



Affiliated with the
Jewish Reconstructionist
Movement

Temple B'nai Abraham

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Important Dates

Sisterhood	3/10
Tot Shabbat	3/14
Purim Celebration	3/16
Saturday Service	3/22

“The Temple Shofar”

March, 2014

Rabbi's Message

During March, I will be presenting my first academic paper at the American Academy of Religion / Society of Biblical Literature regional conference. The paper title is “Father Jeremiah, Evangelist? : Sectarian Deployments of the Jeremian Tradition in 2 Baruch and 4 Baruch” – an analysis of two books that were produced by different sects (one Jewish and one Christian) in the period after the destruction of the Second Temple, but that never made it into the canonical Jewish or Christian scriptures.

I was delighted when I was notified that my paper had been accepted to the conference, but then I was confronted with a dilemma. The conference is scheduled to begin on a Friday and end on a Sunday, and I was initially told that scheduling requests would not be accepted. I am not an orthodox rabbi, but I do maintain a Shabbat observance. Presenting an academic paper would be a violation of my Shabbat observance. What was I to do? If I will drive, go to movies, or read my kindle, on Shabbat, why shouldn't I present a paper? Where is the line, and why?

Maintaining Shabbat observance can be confusing for those of us who are not orthodox. In some respects, it would be easier to have a set of clearly delineated and absolute guidelines established by higher authorities on which to base decisions. But as a liberal Jew who does not view halakhah, Jewish law, as an absolutely binding authority, and who does not recognize a rigid hierarchy of authoritative decision makers, decision making is more complex. It becomes necessary as an individual to consider the context and variant interpretations of our many sacred texts, and to weigh halakhah along with contemporary values. As non-orthodox Jews, each of us will probably set the line in a different place, as each of us will bring different values to the table.

The Torah itself introduces some ambiguity into the nature of Shabbat, due to two different versions of the 10 Commandments (in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5). In Exodus we are told *zachor et yom ha-shabbat* (remember the Sabbath day), while in Deuteronomy we are told *shamor et yom ha-shabbat* (observe/guard the Sabbath day). Many Jews who follow a traditional halakhic practice say they are *shomer shabbos*, guardians of Shabbat. Some liberal Jews call themselves *zocher Shabbat*, rememberers of Shabbat, but in a non-halakhic way.

The traditional understanding is that the kinds of work prohibited on Shabbat are activities that resemble the 39 *melachot* (labors) that were involved in creating the Mishkan – the portable Temple that was carried through the wilderness. This connection is assumed because the description of these labors is in the same section of Exodus as a command to keep Shabbat (*Veshamru*, which we sing on Friday nights, is in Exodus 31:16).

I have never been persuaded by the argument, and most definitely not by the extrapolations made from those specific labors to things such as driving, using electricity, and ripping toilet paper. Instead, I focus on the themes in the texts to derive key values involved. Shabbat is intended to be a holy day, set apart. It serves as a sign to the Jewish people, and is a covenant between God and the Jewish people. It is a day to rest from work, to remember creation and liberation from slavery. These are the themes and values that I keep in mind as I consider my Shabbat activities.

One consideration in choosing Shabbat activities is whether they contribute to a sense of holiness in the day. This is one reason to attend services – it helps to set the day apart from other days, to sanctify it, and attend to the spiritual aspect of life. It is important that I do something to actively engage with the Jewish people and my Jewish identity on Shabbat –

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Sisterhood Officers

Sisterhood President
Randy Bloom

Vice President
Debby Weiss

Treasurer/Financial Scty
Marcy Schwartz

Recording Secretary
Ellen Wehrman

Corresponding Secretary
Patricia Light-Tolomeo

Trustees
Susan Giachetti
Susan Roth

Sisterhood News & Announcements

Sisterhood News:

The next Sisterhood meeting will be held Monday, March 10 at 7:30. We will discuss I Am Forbidden by Anouk Markovits, a novel about being a woman in the Satmar community, and Unorthodox by Deborah Feldman, a memoir about growing up in the Satmar community. Robin Affrime and I found these books to be disturbing and thought-provoking and we look forward to discussing them with you. Please join us at the meeting even if you have not read the books- this discussion of the place of women in an Orthodox society is general enough to give everyone a chance to participate.

PASSOVER WILL BE HERE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!! Please order your personalized Haggadahs as soon as possible so that this can be a successful fundraiser. There is more news in this newsletter and flyers at the Temple. Just order directly from the company and indicate that you are affiliated with Temple B'nai Abraham and we will get credit for your order. These are great for kids, but also for a family that wants to do a Seder service with the basics presented in a straightforward format. Just do not delay- the time is now. Thank you.

We will hold our May Sisterhood meeting on Thursday, May 22. Rabbi Julie Pfau is back by popular demand. Please contact me if you have a topic that you would like the Rabbi to discuss.

Spring will be welcomed most gladly this year!! See you March 10th, Randy

***“The habit of
giving only
enhances the
desire to give.”***

~ Walt

Whitman

Sisterhood Donations

- In memory of Dan Beckerman from Barbara and Jeff Streisfeld
- In memory of Lil Radick from Renee Harrison

- Get well Ellen Weiner from Karen and Fran Sutter, Renee Harrison, and Phyllis and Is Kamer
- Get well Charyl Morginstin from Phyllis and Is Kamer

Tikkun Olam / Social Action

TBA continues to make meaningful contributions to hunger relief in our area, and YOU can be part of it! Here are ways to help:

- Donating boxes of granola bars or cans of tuna or chicken for our monthly contribution to grocery bags for motel residents.
- Any non-perishable food items are welcome for the St. Mary's Food Pantry, just place them in the baskets at the temple.
- We deliver hot meals prepared by the Friends Meeting in Crosswicks to the Pine Motel on the first Thurs. of every month.

All of these efforts are interfaith collaborations with area worship centers. Together we can make a difference!

Thank you to Robin and Steve Affrime, the Weiss family, the Kunkler family, Marcy Schwartz, Rick Shain and Ellen Wehrman for their continued help with meal delivery.

Temple Donations

- In memory of Beverly Hodes from Michael Scolaro and Randy Bloom

Donations

Temple Cards - If you wish to have a Temple joy or sorrow card sent in honor or memory of someone, please contact Randy Bloom by e-mail or phone. She will need the name and address of the person receiving the card, the occasion, and name of the honoree or deceased. The minimum donation is five dollars. There are get well cards as well as cards for any occasion. The donation for the card may be sent directly to Mike Rosen with a notation of what it is for and the check is payable to the Temple.

Yahrzeits for Winter 2014

March 14 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose Klepner, Mother of Len Klepner
March 28 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arthur Fishman, Father of Arlene Speiser • William Trackman, Father of Jay Trackman
April 4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mildred Johnson, Mother of Mark Johnson
April 11 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Bird, Mother-in-Law of Sandy Schwartzbird • Frances Epstein, Mother of Rhea Goldman • Charles Herzog, Father of Madge Rosen • Bess Light, Mother of Patricia Light-Tolomeo • Jack Harrison, Brother-in-Law of Renee Harrison
April 18 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seymour Affrime, Father of Steve Affrime
April 25 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albert Dowshen, Father of Joel Dowshen • Flora Grassian, Mother of Rita Nissim

Old Prayer Books & Kippot

Old prayer books, Tallis, kippot, or other religious items that are no longer needed should be buried. Please place these items into the box (by the sanctuary stairs). Items will be brought to the local Chabad House for burial. \$5 donations are appreciated.

Siddur & Tallit Donations

A new siddur (prayer book) can be purchased in honor of or in memory of someone for \$35. A tallis (prayer shawl) can be purchased for \$60. Please contact Marcia Rosen at:
mjanrosen@comcast.net

Memorial Plaques

Plaques are available for \$250. To order a plaque, send the following to TBA: Marcia Rosen, Plaque Chairman
 PO Box 245
 Bordentown, NJ 08505
 or:
mjanrosen@comcast.net.

English name of loved one, Hebrew name of loved one and date of death in the English calendar. Once the plaque has been installed, you will be billed. Plaques will not be moved from one board to the other.

Purim Celebration



Purim Carnival is Back!

Join the TBA Hebrew School for Purim at TBA

When: Sunday 3/16/14

Time: 9:30am-12pm

There will be a family friendly megillah reading, fun carnival games where prizes can be won, a raffle basket with all proceeds going to charity and a community lunch!

Please RSVP to: kami.knapp@googlemail.com by 3/9

Family contribution: \$10 per family (contributes to the prizes and carnival games)

Lunch contributions: An email will be going out to those who RSVP requesting families to bring 1-2 items to contribute to the community lunch!

Tot Shabbat

Friday evenings, 6:00 PM

Coming Up: March 7th - Study Torah

Craft: Felt Torahs

Includes candle lighting, potluck 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 Kami Knapp at: kami.knapp@googlemail.com.

Passover Seder

Save the Date for our Community Passover Seder

Tuesday April 15 - 2nd night of Passover

6pm

at Temple B'nai Abraham

Families, children and guests are invited to join the community to enjoy the story of Passover led by Rabbi Julie.

The cost for a full dinner:

Adults - \$35

Children (10 to 15yr.) - \$15

Children (5 to 9yr) - \$10

Children under 5 - Free



Monthly Oneg Hosts

March 22 nd	Aubry / Epstein
March 28 th	Benowitz / Roth

Other News

YOUR KIDS DESERVE THE ADVENTURE OF JEWISH CAMP. THIS SUMMER YOU CAN AFFORD IT.

Paying for camp can be difficult, especially if your family does not qualify for scholarships. **BunkConnect** makes it easy, matching eligible families with available overnight camp sessions at special introductory prices from 40-80% off.

BunkConnect launches in February 2014 with over 35 camps participating. Don't miss this chance to give your kids the summer of a lifetime.

www.BunkConnect.org

IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-3:

- 1 Take the online eligibility quiz.** Eligibility is based on more than just your income. Families of all Jewish backgrounds are welcome.*
- 2 Search for the right experience.** Customize camp results based on your child's grade, session length, and more.
- 3 Contact your selected camps.** And once you've found the perfect one, reserve your spot to lock in your rate.

* Jewish day school families welcome.

FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CAMP
BUNKCONNECT

FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CAMP
one happy camper™

The Nehirim East Retreat will bring the best of the Nehirim (now in its 10th year!) to the Isabella Friedman Retreat Center. --- We'll bring about 75 LGBT Jews, partners, and allies together for a heartfelt, fun weekend where you can...

EXPLORE your connection to Judaism with spirited--- Shabbat services, workshops, and community-led programming.

RELAX and enjoy nature and a beautiful 100-acre site--- in the Berkshires, and

CONNECT with an inclusive and diverse community--- of LGBT Jews, partners, and allies.

- See more at: <http://www.nehirim.org/east>

Ethan Sobel
Director of Development, Communication, and Student Programming
Nehirim

www.nehirim.org | Twitter: [@NehirimLGBT](https://twitter.com/NehirimLGBT)

Nehirim is a national community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Jews, families, and allies, committed to a more just and inclusive world. --- Our retreats, student programs, and community events transform lives. And our advocacy work promotes equality and diversity based on the teachings of the Jewish tradition.



Supermarket Gift Card Program

It is always the season for sharing and giving. Please share with the Temple by purchasing your gift cards from Acme or ShopRite for your New Year’s celebration.

Please make checks payable to **Temple B’nai Abraham** and send to: **Marsha Dowshen / 502 Farnsworth Ave., Bordentown, NJ 08505 / (609) 298-5306**. Your cards will be sent to you the same day.

Rabbi’s Message Continued

(Continued from page 1)

whether through prayer, spending time with other Jews in a deliberate way, reading a Jewish novel, studying an ancient Jewish text, etc.

Choosing activities that add holiness is one part of the holiness equation. The other part is trying to avoid activities that might detract from the holiness, the set-apartness, of the day. Some people won’t use money at all on Shabbat. My rule of thumb is that I will only use money for activities that contribute to a sense of rest. No bill paying! If an activity will feel stressful, then it is an activity that I need to avoid on Shabbat – it isn’t laundry day, or errand day. If I watch a movie, it shouldn’t be an upsetting one. Watching or reading the news is often inadvisable on Shabbat... Because my life is over-scheduled (which feels quite unholy!), I avoid scheduling things on Shabbat, even fun things. For one day, I want to be spontaneous and do what feels right in the moment. Often that involves laying on the sofa, but occasionally a spontaneous hike or kayaking excursion emerges. Sometimes I will go the gym, but only if it seems fun in the moment, not if my motivation is to burn calories or do an extreme workout.

One of the major themes of Shabbat is rest from labor – God’s rest from the labor of creating the world and the need of humans to rest rather than to slave away. On Shabbat I do not do my literal work. No homework of any variety, even if I am behind on my reading or have a paper due on Monday. No work-related emails, texts, calls, etc – whether for my academic work or my synagogue work. (Being a rabbi is complicated, because it is technically my job, and it involves leading services on Shabbat. However, it is traditionally understood that leading prayer is different from other kinds of activities, and I accept that distinction.)

So what about that academic conference? Attending is one thing – listening to speakers can be fun for an academic religion nerd like me, and I can skip any session that feels burdensome or tedious. But delivering my own paper at a scheduled time on Shabbat would definitely constitute work... I felt a powerful impulse to just go along and give the paper whenever they scheduled it, even if it meant doing so on Shabbat. I knew I needed to get some conference presentations on my CV, so turning it down didn’t seem wise career-wise! But I knew that once I made an exception, more would follow. After agonizing over the issue, I decided to decline participation in the conference if it would mean sacrificing my Shabbat observance. It was hard to say no, but I felt a sense of relief take hold once I made the decision.

When I wrote to the chair of the region and said that I would need to decline giving the paper if my Shabbat observance could not be accommodated, I was delighted that he said my request would be honored. I can keep and remember Shabbat, and still give my paper after all!

As liberal Jews, we have much more flexibility in setting the boundaries of our Shabbat observance than do orthodox Jews. But for all of us, wherever those boundaries are, it is vital to remember Shabbat and keep the boundaries we have set. Shabbat is too important to let it slip away.

Shalom,
Rabbi Pfau



**TEMPLE
B'NAI ABRAHAM**

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PO Box 245
Bordentown, NJ 08505

609.298.1527
www.bnai-abraham.org

*Shabbat morning services begin at 10:00 a.m.
(when there are B'nai Mitzvah, services begin at 9:30 a.m.)*
March, 2014 ~ Adar I, 5774/Adar II, 5774/

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 9 am Sunday School 10 am Hebrew School	24	25	26	27 4:30 pm Hebrew School	28 7:30 pm Shabbat Services	1
2 9 am Sunday School 10 am Hebrew School	3	4	5	6 4:30 pm Hebrew School	7 6:00 pm Tot Shabbat 7:30 pm Shabbat Services	8
9 9 am Sunday School 10 am Hebrew School	10 	11	12	13 4:30 pm Hebrew School	14 7:30 pm Shabbat Services	15
16 9:30 am- 12:00 pm Purim Celebration 	17	18	19	20 4:30 pm Hebrew School	21	22 10:00 am Shabbat Morning Services
23 9 am Sunday School 10 am Hebrew School	24	25	26	27 4:30 pm Hebrew School	28 7:30 pm Shabbat Services	29