



# Temple B'nai Abraham

Temple B'nai Abraham  
President – Robin Affrime

**The Temple Shofar**  
Rabbi Julie Pfau

Sarah Seidel Sisterhood  
President - Faith Hupfl

March 2011

## Rabbi's Message

*Yedid Nefesh* is a *piyyut*, or liturgical poem, written by R. Eleazar Ben Moses Azikri (1533-1600). Azikri was ordained in 1596 in Safed, but he did not hold any public leadership functions. Rather, he devoted his time to his own individual mystical activities (meditation, study, and writing), and to founding and leading two associations of mystics (*Haverim Makshivim* and *Sukkat Shalom*) whose purpose was to eschew worldly pursuits and to dedicate themselves to things of God. Azikri and his fellows interacted with the public only for the purpose of promoting repentance – making public appearances in order to urge penitence, and ultimately authoring *Sefer Haredim* (Venice, 1601), a text that was a culmination of the ethics and ideals of Azikri and his fellows. The poem, *Yedid Nefesh*, is one of four of Azikri's poems that appeared in this piece of literature and is reflective of Azikri's (and his fellows') passionate desire for *devekut*, for close communion with God.

It is taught that, during one stage of his life, Azikri's spiritual practice was to spend a third of his day writing and the rest of the day engaging in a rather unique meditation practice – a practice which entailed sitting motionless and silent while wearing *tefillin*, and keeping his eyes “focused upon god.” In doing so, Azikri sought to increase his *devekut*, his closeness to God. When, in the third stanza, the poet exclaims about how much he has longed to see the glory of God's majesty, these are not idle words. For at least some times in his life, Azikri spent two thirds of his waking hours literally focusing (or trying to focus...) his eyes on God.

Azikri's desire to focus on god is also revealed in his unique approach to the acrostic style of *piyyut* writing. It was common for Medieval poets to write using acrostics, and they typically spelled the author's name. In contrast to the stereotypical model,

Azikri embedded the name of God in his poem. The editors of our *siddur* highlighted the acrostic by framing the letters in artistic boxes with *shabbos* symbols inside them – a setting sun, *shabbat* candles, a *kiddush* cup, and *challah*. (The Hebrew is on page 7 of our *siddur*, the translation is on pages 4, and 8.)

*Yedid Nefesh* expresses Azikri's sense of being love-sick, pining away for god. In the third stanza, Azikri expresses the desire to, quite literally, see God. This desire is demonstrated in his meditation practice. As he pines away for God, he asks God to have compassion and respond to his love and desire. Azikri has spent two-thirds of his waking hours looking to God, and he asks God to look back. Azikri wants the relationship to have a certain mutuality, if not equality. Azikri speaks of himself as servant – thus it is clearly not an equal relationship. However, this does not mean it cannot be reciprocal and connected. Azikri wants to be the kind of servant who is seen by his master, not one of those servants who might as well be invisible to their masters except when they do wrong.

We might not spend two-thirds of our day sitting silent and motionless with eyes peeled for our beloved Source, and many haven't even seen *tefillin*, much less know what to do with them. But I think many of us can relate to the deep longing expressed in Azikri's poem. Human beings long to be seen, recognized, and responded to. It is sometimes easier to experience this longing in relationship to other human beings, since it is easier to verify the reality of the connection. With the divine, it can take keener vision, as well as patience and persistence. When we long for *devekut*, for closeness to God, may we all be blessed with such insight.

Shalom,  
Rabbi Pfau



Temple B'nai Abraham is affiliated with  
the Jewish Reconstruction Federation.  
[www.jrf.org](http://www.jrf.org)

## Temple B'nai Abraham's Community Passover Seder

Tuesday April 19 6 pm

at Temple B'nai Abraham  
led by Rabbi Julie Pfau

The Community Seder is fun, friendly and  
welcoming for adults, children and guests  
so please join us.

The cost for a full dinner will be:  
Adults - \$30  
Children (10 to 15yr.) - \$15  
Children (5 to 9yr.) - \$10  
Children under 5 - Free

The early deadline for reservations is April 1. Space  
is limited so sign up early.

The community is welcome plus any guests.  
If you would like to help plan, set up or clean up  
please let me know.

Please email Kim Aubry for reservations at  
[kimaubry@gmail.com](mailto:kimaubry@gmail.com) or call 609-841-8965.

All dinners must be prepaid so please mail checks to  
Kim Aubry: 930 Hamilton Ave. Roebling, NJ 08554  
and make checks out to Temple B'nai Abraham.

### Temple B'nai Abraham Officers

#### **Officers:**

President	Robin Affrime
Executive Vice President	Charlie Weiss
Religious Vice President	Sid Morginstin
Financial Vice President	Mike Rosen
Recording Secretary	Susan Giachetti
Past President	Betsy Ramos

#### **Trustees:**

Religious School Chair	Linda Osman
Membership Chair	Kim Aubry
Building Chair	Eileen Gale

## Yahrzeit List

### March 5

Irving Epstein, father of Rhea Goldman

### March 12

Arthur Fishman, father of Arlene Speiser  
Rose Klepner, mother of Len Klepner,

### March 26

Rebecca Shemesh, mother of Marty Nissim

### April 2

William Trackman, father of Jay Trackman

If there is a name that you would like added to the  
synagogue's yahrzeit list, please contact Sid  
Morginstin at 609-298-2891. You will receive a card  
annually reminding you of your yahrzeit, and the  
name will be announced at services at which time  
you will be able to recite Kaddish.

## Tot Shabbat News

Tot Shabbat Services start at 6:00 p.m. and include,  
candle lighting, pot luck dinner, story time, a theme  
related craft, and songs. If you need any additional  
information, or would like to  
volunteer to help clean up or set  
up, please contact Marla Hoffman  
[rhynestonegrl@gmail.com](mailto:rhynestonegrl@gmail.com)



Friday, March 18 -- Purim  
Friday, April 8 -- Pesach  
Friday, May 6 -- Israel  
Friday, June 10 -- Family

I would like to thank Shiri Haines for being our Temple  
Shofar editor, and for working hard each month to put out  
a quality newsletter that was informative and interesting  
to read. Unfortunately, she is resigning as editor of the  
Temple Shofar. We will miss her efforts.

We are now looking for someone to take over the position  
of editor of the Temple B'nai Abraham newsletter. If you  
feel that you have the skills necessary to put together our  
paper and would like to be more involved with the  
happenings at TBA, please contact me at 609-499-1761  
or let another board member know that you are interested.

A small community like ours is always in need of people  
to take on both big and little responsibilities. If you have  
been feeling that you would like to be more involved; feel  
more connected, please don't hesitate to let one of us  
know you are interested. In the interim please check our  
website for our calendar of events, and phone numbers of  
board and committee members should you have any  
questions or need information.

Robin Affrime  
President

## Social Action



Keep those boxes of granola bars coming, along with any other contributions for the food pantry! Thank you to all who have been donating!

Marcy Schwartz

## PURIM CELEBRATION

**Sunday, March 20**

\$5 per person - max. \$20 per family

I want to encourage everyone to come (in costume) to our Purim celebration. There will be a costume contest with prizes, and Purim-themed costumes are especially encouraged!

Set-up will begin at 9:30 am. The festivities will start promptly at 10 am. We will begin upstairs with our "traditional" backwards service (with other strange Purim-only modifications), have a play written and performed by our teens, and award winners for our costume contest. At approximately 10:45, the carnival will begin and will end at noon.

I want to encourage people to bring Hamentashen so we will have some Purim-themed food with the pizza. Other potluck contributions (salad, fruit, etc) will also be welcome. [But please remember to clean and bring home your dish afterwards]

A food pantry donation (canned food, cereal) will get you 1 raffle ticket for the Guess the Candy Jar, and additional tickets can be purchased at a cost of 2 for \$1. There will also be a raffle for a gift basket - \$2.00 a ticket or 3 for \$5.00.

RSVP to Susan Giachetti [sgiachetti@aol.com](mailto:sgiachetti@aol.com)

## Healing List

The list has become quite long. On January 15, 2011 we will start again with a new list. Please contact Sid at 609-456-9508 with the names of those you desire to put on the list. Also, please tell him when the name can be removed. Sid makes an effort to contact you about 2 months after adding a name, however, sometimes he is very busy, so, please contact him if there are any changes.

## SAVE THE DATE!!!!

### Temple B'nai Abraham's 1st Annual Reconnect and Renew Retreat

May 15, 2011 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Renew your faith and reconnect with your spirituality along with your fellow temple members and their families. Attend seminars, participate in fun activities, spend time together as we all find increased meaning in temple life and Judaism!

More details to follow!

Interested in assisting or would like more info. now-- call Linda Osman (609)291-0355 or send an email to [Attyosman@verizon.net](mailto:Attyosman@verizon.net)

## Supermarket Gift Card Program



The gift card fund raiser is extremely important as a source of income for the Temple. We need more participation!

Everyone please take one minute to write a check and send it to Dowshen 502 Farnsworth Ave Bordentown, NJ 08505 or call 298-5306. Your cards will be sent to you the same day.

## Temple Donations

### In Honor Of

Maribeth and Brian Epstein in honor of the birth of Ella Grace Epstein from Anita Berson  
Zaveloff family on son's David's engagement from Michael and Marcia Rosen

### In Memory Of

Kenneth Peter Segal from Michael Scolaro & Randy Bloom  
Leonard Greenblatt from Michael & Marcia Rosen  
PFC Benjamin Moore from Michael & Marcia Rosen  
Michelle Trackman from Bonnie Goldman & Steven Lederman  
Irving Epstein from Rhea Goldman  
Selma Levitsky from Brian & Maribeth Epstein  
Howard Brewis from Brian & Maribeth Epstein  
Rose Klepner from Len Klepner  
Max Kessler from Rhoda & Henry Kessler

Thank You to the Congregation for the care, concern, help, and sympathy during Jerry Rosen's, Michael's dad and Madge's husband, illness and passing ~ from Michael & Marcia Rosen

## Sisterhood News

### Sisterhood Program for May Book Review

*The Zookeeper's Wife* by Diane Ackerman.

Jan and Antonia Zabinski were Polish Christian zookeepers horrified by Nazi racism, who managed to save over three hundred people. Yet their story has fallen between the seams of history. Drawing on Antonia's diary and other historical sources, best-selling naturalist Diane Ackerman vividly re-creates Antonia's life as "*the zookeeper's wife*," responsible for her own family, the zoo animals, and their "*Guests*"--resistance activists and refugee Jews, many of whom Jan had smuggled from the Warsaw Ghetto. Ironically, the empty zoo cages helped to hide scores of doomed people, who were code-named after the animals whose cages they occupied. Others hid in the nooks and crannies of the house itself. Jan led a cell of saboteurs, and the Zabinskis' young son risked his life carrying food to the Guests, while also tending an eccentric array of creatures in the house) pigs, hare, muskrat, foxes, and more). With hidden people having animal names, and pet animals having human names, it's small wonder the zoo's code name became "The House Under a Crazy Star." Yet there is more to this story than a colorful cast. With her exquisite sensitivity to the natural world, the author explores the role of nature in both kindness and savagery, and she unravels the fascinating and disturbing obsession at the core of Nazism: both a worship of nature and its violation, as humans sought to control the genome of the entire planet.

The Board decided to experiment with a new start time for Shabbat morning services. It was thought that beginning at 10:00 am instead of 9:30 am might increase the likelihood of people arriving on time. We will be interested in people's responses to the alternative start time, and will take note of whether it accomplishes the goal. We will then evaluate whether to make the new time permanent. (However, when there are B'nai Mitzvah, we will still begin at 9:30 am since there are additional pieces of the service.)

## General Donations

For anyone interested in making a general donation to the synagogue that does not fit into any of the above categories, of course, the synagogue will be happy to accept the donation. You may send a check to Temple B'nai Abraham, P.O. Box 245, Bordentown, and indicate whether it is for a special occasion and whether you would like the synagogue to send an acknowledgment. If it is a non-temple member, please provide their name and address.

In case a loved one dies, the following information will be helpful in thinking through what steps to take:

- 1) As soon as possible, please contact the Rabbi, the Temple President, and the Sisterhood President.
- 2) If you would like the Rabbi to officiate at the funeral, please ask the Funeral Director to contact the Rabbi when exploring possible dates and times.
- 3) There are many traditional Jewish practices that may offer guidance about the handling of the body, the funeral, and the burial. Please ask the Funeral Director to explore these options.
- 4) Resources about mourning, death, and dying are available from the Rabbi. There is also a synagogue document containing information about Jewish funeral procedures.

We hope this information will be needed as infrequently as possible!

## Torah Prayer Books (Chumashim)

A new Torah prayer book can be purchased in honor of or in memory of someone for \$75 or an existing Siddur may be sponsored for \$35.00. Please call (298-0437) or email Betsy Ramos: [bramos@capehart.com](mailto:bramos@capehart.com).

**MARCH 2011 ADAR II 5771**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 4:30-6:30 HS	4 Candle lighting 5:35 pm	5 Shabbat Morning Service 10:00 am
6 Rosh Chodesh Adar II  9-10 SS 10-12 HS	7 Rosh Chodesh Adar II	8	9	10 4:30-6:30 HS	11 Shabbat Evening Services 7:30pm  Candle lighting 5:43 pm	12
13  9-10 SS 10-12 HS	14	15	16	17 Fast of Esther  4:30-6:30 HS	18 Tot Shabbat 6:00pm Shabbat Evening Service 7:30pm  Candle lighting 6:50 pm	19
20 <b>Purim</b>  Purim Celebration 10-12 noon	21 Shushan Purim	22	23	24 4:30-6:30 HS	25 Shabbat Evening Service 7:30 pm  Candle lighting 6:57 pm	26
27  9-10 SS 10-12 HS	28	29	30	31 4:30-6:30 HS		

## Sisterhood Oneg Schedule

<b><u>MARCH</u></b>				
Sat	5-Mar	10:00 AM	Shabbat Morning	Faith Hupfl and Sandy SchwartzBird
Fri	11-Mar	7:30 PM	Shabbat Evening	Debbie Weiss
Mon	14-Mar	7:30 PM	Sisterhood Program	Phyllis Chudoff and Sandy SchwartzBird
<b><u>APRIL</u></b>				
Fri	1-Apr	7:30 PM	Erev Shabbat	Karen Nissim & Sheila Lamonsoff
Mon	11-Apr	7:30 PM	Sisterhood Program	Betsy Ramos and Eileen Gale
Sat	16-Apr	10:00 AM	Shabbat Morning	Elaine Trackman & Renee Harrison
Tue	19-Apr	6:00 PM	2nd night community Seder Passover	Kim Aubry & others
<b><u>MAY</u></b>				
Mon	9-May	7:30 PM	Sisterhood Program- Book Review	Rita Nissim & Mimi Gellar
Sat	14-May	10:00 AM	Shabbat Morning	Anita Berson & Sonia Fenick
Fri	27-May	7:30 PM	Erev Shabbat	Rhea Goldman & Bonnie Goldman
<b><u>JUNE</u></b>				
Fri	3-Jun	7:30 PM	Erev Shabbat	<b>Bar Mitzvah</b>
Sat	4-Jun	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning	Noah Goldberg
<u>Mon</u>	13-Jun	6:15 PM	Sisterhood Pot Luck	Marsha Dowshen & Randy Bloom
Fri	24-Jun	7:30 PM	Member of the Year	Debby Weiss & Marcy Schwartz