

BHBIRochester.org
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Congregation Beth Hamedresh – Beth Israel

BULLETIN

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January President's Message

Friends,

I've been continuing my exploration of the 3 volume book, The Sages, by Rabbi Binyamin Lau. I have struggled with the problem of keeping track of the various Rabbis mentioned in the Mishna and Gemarrah, who they were, when they lived, and what their relationships were to each other. Rabbi Lau's book is a great help with this, though I'm sure I'll continue to get confused. As I read about these great men, I see situations in their lives that reflect on our own situation. I got the stories from Rabbi Lau, but the conclusions I draw from them are my own.

Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai was the great man who escaped from Jerusalem before its destruction by the Romans in 70 CE, and founded the Rabbinic Academy at Yavneh, which is thought to be responsible for saving Judaism from obliteration. Pirke Avot lists five of his disciples. Two are of particular interest: Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Elazar ben Arakh. Eliezer was called "a plastered well"- he remembered every teaching he heard and could pass it along. Elazar was called "an ever-flowing spring"- he was capable of finding very creative solutions to problems. Both of these men had influences on the succeeding generations of scholars, but neither met his full potential.

The period immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem was a time of turmoil. So much of Judaism had been centered on the Temple, and now the Temple was gone. This was a time when innovation was needed to cope with a fluid situation. Rabbi Eliezer didn't do well in this environment; he stubbornly resisted any changes. In the end, he was "excommunicated" (herem - a form of shunning) and died a bitter man. Many of those teachings that he never forgot were never passed along to students.

You would think that in this fluid situation, Rabbi Elazar ben Arackh, the brilliant innovator, would have prospered. But he did not. When Yohanan ben Zakkai died and Rabbi Gamliel II (great grandson of Rabbi Hillel) became the leader at Yavneh, Rabbi Elazar left Yavneh and moved to Emmaus. The midrash (Kohellet Rabbah) says his wife made him do it. It seems more likely to me that he didn't get along as well with Rabbi Gamliel as he had with Rabbi Yohanan (Gamliel was more authoritarian in his approach). At Emmaus, Rabbi Elazar "waited for the other students to come to him, but they did not come." So, the value of his creativity was lost.

In our own situation, faced with the challenge of a small and aging congregation, how do these ancient experiences apply to us? We cannot be stubbornly attached to how we've always done things, as R. Eliezer was. We need to innovate, to find new approaches to keep our congregation vital. But, no matter how we innovate, we can't just sit tight like Rabbi Elazar and wait for people to come to us, we have to reach out to where the people are and show them what we have to offer. Over the coming months we will be addressing both of these problems- innovation and outreach.

I will suggest one small innovation. Whenever you pick up a prayer book at services, I bet you open it up and see who dedicated the book, and in honor of whom. Because we have not expanded our book collection in a long time, the names inside the books we use most are unknown to many of the congregants. We have a large number of lightly used prayer books that we got from Temple Beth El when they changed to a different book. For a small donation (\$18) you can rededicate one of those books in memory or in honor of a loved one. Just send in the donation(s) and your BHBI book plates will replace the Beth El book plates. This is a great opportunity to celebrate the lives of your loved ones.

Have a wonderful 2014.

Leon Metlay

BHBI CALENDAR OF EVENTS – JANUARY 2014

Friday	Jan 3	7:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service at Heather Heights in Pittsford Light candles at 4:29 PM
Saturday	Jan 4	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service Torah: Bo
Sunday	Jan 5	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Friday	Jan 10	7:00 PM	Joint Shabbat Evening Service with Temple Beth Am at Beth Am Light candles at 4:36 PM
Saturday	Jan 11	9:30 AM	Joint Shabbat Morning Service with Temple Beth Am at BHBI Torah: Beshalach
Sunday	Jan 12	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Monday	Jan 13	7:30 PM	Monthly Meeting of the BHBI Board of Trustees
Wednesday	Jan 15	7:30 PM	Small Conservative Shul Collaborative Torah Study at BHBI Tu b'Shevat
Friday	Jan 17	7:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service Light candles at 4:44 PM
Saturday	Jan 18	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service Torah: Yitro
Sunday	Jan 19	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Friday	Jan 24	7:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service Light candles at 4:53 PM
Saturday	Jan 25	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service Torah: Mishpatim Blessing of the New Month
Sunday	Jan 26	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Friday	Jan 31	7:00 PM	Joint Shabbat Evening Service with Temple Beth Am at BHBI Light candles at 5:03 PM

FREE 3-MONTH TRIAL MEMBERSHIP FOR FIRST-TIME NEW MEMBERS

Let your friends know about BHBI's special [free 3 month trial membership](#) (available to prospective first-time new members only). Have them contact BHBI at 244-2060 or BHBIRochester@gmail.com and we will be happy to give them information about BHBI and this great offer!!

BHBI WEBSITE

Have you checked out the BHBI web site lately? If you haven't there is a lot that you're missing. The web site at www.BHBIRochester.org provides information about many aspects of our congregation, lists the BHBI calendar, has electronic versions of this and previous bulletins going back several years, has an extensive history of our congregation along with historic photos, includes photos from several BHBI dinners, picnics and other special events, and has the unique Adon Olam Songbook with information on over 100 melodies for Adon Olam.

SMALL CONSERVATIVE SHUL COLLABORATIVE TORAH STUDY

Our next Small Conservative Shul Collaborative Torah study session will take place at BHBI on Wednesday, December 18th at 7:30 p.m. which is Tu b'Shevat. In honor of the 'Birthday of the Trees' participants are encouraged to bring fruit or nuts to the study session. Everyone is welcome.

DONATIONS
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

GENERAL FUND

Paul and Sylvia Rose

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In memory of Mike Kolko

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KIDDUSH FUND

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THANK YOU TO OUR KIDDUSH SPONSORS
FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

December 7	Jill Clark-Foulkes in memory of her aunt, Barbara Bertman
December 14	The Congregation
December 21	Leon Metlay and Nina Klionsky in honor of Hannah's birthday
December 28	Ruth and Steve Teitel in memory of Ruth's father, Jack Glaser

GOODSEARCH.COM

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BRIGHTON FOOD CUPBOARD

The Brighton Food Cupboard is very low on breakfast cereal, pasta and tuna. Please consider donating to them. There is a box in the BHBI lobby where you can drop off your donation or you can drop food items off at either the Brighton Board on Education Building or at the former Brookside School in Brighton.

EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Chabad and the JCC present 'The Archeological Claim to Jerusalem' with Rabbi Avraham Stolik, biblical archeological scholar, at the JCC on Saturday evening, January 11th at 7:30 p.m. Cost: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. Call 385-2097 or go to www.JewishPittsford.com/Jerusalem for tickets. There will also be a community Shabbat dinner with Rabbi Stolik, who will discuss 'One Group's Trash is Another's Treasure Trove' (the fascinating saga of the Temple Mount archaeological destruction and the subsequent salvage operation) at the Kessler Family Chabad Center in Brighton on Friday, January 10th. Call 271-0330 for information.

The Jewish Community Federation's Israel 2014 Speaker Series kicks off with a presentation by Anat Hoffman, Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Center and Chair of Women of the Wall, titled "Women of the Wall: From the Back of the Bus to the Top of the Agenda" on Thursday, January 30th at 7:30 p.m. at Temple B'rith Kodesh.

"Wicked" and the Holocaust

TEENS: For a "Wicked" good time and some lessons about life, join a special group of teens from Rochester and Buffalo (space is limited) for trip to Buffalo to see a production of "Wicked," preceded by kosher dinner, fun games and an insightful Holocaust program.

Elphaba, who later becomes known as "The Wicked Witch of the West," is ostracized because she was born green. The talking animals of Oz are also "different"; suddenly they are disappearing from their jobs. Parallels between the subplot of "Wicked" and the Holocaust are fascinating...

January 12, 2014

Drop-off @ 2PM; Pick-up @ 10:30 PM

at the Jewish Community Center

1200 Edgewood Avenue

Cost: \$20 per person

Register at JewishRochester.org. Click on TEENS.
Transportation from Rochester and in Buffalo, kosher dinner, admission to "Wicked" and all programming included.

Questions? Contact Rich Gordon, rgordon@jewishrochester.org or 461-0490, x8637

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TU B'SHEVAT – THE NEW YEAR OF THE TREES

Tu b'Shevat appears in the Mishnah in Tractate Rosh Hashanah as one of the four new years in the Jewish calendar. The discussion of when the New Year occurs was a source of debate among the rabbis: "And there are four New Year dates: - The first of Nissan - New Year for kings and festivals - The first of Elul - New Year for animal tithes. Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Shimon say: the first of Tishrei. - The first of Tishrei- New Year for calculation of the calendar, sabbatical years and jubilees, for planting and sowing - The first of Shevat, according to the school of Shamai; The school of Hillel say: the fifteenth of Shevat." The rabbis of the Talmud ruled in favor of Hillel on this issue. Thus the 15th of Shevat became the date for calculating the beginning of the agricultural cycle for the purpose of biblical tithes.

In the Middle Ages, Tu B'Shevat was celebrated with a feast of fruits in keeping with the Mishnaic description of the holiday as a "New Year." In the 16th century, the kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria of Safed and his disciples instituted a *Tu Bishvat seder* in which the fruits and trees of the Land of Israel were given symbolic meaning. The main idea was that eating ten specific fruits and drinking four cups of wine in a specific order while reciting the appropriate blessings would bring human beings, and the world, closer to spiritual perfection.

In Israel, the kabbalistic Tu b'Shevat seder has been revived, and is now celebrated by many Jews, religious and secular. Special *haggadot* have been written for this purpose. In the Chassidic community, some Jews pickle or candy the etrog (citron) from Sukkot and eat it on Tu b'Shevat. Some pray that they will be worthy of a beautiful etrog on the following Sukkot. Trees are planted in Israel on Tu b'Shevat and it is considered a day of rededication.

This year Tu b'Shevat starts on Wednesday evening, January 15th. If you plan to attend the Small Conservative Shul Collaborative Torah study session that evening, you are invited to bring along fruit or nuts to celebrate Tu b'Shevat.

- From Wikipedia

Yahrzeits

At the following Shabbat Services, we will read the names of our late loved ones whose Yahrzeits will occur on that Shabbat or during the following week.

January 3-4	Shevat	January 10-11	Shevat	January 17-18	Shevat	January 24-25	Shevat
Etta Levinson*	4	Daniel Hirsch*	10	Morris Gurian*	17	Bernard Falk*	25
Ida Silver*	4	Hyman Aaron Nusbaum*	10	Stanley Clark*	18	Marian Bernstein*	27
Sidney Appelbaum*	6	Jacob Swartz	12	Samuel Spencer	18	Ada Goldstein*	27
Jacob Komenski*	6	Miriam Weinberger	12	Gitla Perkal*	18	Samuel Keyfetz*	27
Morris Suskind*	7	Abraham Newell*	13	Besse Gold	20	Lottie Fink*	29
Herman Strauss*	8	Anna Sanow	13	Benjamin Lapides*	20	Rose Ring*	29
Dvora Brodie*	9	Rose Salzberg	14	Alexander Phillips	21	Henrietta Schaffer	30
Samuel Goldman*	9	Gidda Strauss*	16	Simon Pogal*	21	Boris Schwarts	30
				Jacob Rubinstein*	21		
				Sarah Maltinsky*	23		
						*Denotes name memorialized on BHBI Memorial Plaque	

We pray that our mourners will be comforted among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and that the memory of the deceased continues to be a blessing to all who knew them.

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So far our **TOPS** Gift Card fundraiser has been quite successful. Remember, **TOPS** Gift Cards are now available through BHBI in \$50 denominations. To purchase **TOPS** Gift Cards, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or by e-mail at stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

You can also memorialize a friend or loved one on a BHBI memorial plaque. Our memorial plaques are very reasonably priced. For more information, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

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AD SPONSORS

We are always looking for additional businesses that are interested in placing an ad in the BHBI Bulletin. If you know of someone whose business or company may be interested, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or by e-mail at stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

SAVE THE DATE – NEXT INTERFAITH EVENT

Save the date for the next event in our Jewish-Muslim Interfaith Series – on Sunday, February 9th! Details to follow.

OFFICE: The synagogue office is checked regularly for mail and messages. The synagogue phone is 244-2060. For urgent issues, call Steve Teitel at 473-5741 or Stan Schaffer at 473-8072. You can also e-mail us at BHBIRochester@gmail.com

WANT TO REMEMBER OR HONOR SOMEONE OR A SPECIAL OCCASION? *Consider sponsoring a kiddush or making a donation to any one of our funds* (General Fund, Kiddush Fund, Harry Rogachefsky BHBI Building Fund, Torah Fund, Rabbi Aaron Solomon Scholarship Fund, Special Events Fund or the Sam Malina Memorial Fund). Please indicate which fund you would like your donation to go to and we will send out an acknowledgement card as you indicate and print an announcement in this bulletin. A standard sponsored kiddush at BHBI costs just \$40 while a larger enhanced kiddush is just \$50.

BULLETIN CONTENT What do you enjoy reading in the BHBI Bulletin? Is there something that you would like added (or taken out)? If so, please let Stan Schaffer know. We always appreciate feedback.

DID YOU MISPLACE YOUR BULLETIN? Don't worry. BHBI Bulletins going back several years can now be found on our web page: www.BHBIRochester.org

WANT TO GET YOUR BULLETIN HOT-OFF-THE-PRESS? Consider having us e-mail it to you! Contact Stan Schaffer at: stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

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