



Purim

OVER THE RAINBOW!

Sun, March 13

11:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

Kehilah Spiel & Magic Show

12:00p.m. – 12:30p.m.

Hamentaschen Drive-Thru

Wed, March 16

5:00 – 6:00p.m.

Pizza & Crafts

(RSVP required)

6:00 – 6:45p.m.

Megillah & Spiel

The
MEGILLAH
of
OZ

Sat, March 19

8:00p.m. | Comedy night with Liz Glazer
ages 18+ (no munchkins!)

"THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE..."

Congregation
B'nai Israel
קהילת בני ישראל

SHARING OUR JOY...

In Celebration of:

Linda & Barry Diamond, on the birth of great-granddaughter, Layla Mae Barrett, daughter of Nikayla Diamond and Darius Barrett.

SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

Abby M Krim, daughter of Carol Krim
Phyllis Kooris, mother of Geoffrey Kooris

Lena “Lee” Lester

Myrna Harris, mother of Cantor Scott Harris

Lois Ferris, mother of Traci Ferris

WELCOME! WELCOME!

A warm welcome to our newest members. We look forward to their participation in our many programs and hope their affiliation will not only enrich their lives, but that of our congregation.

Hillary & David Ortiz, Alexandra & Hudson

Fairfield, CT

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BIFTY	p. 11
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BULLETIN BOARD

Mitzvah Morning – March 20, 2022



On Sunday, March 20, we will be gathering at Homes for the Brave to deliver breakfast and sort toiletries and other items for homeless military veterans.

Our event will start at 10 a.m. at the Homes for the Brave facility in Bridgeport, located at 655 Park Avenue. We are asking people to donate healthy breakfast items such as bagels, yogurt, smoothies, granola bars, breakfast bars, fruit, and cereal.

Homes for the Brave residents are also in need of additional items such as hand soap, deodorant, shampoo, napkins, toilet paper, bottled water, dish soap, laundry detergent, and toothpaste.

At the Mitzvah Morning event, we will be sorting these items and breakfast foods and delivering them to the residents. Volunteers are welcome to drop off items after 10 a.m., and all are welcome to stay and help with the sorting and delivery as well. Whatever time you can contribute is appreciated.

Additionally, you are welcome to drop off items at B’nai Israel in the box labeled “Homes for the Brave” in the front hall near the main entrance the week prior to the event.

Since opening its doors in 2002, Homes for the Brave has provided housing, vocational training, and life skills coaching to help individuals leave homelessness behind. To date, they have worked with nearly 1,200 men and women, most of whom are military veterans.

For further information, please reach out to Nina Silberman (ninahv@aol.com) or Mitch Weinstein (mitchellew@yahoo.com).

Judaica shop



The Judaica boutique stocks many gifts as well as beautiful items for your home. For personal appointments please contact: Karen Sanger (203-767-0830) or Sylvia Neigher (203-895-7348)





FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

WHERE I'M FROM

I was recently introduced to a wonderful poem written by George Ella Lyon entitled, "Where I'm From". The piece captured my attention not only because of its incredible use of language and vivid storytelling through poetry, but also how the opening line of the poem invites us to think about our stories and where we are from. Just a few weeks ago, after the horrific events in Colleyville, I was at my desk trying to figure out how to organize my thoughts for the sermon I would offer to the congregation that Friday night. With Lyon's poem in mind, I took a piece of paper, and began to write, "I am from..."

As I scribbled lines down on the paper, the exercise helped me to understand why what happened in Texas that Shabbat morning impacted me, and perhaps so many of you, so greatly. I wanted to share with you below both a selection from George Ella Lyon's poem, and the piece I wrote after Colleyville. I encourage you as well to sit down with a pencil and paper and see where the prompt takes you. I actually recently did the exercise with my Merkaz "Judaism and Nature" class, and the teenagers wrote some incredible verses as well. I would love to read what you write. You can always send your writings to me at eschultz@cbibpt.org.

Where I'm From

George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening,
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.

I'm from the know-it-alls
and the pass-it-ons,
from Perk up! and Pipe down!

I'm from He restoreth my soul
with a cottonball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.

My Story and Song

Rabbi Evan Schultz

This is my American story.

This is my Jewish song.

I am from Austrian hills and Lower East Side tenements.

I am from permanence and impermanence,
journey and home.

I am from Ellis Island.

I am from Pittsburgh and I am from Poway.

I am from tired feet, American dreams,
and Bayside, Queens.

I am from Roth and Malamud, Ozick and Lazarus.

I am from ashes and martyrs, writers and poets.

I am from stars and stripes, fireworks and overturned gravestones.

I am from sea to shining sea and I am from no Jews allowed.

I am from fear and loss and I am from courage and hope.

I am from this place.

This land.

And this week, I am from Colleyville, Texas.

This is my Jewish story.

This is my American song.

SAVE THE DATE!
JUNE 11, 2022

Congregation B'nai Israel
קהילה בני ישראל

Celebrating Rabbi Evan Schultz on his 10th Anniversary at B'nai Israel!

I encourage you as well to sit down with a pencil and paper and see where the prompt takes you.

COMMUNITY SCREENING AND DISCUSSION

B'nai Israel Community Screening and Discussion of "The Provider" With our clergy, Maya Cueva, and members of the B'nai Israel Reproductive Justice Action Team

Saturday, March 5 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

With a case before the Supreme Court that poses a direct threat to almost fifty years of reproductive freedom, it is more important than ever to emphasize our sacred Jewish values that support the right to choice and bodily autonomy. Join us for this important community conversation about why this matters to us as Jews, what's at stake, and what our



B'nai Israel Reproductive Justice Action Team is doing to affirm this fundamental human right.

"The Provider," a 2015 short film/documentary by Maya Cueva and Leah Galant, follows traveling abortion provider Dr. Shannon Carr to Dallas,

Texas, where she performs legal and safe abortions, despite vigorous anti-abortion stigma and legislation. "The Provider" was the 2015 winner of the college television awards and was officially selected for the 2015 NYC Independent Film Festival. We will begin with Havdalah and learning about the core Jewish texts that formulate the Jewish mandate for reproductive choice, and then we will watch "The Provider" together over Zoom. Following the screening, co-director Maya Cueva will join us for a talkback about the making of the film.

B'NAI ISRAEL GREEN TEAM (BGT) MARCH 2022

While the B'nai Israel Green Team is looking toward the future and thinking about how B'nai Israel can become the most sustainable temple possible, so much has been already achieved by the House Committee at B'nai Israel.

Over the years, the House Committee at Congregation B'nai Israel has worked to reduce its carbon footprint. Updates to utility systems have always strived to reduce energy usage. Some examples include the heating boiler (replaced in 2013 with a natural gas-fired system, reducing the temple's heating bill by about 50%) and the air conditioning system's chiller (replaced in 2018 with a unit about 10% more efficient). Some proactive measures have also been completed. Fluorescent lighting was replaced in 2019 with LED bulbs. New windows were installed in the school wing to

reduce energy loss. Heat pumps were installed in the nurseries and some of the classrooms, to help control temperatures, particularly in the winter months. These measures have helped reduce our electrical usage by about 45% over the past 3 years, or an average of 7,000 kilowatt-hours per month – more than enough to power my entire house for a year! Can we do more? The House Committee and B'nai Israel's Facilities Manager Eric Braisted are looking at replacing additional light fixtures with LEDs; providing programmable thermostats and motion sensors; and improving heating controls. We welcome any ideas from congregants; feel free to reach out to Peter Montagna (montagna.peter@att.net) or Eric Braisted (ebraisted@cibipt.com) anytime!

by Peter Montagna



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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY/RABBI SARAH R. MARION "WRITING FOR THE FUTURE"

"Esther spoke to the king again, falling at his feet and weeping, and beseeching him to avert the evil plotted by Haman against the Jews. The king extended the golden scepter to Esther, and Esther arose and stood before the king." (Esther 8:3)

Who doesn't love that climactic, consequential scene in our Purim story? A seemingly timid Jewish Queen, mustering every ounce of courage and conviction to reveal her true identity in order to save her people.

Indeed, we all know about Esther's bravery because of this pivotal scene with the king. But there is more. Within the Jewish imagination, Esther's courage and conviction actually extends well-beyond this moment, and even, well beyond the Megillah's closing lines.

Not only did Esther confront the King, reveal her true identity, and ensure Haman's demise, but our tradition pictures Esther taking significant steps to ensure that her story would be told – and retold – from generation to generation. In fact, our tradition tells us that it is *because* of Esther that we have a Purim celebration, year after year; and it is it is *because* of Esther that "The Book of Esther" is even a part of the Bible at all.

The part in which Esther appears before the king may be the most dramatic, but equally bold and pivotal, are the concluding comments at the end of the Megillah, which showcase just how determined Esther was to write herself — and her story — into history:

Then Esther the Queen wrote down all the acts of power, to confirm this second letter of Purim. (Esther 9:29)

And the decree of Esther established these observances of Purim; and it was written in a scroll. (Esther 9:32)

Esther writes, and Esther decrees, and the story of Shushan is recorded for all time.

Moreover, a rabbinic excerpt in the Talmud imagines a conversation between Esther and the Talmudic rabbis, in which Esther insists that her book, "The Book of Esther," is worthy of inclusion within the sacred Biblical canon. Taking her case before a panel of (male) rabbis, Esther is quick-witted and clever, her proficiency aligned with the best courtroom attorneys of our time. "You're telling us that you want to publicly celebrate our victory?" The rabbis say to her, their question laden with cynicism. "Why would we want to remind our gentile neighbors that we won, and they lost? Wouldn't that just aggravate them even more?" But Esther is insistent:

"I am already written into the chronicles of the kings of Persia and Media, and so the Megillah would not publicize anything that is not already known, worldwide. Please. Write me in for future generations." (Talmud Megillah 7a:3)

And so, as Rabbi Avi Killip writes,

Esther's story could easily have been erased. The Book of Esther was not an obvious contender for inclusion in the Bible. The holiness of the book was not self-evident to the rabbis of the Talmud. But the book *is* a part of our Bible. We are able to read this story of the woman who saved our people because she was brave

enough to act, brave enough to write her story, and finally — in the Talmudic imagination — brave enough to demand that her story be preserved. Esther teaches us the importance of leaving a legacy. From her we learn to record our stories in writing, and to fight for their inclusion in the sacred canon. The rabbis of the Talmud read the end of the Megillah and they heard Esther's voice. They heard her speaking directly to them. They heard her pleading, "Write me in for future generations." And they listen. May we all be such good listeners. May we hear more than just the loudest voice. May we listen to the story beneath the story, and take the time to record it for the generations to come.

I read Rabbi Killip's teaching and I think about some of the most important stories of *our* history and *our* time that so many still try to discount, erase, or ignore: the story of the six million, and the ongoing realities of Jew hatred and Holocaust denial that still exist within our midst. The brutal history of African American enslavement in our country and the continuing reality of racism and racial injustice that still persists wherever we turn. Sexism, sexual violence, and gender inequity. Climate calamity caused by our own environmental destruction. And on and on and on.

Many lifetimes ago, Esther fought for her story to be written and to be remembered for every generation to come. May we always be like Esther, striving to ensure that the most important stories are always read, always heard, and always told — now, and forevermore.



BONIM BUZZ/ALEXA COHEN, EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTOR

THE PURIM STORY FOR KIDS

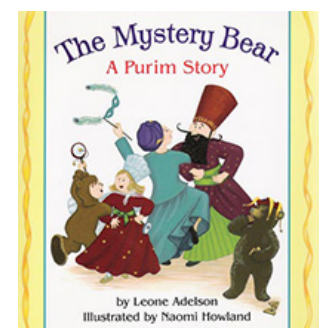
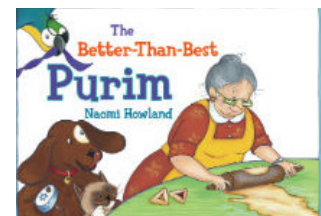
SHARED FROM PJ LIBRARY



Make Your Own Kid-Friendly Megillah

Children’s author Sylvia Rouss has a fantastic amended version of the Purim story available on her website. You can print it out and make your own version of the *Megillah*, the story of Esther, for your kids to unroll and read on Purim.

Read Purim Books



Purim is a holiday marked by joyous activities. We dress up in our favorite costumes, share gifts of food with friends, give charity to those in need, have a festive meal with family and friends, and read a story (PJ Library’s favorite activity) – specifically, the story of Queen Esther – together.

The story behind Purim isn’t exactly family friendly though; some not-so-friendly highlights (more like lowlights) include Queen Vashti (Queen Esther’s predecessor) being humiliated by her husband, a murder plot against the king, the evil Haman conspiring to wipe out the entire Jewish people, and the Jews taking revenge by hanging Haman and all of his sons. Yikes!

So how then, on a holiday otherwise perfectly suited to kids, do we share the story of Purim? Here are a few ideas:

Feel free to summarize the story of Purim, especially for younger children. On Purim we celebrate the bravery of Queen Esther, a very smart Jewish woman, who was married to a king, Ahashverosh. When Esther learned that Haman, who worked for the king, was plotting against the Jews, she summoned the courage to tell the king about Haman’s evil plan and saved her people.

Focus on the Values

The Purim story helps kids learn about courage, bravery, and standing up for what’s right. Your kids can grasp the themes of the story, without knowing the gory details. Here are some questions to kickstart conversations:

- Who is a hero?
- What does it mean to be brave?
- When was a time that you felt brave?



FROM THE EDUCATION CENTER “SOMEONE SHOULD...”

Turn on the cable news channel of your choice. Fox, CNN, MSNBC, InfoWars, it doesn't matter. Within a few minutes – at most an hour – a commentator will likely say that “Someone should...”



Hang out at a sporting event. Could be kids playing little league, a minor league game or a showdown between the Yankees and the Red Sox, it doesn't matter. Someone in range of your hearing – talking about almost any topic – will eventually say “Someone should...”

We hear it all the time. Many of us say it ourselves once in a while. When we

see something that could be done better, or maybe something we think should be done that isn't, we think and sometimes say “Someone should...”

You have been hearing or reading me talk about Jewish values a lot over the past twenty-six and three quarters years. We built our new curriculum around the idea that Jewish values are what make being Jewish valuable. They give meaning and structure to our Jewish identity and give us roots and wings.

Today's Jewish value is **אֲחֵרַיִת** *Achrayut* – responsibility. The Hebrew comes from the root letters Alef, Chet, Resh. Put them together and you get Acher – which means “other.” So one way to think about responsibility is that it can be the duty to think about and act toward people and events that are beyond your own immediate needs. *Kehilah* – community – happens because we all see that we have a shared *achrayut* or responsibility to take care of one another.

Kehilah – and now I am talking about youth education at B'nai Israel – only works when adults actually do something, rather than saying that “someone

should...” In the coming months, you will be invited to participate in ways you may not have done before. We already need more substitute teachers. (Call me!) We will likely need a few new teachers in the fall.

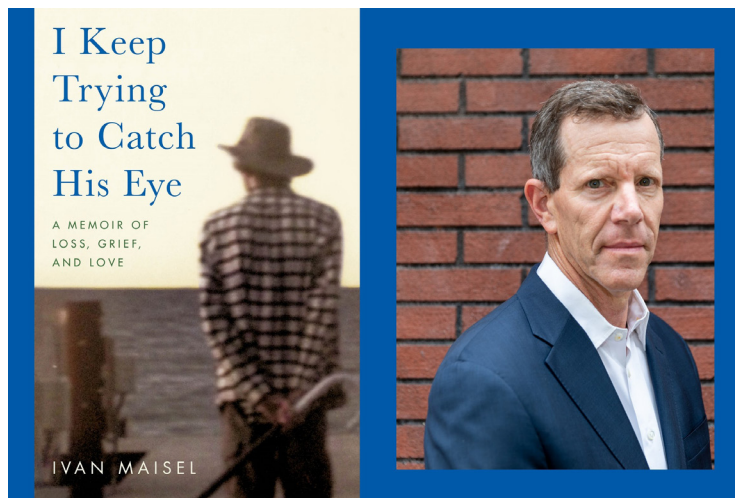
The Kehilah Vision Team, which works with the Director of Education to imagine the future, make policies and respond to new needs will need members. The Community Building Team, which organizes special events and the room parents (who work to build relationships between the parents in each class) will need people to fill those roles and do those tasks,

“Someone should” is easy to say. We spend a lot of time in Kehilah building up our kids and helping them to feel like they are really someone. For Kehilah to be successful, we need all of our adults to demonstrate *achrayut* for our kids. We need you to say “I will” instead of “Someone should.”

L'shalom,

Ira

BOOK TALK WITH IVAN MAISEL: *I KEEP TRYING TO CATCH HIS EYE*



Saturday March 26, 4:00 p.m.
in person at B'nai Israel and on Zoom

Join with B'nai Israel member Ivan Maisel for an intimate conversation about his recent book, *I Keep Trying to Catch His Eye*. The book is a poignant exploration of a father losing his dear son Max in 2015. Ivan is an incredible writer and speaker as well as a member of our community. Copies of the book can be purchased in the synagogue office for \$30.



ADULT JEWISH LEARNING AT CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

B'nai Israel Community Screening and Discussion of "The Provider" Saturday, March 5 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. on Zoom



Join our clergy, co-director of the film Maya Cueva, and members of the B'nai Israel Reproductive Justice Action Team for Havdalah and a viewing and conversation about this important film. Please see page 4 for more details.

Key Jewish Texts of the 20th Century Tuesdays, March 8 and 22, noon – 1:00 p.m.

Based on the recent book of the same title by Rabbi David Ellenson, this course with Rabbi Schultz will explore some of the most important texts written over the past eighty years on Jewish identity, belief, and theology. Their messages certainly hold much weight and meaning for us as we continue to wrestle with and explore those topics today. Open to all!

Dignity Grows Women's Rosh Chodesh Gathering RESCHEDULED for Thursday, March 10 In-person only at B'nai Israel from 7:30-9:00 p.m.



"Dignity Grows" Packing Party in partnership with the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield

County and Schoke Jewish Family Service. Help us make period poverty a problem of the past! The newly launched "Dignity Grows" program of our Federation for Jewish Philanthropy aims to support women, girls, and individuals assigned female at birth who lack the resources to afford basic, feminine hygiene necessities. At our Rosh Chodesh packing party, we'll learn about the ubiquity of period poverty, assemble tote bags filled with feminine products, and explore some of Judaism's various perspectives on periods, menstrual taboos, red tents, and more. The bags we assemble will go directly to our CBI/Schoke JFS Food Pantry recipients.

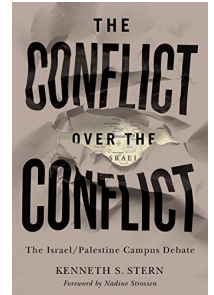
Packing party participants are asked to underwrite the cost of one or two tote bags, at \$10/bag. To participate, please send an email to Chris Rocha at chris@cbibpt.org by March 3, letting her know how many bags you would like to underwrite. Then, please mail a check to B'nai Israel (attn Chris Rocha) for the number of bags you are underwriting. Checks should be made out to the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy.

If you've already submitted a contribution for the previously scheduled 1/13 date, we are happy to hold onto your check and apply it towards March. If you would like us to return your donation, please let us know

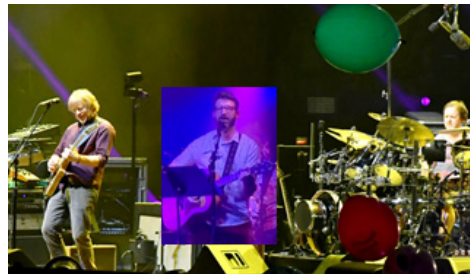
"The Conflict over The Conflict: The Israel/Palestine Campus Debate" Shabbat Speaker Ken Stern Friday, March 11 during services; post-service discussion/program afterwards in person and/or over Zoom... TBD

Kenneth S. Stern is the director of the Bard Center for the Study of Hate and an attorney and award-winning author. For twenty-five years, he was the American Jewish Committee's expert

on antisemitism, and he was also the lead drafter of the "Working Definition of Antisemitism." He has argued before the Supreme Court of the United States and testified before Congress. His most recent book is *The Conflict Over the Conflict: The Israel/Palestine Campus Debate*.



Jews and Music Series with Rabbi Schultz, Session 2 Phish: Sacred Pilgrimage, Holy Ritual and Communal Rejoicing Thursday, March 14 from 8:00 - 9:00 p.m.



Calling all music lovers! Join with Rabbi Schultz to listen to and explore the Jewish connections in the music, lyrics, and concert experiences of Bob Dylan, Phish, and Leonard Cohen. These classes should be a lot of fun for all ages and every music aficionado! (Hoping to have the classes meet in person — check Hashavua for updated information.)

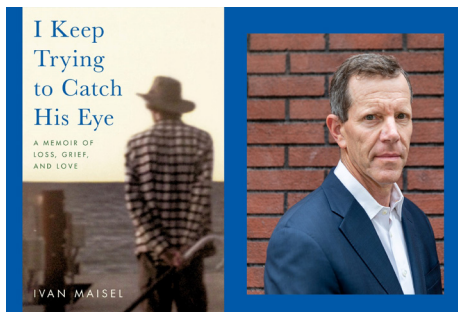
Upcoming session:

- **Thursday, April 14
from 8:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Leonard Cohen: Purpose,
Conflict and Resolution**

Continued on page 9

ADULT JEWISH LEARNING FROM P. 8

Book Talk with Ivan Maisel: I Keep Trying to Catch His Eye Saturday, March 26, 4:00 p.m.



Join with B'nai Israel member Ivan Maisel for an intimate conversation about his recent book, *I Keep Trying to Catch His Eye*. The book is a poignant exploration of a father losing his dear son Max in 2015. Ivan is an incredible writer and speaker, and dear member of our community. Copies of the book can be purchased in the synagogue office for \$30.

ONGOING CLASSES

Torah Study Saturdays, March 5, 12, 17, and 26 from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

The Torah is so many things to so many people: Law book; guidebook; moral compass; history; mythology; genealogy and so much more. Each week we read from the Torah. Each year at Simchat Torah we start over from the beginning. Each time we revisit a portion, we learn something new. Some of us have been learning together for decades. Some of us joined recently. All of us are teaching and learning from one another! Join us as we slowly make our way through the entire Torah! Please see Hashavua to confirm if we are meeting at temple in addition to on Zoom as well as for the link.



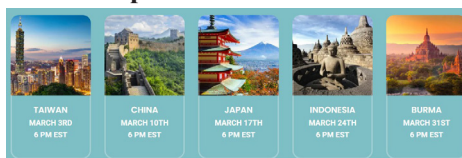
Talmud with Training Wheels Monday, March 7, 14, and 28 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Zoom

We have a small but loyal band of people exploring how Talmud and other classic

Jewish texts can help us make sense of our world today. We don't always agree with them (or even with each other), but we are able to learn and wrestle with the values they teach us. Ira Wise is our guide as the group decides on topics of interest; then he finds us the texts and we dig in. No prior knowledge or political leaning is required, just a sense of adventure and a willingness to have an opinion! Please see Hashavua for Zoom info or email info@cibibt.org for the link



Take the Hot Air Zoom Balloon and Visit Jewish Asia! Thursdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom



When you hear Jewish Asia, do you picture a group of temple members heading to Mott Street? Come join any or all five of these amazing online tour guides organized by our friend Dani Rotstein from JewishMajorca.com. They will show you how our people's story has gone to places we might not have imagined! This month we can visit Taiwan (3/3), China (3/10), Japan (3/17), Indonesia (3/24) and Burma (3/31). There is a fee for participating. Go to jewishmajorca.com/travel.

From HUC-Connect (Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion) Religion: Natural Mystics Tuesday, March 8 at 2:00 p.m.

Discover how the lives and musical oeuvre of popular artists become synonymous with their respective faith practices, cultures, and countries. With Varun Soni, Ph.D., Dean of Religious Life, University of Southern California, and Gordon Dale, Ph.D., Inaugural Dr. Jack Gottlieb Scholar in Jewish Music Studies at the Debbie Friedman School

of Sacred Music and Assistant Professor of Jewish Musicology, HUC/New York.

Civil Society: Israel, American Jewry, and 45 Tuesday, March 15 at 3:00 p.m

HUC faculty and esteemed academics discuss the intricacies of American Jewish identity, Israel, and President Donald Trump. With Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, Stephen Wise Free Synagogue Senior Rabbi; Saba Soomekh, Ph.D., Associate Director, American Jewish Committee, Los Angeles; Steven Windmueller, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Jewish Communal Service, HUC-JIR/ Los Angeles and editor of *The Impact of the Presidency of Donald Trump on American Jewry and Israel*; and Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D., HUC-JIR President as moderator.

Arts and Culture: Finding Myself in Motel Tuesday, March 22 at 2:00 p.m.

Join Grammy and Emmy award-winning actor and singer Adam Kantor in an exploration of his journey through Judaism as an American performer. Best known for the roles of Mark Cohen in the closing cast of *Rent*, Motel Kamzoil in the 2015 revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and as an original cast member in *The Band's Visit*, Kantor's Jewish identity is closely connected to his voice and life on stage.



REGISTER for any or all of these webinars at
<https://bit.ly/HUCConnectMarch>.

MARCH DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund
Stacey & Duane Berlin, in memory of grandmother, Ida Perlstein.

Geoffrey & Melanie Kooris, in appreciation and with thanks to Rabbi Schultz.

Marjorie & Paul Krubiner, in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley.

Amy Madwed, in appreciation of Rabbi Schultz for Ruth Madwed's beautiful funeral service.

Beth & Jordan Posner, in memory of father, Dr. Andrew Ageloff.

Beth & Randy Reich, in memory of Donna Silverman, mother of Ronni Zinn; in memory of father, Sydney Loewith Goldstein.

Sharon & Arthur Schloss, in gratitude to Rabbi Schultz for his assistance in making the bar mitzvah of our grandson, Jacob Pressman, so meaningful.

Jonathan Sonneborn, in memory of grandfather, Leo Sonneborn.

Debbie & Michael Weisman, in memory of Mary Frauwirth, Max Frauwirth and Nancy Frauwirth.

Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund
Carol Barsky, in memory of mother-in-law, Jennie Barsky.

Sandy & Jack Germain, in memory of Lawrence Dragunoff.

The Keshet Project, Rhea Farbman, Michele Farbman & Sherry Portnoy, in grateful memory of Lee Lester, who generously supported the Keshet Project, and with thanks to Rabbi Marion's loving service for Lee that touched our hearts.

Beth & Randy Reich, in memory of stepfather, Harry Burchman.

Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund
Carol Barsky, in memory of brother-in-law, Paul Barsky.

Marjorie & Paul Krubiner, in honor of the birth of Micah Daniel Weinberg Prosnit, grandson of Rabbi Jim Prosnit & Wendy Bloch.

William L. Smith, in memory of Abby Krim, daughter of Carol Krim.

Marilyn & Judy Weinstein, in memory of Dr. Norman Weinstein.

Rabbi James Prosnit Discretionary Fund

Marjorie & Paul Krubiner, in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley.

Music Fund

Donations made in memory of Ruth Edinberg, mother of Mark Edinberg, were made by:

Anne & Mark Kirsch
Marjorie & Paul Krubiner
David & Judith Pressler

Donations made in memory of Phyllis Kooris, mother of Geoffrey Kooris, were made by:

Bari Dworken,
Bob & Paula Herzlinger
Don & Wendy Hyman

Linda & Mike Epstein, in memory of Lee Kirsch, mother of Mark Kirsch.

Elaine & Robert Friedman, in memory of Myrna Harris, mother of Cantor Scott Harris.

James & Lisa Greenberg, in memory of Myrna Harris, mother of Scott Harris.

Beth & Randy Reich, in memory of father, Stanley Reich.

Sharon & Arthur Schloss, in gratitude to Cantor Rubel for the excellent Bar Mitzvah preparation that she gave to our grandson, Jacob Pressman.

Enhancement Fund

Donations made in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley, were made by:

Fairfield Foundation for Education
Nancy & Irving Silverman
David & Geri Spollett

Adrienne Baumrind, in memory of my beloved parents, Abraham & Phyllis Baumrind.

Wendy & Jeffrey Bender, in memory of Fred Bender.

Barbara Berkowitz, in loving memory of sister, Carole Toss.

Audrey & Larry Bernstein, in honor of Bari Dworken's 70th birthday.

Susan B. Davis & Ellen Hyde Phillips, in memory of Martha Freedman.

Dale & Jerry Demner, in memory of Bertha Greenfield, mother of Dale Demner; in memory of Lillian Slive, aunt of Dale Demner; in memory of friend, Phyllis Goldstein.

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Donations made in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley, were made by:

Caryn Kaufman
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Continued on page 11

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(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Deb Berkowitz, wishing Serena Sher a Refuah Shelema.

Joni & Michael Greenspan, sending love and get well wishes to Serena Sher.

Samuel Miller & Family, in memory of Zelda Miller.

Serena Sher & Ona Cohn, in loving memory of father and grandfather, Charles Fishman.

Jim and Barbara Abraham Education Fund

Marjorie & Paul Krubiner, in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley.

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Congregation B'nai Israel, founded in 1858, seeks to be a vibrant Reform synagogue dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish life and values within the framework of contemporary American Judaism. We are a gateway to Judaism for all. The Congregation B'nai Israel Bulletin publishes monthly 11 times a year (except July). To submit an article, announcement or ad to the Bulletin, please contact Co-Editors, Amy Pressman at apressman@cbibpt.org or Lauren Tropp at ltropp@cbibpt.org. Submissions are due by the first day of the month preceding the publication month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length or style.

BIFTY MARCH 2022

It is never too late to join BIFTY! We meet in the BIFTY Lounge on Thursdays from 7:15 - 8:45 p.m. Please come wearing a mask. Follow us on Instagram @cbi.bifty and join our text group to stay up to date on events!

Our March events will be held on:

March 10

March 17

March 24

March 31

We look forward to seeing you!



BIFTY had fun celebrating Harry Styles's Birthday in February!

CEMETERY PLOTS AVAILABLE

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TETZAVEH DVAR TORAH

By Anat Shiloach

12 February 2022

Growing up in the suburbs of Washington, DC, my family often visited the Smithsonian museums. The museums were educational (and free), and there was always a new exhibit to see. A perennial favorite, though, was the gem gallery at the Museum of Natural History. In my memory, the space was dimly lit and hushed, and the gemstones sparkled under dramatic lighting in their cases.

Gemstones feature in this week's parashah, Tetzaveh, as we read about the elaborate, ornate garments that the priests were instructed to wear when fulfilling their duties. The Torah provides detailed directions for constructing these garments, with an array of sumptuous materials. In 28:15-20, God commands Moses:

You shall make a breastplate of decision, worked into a design; make it in the style of the ephod: Make it of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen. It shall be square and doubled, a span in length and a span in width. Set in it mounted stones, in four rows of stones. The first row shall be a row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald; the second row: a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst; the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal; and the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They shall be framed with gold in their mountings.

Regardless of what a "breastplate of decision" actually is (a topic for another day), it sounds impressive and beautiful, even today. Gemstones aren't a trendy fad. The American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan recently renovated their Hall of Gems and Minerals, and the museum expects it to be a major tourist draw. In an article in artnet, Ellen Futter, the museum president, said,

"There is something truly elemental and visceral about our connection to the minerals and materials of the earth on which we live. Didn't we all collect rocks as children?... And who among us doesn't appreciate a spectacular gem?"

Research in the Journal of Consumer Psychology has even demonstrated that people have an innate preference for glossy surfaces, suggesting that this preference is due to an evolutionary association with the glossy surface of a body of water.

Why were the priests told to wear such eye-catching clothing, and why the gems? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the UK, pointed out that for the most part, Judaism is a tradition of speaking and hearing, of words and not of appearances. We tend to think of our religious practice as a more cerebral endeavor, and indeed, reading further, we learn that the twelve gemstones represent the twelve tribes of Israel, although the Torah doesn't specify which tribe corresponds to which gem.

Naturally, this has led to rabbinic speculation about how to best match the qualities of the stones to the tribes. In solving this puzzle, the commentators focus on the symbolism of the stones, rather than on their innate beauty and appearance. Paying attention to meaning and substance is consistent with the idea that the content of a prayer or a service is more important than the clothing that anyone involved is wearing. In fact, the Hebrew word for garment, "begeh", has the same root as the word for betrayal, "bagad," hinting that clothing might not accurately represent the person within and might lead us astray.

The priests, though, have a special role as intermediaries between the people and God, and the text offers a clue for why they need to be clothed in such a specific way. 28:2 reads, "Make sacred vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment." The word for dignity or honor, "kavod", appears throughout the Torah, but it almost

always refers to God. Here, it indicates that as they carry out their duties, the priests need to be dressed to dignify and honor God. "Tiferet", the word for adornment, or beauty, appears here for the first of only three instances in the Torah. By joining it to "kavod", the text indicates that the aesthetics of the priestly clothing are also very important.

In The Guide for the Perplexed, Maimonides gives this explanation:

In order to exalt the Temple, those who ministered there received great honor, and the priests and Levites were therefore distinguished from the rest. It was commanded that the priest should be clothed properly with the most splendid and fine clothes, "holy garments for glory and for beauty" ... for the multitude does not estimate man by his true form but by ... the beauty of his garments, and the Temple was to be held in great reverence by all. (Guide for the Perplexed, III:45)

Rabbi Sacks suggests that this aesthetic aspect, for the priests and for the temple, is critical for engaging people. Regardless of our rational intentions, our emotional reactions will be swayed by outward appearances.

I recently heard an interview on NPR with Dr. Francis Collins, the former director of the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Collins is a scientist and also an evangelical Christian. In the interview, he referred to "our greatest calling... truth, goodness, and beauty, those three transcendentals that are supposed to characterize us."

Please go to our website at <https://cbibpt.org/2022/02/tetzaveh-dvar-torah-february-12-2022/> to read the full D'var Torah.

It can be found within the Worship section, under Shabbat, beneath the Shabbat Reflections heading.



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SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

In person on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. where indicated.
All services at this time can also be viewed on Zoom. The link is sent out in our weekly email.

Friday, March 4

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
Torah Portion – Pekudei, Exod. 38:21-40:38
Haftarah – 1 Kings 7:51-8:21

Zoom

Torah Portion – Vayikra, Lev. 1:1-5:26
Haftarah – 1 Samuel 15:1-34

7:00 p.m. Shabbat Dinner (in person, subject to change)

8:00 p.m. Conversation with Kenneth Stern

Saturday, March 19

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom

9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person

9:30 a.m. Torah Study - in person and on Zoom

9:30 a.m. Havurah – Shabbat Social

Saturday, March 5

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom

9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person

9:30 a.m. Torah Study - in person and on Zoom

11:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Hayden Goldstein, daughter of Gretchen & Lee Goldstein

5:00 p.m. Havurah - Shabbat Play & Pray

Saturday, March 12

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom

9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person

9:30 a.m. Torah Study - in person and on Zoom

Friday, March 25

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom

Torah Portion – Sh'mini, Lev. 9:1-11:47

Haftarah – Ezekiel 36:16-38

Saturday, March 26

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom

9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person

9:30 a.m. Torah Study - in person and on Zoom

4:00 p.m. Book Talk with Ivan Maisel: I Keep Trying to Catch His Eye

Friday, March 11

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – with special guest, Kenneth Stern, director of the Bard Center for the Study of Hate - in person and on

Friday, March 18

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom

Torah Portion – Tzav, Lev. 6:1-8:36

Haftarah – Jeremiah 7:21-8:3, 9:22-23