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Congregation Beth Hamedresh – Beth Israel

BULLETIN

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April's President's Message

Friends,

This month we celebrate the festival of Pesach, or Passover. The holiday is often referred to in our prayers as the “Season of our Freedom.” You may ask, just what is “freedom”? In our tradition it refers both to our physical freedom from slavery in Egypt, but also our freedom to serve G-d and carry out the obligations of our faith.

In Western culture, freedom is usually associated with a democratic form of government. We are now at a time when such a notion seems to be under attack. Consider a country in which the executive branch tries to consolidate all power for itself, firing independent governmental watchdogs to replace them with political lackies, attacking the judicial system to make it subservient to the executive branch, denigrating the media and trying to cut governmental funding for public broadcasting, threatening retribution against political adversaries. What country am I thinking of? If you guessed the United States, you would be correct. But if you guessed Israel, you would also be correct (other correct answers would include Hungary and Turkey). Proponents of such actions claim they are only trying to restore, or rebalance, democracy, by transferring power from unelected judges and bureaucrats to popularly elected representatives. But such actions undermine the notion of a *liberal* democracy, in which checks and balances provide protections for minority interests. Some proponents of such actions are more blunt: Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal and the first outside investor in Facebook, a strong supporter and major funder of conservative and libertarian causes and a mentor to JD Vance, explicitly stated in a 2009 essay that he had come to “no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible.”

It is interesting to look in Jewish tradition for its stance on such matters. While authority in ancient Jewish society was certainly not governed by democratic elections, within the Sanhedrin (the rabbinic body for deciding halachah) decisions were enacted by simple majority vote – no checks nor balances on that. Yet still there is at least one Talmudic record of discomfort with that system. During the time of the revolt against Rome, the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai were often in disagreement. At one point, the House of Shammai gained in popularity and used its majority status to force through the “[18 Decrees](#),” a set of laws primarily designed to limit interactions between Jews and Gentiles. The dispute over these laws was so intense that the Jerusalem Talmud ([Shabbat 1:4](#)) says, “The students of the House of Shammai were standing downstairs and killing the students of the House of Hillel. It was stated, six of them went up; the rest were standing around them with swords and lances.” The Babylonian Talmud ([Shabbat 17a](#)) says, “And that day was as difficult for Israel as the day the Golden Calf was made.” Following the failure of the revolt, when the Sanhedrin reconvened in Yavne, the disputes between the Houses of Shammai and Hillel were reviewed and it was concluded that the law in most cases would follow Hillel. The reason, as given in the Babylonian Talmud ([Eruvin 13b](#)), was because the disciples of Hillel “were agreeable and forbearing, showing restraint when affronted, and when they taught the halachah they would teach both their own statement and the statements of the House of Shammai.” It would seem the Talmudic Rabbis learned the danger of using majority rule to exert power to force through unpopular actions.

See you at shul,
Steve Teitel

SHABBAT SERVICES

BHBI has in-person **Shabbat Morning Services**, each Saturday at 9:30 AM. All attendees over 5 years of age must be vaccinated against Covid. All attendees over 3 years of age must wear a face mask, unless sitting in the “unmasking” section of the sanctuary. Masks are available in the sanctuary for those who need.

Temple Beth Am and **Temple Beth El** have **Shabbat Evening Services** on Fridays at 6 PM. Services are in-person at Temple Beth El, in the TBE Chapel, and live-streamed on Zoom. For the Zoom link and other details, visit the Beth El website: <https://www.tberochester.org/pray/virtual-services/>

BHBI Website: www.BHBIRochester.org

BHBI CALENDAR OF EVENTS – APRIL 2025

Friday	April 4	6:00 PM	Erev Shabbat with Temple Beth Am and Temple Beth El in TBE's chapel and on Zoom – see page 1 for further information (light candles 7:23 PM)
Saturday	April 5	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service at BHBI. Torah: Vayikra Kiddish with Temple Beth El following service
Sunday	April 6	9:00 AM	Service live streamed, visit www.BHBIRochester.org for the Zoom link
Friday	April 11	6:00 PM	Erev Shabbat with Temple Beth Am and Temple Beth El in TBE's chapel and on Zoom – see page 1 for further information (light candles 7:31 PM)
Saturday	April 12	9:30 AM --	Shabbat Morning Service at BHBI Torah: Tzav (Shabbat Hagadol) Pesach 1 st Night Seder (light candles after 8:34 PM)
Sunday	April 13	9:00 AM --	Pesach 1 st Day Morning Service with Beth El in the TBE sanctuary Pesach 2 nd Night Seder (light candles after 8:35 PM)
Monday	April 14	9:00 AM	Pesach 2 nd Day Morning Service with Beth El in the TBE sanctuary
Friday	April 18	6:00 PM	Erev Shabbat and Erev Passover 7 th Day Service with Temple Beth Am and Temple Beth El in TBE's chapel and on Zoom – see page 1 for further information (light candles 7:39 PM)
Saturday	April 19	9:00 AM 7:30 PM	Shabbat and Pesach 7 th Day Morning Service with Temple Beth El in the TBE sanctuary Mincha/Maariv, Erev Pesach 8 th Day with Temple Beth El in the TBE chapel. (light candles after 8:43 PM)
Sunday	April 20	9:00 AM 8:45 PM	Pesach 8 th Day Morning Service with Beth El in the TBE sanctuary; Yizkor at 11:00 AM Pesach Ends
Monday	April 21	7:30 PM	BHBI Board of Trustees Meeting on Zoom
Friday	April 25	6:00 PM	Erev Shabbat with Temple Beth Am and Temple Beth El in TBE's chapel and on Zoom – see page 1 for further information (light candles 7:47 PM)
Saturday	April 26	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service at BHBI Torah: Shemini Kiddish luncheon following service in BHBI's kiddish room
Sunday	April 27	9:00 AM	Service live streamed, visit www.BHBIRochester.org for the Zoom link

THANK YOU TO OUR MARCH KIDDUSH SPONSOR

Steve Teitel in honor of all those who helped with the move to Temple Beth El

DONATIONS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

In memory of Irving Gold
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In memory of Marian Carton Gulack
Steve and Helen Gulack

In memory of Harry Aronow
Eileen and Dennis Kovel

In memory of Max and Lil Levy
Rose Israel

In memory of Minette Taylor
Lyn and Norm Adams

We wish you and your loved ones a very Happy Passover!

BHBI members may sell their chametz for the holiday by using Temple Beth El's Rabbi Bitran as your agent. To do so, go online to <https://tberochester.shulcloud.com/form/hametz> and fill out the form, no later than Monday April 7. The form also asks you to include a donation to provide Maot Hittin funds for Passover supplies for the needy, and will let you do that using a credit card.

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.

April 4-5	Nissan	April 11-12	Nissan	April 18-19	Nissan	April 25-26	Nissan/ Iyar
Esther Bertman*	8	Helen Neiman Goldman*	14	Beatrice Goldstein*	21	Ethel L. Goldstein*	28
Max Block	8	Sylvia Kowal	14	Benjamin Ritter	21	Rose Dworkis Lewis	28
Seymour Ouzer*	10	Harry Toker	14	Yetta Levine*	22	Hyman Rothschild*	29
Charles Levy	11	Leo Buchbinder*	15	Evelyn Maimon	23	Karen Schulman	30
Morris Lipman*	11	Michael Kron	15	Simon Finkelman	24	Louis Goldberg*	1
		Sol Levin*	15	Louis Priceman*	25	Louis Goldman*	3
Denotes name memorialized on BHBI Memorial Plaque		Rose Jossem	16	Dorothy Riwkin*	25	Beverly Honickman	4
		Judith Potter*	16	Samuel B. Spiller*	25		
		Louis Cohen*	18	Arthur Weinberger	26		
		David Morris*	20	Alexander Greenbaum*	27		
		Jacob Weinrib*	20	Esther Gurian*	27		

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.

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

You can memorialize a friend or loved one on a BHBI memorial plaque. Our memorial plaques are very reasonably priced. For more information, contact Ira Cohen at BHBIRochester@gmail.com.

CEMETERY PLOTS

Did you know that BHBI has designated sections at Stone Road, Britton Road and Mt. Hope Cemeteries and that we sell cemetery plots? If you would like more information, contact Steve Teitel at BHBIRochester@gmail.com.

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 Ira Cohen at 943-1040 or by e-mail at gouldron@aol.com

TORAH READERS WANTED!

Would you like to learn how to chant the Torah at services? We have several members who would be happy to tutor you! Why not give it a try? You'd be helping out the Congregation and doing a mitzvah at the same time! Contact the shul at BHBIRochester@gmail.com if you are interested.

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OFFICE: The synagogue office is checked regularly for mail and messages. Snail mail must be sent to P.O. Box 20891, Rochester, NY 14602. The synagogue phone is 244-2060. For urgent issues, call Steve Teitel at 473-5741 or Harris Honickman at 271-5145. 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 Steve Teitel 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 Steve Teitel at: BHBIRochester@gmail.com

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