



BETH EL NEWSLETTER

The Heights Synagogue

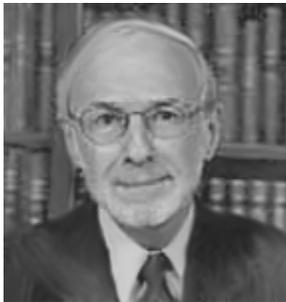
June-July 2004

5764 סיון \ תמוז \ אב

Notes from the Rebbe...

"Orders is Orders"

- Or Are They?



Rabbi Moshe Adler

As I write these words, there is a great public outcry that justice must be done to the perpetrators of the prisoner abuse at the Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq. Members of Congress are demanding that those who carried out the abuse policy – whether it was articulated or implied – be court-martialed and that their superiors also be brought to justice. I am reminded of two biblical stories of kings of Israel who ordered their men to harm innocent people.

The book of First Samuel tells of King Saul, who fails to implement G-d's word on two occasions and is informed that he is no longer G-d's choice as king. It dawns on him that his protégé, David, now enjoys the miraculous successes and the popularity that he himself previously enjoyed. Saul is plunged into a deep paranoid depression. Believing that David is trying to usurp his throne, he seeks to take David's life. David flees Israel without even taking along provisions or a weapon. He stops at Nov, the city of the kohanim (priests), where the High Priest, thinking that David is on the king's secret business, furnishes him with bread and a weapon. Saul's chief herdsman, Doeg, who is on a pilgrimage at that time, witnesses the transaction. Later, when Saul learns of it, he summons all the priests of Nov and orders his men to kill them all for treason. They refuse to carry out the unlawful order. Doeg volunteers to carry it out. He first slays the priests, then raids the town of Nov and massacres its population.

The book of Second Samuel tells of King David, who has an affair with Bat-Sheva, the wife of Uriah, one his soldiers. Learning that she is pregnant, David summons Uriah home from the front and orders him to take a well-earned furlough with his wife. Instead, Uriah camps out on the palace steps with the king's guard, on the grounds that he cannot in good conscience enjoy time off with his wife when his comrades in the king's service are engaged in battle. David sends Uriah back to the front with a secret dispatch for the commander to place him in the thickest part of the battle so that he will be killed. The order is carried out, and David marries Bat-

Sheva. The prophet Natan informs David that, because he has emulated ordinary kings, who sleep with other men's wives and "legally" kill their husbands, he will suffer the fate of ordinary kings: his own confidants will rise against him, and a usurper from his own family will sleep with his women.

Both kings gave orders to kill innocent people. In Saul's case, it is Doeg, who obeyed and even improved on the order, and who stands condemned by Jewish tradition. In David's case, it is David himself, giver of the order, who stands condemned. As Jewish tradition sees it, the soldiers who carried out orders to abuse their prisoners, and their superiors who gave the orders, stand condemned. While we can't expect American law to follow Jewish legal principles, we can perhaps appeal to the commonly shared morality underlying these two biblical stories.

In Jewish law, both the subordinate and his superior answer to a Higher Authority, as our Sages teach in the form of a rhetorical question: "When the words of the Master conflict with the words of the disciple, whose words do we obey?" (Talmud, Kiddushin 42b, et al.) Before G-d the Master, even the king is but a disciple.

My goal here is not to solve the moral dilemma conclusively (much less simplistically), but to illustrate how we might approach it by viewing it through the lens of Jewish teaching.

Go for it.



Jack Valancy

**QUESTIONS?
CONCERNS?
COMMENTS?
COMPLAINTS?**

As always, please do not hesitate to contact your President by e-mail jack@valancy.com or home telephone (216) 371-1439

HELP US

STAY IN TOUCH!

Please be sure we have your current contact information: phone number and home and e-mail addresses.

Send changes to Blanche Valancy, blanche@valancy.com or call her at (216) 371-1439

E-Mail Newsletter

available as a pdf e-mail attachment.

This month's e-issue was sent May 13. If you'd like to get the e-mail version, contact benews@apk.net

Members: Our Lifeblood

What does Beth El – The Heights Synagogue mean to you? A special place to worship? A supportive place for learning? A place to celebrate and socialize with friends?

Whether you attend our services regularly, occasionally, or infrequently, you know why they are special: We're traditional, yet egalitarian. Men and women participate equally. Our services are lead by our members, who also read Torah. Some have decades of experience, some have recently developed their skills. Rabbi Moshe Adler regularly enlightens us with his commentary on our heritage as seen by our ancestors and through contemporary eyes. Our members share their perspectives with us, too. Indeed, members are our lifeblood.

Perhaps you appreciate our multitude of educational programs: Our regular Learner's Services, Lunch and Learn presentations, our ongoing Kiddush With Rashi discussions, and special programs lead by our knowledgeable members and guests. We are a community of learners eager to share our knowledge. Our members are our lifeblood.

You may join us for social events: Big parties at Chanukah and Purim, smaller celebrations and special occasions throughout the year. Committees small and large produce each party. Our members are our lifeblood.

Our recent congregational retreat was a unique combination of worship, learning, and community. Many members worked hard to make it happen. Our members are our lifeblood.

Behind the scenes, our members arrange catering for events (for what's an event without food?), maintain our synagogue's physical plant and plan for its renovations, manage our finances, publicize our activities, and do so much more. Our members are our lifeblood.

If you are one of our almost 80 members, you recently received (or will soon receive) a membership renewal letter. Please renew your membership and remit your dues promptly.

If you are one of the more than 300 of our friends who receive this newsletter, I urge you to join us as a member. We need your commitment and support to help us grow. We would love to be your primary congregation or your second spiritual home. Our membership dues are reasonable and, I personally assure you, your voice will be heard. Please do not let finances be a barrier. Contact membership chair Karen Kugelman for more information: (216) 932-5562 or kugelman@juno.com.

What would you do if there were no Beth El – The Heights Synagogue? How would you feel if our home for worship, learning, and community closed its door forever? Now is the time for you to assure that our lifeblood is strong.

Jack

Annual Meeting June 6

Please join us for our 5th Annual Meeting, which will be held on Sunday, June 6, from 11 AM to 12 Noon at the synagogue. Vote on amendments to the Bylaws and next year's officers and Board of Trustees. President Jack Valancy will discuss the "State of the Shul." You must be a paid-up member in good standing, in order to vote.

The following amendments shall be offered for approval, expanding the Board to include as a Trustee each Chair of a Standing Committee. There are presently 10 Standing Committees.

Resolved that Article IV, paragraph 2(a) of the Bylaws be amended to state that "The members of the Board of Trustees shall include the chairperson of each of the Standing Committees of the Board, as further described in Article VI;" and that Article V, paragraph 2 be amended to remove the phrase, "and those Standing Committees not serving on the Board of Trustees." A two-thirds majority of those present is required in order to approve the amendments.

Assuming the passage of the Bylaws amendments, the Nominating Committee, pursuant to Article VII of the Bylaws, nominates the following slate for the 2004-2005 year:

President	Jack Valancy	House and Operations	Ditte Wolin
Vice President	Laura Gooch	Membership	Karen Kugelman
Secretary	Fern Grunberger	Ritual	Lisa Berusch
Adult Education	Mia Buchwald-Gelles	At Large:	Michael Bloom
Chesed	Scott Wachter	At Large:	Robin Dubin
Child-Teen Programs	Mark Davidson	At Large:	Marilyn Malkin
Communications	Celia Jennings	At Large:	Bill Schmitt
Development	Emily Dennis		

We will also be thanking the following Trustees, who are ending their service to the Board: Cheryl Birkner-Mack, Leon Gabinet, Gil Preuss, Marty Rabinowitz, Steve Sender, Ed Small, and Marv Warshay. Dr. Adi Gerblich remains an at-large member of the Board.

Adult Education at Siegel College

Add class to your summer: Hebrew summer sessions begin June 2 and July 12. Courses include learning how to chant the Torah. Call Nili Adler for information: 216-464-4050 Ex. 116

Cheryl Birkner Mack will be teaching *Holidays and Life Cycles*, an undergraduate course, during the summer session (Tuesday and Thursday evenings, June through mid July). Contact Siegel College at 216-464-4050 or via e-mail at enroll@siegelcollege.edu.

Moreshet, the Hebrew Teacher Training Program, is recruiting a new class: Siegel College and the JECC are seeking candidates interested in joining the fourth class of this highly-successful program, to begin in Fall 2004. Fully subsidized, this program includes an intensive ulpan, enriched Judaic study, and an opportunity to learn the latest theories and practices of language teaching.

Adult Education

June 12: Services will be followed by a Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Moshe Adler, who will discuss the parsha of the week, Sh'lach.

June 19: We will have the last Learners' Service of the season, at approximately 10:15 AM. The topic will be

The Amidah: Tying Up the Loose Ends.

Annual Summer Picnic

Our annual summer picnic will be held on Sunday, July 18, from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM at Forest Hills Park in Picnic Shelters 2A and 2B. See enclosed flyer for details.

Debbie Michelson could really use some help with planning this affair and making the event fun for all. If you are able to help Debbie, contact her at (216) 371-0327 or michelson@goodmanweissmiller.com.

חדשות NEWS FROM BETH EL

Refuah Sh'lema to:

רפואה שלימה!

☞ Naomi Klarreich

Yasher Koah to:

יישר כוח!

☞ Eliza Bloomfield, daughter of Michael and Shelly Bloomfield, who graduated from Chagrin Falls High School, and who will begin her studies in the fall at Ohio State University in the Health Science Scholars program in nursing.

☞ Rebecca Bloomfield, who graduated from Queen's University (Canada) with a B.A. in Development Studies.

Thanks to:

תודה!

☞ Joe Gelles for designing the new sign insert for the sign in front of our building. It looks a lot better than the temporary sign (advertising Sukkot 2003) that was there before!

☞ Shulamit Magnus for leading the mini-series *Surprises from the Archives and Other Paradoxes of Jewish History* and to Sondra and Harvey Jacobs for hosting the two-evening event in their home.

☞ Cheryl Birkner Mack for leading Kiddush with Rashi on May 1.

Thanks for Kiddush Sponsorships:

תודה!

June 5 ☞ Lisa Palevsky-Evans and Martin Evans, in honor of daughter Leah Evans' Bat Mitzvah.

July 31 ☞ Deborah Michelson and Andrew Steiger, in honor of son Eli Steiger's Bar Mitzvah.

Thanks for Contributions:

תודה!

☞ Henry Bloom and Marilyn Malkin to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund and also toward the groundbreaking ceremony.

☞ Jeannette and Frank Buchwald in memory of Sam and Sylvia Auerbach.

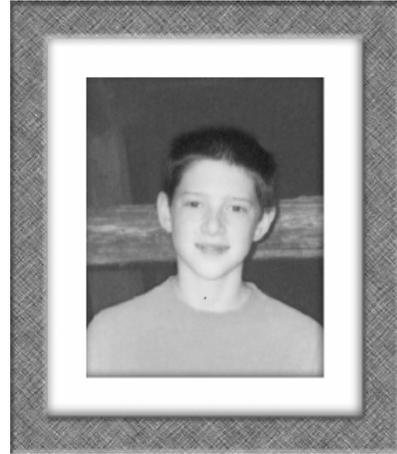
☞ Chester and Stephanie Gordon, in memory of Rachel Gooch.

☞ Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin in memory of Rachel Gooch.

☞ Abbie and Steve Sender in memory of Rachel Gooch.

☞ Helen A. Weinberg.

☞ Omitted in May: two anonymous contributions to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund for the sale of chometz.



Eli Steiger to Become Bar Mitzvah on July 31

Eli "Wild Man" Steiger is the son of Deborah Michelson and Andrew Steiger, and the grandson of Michael and Susan Michelson and Karen and Leonard Steiger. Eli was born in Brooklyn, NY, on July 22, 1991, and moved to Cleveland Heights, OH, when he was nine months old. He is currently a seventh grader at the Ratner School, which he has attended since the third grade. Eli is an avid reader, sometimes polishing off as many as five books a week; he especially enjoys fantasy novels. In school, his favorite subjects are history, science, computer and gym. Eli participates in a variety of sports, including soccer, basketball and baseball. He has played on both school and community teams. Eli also likes lacrosse and looks forward to playing that sport in high school.

Eli has rhythm and movement in his blood. He has taken music lessons since the age of five, when he began with the violin, which, alas, was ill-suited to his rambunctious personality. For the past three and a half years, Eli has studied percussion; he has become quite proficient on the drum set. Eli's favorite way to unwind is to curl up with his Game Cube or Game Boy. His interest in and excellence on the computer amazes his friends and family; he enjoys explaining to others how they, too, can proceed to the "next level" in whatever computer game may be stumping them.

Eli has a unique intellect and sense of humor. His family and friends are grateful that he is a part of their lives. Eli would like to thank all of his family members and friends for their endless love and support.

CALENDAR, JUNE-JULY 2004

סיזן \ תמוז \ אב 5764

Friday, June 4, 7:37 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Saturday, June 5: Leah Evans will become Bat Mitzvah

Sunday, June 6, 11 AM to 12 Noon: 5th Annual Meeting, see page 3 for details.

Friday, June 11, 7:41 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Saturday, June 12, after services: Lunch and Learn: Rabbi Moshe Adler will discuss this week's Torah portion, Sh'lach.

Friday, June 18, 7:43 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Saturday, June 19, approx. 10:15 AM: Learners' Service: The Amidah, Tying Up Loose Ends.

Friday, June 25, 7:45 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Friday, July 2, 7:44 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Tuesday, July 6: Fast day of 17th of Tammuz, which officially marks the beginning of the three week period of semi-mourning culminating in Tisha B'av.

Friday, July 9, 7:42 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Friday, July 16, 7:38 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Sunday, July 18, 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM: Annual Summer Picnic, Forest Hills Park, Picnic Shelters 2A and 2B. See enclosed flyer for details.

Friday, July 23, 7:33 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Monday-Tuesday, July 26-27: Tisha B'av:

צום תשעה באב

July 26, 8:30 PM: Introductory study session at 8:30 PM at the synagogue, followed by Ma'ariv and the traditional mournful reading of Eikha, which retells the destruction of Jerusalem.

The fast begins at 8:40 PM.

July 27, 10:00 AM: Study session on the significance of Tisha B'av.

The fast ends at 9:20 PM.

Friday, July 30, 7:26 PM: Shabbat Candle Lighting

Saturday, July 31: Eli Steiger will become Bar Mitzvah.

Sunday, August 29, 7:00 PM: Jewish Short Story Reading and Discussion Group kickoff meeting at the synagogue. See page 3 for details.



Leah Evans Will Become Bat Mitzvah on June 5

Leah Hannah Evans is the daughter of Lisa Palevsky-Evans and Martin Evans and the granddaughter of Madelyn and Irwin Palevsky. She is a student at Gross Schechter Day School, where she enjoys her Hebrew studies and is learning to play the acoustic guitar. Leah enjoys outdoor activities such as roller blading, bicycling, and soccer. She has attended Camp Sternberg in New York for two summers, and hopes to go again this year. Leah is active in N.C.S.Y. and enjoys going on retreats with the group. She is really looking forward to traveling to Israel next year with her eighth grade class from Schechter. Leah also enjoys spending time with young children, particularly her cousins, and she does a lot of baby-sitting.

Leah looks forward to becoming Bat Mitzvah and wishes to thank her parents and sisters, Megan and Brittany, for being there for her as she's been growing up.



What's Going On?

BETH EL

The Heights Synagogue

Issue 11, June-July 2004

The Renovation is Under Way!

We celebrated the ground-breaking for our façade renovation on April 18, and work got underway in earnest during May. Construction will continue throughout the summer, with completion expected before we celebrate High Holy Days.

Please Do Not Disturb...

While the construction is going on, the sidewalk along Berkeley will be blocked off and there will be a great deal of activity on the south and west sides of the building during the week. For safety and legal reasons, we ask that everyone follow these guidelines:

- Stay clear of the construction area;
- Avoid discussing the work with the contractors, construction manager, or workers.

If you have a concern about anything you see at the site, please let us know. Contact Laura Gooch (lgooch@alum.mit.edu; 216-932-1002), Russell Berusch (rab@neighborhoodprogress.org; 216-397-9060), or Ditte Wolin (adwolin@nccw.net; 216-932-9907). We prefer that you contact us by e-mail so that we have a written record of your concern. Again, don't discuss it directly with workers at the site.

The construction may be an inconvenience, but our new elevator entrance will be worth the trouble!

Preparations

Ditte Wolin, Marvin Palevsky, Dave Tomberg, Bill Schmitt and others worked hard to clean out the building in preparation for the renovation. They cleared the storage area under the west stairs, installed a few more chairs in the sanctuary, repaired a few of the ones that are in place, and set others aside for disposal. Many thanks to them for their continuing hard work.

Fire Doors

You may have noticed some new "Fire Door" signs and some newly closed doors in the building. The doors with the signs that say "Fire Door – Do Not Prop Open" are designed to prevent the spread of fire from one part of the building to another. The Fire Marshall has reminded us that these doors need to be closed at all times (except when you are actually walking through!). Please help us out by never propping them open. During construction, some of the existing interior doors will be upgraded so that they close properly and safely, and we'll add some more emergency lighting to be sure that we can exit safely if there is a power failure. The existing exit doors will also be upgraded or replaced to improve safety and security.

Jewish Short-Story Reading and Discussion Group

Sponsored by the Adult Education Committee.
Kickoff meeting Sunday, August 29, 7:00 PM
(at the synagogue)

So many of us enjoyed discussing the Saul Bellow and Cynthia Ozick short stories at the Lunch and Learn with Shelly Bloomfield earlier this year. Our interest is piqued and we are ready for new engaging discussions of short stories by Jewish authors. The initial meeting will focus on creating an authors/stories selection list, how often the group should meet – monthly, bimonthly, quarterly – and other relevant matters.

Please contact Sondra Jacobs, hajacobs@juno.com or (216) 397-1486, if you plan to participate.