

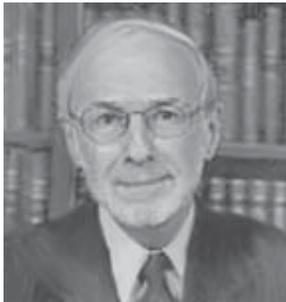


BETH EL NEWSLETTER

The Heights Synagogue

February 2006

שבט 5766



Rabbi Moshe Adler

Faith versus Fanaticism

Radical Islamist groups who make news every day are motivated by a desire to bring the world under a repressively fundamentalist brand of Islam. They believe that this is the will of G-d, and that this was, in fact, what Muhammad and his successors were doing during their century-and-a-half march to empire. They see themselves as completing Muhammad's march. To this end, they exploit, inflame and co-opt any political cause or social unrest; they train and dispatch suicide bombers; they use civilian populations as human shields; and wherever they succeed, they replace existing governments with repressively fundamentalist theocracies.

In short, radical Islamist groups are religious fanatics. Before we talk about what fanaticism is, we need to be clear about what it is not. A Jew who lives a life of religious observance is not fanatic. A Christian who informs all his major life-decisions with Christian values is not fanatic. A Muslim who fasts during Ramadan and prays five times a day is not fanatic. Fanaticism is not the same as intense commitment.

Fanaticism is a particular form of commitment: one that cannot tolerate other forms of commitment. If I think that you are mistaken in your views, I am not a fanatic. If, however, I can neither tolerate your views nor permit them to exist, I am a fanatic. And if I use violence to prevent you from maintaining and advocating your views, I am a violent fanatic.

Religion is driven by passion. It is passion that impels us to do good even when there is no "percentage" in it; to pray simply for the sake of being with G-d; to love with no expectation of reward; and to strive, against practical counsel, to improve the world.

But if intellect devoid of passion is cold, passion devoid of intellect is a flame out of control. Passion must be carefully directed lest it run wild and devour everything it touches. When passion passes its boundaries, it becomes fanaticism.

Our Sages, of blessed memory, understood this clearly. In the Talmud, they discuss the biblical case of Pinchas, who summarily executed Zimri, a tribal chieftain engaged in public cult-prostitution. In so doing, he instantly ended the people's defection to idolatry. G-d exonerated Pinchas because he "turned back My wrath from the Israelites by displaying among them his passion for Me, so that I did not wipe out the Israelites people in My passion" (Numbers 25.11).

Did G-d's ratification of Pinchas' act mean that the Torah generally approves of zealots taking the law into their own hands? Our Sages (Sanhedrin 82a) reply as follows:

If [a zealot] comes to take counsel [on whether to slay the transgressor], we do not instruct him to do so. What is more, had Zimri separated [from the cult-prostitute] and Pinchas slain him, Pinchas would have been executed on his account;

(continued on page 3)



Join us for
Kabbalat Shabbat
on January 27
(no congregational
dinner)

and on
March 3
(reservations re-
quired, if you would
like to join us for
dinner).



Jack Valancy

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

As always, please do not hesitate to contact your President by e-mail president@bethelheights.org 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: If you'd like to get the pdf e-mail version, contact news@bethelheights.org (You must have the free Acrobat Reader in order to open the attachment.)

President's Perspectives, February 2006

Teach Your Children Well

Two of life's pleasures are watching children and trees grow. Since our congregation is blessed with many delightful kids, and Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for Trees, begins at sunset on February 12, I turned to a variety of thinkers for their wisdom on children and trees.

- ☞ One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade. - *Chinese proverb.*
- ☞ We find delight in the beauty and happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body. - *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- ☞ For unflagging interest and enjoyment, a household of children, if things go reasonably well, certainly all other forms of success and achievement lose their importance by comparison. - *Theodore Roosevelt*
- ☞ Great oaks from little acorns grow. - *Proverb*
- ☞ When I approach a child, he inspires in me two sentiments; tenderness for what he is, and respect for what he may become. - *Louis Pasteur*
- ☞ I think, at a child's birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift should be curiosity. - *Eleanor Roosevelt*
- ☞ Children always turn to the light. - *David Hare*
- ☞ No one has yet realized the wealth of sympathy, the kindness and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure. - *Emma Goldman*
- ☞ To make your children capable of honesty is the beginning of education. - *John Ruskin*
- ☞ Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him. - *Maya Angelou*
- ☞ What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child. - *George Bernard Shaw*
- ☞ Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up. - *Pablo Picasso*
- ☞ The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives. - *Albert Einstein*
- ☞ If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all. - *Pearl S. Buck*
- ☞ If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace. - *Thomas Paine*
- ☞ If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children. - *Mohandas Gandhi*
- ☞ Each child is an adventure into a better life - an opportunity to change the old pattern and make it new. - *Hubert H. Humphrey*
- ☞ Children are apt to live up to what you believe of them. - *Lady Bird Johnson*
- ☞ Children need models rather than critics. - *Joseph Joubert*
- ☞ There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One is roots; the other, wings. - *Hodding Carter*
- ☞ A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children. - *John James Audubon*

(*Faith versus Fanaticism, ctd. from p. 1*)

and had Zimri turned upon Pinḥas and slain him, he would not have been executed, since Pinḥas was a pursuer [and might therefore legally be slain in self-defense].

The summary action of a zealot may be justified only after the fact, and only in a very narrow window of legitimacy. The burden of the law rests not on the zealot's victim, however provocative his behavior may have been, but on the zealot. The question is not whether the zealot is a role model; the question is whether he can even be exonerated. It took a direct pronouncement by G-d to exonerate Pinḥas. While there is limited room in Jewish law for extraordinary acts of zealotry, there is no room for vigilante rule.

Some halachically committed Jews have nevertheless taken it upon themselves to carry out what they considered G-d's retribution. The late Baruch Goldstein, who gunned down some thirty Muslims at prayer in the Tomb of the Patriarchs, and Yigal Amir, who assassinated Prime Minister Yitzḥak Rabin, are prime examples. Such people act on the conviction that they are doing the will of G-d, but they have crossed the line separating faith from fanaticism.

Two different Hebrew terms describe religious zeal: *z'rizut* and *kin'ah*. *Z'rizut* means eagerness, and *kin'ah* means zealotry. Someone who performs a mitzvah joyfully and at the earliest possible moment is acting out of *z'rizut*. Someone who, like Pinḥas, takes "impassioned action" in G-d's behalf is acting out of *kin'ah*. There is a critical difference between them. *Kin'ah* can start out with good intentions but end up causing evil results. *Z'rizut*, on the other hand, can lead to freedom from sin (Talmud, Avodah Zarah 20b).

Religion can be a powerful motivation either for doing good, or for doing evil in the name of good. It depends on which type of zeal one brings to it. We do well to follow the Psalmist's teaching, "Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (Psalms 34.15).

Short Stories by Jewish Authors Mini Series On the Lighter Side

At the December meeting of our Short Stories by Jewish Authors Reading and Discussion Group, it was suggested that we depart, momentarily, from the "heavy" readings and try something lighter – for which reason the group focused on five short stories by S.J. Perelman in January.

The stories of Alan Isler – read in December – were fascinating and wonderfully written with seriousness and a dash of humor. Basically, Isler's theme was "the Jew in the Gentile World" and he perfectly captured that dilemma with its many nuances.

The Short Stories by Jewish Authors ... Group will not meet in February but will resume in March with stories by Amos Oz. New members are welcome. For details, and to obtain titles or copies of the stories, contact Sondra Jacobs, 216-397-1481 or sondrajacobs@sbcglobal.net.

Daniel Shapiro to Perform

Beth El member Daniel Shapiro will be performing a recital of chamber and solo piano works on Wednesday, February 15, at 8:00 PM in Kulas Hall at the Cleveland Institute of Music, 11021 East Boulevard in Cleveland. There will be works by Bartok, Brahms and Schumann. Admission is free.

Daniel will also be giving a series of performances of the Beethoven Triple Concerto at various locations with City Music Cleveland beginning Wednesday, February 22, 2006, at 7:30 PM at Fairmount Presbyterian Church in Cleveland Heights. Detailed information for this free series of concerts can be found

WE NEED ADDITIONAL TORAH READERS!

Join the Beth El Torah reader corps, acquire an exciting new skill, and help your shul.

Enroll in a five-session course at Siegal College of Judaic Studies, beginning Monday evening, January 30.

By the end of this user-friendly course you will be able to chant any Torah section without relying on tapes.

Other courses in biblical and modern Hebrew are also available at Siegal College.

For more information please call Nili Adler at 216-464-4050 ext. 116, or e-mail nadler@siegalcollege.edu

Adult Education at Beth El

SHABBAT

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Want to learn to
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available.

Contact

Lisa Berusch

at 397-9060

or

[lberusch@](mailto:lberusch@sbcbel.net)

sbcbel.net

Saturday, February 11, about 10:20 AM – **Learners' Service.** Does the davening leave you in the dust? Come to our new and improved Learners' Service. Practice praying at a slow pace. Ask questions and get answers. Take-home study guides from the new Berhman House series for adults. Meet around 10:20 AM and rejoin the main service for the D'var Torah.

Saturday, February 11, after services – **Kiddush with Rashi.** Wonder what Rashi, the famous Medieval commentator, made of the Five Books of Moses? Satisfy your appetite, both of mind and body, during an engaging and accessible exploration during kiddush. Lead by Cheryl Birkner Mack. Cheryl teaches at the Siegal College of Judaic Studies and Cuyahoga Community College and has a graduate degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Saturday, February 11, 7:30 PM – **Movie Night.** Looking for good company, stimulating discussions and something to nosh on a Saturday night? This is the second of our movie nights for 2006 – taking place while Shabbat ends early enough to still party. You don't even need to hire a sitter for your older school aged kids. Bring them along to watch a kids movie with their friends.

For adults: *Land of the Settlers* (Israel, 2005). Chaim Yavin, who has anchored the news on Israel TV for 4 decades and is often called "Israel's Walter Cronkite," went into the West Bank to do a documentary on the settlers, and this is what he came back with — and surprise, it's "controversial." Co-sponsored with Brit Tzdek v'Shalom.

For children: *The Frisco Kid* (1979, USA). The greatest cowboy ever to ride into the Wild West. From Poland. This is the Gene Wilder classic, and it's still funny, and surprisingly familiar here in the 21st century wild west. Adults are welcome too.

Saturday, February 25 – **Learners' Service.** See description on February 11.

Saturday, February 25, after services – **Lunch and Learn. "Isaiah, Voices of Prophecy,"** presented by Stacia Dearmin. Join us for a warm, vegetarian-friendly lunch after services and stay to learn. Featuring stimulating topics presented by members of the synagogue and community. Free to members and friends, no RSVP required. Babysitting provided. Stacia is a pediatrician who also has a graduate degree in Religious Studies.

Sunday, February 26, 7:00 to 8:30 PM – **"Negotiating with G-d: Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev (an eighteenth century Chasidic Rabbi),"** presented by Rabbi Moshe Adler. This is part 3 of the Rabbi's mini-series. Please join us even if you missed previous sessions. Location: Home of Rabbi Moshe and Nili Adler, 4083 Bushnell Road, University Heights

Saturday, March 11, about 10:20 AM – **Learners' Service.** See description on February 11.

Saturday, March 11, after services – **Lunch and Learn. "Among the Jewish 'Ink-stained Amazons': The Poetry of Emma Lazarus, Adah Isaacs Menken, and Penina Moise,"** presented by Shelley Bloomfield. Copies of selected poems will be available on the information table mid-February. Shelley has a PhD, is a published author, and teaches at the Cleveland Institute of Art.



Come In Out Of The Cold!

Movie Nights

**at Beth El–The Heights Synagogue
Saturday, Jan. 21, at 7:30 p.m.**

For adults:

Trembling Before God (U.S. & Israel, 2001)

Built around intimately-told personal stories of Hasidic and Orthodox Jews who are gay or lesbian, the film portrays a group of people who face a profound dilemma — how to reconcile their passionate love of Judaism and the Divine with the drastic Biblical prohibitions that forbids homosexuality. Followed by a facilitated discussion.

For children:

Peter Pan

(2003, U.S.A.)

This is a remake of the classic. In case you never heard of it: "The Darling family children receive a visit from Peter Pan, who takes them to Never Never Land where an ongoing war with the evil Pirate Captain Hook is taking place."

FREE ADMISSION

but we request a donation (\$4 adult, \$2 child) to cover refreshments and equipment rental.

SAT
21
JAN

SAT
11
FEB



For adults:

Land of the Settlers

(Israel, 2005)

Chaim Yavin, who has anchored the news on Israel TV for 4 decades and is often called "Israel's Walter Cronkite," went into the West Bank to do a documentary on the settlers, and this is what he came back with — and surprise, it's "controversial."

Co-sponsored with Brit Tzdek v'Shalom

For children:

The Frisco Kid

(1979, U.S.A.)

The greatest cowboy ever to ride into the Wild West. From Poland. This is the Gene Wilder classic, and it's still funny, and surprisingly familiar here in the 21st century wild west. Adults are welcome too.

**For information
on these events
call Mia or Joe
at 216-321-7134**

**at Beth El–The Heights Synagogue
Saturday, Feb. 11, at 7:30 p.m.**

All events at our shul, 3246 Desota Ave., Cleveland Heights

NEWS FROM BETHEL

חדשות

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Thanks for the help to: תודה!

- Lila Newman, who continues to use her expert sewing skills to improve our Torah mantles.
- All of those who helped make the mailing of the January newsletter go quickly.

Thanks for donations to: תודה!

- Lisa and Russell Berusch for the donation of a dish.
- Bill and Carol Bruml for two pairs of shears for the kitchen.

Thanks for contributions to: תודה!

- Abraham and Muriel Chassin
- Hope and Jay Fromson
- Frances Goldberg
- Richard Krueck and Robin Dubin
- Lumina Foundation (Matching Gift, at the request of Leah Austin), to the Capital Fund.
- Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin
- Marty and Laura Rabinowitz
- David and Terri Tomberg

- Blanche and Jack Valancy
- Ieda and Marvin Warshay
- Mark Weber
- Anonymous

Thanks for Kiddush Sponsorships to:

- Harvey and Karen Kugelman, who sponsored Kiddush on January 28, in honor of Adam's Bar Mitzvah.

Refuah Sh'lema to: רפואה שלימה!

- Bill Bruml's sister, Jan Bruml
- Kimberly Carr
- Gerson Carr
- Clara Dick
- Nancy Landis (Emily's mother)
- Miriam Palevsky

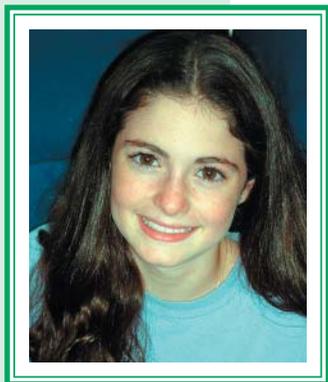
Mazel Tov to: מזל טוב!

- Elana Berusch and her family. Elana will celebrate her Bat Mitzvah on February 18.

Bravo! כל הכבוד!

- Zev Valancy who will appear in Leonard Bernstein's "Candide" at Northwestern University, February 10-19.

Elana Berusch to Become Bat Mitzvah



Elana Berusch will celebrate her Bat Mitzvah on February 18. Elana, the daughter of Lisa and Russell, lives in Cleveland Heights, along with her siblings, Maggie and Joe. Her grandparents are Carol and Howard Berusch of Beachwood, Sam and Leah Austin and Norman and Diane Lefstein, all of Indianapolis. Elana is in 7th grade at Roxboro Middle School, and attends Cleveland Hebrew Schools. She was on Roxboro's volleyball team this past year. Elana has been taking piano since second grade, and she plays clarinet in the Roxboro band. In her limited free time Elana reads and spends time with friends. Elana thanks her tutor, Na'ama Sharaby, and her parents for helping her prepare for her bat mitzvah.

Following services, the congregation is invited to a kiddush lunch sponsored by the Berusch family in honor of Elana.

CALENDAR, OCTOBER 2005

February 2006

5766 שׁבֿט

Saturday, January 28 – ADAM KUGELMAN WILL BECOME BAR MITZVAH. His parents, Harvey and Karen, will sponsor Kiddush in his honor.

Saturday, February 11

Approximately 10:20 AM – LEARNERS' SERVICE

After services – KIDDUSH WITH RASHI. (See page 4 for details.)

7:30 PM – MOVIE NIGHT (See page 6 for details.)

Adult Movie: *Land of the Settlers*

Kids' Movie: *The Frisco Kid*

February 13 – TU B'SHEVAT ט"ו בשבֿט

Saturday, February 18 – ELANA BERUSCH WILL BECOME BAT MITZVAH. Her parents, Lisa and Russell, will sponsor Kiddush in her honor.

Saturday, February 25

Approximately 10:20 AM – LEARNERS' SERVICE

After Services – LUNCH AND LEARN: "ISAIAH, VOICES OF PROPHECY," presented by Stacia Dearmin. (See page 4 for details.)

Sunday, February 26, 7:00 to 8:30 PM – NEGOTIATING WITH G-D: "RABBI LEVI YITZHAK OF BERDITCHEV," presented by Rabbi Moshe Adler. (See page 4 for details.)

Saturday, March 11

Approximately 10:20 AM – LEARNERS' SERVICE.

After Services – LUNCH AND LEARN: "AMONG THE JEWISH 'INK-STAINED AMAZONS': THE POETRY OF EMMA LAZARUS, ADA ISAACS MENKEN, AND PENINA MOISE," presented by Shelley Bloomfield. (See page 4 for details.)

Yahrzeit Reminder Program

Beth El--
The Heights
Synagogue
now has
a Yahrzeit
Reminder
Program
in place for
members.

If you wish
to receive a
reminder
when a loved
one's yahrzeit is
approaching,
please contact
Sondra Jacobs,
216-397-1481,
or e-mail
sondrajacobs@sbglobal.net

February Yahrzeits

FEBRUARY 1 TO FEBRUARY 3

3 SHEVAT TO 5 SHEVAT

Victor Reiss	3 Shevat
Theresa Siegler	3 Shevat
David Carr	3 Shevat
Mordechai Lugasy	4 Shevat

FEBRUARY 4 – FEBRUARY 10

6 SHEVAT – 12 SHEVAT

Rudolph Landesman	6 Shevat
Ziskind Alex Simon	6 Shevat
Isaac Bruder	7 Shevat
Eugene Goodman	7 Shevat
Max Fromson	10 Shevat
Blumi Zavelowitz	10 Shevat
Louis Sobelman	11 Shevat
Dorothy Neuger	11 Shevat

FEBRUARY 11 – FEBRUARY 17

13 SHEVAT – 19 SHEVAT

Fannie Levine	13 Shevat
Pinkas Zavell	13 Shevat
Mary Malkin	17 Shevat
Charles Auerbach	17 Shevat
Isadore Fromson	17 Shevat
David Muszynski	18 Shevat
Gayle Kuhr Sharpe	18 Shevat
Anna Genuth	18 Shevat
William Berkman	19 Shevat
Abraham Margolis	19 Shevat
Howard B. Cohen	19 Shevat
Mathilda Mendelow	19 Shevat

FEBRUARY 18 – FEBRUARY 24

20 SHEVAT – 26 SHEVAT

Rose Reiss	20 Shevat
Euginea Sender	20 Shevat
Abe Lipoff	21 Shevat
Helen Haskin	23 Shevat
Sam Cohen	24 Shevat
Jules Pepper	25 Shevat

FEBRUARY 25 – FEBRUARY 28

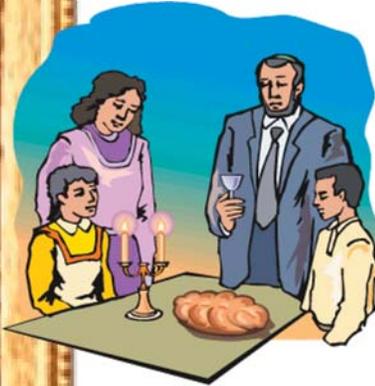
27 SHEVAT – 30 SHEVAT

Irving Bloom	29 Shevat 5753
Emanuel Mills	29 Shevat
Phil Mishinsky	29 Shevat
Edith Bertman	30 Shevat
Dorothy Samuels	30 Shevat

Kabbalat Shabbat

קבלת שבת

Friday, March 3



6:00 PM Services begin in the sanctuary

**7:00 PM Dinner in the social hall,
followed by singing and dancing**

The cost of the dinner is \$8.00 per person. Children 5 and under are free.

For more information call the Beth El-The Heights Synagogue Office at 216-320-9667.

Yes, we are coming to the Friday night dinner on March 3, 2006

Name _____

Phone number _____

Number of: Adults and children over 5 years old attending _____ Children ages 5 and under _____

Number of vegetarian meals needed _____

Total amount enclosed (\$8 per person; Children 5 and under free) _____

I can help set up/ cook (Thurs. Eve) _____ Set up (Fri. 4 PM) _____ Clean up _____

Reserve your spot by Friday, February 24, by sending in payment with response forms
(to help us keep track of what your check is for!) to:

Beth El-The Heights Synagogue, 3246 Desota Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118.