

February 2011 (Sh'vat/Adar 5771)



SINAI DIALOGUE



Rabbi
Alexander
Lazarus-
Klein

"The truth is, part of me is every age. I'm a three-year-old, I'm a five-year-old, I'm a thirty-seven-year-old, I'm a fifty-year-old. I've been through all of them, and I know what it's like. I delight in being a child when it's appropriate to be a child. I delight in being a wise old man when it's appropriate to be a wise old man. Think of all I can be! I am every age, up to my own." –Morrie Schwartz

The Morrie quoted here is none other than the Morrie from Mitch Albom's Tuesdays with Morrie, a novel about a retired Sociology professor dying of ALS. Here we see the spirit of a man who understood how to live life even as he approached death.

I think of these words this month as we prepare to celebrate my daughter Jarah's third birthday. Jarah was born on a warm winter night in early February of 2008. On the Jewish calendar it was Rosh Chodesh Adar 1, although technically it was still the last day of Sh'vat. Most of the rest of the world was celebrating Mardi Gras, and an open box of donuts lay in the nurse's station of the maternity ward of Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia.

As is often the case with first births, labor moved slowly and the hours of the clock danced their way into the next morning. At a little after eleven in the morning on the 6th, little Jarah Chava Lazarus-Klein finally emerged into the world. "It's a girl," I announced to Ashirah, handing the small bundle of warmth and tears to my exhausted wife, all the struggles of labor dissolving the instant she held our baby in her arms.

At that moment I knew that none of our lives would ever be the same. Ashirah was now a mother and I a father. Jarah was a new life we would have to tend and care for and love. How blessed we were to have helped create this new family. How blessed I was to have been there and to have held our daughter when she first came into the world.

One of the great pleasures I have as the rabbi of Temple Sinai is calling our members of their birthdays. This was a tradition passed down to me by my predecessor Rabbi Seidler, and while I have not been as faithful to it as I hope to be, it is a task I have gladly accepted upon myself. Whether I am calling someone in their eighties or nineties, or in their twenties or thirties, there is almost always a childlike joy on the other side of the line, especially when I tell the person I am not calling for any other reason than to wish him or her a happy birthday.

As Morrie Schwartz pointed out a birthday not only reveals where we are going, but where we have been. Each year stays with us; the experiences – both the challenges and the successes – that have gone into making us who we are. So, don't be surprised if you receive a call on your birthday, or more likely a few days before or after. This is a wonderful time to check in, to show that Temple Sinai cares about you and celebrates your milestone with you.

May you have a blessed month ahead of you and a Happy Birthday if it happens to fall in February.
B'Shalom,

Rabbi Alex

From The President



Although the days are growing slightly longer, this is a time of year when the winter seems to drag on. I have read that in ancient times, in the cold of winter, people may have feared that the days would just keep getting shorter, until the sun disappeared altogether. At this point in the winter, little seems to be happening in nature, and things seem quiet and dull outside. However, squirrels wake up periodically to eat from their cache of nuts, apple seeds are getting ready to sprout, and life is stirring in the ground and beneath the frozen water of ponds.

Similarly, although it may not always be obvious, things are stirring at Temple Sinai. Here are some of the committee activities and events that are currently going on:

President

Jill Hamilton

- The dues committee has collected information (we hope you responded to the survey!), and is attempting to develop a system that will be as equitable as possible, while meeting our fiscal responsibilities.
- The Tikkun Olam committee has collected canned goods and warm clothing for needy people, socks for people in shelters, and books for schoolchildren.
- The Ruach Committee is planning a movie night for February 12th
- The Strategic Planning committee developed a list of Temple Sinai's priorities, and is exploring opportunities for our continued survival in Western NY's shrinking Jewish population.
- Rebecca Slonim is organizing our vast collection of photos, and cataloguing information about Temple Sinai's illustrious history, as part of her Girl Scout Gold Award project.
- The Purim Spielers are hard at work learning their lines and songs for the Purim Spiel in March.
- We continue to offer enriching and varied Friday evening and Saturday morning services.
- We continue to educate our children in the Gesher religious school, and are looking forward to several b'nei mitzvahs in the spring.
- The Membership committee is constantly expanding outreach and programming.
- We are planning for our Passover 2nd Seder and Jazz Night, both of which will occur in April.
- We are looking forward to our upcoming 60th anniversary (in 2012).

All of Temple Sinai's committees welcome your help and input. Please contact the committee chairs directly if you would like to participate. And of course, feel free to contact me with questions at any time.

ADULT EDUCATION

On Thursday, February 17 at 7:30PM, we will continue with our study of the five megillot with the book of Esther. While Purim is still a month away, February 17th marks Purim Katan, a minor Purim celebration that occurs on leap years when an extra month is added to the Hebrew calendar. This will be a wonderful way to look closely at the story of Esther and Mordecai and leads to our Purim celebration on March 20th.

Mazel Tov to Temple Sinai member Neil Rudin on the publication of his book, "Growing Into My Genes: A Genealogical Memoir." He was first inspired to write after taking a series of adult-education writing courses at the JCC. What transpired is a rich history of Neil's childhood memories of growing up in Detroit in the 1940's and 50's as the only child and grandchild of an immigrant family. He mixes in humor, love, and genealogical charts. A picture of the whole Rudin clan, smiling and full of life graces the back cover. The book is available through the publisher Author House or on-line at Amazon.com or other book sellers. Neil and Cheryl are currently at their second home in Sarasota, Florida. We wish Neil much success with his fine publication.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College has just launched a new website called www.mostjewish.com. Four random ideas are presented on the screen and you must decide which is the most Jewish. These include: black and white cookies, ipods, early bird specials, parsnips, clip-on ties, etc., etc. The idea of the game is to start a conversation about what it really means to be Jewish in America today. We encourage our membership to try out the website and let the games begin.

LIBRARY CORNER

By Leslie Jaszczak

Last month's "Library Corner" highlighted the 200 section of the temple library, which is where information about Jewish holidays, customs and practices can be found. While the fiction section is among our most popular, this month's column offers a brief tour of other parts of the library.

Most people enjoy biographies, and our biography section, located behind the desk on the same wall as the fiction books, contains books about Jewish figures from Maimonides to Anne Frank and Kirk Douglas.

Reference books are located by the window on your right side as you enter the room, and we have several excellent Torah commentaries that are useful for upcoming bar and bat mitzvahs, or for doing some advance reading before the Saturday morning beit midrash.

Although there is no Hebrew school meeting at Sinai at this time, we still have a selection of children's books at the bottom of the same bookcase as the reference books and in the display rack to its left. Books for older children are now in the classroom next door where regular Saturday services are held.

Finally, we have a good-sized collection of cookbooks, located just above the display area on the right-side wall. In the same place as our family section. Put together by one of our members several years ago, it contains a selection of books on everything from child rearing and preparing for bar/bat mitzvahs to mourning and kashrut.

Happy browsing!

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THIS MONTH IN JEWISH HISTORY

by Alexis Rubin

Rome, February, 67- After forces under Pompey's command captured Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E., Rome annexed Judea and made it part of their province of Syria. Judea's Jews never gave up hope of regaining their sovereignty and, as the decades passed, they grew increasingly restive under Roman rule. Clandestine organizations sprang up in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside dedicated to regaining Jewish independence.

Over one hundred years after the Roman occupation began, the Jews' smoldering resentment against Rome broke into open rebellion. One group known as the Zealots terrorized Jerusalem, assassinating both Roman soldiers and Jews believed to be collaborators. Contending insurgent bands vied with each other, but still managed to wrest control of the city from the foreign occupiers. Unable to retake Jerusalem, Roman forces retreated toward the Mediterranean coast, suffering severe losses

of men and equipment at the battle of Beth-Horon. As the revolt spread, Judea declared its independence under a secessionist government and began minting its own coins inscribed with "Shekel of Israel" and "Jerusalem is Holy."

In February, 67, Roman Emperor Nero sent Vespasian and an army of 60,000 men to put down the Jewish revolt. Three years later, Vespasian's son Titus oversaw the demolition of the Second Temple and the destruction of Jerusalem. Thousands of Jews were carried off to serve as slaves in Rome. A massive arch, built to commemorate Titus' victory, still stands adjacent to the Roman Forum.

Haifa, Palestine, February 19, 1934 - Born in Baltimore in 1860, Henrietta Szold spent the first half of her adult life as a scholar, translator and editor for the Jewish Publication Society. After a visit to Palestine in 1909, Szold turned her attention to the needs of Zionist pioneers working to reclaim the Jewish homeland. Returning to the States, she created what would become the largest Jewish organization in American history: Hadassah Women. She dedicated it to improving the health and sanitation of Palestine's Jewish and Arab residents.

Szold, now in her seventies, was visiting Palestine when Hitler became Germany's Chancellor in January 1933. Recognizing that Nazi anti-Semitism would force many German Jews to become refugees, Szold stayed in Palestine to set up an agency to help refugee Jews who wished to settle in the Jewish homeland. She soon involved Hadassah in Youth Aliyah, a program to rescue Jewish youth from Germany.

On February 19, 1934, the ship Martha Washington landed in Haifa carrying the first Youth Aliyah group to reach Palestine. Eighteen girls and twenty-five boys, refugee youth from a Germany that would soon decimate the families they left behind, boarded busses for Ain Harod (Harod's Well). There they began new lives as pioneers in the Land of Israel.

Thanks to Szold's leadership and the women of Hadassah, "Youth Aliyah" saved the lives of some 22,000 Jewish children from Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe.

Istanbul, February 24, 1942 - On December 16, 1941, an old excursion boat named the Struma sailed from Constantza, Rumania, crammed with 769 Jewish refugees. These men, women and children intended to defy the British ban on Jewish immigration to Palestine by making an "illegal"

landing on its shores. Although the overcrowded and unseaworthy vessel was unable to proceed safely beyond Istanbul, Turkish authorities refused permission for the passengers to land. The Struma sat in Istanbul's harbor for over two months as Jewish rescue groups ferried food and medical supplies to the ship. Despite the refugees' desperate pleas to be allowed to continue on to the Jewish Homeland, the British refused to issue Palestine entrance certificates.

In mid-February 1942, the British Embassy in Ankara received authorization from London to give Palestine certificates to the seventy children on board. When told of the British change-of-heart, the Turkish government replied that it would not permit the children to travel overland across Turkey. However, if the British government were to send one of its own ships to Istanbul, the children could be transferred to it. Otherwise they had to remain on the Struma.

On February 24, 1942, when no British ship had arrived to take the youngsters, the Turkish government ordered the Struma towed out to sea. Just beyond the Istanbul harbor and within full view of observers on shore, the ship broke up and sank with the loss of all on board.

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Ruach
by Maureen Seitz

Ruach or “Spirit” is an organization open to all members and families of Temple Sinai. We organize social function for all ages, maintain the functioning of the temple kitchen and provide the weekly Friday night onegs. Through our fund raising efforts, we contribute to the operating budget of the temple. Everyone needs to be part of Ruach. In order to be successful, we need both your dues and your helping hands. Please support our temple by becoming a member of Ruach.

We had a meeting January 9. There will be a movie night at temple on February 12. We will have a children’s and an adult movie. Watch for details. Our next meeting will be March 6, 2011 at Friendlys Resturant on Maple Road at 10 a.m.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Family Fun Friday starts Friday Feb 4-28 at 10AM-11:15AM @ Temple Sinai (cost of series \$36).
Pot Luck Dinner at 5:30 PM and **Tot Shabbat** 6:00 PM **Family service** 7 PM. Friday Feb 4

Gesher Havdallah Service Saturday February 5 at 7 PM @Temple Sinai

Make-a-lunch at 9:30AM @ Sinai

Purim Spiel Rehearsal Sunday's at 1PM @ Temple Sinai

Adult Education Thursday Feb 17 at 7:30 PM @ Sinai

Choir rehearsal Wednesdays at 7:30 PM @ Sinai

Jazz on Mount Sinai Saturday April 30, Save this date for a fun filled evening

Regular Shabbat services are at 7:30 PM Friday evenings

Regular Shacharit services are 10AM Saturday mornings followed by Beit Midrash and kiddush luncheon at 11 AM and Noon respectively.(sponsors for Kiddush luncheon always welcome).

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