



BETH EL NEWSLETTER

The Heights Synagogue

May 2006

אייר \ סיון 5766



Rabbi Moshe Adler

Three Good Gifts that Aren't Free

The Talmudic sage Rabbi Shim'on ben Yoḥai taught (B'rachot 5a) that "the Holy Blessed One gave Israel three good gifts, all of which He gave only through suffering: Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come."

Those gifts tend to be undervalued, scorned, or simply ignored. People who actively seek to acquire them tend to be honored outwardly but disrespected inwardly.

Rabbi Shim'on ben Yoḥai seems to have based his teaching on his own life experience. Forced to flee from the Roman government, which sought his life during the Hadrianic persecution, he hid out in a cave with his son for years. He had already seen colleagues being arrested and, in many cases, never coming back alive. He evidently considered suffering to be part of the divine plan, the means for earning the gifts to which he and his colleagues and disciples dedicated their lives.

In stating his teaching categorically, Rabbi Shim'on ben Yoḥai is telling us that the mere fact of our having to acquire Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come in this world means that we must acquire them through hardship and often through suffering. It is not that we must suffer in order to receive a reward; it is that we must necessarily serve G-d in this world, which all too often entails suffering, either because of natural disasters that have nothing to do with human virtue or vice, or because of human malevolence. To keep faith with G-d in the midst of all this, and to live by His mitzvot despite pressure to abandon them, is to become better people – people who acquire Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come.

But such a theology, when stated categorically, is most problematic. If you have to suffer for a gift, is it really a gift, much less a good one? Is G-d a "reality show" host who puts us through pain and degradation and then rewards us for having endured them? Are we forced to eat dung so that we can later eat chocolate? Making Rabbi Shim'on's theology categorical would seem to lead to such a conclusion, though that is hardly what he would have wanted. What might he have meant, then, by stating that teaching categorically?

This month we celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel Independence Day. There is no doubt that, among the three good gifts G-d gave us, the Land of Israel has been acquired by our people, and is maintained by our people, through hardship and suffering. That is why, each year, Yom HaAtzmaut is preceded by Yom HaZikaron, Memorial Day for those who fell in battle or in terrorist attacks either in defense of the State of Israel or merely for living there.

In this fragile and finite world, the difficulties of having to earn a livelihood and of coping with life's many vicissitudes make it difficult to pursue G-d's gifts. In addition to the built-in difficulties of living in an imperfect world, there is the added human factor: the persistence of selfishness, destructiveness, and violence that makes it hard for so many people merely to survive, let alone seek to acquire G-d's gifts.

Since the Palestinians have democratically elected a fanatical terrorist organization to power, prospects for negotiating a peaceful two-state co-existence with our neighbors appear dimmer than ever. The question of whether we could have done so in the past, *(continued on p.3)*

יום
העצמאות
ה אייר



Israel
Independence Day
Wednesday, May 3

Note: There will be no first-Friday Kabbalat Shabbat services during the summer; they will resume in the fall.



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, May 2006

An Appreciation of Mothers

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 14. Let's celebrate the mothers in and of our congregation with a wise and witty appreciation of mothers!

- ☞ *Motherhood: All love begins and ends there.* - Robert Browning
- ☞ *No gift to your mother can ever equal her gift to you - life.* - Unknown
- ☞ *Sometimes the strength of motherhood is greater than natural laws.* - Barbara Kingsolver
- ☞ *Most of all the other beautiful things in life come by twos and threes by dozens and hundreds. Plenty of roses, stars, sunsets, rainbows, brothers, and sisters, aunts and cousins, but only one mother in the whole world.* - Kate Douglas Wiggin
- ☞ *Being a full-time mother is one of the highest salaried jobs... since the payment is pure love.* - Mildred B. Vermont
- ☞ *When you are a mother, you are never really alone in your thoughts. A mother always has to think twice, once for herself and once for her child.* - Sophia Loren
- ☞ *If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do well matters very much.* - Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
- ☞ *At work, you think of the children you have left at home. At home, you think of the work you've left unfinished. Such a struggle is unleashed within yourself. Your heart is rent.* - Golda Meir
- ☞ *All mothers are working mothers.* - Unknown
- ☞ *Motherhood has relaxed me in many ways. You learn to deal with crisis. I've become a juggler, I suppose. It's all a big circus, and nobody who knows me believes I can manage, but sometimes I do.* - Jane Seymour
- ☞ *Any mother could perform the jobs of several air-traffic controllers with ease.* - Lisa Alther
- ☞ *G-d could not be everywhere, and therefore he made mothers.* - Rudyard Kipling
- ☞ *There is only one pretty child in the world, and every mother has it.* - Chinese proverb
- ☞ *It is not until you become a mother that your judgment slowly turns to compassion and understanding.* ~ Erma Bombeck
- ☞ *A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.* - Tenneva Jordan
- ☞ *The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom.* - Henry Ward Beecher
- ☞ *And so our mothers and grandmothers have, more often than not anonymously, handed on the creative spark, the seed of the flower they themselves never hoped to see ~ or like a sealed letter they could not plainly read.* - Alice Walker
- ☞ *Mama exhorted her children at every opportunity to 'jump at de sun.' We might not land on the sun, but at least we would get off the ground.* - Zora Neale Hurston

☞ *My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her.* - George Washington

☞ *I regard no man as poor who has a godly mother.* - Abraham Lincoln

☞ *A mother is not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary.* - Dorothy Canfield Fisher

☞ *A mother understands what a child does not say.* - Unknown

☞ *A mother's love is patient and forgiving when all others are forsaking, it never fails or falters, even though the heart is breaking.* - Helen Rice

☞ *There is no way to be a perfect mother, and a million ways to be a good one.* - Jill Churchill

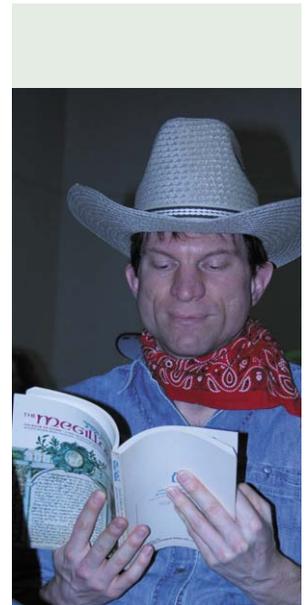
☞ *A mother holds her children's hands for a while... their hearts forever.* - Unknown

While researching this column, I came across ***Jewish Mothers: Strength, Wisdom, Compassion***, a documentary photography book which celebrates today's American Jewish mothers. Photographer Lloyd Wolf and writer Paula E. Wolfson have captured the rich diversity of America's Jewish mothers in compelling personal stories and poignant black-and-white photographs. Each woman shares her life experience, her dreams, struggles, hopes, pains; pleasures, traditions, and transitions, her memories of her mother, child-raising, and what it is to be Jewish.

For more information, follow this link

http://www.chroniclebooks.com/site/catalog/index.php?main_page=pubs_product_book_info&products_id=1670

Happy Mother's Day!



Eric Fryxell
Purim 2006

(Three Good Gifts that Aren't Free, continued from p.1)
before Hamas became the Palestinian government, is now moot. At the same time, although Israel's new Kadima party was just elected to power, its mandate to proceed with unilaterally drawing Israel's borders is not as great as Ehud Olmert had hoped it would be. And all the while, Israel's internal economy is in crisis.

Our people will have to do what it has always done: argue, settle on a less-than-perfect plan, and – like Nahshon wading into the sea in the faith that it will split – move ahead.

On Yom HaAtzmaut, we will recite Hallel in thanks for the miracle of having Eretz Yisrael again after two millennia. We will also pray for the welfare of the State of Israel, in which we ask for G-d's protection against our enemies and for a peace in which no one will be enemies.

And day after day we will go on trying to acquire G-d's other two good gifts: Torah and the World to Come.

Hag Sameah! חג שמחה!



BETH EL
The Heights Synagogue

Any Day is Thanksgiving Day When...
You or a loved one recovers from an illness or surgery
You narrowly escape an accident
You achieve success in some area of your life
A relationship is healed

Say "Thank G-d" for these daily miracles
in a tangible way,
with a gift to Beth El – The Heights Synagogue

Contact Emily Dennis
216-589-0663

To assist with directing your gift of gratitude

Adult Education

Adult Education at Beth El

Saturday, May 6 – 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, May 6 – (Note change in program) Lunch and Learn, led by Shulamit Magnus – “Who was a Jew? – Prepare to be Surprised” Shulamit is Director of the Jewish Studies Program and Associate Professor of History at Oberlin College.

Sunday, May 7, 1:00 PM – Private tour of the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage. Reservations and prepayment required. See April newsletter for details. Contact Mark Davidson, at 216-593-0593 or markyosef@sbcglobal.net, with any questions.

Saturday, May 20 – Learners’ Service – see description on May 6th for details.

Saturday, May 20 – (Note changed date) Kiddush with Rashi – Wonder what Rashi, the famous medieval commentator’s, made of the Five Books of Moses? Satisfy your appetite, both of mind and body, during an engaging and accessible exploration during Kiddush. The program will be led by Cheryl Birkner Mack, who teaches at the Siegal College of Judaic Studies and Cuyahoga Community College and who has a graduate degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Sunday, May 21, 7:00-8:30 PM – Medical Ethics: Judaism and End-of-Life Issues: “How to Effectuate the Decisions – Legally, Medically, and Religiously,” with Rabbi Moshe Adler and Professor Jessica Berg, JD, Case Western Reserve University Schools of Law and Medicine. See the enclosed flyer for further details.

Short Stories by Jewish Authors Discussion Group

Amos Oz’ stories, “Crusade” and “Late Love” were set centuries apart, yet both were very dark and surprisingly compelling. Oz is a master of prose. Interestingly, he writes in Hebrew but the English translations are no less powerful. He is able to convey the idiosyncrasies of his characters and the images of their environments with a force that provided our group with much to ponder.

SSBJA will be reading Philip Roth’s short stories in his book, *Goodbye, Columbus*. A May date is not yet established for the next meeting of SSBJA. For information, please contact Sondra Jacobs, 216-397-1481, or sondrajacobs@sbcglobal.net.

Adult Education at Siegal College

Siegal College Summer Courses
ADD CLASS TO YOUR SUMMER
A variety of Hebrew courses are offered this summer at Siegal College. Short courses in Biblical and modern Hebrew begin May 29. Courses include learning how to chant the Torah and readings in the book of Jonah. Summer intensive Ulpan is July 17 to August 10, morning or evening hours.

LEARN HOW TO TEACH HEBREW
Moreshet, the Hebrew Teacher Training program, is recruiting a new class: Siegal College and the JECC are seeking candidates interested in joining the fourth class of this highly successful program, to begin in the September 2006. The program is tuition free and includes an intensive Hebrew language study, enriched Judaic study and an opportunity to learn the latest theories and practices of language teaching. Call Nili Adler for information: 216-464-4050 ext. 116

*As we
express our
gratitude, we
must
never forget
that
the highest
appreciation
is not
to utter
words, but to
live by them.*

John Fitzgerald
Kennedy



Noam Gelles
Purim 2006

The Supplements Are Here!

On Shabbat, April 8, 2006, the long-awaited supplement booklets for the Torah service, complete with excellent transliteration, were used with great delight. After a trial run in February, they were put away until the wonderful series of Bar and Bat Mitzvahs was over. Now the supplements are out again and are working for us. In addition to very readable transliteration, the supplements give useful directions about “choreography” and even contain some wry humor. The format makes them easy to handle and use.

Thanks are due to Rabbi Moshe Adler, Lisa Lefstein Berusch, and Joe and Mia Buchwald Gelles for this exciting and dynamic aid!

Won't you join us on a Shabbat morning soon and see what we are doing to make the service more accessible?



Welcome New Member,

Sue Klein

Beth El–The Heights Synagogue is happy to welcome our new member, Sue Klein.

Sue first came to our shul because her son and his family, Ari Klein, Ditte Wolin, and Shoshana and Aviva Klein, are members. But she stayed because she felt the group to be very welcoming, friendly, and accepting of a range of observance. In addition, Sue thinks BE-THS has “something for everyone” in the variety of programs and opportunities offered!

A Cleveland resident since childhood, Sue has lived in Cleveland Heights since high school. Indeed, Aviva and Shoshana are the third generation of the family to attend the CH-UH Schools.

Sue has worked at various jobs, but her primary vocations were raising her four children and volunteering with the American

Field Service, which she has done since 1980. Her other children are daughter Alison and husband Robert of Reno, NV. They work as child advocates in the court system. Son Paul and his wife Juli live in Cleveland Heights and both work at Cuyahoga Community College. Daughter Miriam works for the Bureau of National Affairs, a legal publisher in Washington, DC, and lives in Silver Spring, MD, with her husband Bob, who is employed at the National Zoo.

Sue's late husband, Jerry (Jarad) Klein, owned and operated Klein Insurance. He was well known for his wonderful singing voice, and sang at many churches and synagogues.

We are glad to have Sue at BE–THS, whether at a service or educational program, celebrating a holiday, or as a faithful member of the newsletter-mailing crew!!



Summer Newsletter Deadlines

The next issue of the newsletter will be a combined one, covering both June and July. It should cover all planned events through Sunday, August 6. The deadline for submittals will be May 10. I am giving advance notice due to the need to plan far ahead! / Editor

The August issue of the newsletter will be published about a week early, to allow for some catch-up, after the combined June-July issue. The August issue should include all planned events through Monday, September 4. The deadline for submittals for the August issue will be July 5.

Shabbat

Liturgy

Available on

CD

Want to learn to

lead part of our

Shabbat service?

CDs of Shabbat

liturgy are now

available.

Contact

Lisa Berusch

at 397-9060

or

lberusch@

sbcglobal.net

NEWS FROM BETH EL

חדשות



*Allegra & Mariah Steiger
Maggie Berusch*



Jessica Buekmann & Mom



Noah Schmitt



Ed & Eva Small

Condolences to: נידום אבלים

- Deborah Michelson and family, on the death of Debbie's father, Mike Michelson.
- Marvin Palevsky and family, on the death of Marvin's sister, Iris Bergsman.

Thanks to readers of Shir Ha-Shirim on Shabbat Hol Ha-Moed Pesach: תודה!

- Moshe and Nili Adler
- Michael Bloom and Peggy Sullivan
- Matthew Hirshfeld
- Marilyn Malkin
- Na'ama Sharaby
- Blanche Valancy

Thanks for the Donation to: תודה!

- David and Teri Tomberg, who donated two bookshelves and 93 volumes, as an addition to our library.

Thanks for Contributions to: תודה!

- Henry Bloom and Marilyn Malkin
- Frank and Jeanette Buchwald, in appreciation for Shalach Manot.
- Frank and Jeanette Buchwald, in honor of Sam Shiffman becoming a Bar Mitzvah.
- Aryeh and Galit Dori, in memory of grandfather Ruben Pilder.
- Joe and Mia Buchwald Gelles, to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.
- Louis Gray, in memory of Esther, Evelyn and Morris Gray.
- Gabi Hays, to help give seniors better access to programs and services.
- Joe and Lila Newman, in honor of their wedding anniversary.
- Charlotte Saunt, in memory of Jim Saunt and in honor of Rabbi Adler.
- Bill and Ilana Schmitt, to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.
- Helen Weinberg

Thanks for Kiddush Sponsorship to: תודה!

- Enid and Irv Kushner in memory of Rose Kushner

Thanks for Purim Photos to: תודה!

- Laura Gooch and David Kazdan

Thanks for Donations toward the Cleaning of our Talitot to: תודה!

- Shelley Birkner
- Michael Bloomfield
- Valeriy Elnatanov
- Gary and Marilyn Magden
- Deborah Michelson
- Devorah Silverman
- Beth and Scott Wachter

Thanks for Donations toward Maot Hittin to: תודה!

- Rabbi Moshe and Nili Adler
- Bill and Carol Bruml
- Frank and Jeanette Buchwald
- Martin Gelfand
- Chester and Stephanie Gordon
- Abigail and Jeffrey Halpern
- Laura Gooch and David Kazdan
- Robin Dubin and Richard Kruek
- Harvey and Karen Kugelman
- Henry Bloom and Marilyn Malkin
- Raymond Lesser and Susan Wolpert
- Shulamit Magnus
- Lila Newman
- Linda Tobin and Stephen Pepper
- Connie Sussman

Thanks for Mailing Help to: תודה!

- Shelley Birkner
- Sue Klein
- Teri Tomberg
- Beth Wachter
- Robin Dubin
- David Tomberg
- Blanche Valancy

We've received greetings from our former member, Elliott Magalnick, who is living in Denver. He writes that he attended FIVE seders this Pesach – three of them as a para-chaplain for Jewish Family Service of Colorado, bringing the holiday to Jewish seniors in assisted-living facilities. Elliott writes, "I'll be eating real good this Pesach!!" He sends his love to the whole Beth El family.

CALENDAR, MAY 2006

אייר \ סיון 5766

Sunday, April 30

Million Voices for Darfur Rally in Washington, DC. See March newsletter (p.5) or <http://www.millionvoicesfordarfur.org> for further details.

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM – **Dr. Stuart Youngner will lead Session Two of Judaism and End-of-Life Issues: Decision Making** (see p. 8 for details)

Tuesday, May 2, 6:00 to 9:00 PM – **Community-wide celebration of Yom Ha-Zikkaron and Yom Ha-Atzmaut** at Park Synagogue Main Campus, 3300 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights.

Wednesday, May 3 – Israel Independence Day, Yom Ha'Atzmaut

יום העצמאות

Saturday, May 6

About 10:20 AM – **Learners' Service**, see page 4 for details.

After Services – **Lunch and Learn with Shulamit Magnus**, see page 4 for details.

Sunday, May 7, 1:00 PM – **Tour the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage.** Reservations and prepayment required, see April newsletter for details.

Tuesday, May 16 – **Lag Ba-Omer**

ל"ג בעומר

Saturday, May 20, after services – **Kiddush with Rashi, led by Cheryl Birkner Mack**, see page 4 for details.

Sunday, May 21, 7:00 to 8:30 PM – **Rabbi Moshe Adler and Jessica Berg, JD, will lead Session Three of the Judaism and End-of-Life Issues mini-series, "How to Effectuate the Decisions – Legally, Medically and Religiously."** See page 8 for details.

Monday, May 29, 1:05 PM – **Join BE-THS friends for the Indians vs. White Sox game** at Jacobs Field. If you have not already reserved your ticket, contact Cheryl Birkner Mack, <cbm55@juno.com>. (Seats within our block may no longer be available.)

Thursday, June 1, 8:45 PM – **Erev Shavuot services**, followed by 9:30 PM – **Dinner and Tikkun.** Reservations required for dinner. See sidebar at right for details.

תקון ליל שבוועות

9:36 PM – **Yom tov candle-lighting** (earliest time to begin Kiddush and dinner and to hold Tikkun Leyl Shavuot)

Friday, June 2 – **First Day of Shavuot**

שבוועות

4:45 AM – **EARLY services** – Feel free to come join those who are ending the Tikkun.

9:15 AM – **Morning services**

8:37 PM – **Shabbat and yom tov candle lighting** (earliest time to begin Kiddush and dinner)

8:55 PM – **Sunset**

Saturday, June 3 – **Second Day of Shavuot**

שבוועות

9:15 AM – **Morning Services.** Join us for Hallel and readings from the Book of Ruth.

9:37 PM – **Shabbat and Shavuot may be ended and Havdalah recited** (full Havdalah with wine, spices and candle).

Sunday, June 25 – hold the morning for our **Annual Meeting** (members only).

Shavuot

**Stay up late!
Drink coffee!
Eat Nosh!
Study Torah!**

Join us for Tikkun Leyl Shavuot the evening of Thursday, June 1st.

Services begin at 8:45 PM.

A vegetarian dairy dinner will be served at 9:30 PM, followed immediately by the Tikkun.

We finish studying Torah the following morning at 4:45 AM with our early shaharit service.

Reservations necessary for dinner only.

Call Lisa Berusch at 397-9060 or e-mail at lberusch@sbcglobal.net to reserve a place.



The public is cordially invited to Beth El–The Heights Synagogue
for an Adult Education Mini-Series on

Medical Ethics: Judaism and End-of-Life Issues

with **Rabbi Moshe Adler** of Beth El–The Heights Synagogue

Dr. Stuart J. Youngner, Chairman of the Department of Bioethics at CWRU

Jessica Berg, JD, Professor of Law and Bioethics

at Case Western Reserve University Schools of Law & Medicine

Sunday, April 30 – End-of-Life Issues: Decision Making

Dr. Youngner's presentation will include Clinical Ethics, Consultation, Medical Interventions, Choices, and the Moment of Death.

Sunday, May 21 – How to Effectuate the Decisions: Legally, Medically, and Religiously

Rabbi Adler and Jessica Berg, JD, close the series with a focus on a pragmatic integration of legal, medical and religious approaches. This session will include a wrap-up, as well as questions and discussion.

TARGET AUDIENCE: general public, consumers, doctors, nurses, social workers, etc.

The format will be a 45 minute presentation followed by 45 minutes of questions and discussion.

Light refreshments will be served in the social hall following each session.

There will be no charge. A donation is suggested.



The sessions will be held at
Beth El–The Heights Synagogue
3246 Desota Ave in Cleveland Heights

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

For information or directions, call 216-320-9667

Yahrzeits, May 2006

אייר \ סיון 5766

May 1 to May 5
3 Iyar to 7 Iyar

Maurine Berman	3 Iyar 5762
John Berger	3 Iyar 5733
Earon Rein	4 Iyar
Sam Hemple	5 Iyar
George Friedlander	7 Iyar

May 6 to May 12
8 Iyar to 14 Iyar

Sam Neuger	8 Iyar
Sam Auerbach	9 Iyar
David Shamis	9 Iyar
Sarah Frumker	9 Iyar
Annie Keller	10 Iyar
Chaim Gabinet	12 Iyar
Rose Hemple	12 Iyar

May 13 to May 19
15 Iyar to 21 Iyar

Sarah Friedman	17 Iyar
Ethel Eisman	19 Iyar
Jacob Gutterman	19 Iyar
Samuel Herman Katz	21 Iyar

May 20 to May 26
22 Iyar to 28 Iyar

Harold Saul Neuger	22 Iyar
Aaron Schneider	26 Iyar
Nathan Valancy	26 Iyar
Miriam Zaremsky	27 Iyar
Mollie Davis	28 Iyar
Rachel Barazone	28 Iyar

May 27 to JUNE 2
29 Iyar to 6 SIVAN

Bessie Stashower Fredman	29 Iyar 5726
Anna Weinberger	29 Iyar
Clara Kord	29 Iyar
Isaac Genuth	29 Iyar
Elka Genuth	29 Iyar
Goldie Lederer	29 Iyar
Ernest Gelfand	29 Iyar
Donna Williams	29 Iyar
Anna Krasny	2 Sivan