



THE SCRIBE

Monthly Newsletter of Temple B'nai Abraham
Now Celebrating its 128th Year
Affiliated with the United Synagogue
Of Conservative Judaism

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February, 2019

Shevat - Adar I - 5779

From Rabbi Michael G. Kohn

The New American Judaism

Jack Wertheimer, a long-time professor of American Jewish History at the Jewish Theological Seminary, has just published a new book on the way Jews in America today practice their religion. The book is based on three years of conversations with 160 rabbis and thought leaders from all across the country and all across the Jewish spectrum. With respect to non-Orthodox Jews, he notes three well-known trends: the first of which he describes as a “new commandment” invented in the 1980s — “the injunction to engage in tikkun olam, repairing the world”. Second, is the increasing focus on children’s rites of passage and other life-cycle events, with ritual in synagogues increasingly replacing home-based practice. Finally, there is the delivery of services by religious entrepreneurs (independent rabbis), which to some significant extent, are supplanting community-based ceremonies.

Not surprisingly, Wertheimer finds that “a great many Jews have difficulty both engaging in public prayer and finding in it personally meaningful.” As a result, those individuals have often turned to the “golden-rule religion,” where social justice activism and social service provision becomes central to Jewish practice, rather than increasing both their Jewish literacy and their frequency of participation in religious life in all settings, especially in what he termed the “irreplaceable institution” of the synagogue.

On the other hand, Wertheimer notes the rapid growth of Orthodox outreach organizations — Soho loft parties hosted by a Chabad couple and the Orthodox Union’s NCSY division that seeks to attract non-Orthodox teens to greater observance of Jewish law — and the rise of the so-called “social Orthodoxy” cohort — individuals who don’t ascribe to Orthodox beliefs, but affiliate with Orthodox life due to its social and communal value. The scale of this effort and the sheer numbers of Jews touched by Orthodox outreach centers could not have been anticipated even two decades ago. Unlike mid-twentieth century Jews who distanced themselves from religious traditionalism fearing it was un-American or a throw-back to the Old World, the grandchildren of such Jews are currently far more willing to try out some aspects of traditional religion. This demonstrates a resolve to resist what others see as the inevitable triumph of secularization and assimilation.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is a renewal taking place in unconventional settings for religious congregating. At a time of much hand-wringing about the drift of Gen X and Millennials away from Jewish life, these places are gearing their efforts to attract otherwise unengaged Jews to some kind of religious programming. Most leaders of these efforts are part of the same age cohorts, and they are deeply invested in their own forms of outreach.

Wertheimer admits that a more complete analysis would necessarily have included insights from both unaffiliated Jews as well as “ordinary” lay members of liberal synagogues. Nevertheless, one of his

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more interesting findings was that those liberal rabbis were not so enamored of their respective movement's leadership. This is an interesting finding and becomes especially important as the Reform and Conservative Movements keep edging ever closer to one another in practice, while the number of non-affiliated, or post-denominational, congregations continues to grow.

Reflecting his Conservative Movement connections, Wertheimer believes that a sense of Jewish peoplehood continues to remain important to Jewish survival and that "Jewish religious expression" must be "guided by intentionality." Today, Jews who affiliate with Conservative synagogues are for the most part not practicing Conservative Judaism, in that they do not consider halakhah — Jewish law — to be binding on their daily lives. Even among those who do observe Shabbat or Kashrut, many do so out of a sense of habit, or choice, rather than obligation. As I prepare to leave the pulpit, I worry about the future of this Movement which has been home to my family for over 100 years. What do you think about the future of Conservative Judaism? What do you believe should be its future?

B'Shalom,
Rabbi Michael G. Kohn

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Mark your calendars!!

Military Whist Card Party

Saturday, March 9th

7:00 pm

at Adath Israel, 8 Broad Street, Middletown

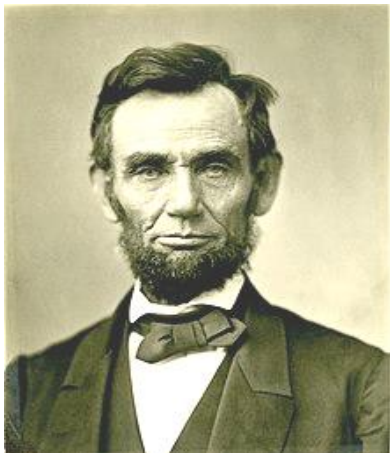
Bring friends and family. Come individually or as a party.

Bring a bridge table if possible.

Admission: \$5 per person

There will be a 50/50 raffle

Please RSVP Adath Israel (860-346-4709) by Wed. Feb. 27th.



CALENDAR EVENTS

- 1 Friday**
5:30 pm Pray-Eat-Sing Shabbat Evening
Services at Adath Israel in Middletown.
No services in Meriden
- 2 Saturday**
9:30 am Shabbat Morning Services - Meriden
- 3 Sunday**
9:00 am Jewry Duty at Adath Israel in
Middletown
- 7 Thursday**
7:30 pm Ritual Committee Meeting - new date
- 8 Friday**
6:30 pm Shabbat Evening Services - Meriden
- 9 Saturday**
9:30 am Shabbat Morning Services - Meriden
- 10 Sunday**
9:30 am Jewry Duty - Meriden
- 15 Friday**
6:30 pm Shabbat Evening Services - Meriden
- 16 Saturday**
9:30 am Shabbat Morning Services - Meriden



FEBRUARY 2019

- 17 Sunday**
NO JEWRY DUTY
- 22 Friday**
6:30 pm Shabbat Evening Services - Meriden
- 23 Saturday**
9:30 am Shabbat Morning Services - Meriden
- 24 Sunday**
9:30 am Jewry Duty - Meriden
- 28 Thursday**
7:30 pm Board of Directors' Meeting

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President's Corner

Dear Temple B'nai Abraham Members,

I would like to give you an update on the status of the merger between Temple B'nai Abraham and Congregation Adath Israel.

In November 2018 we cleaned out the Temple building and moved the Temple office and Rabbi to 20 Lawrence Court, Meriden. The sale of the building at 127 East Main Street was completed on December 11, 2018 and we started the process of removing our final items from the building. This process was completed in the second week of January 2019. All services and meetings have been held at 20 Lawrence Court since December.

Both Boards of Directors have now approved a merger agreement. We will now be doing the work necessary to accomplish the merger, and putting together the package of information to present to you (the members of TBA) so that you can make an informed decision when voting on the merger. You can expect that vote to take place sometime in the Spring.

I want to thank the members of the Futures Committee for their dedicated work on the sale of the building, the move to Lawrence Court, and on the Merger Agreement. I also want to thank the Borsuks for the use of the house at 20 Lawrence Court.

Jay D. Weiss
President

מזל טוב – Mazal Tov

Happy Birthday to our members celebrating a birthday during the month of **February**:

3rd – Eleanor Denenberg
9th – Linda Caplan
17th – Allen Caplan
22nd – Sherry Stekloff

Happy Birthday to our next generation:

2nd – Ben Steele
8th – Robert Massicott

With regret we inform you of the passing of:

Harriet Gunther
Mother of Jean Nemeth

and

Flora Shorr
Mother of Jack Shorr

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבילי ציון וירושלים.
May the Lord comfort and sustain
all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yahrzeits Observed During the Month of February

Feb. 1	Esther Apfelbaum Joseph Fine Samson Gordon Irving Godfried Sadie Lenzner Bertha Goldring		Ida Feinberg Arthur Landsberg	Feb. 20	Elliot DuBrow Esther Levine Esther Smith
Feb. 2	Oscar Muravnick Simon Friedman David Levine Tillie Fine Robert Schupack Arthur Weiner	Feb. 9	Anne Weinberg Alex Shoag	Feb. 21	Eva Bittman Nathan Pell Ruth Jacobs Ralph Kohn Arthur Henle
Feb. 3	Gerald Resnick Charles Muravnick Abraham Lapidés Samuel Miller	Feb. 10	Joseph Muravnick Frances Steinfeld Edith Zaiantz Charles Emple	Feb. 22	Sarah Abrams Eva Ziskis Louis Zwillinger
Feb. 4	Bernard Levitt Hannah Klamkin Avraham Kirchheimer Rachella Rose Kay Jack Greenberg	Feb. 11	Cindy Lee Frank Geraldine Kahn Arnold Cohen Jacob Hirsch	Feb. 24	Fannie Fightlin Dr. Irving Katz Joseph Silverstein Sarah Friedman Philip Rosenthal Jules Grossman Ralph Burwick Louis Lurie Helene Axelrod Miriam Cooperman Nathan Weinstein Janet Tonkonow
Feb. 5	Rachel Horn Pauline Gerstenblatt Sarah T. Friedman Shirley Lee	Feb. 12	Benjamin Pollack Nelda Greengas Jack Small Norman Landsberg Joseph Rachels	Feb. 25	Paul Baron
Feb. 6	Lucy White Rose Gold Fannie Levine Harry Zaiantz Benjamin Hozer Joseph Barker Rose Goldstein Bailey	Feb. 13	Yetta Friedman Lillian Harris Dale Bauer	Feb. 26	Molly Helper Rachel Rosenthal Shirley Stuart
Feb. 7	Harry Grossman Abraham White Milton Kalmanowitz Isaac Dressler Jennie Opinsky	Feb. 14	John Blume Abraham Grossman	Feb. 27	Anna Cherniack Abraham Cheerman Merwin Zuckerman Selma Young Marshall Cooper
Feb. 8	Mildred Edelson Jack Bernstein	Feb. 15	Gussie Shapiro Edward Apfelbaum Irene Hopenhajm Jon Harris	Feb. 28	Dorothy Miller Sima Kalmanowitz Tessie Cherniack Abraham Goldberg
		Feb. 16	Norman Bogatz Edward Perry Michael Levin Barry Koslow		
		Feb. 17	Samuel Greenblatt Jacob Weiss Sidney Kahn Rebecca Lurie		
		Feb. 18	Max White Israel Feinberg Ann Shapiro		
		Feb. 19	Martin Lable Harry Gordon		

A Candle or Yahrzeit Light should be lit at sundown the night before these dates.

Tzdakah to perpetuate the memory of a loved one is a Mitzvah.

Your contribution to the Yahrzeit Fund would be greatly appreciated.



תודה רבה - THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS TO OUR VARIOUS FUNDS

Yahrzeit Fund: In Memory of:

Abraham Cooperstein by Barbara Roller

Ethel Cooperstein by Barbara Roller

Bernard Levitt by Arlene Weyler and Edith Schpero

Minnie Gordon Levitt by Arlene Weyler and Edith Schpero

Charles Emple by Barry Emple

General Temple Fund

In Memory of **Seymour Port** by Ines Gerstenblatt.

In Memory of **Flora Shorr** by Jean & Marc Nemeth.

In Memory of **Flora Shorr** by Bonnie & Michael Sperling.

In Memory of **Harriet Gunther** by Natalie & Lenny Cheerman.

In Memory of **Flora Shorr** by Natalie & Lenny Cheerman.

In Memory of **Harriet Gunther** by Debbie & David Kaye.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of **Lesley Chidekel** by Barbara Cohen.

Cemetery Fund

In Memory of the **Robbins Family** by Richard Robbins.

In Memory of **Morton and Evelyn Greenblatt** by David, Sarah and Ruth Greenblatt.

In Memory of **Albert, Edna and Bruin Lipman** by David, Sarah and Ruth Greenblatt.

Sophie and Julius Barker Scholarship Fund

In observance of the yahrzeits of **Edith Barker and Joseph Barker** by Michael and Shelley Barker.

In Memory of **Flora Shorr** by Shelley & Michael Barker.

Sarah Zietz Pierson Scholarship Fund

In Memory of **Harriet Gunther** by Fred & Risa Zierler.

In Memory of **Flora Shorr** by Risa & Fred Zierler.

In Memory of **Flora Shorr** by Shana, Alyn & Travis Adams.