintain our highest ideals while practicing compassion and opportunities for growth and evolution. This is complicated and difficult, but, believe me, we DO have everything we need to do this sacred work—and win.] Now is the time to ACT to end racism and bring Dr. King's vision to life. Today is a new day, in which we have the strength and vision to walk and work together in beloved community with loving accountability. This Jewish woman of color has come to say, let us move forward, full throttle, because on the other side of this plague of racism...is liberation. On the other side of this plague is true safety. On the other side of this plague is the full realization of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's vision of beloved community.



April Baskin, URJ V.P.



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ABOUT TEMPLE HESED:

Temple Hesed, a Reform Synagogue founded Aug. 20, 1860, is Scranton's first and oldest Jewish congregation. It is one of the earliest congregations to join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, now the Union for Reform Judaism. It has been a member since Dec. 12, 1874.

The synagogue serves the needs of individuals and families in Lackawanna County and surrounding areas. Situated on Knox Road, off Lake Scranton Road in the East Mountain section of Scranton, the current building opened in 1973. Temple Hesed operates a cemetery on West Warren Street in Dunmore.

The office is open Tuesday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Rabbi Swartz is happy to set appointments at any convenient time. Contact him to set a time. The rabbi also has "drop-in" hours every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Friday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The Rabbi holds these times open for visits or calls for which an appointment was not or could not be made.

The Temple Hesed Cemetery is open for visitation six days a week. Visitation hours are: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m. till dusk and it is closed for Shabbat on Saturday. For more information, call the office.



Eco-Tip:

Waste Reduction: Your waste will outlive you—plastic can take up to 600 years to break down in a landfill, and Styrofoam never breaks down. When planning parties and events, keep the environment in mind by using reusable dinnerware.

Start small with reusable utensils, since they can be easily collected and washed, supplemented with recycled-content paper and/or biocompostable dinnerware:

www.worldcentric.org .

