

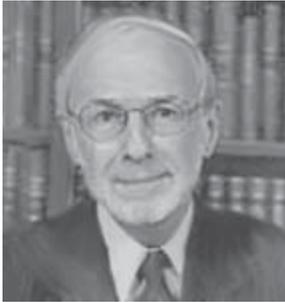


BETH EL NEWSLETTER

The Heights Synagogue

June-July, 2007

סיון \ תמוז \ אב 5767



Rabbi Moshe Adler

Old Wine, New Nuances

There is a common misconception abroad these days. It is the notion that prayer is either “traditional” or “creative,” and that the task of traditional Jews is to maintain liturgical texts and forms intact so that non-traditional Jews can use them creatively.

This portrayal of traditional Jewish prayer is both simplistic and inaccurate.

When prayed with heart and mind, every service is creative. Sometimes the worshipper creates of the liturgy a work that is satisfactory; sometimes a work that is rather good; and on occasion, a work of enduring value, one that puts the universe into perspective and brings the worshipper into closer touch with God.

Our Sages, of blessed memory, refer to prayer as *avodah*, which means “work.” If prayer is to be an integral part of one’s life, an ongoing dialogue with the Creator and not merely something done either in desperation or in occasional celebration, it must be built into one’s daily routine. That takes careful and patient work. As Abraham Joshua Heschel reminds us:

Prayer will not come about by default. It requires education, training, reflection, contemplation. It is not enough to join others; it is necessary to build a sanctuary *within* [emphasis

mine], brick by brick, instants of meditation, moments of devotion.

This is particularly true in an age when overwhelming forces seem to conspire at destroying our ability to pray.*

The key to lifting prayer up to God is *kavanah*, which means intent, focus on the One whom we are addressing. The literature of Jewish law and teaching has much to say about how to achieve *kavanah*. All kinds of “*kavanot*” – pre-prayer meditations – have grown up around liturgy and *mitzvah* observance, some of which have found their way into the prayer book. For example, before beginning the morning service, many people say, “I am ready to fulfill the mitzvah of ‘Love your fellow human being as yourself.’” In appropriating the collective prayer of my people as my own prayer, I am identifying with, and expressing concern for, all of our people. Once in that place, I can widen my circle of concern to include all of humankind. My prayer thus becomes an act of love for humankind. In making the collective prayer of *am yisrael* my own, I am adding my unique voice to that prayer.

Creativity in prayer is like creativity in music. One may compose something new and inspiring, or one may *(continued on p. 3)*



Beth El - The Heights Synagogue builds vibrant Jewish community.

We welcome all in participatory, traditional, egalitarian worship and learning.

Rabbi Moshe Adler ♦ Saturday Morning Services at 9:15, 3246 Desota Ave., Cleveland Hts., OH 44118 ♦ ☎216-320-9667



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.)

Priceless

This is the time of year when our members renew their membership in our congregation. What does it mean to be a member of Beth El-The Heights Synagogue?

As Rabbi Shawn Israel Zevit writes in his book, *Offerings of the Heart* (Alban Institute, 2005), "In Jewish life, an emphasis on community has historically been a core value." At its best, membership is a covenantal relationship with HaShem and with each other.

I write regularly in this space about how we are pursuing these relationships by worshipping and learning together, by caring for and about each other, and by simply enjoying each other's company. Each week, we worship together on Shabbat, in services organized and led by our members, Rabbi Adler, and friends. We bring our talents and perspectives to create fresh kavanah (intent) as we honor HaShem.

Most weeks, children and their parents pray, learn, and play in our Junior Congregation. Across the hall, younger kids, and some teens, hang out in the babysitting room. Twice monthly from fall through spring, a regular group explores the meaning and mechanics of worship in our Learner's Service. About once each month, Rabbi Adler, a member, or a friend presents a Lunch and Learn program on a topic ranging from the Biblical to the whimsical.

Every week, we enjoy seeing each other at kiddush, talking, laughing, and singing for an hour or more after services end. We come to shul not as an obligation, but for spiritual, intellectual, and social fulfillment.

We are engaged and involved in holiday observances, educational programs, and social events throughout the year. Unique among congregations, we offer complimentary High Holy Day tickets, welcoming friends to join us in worship regardless of their financial situation.

We learn from each other in educational programs held in our synagogue, our homes, and elsewhere. Our social events range from a simple breakfast to an elegant wine tasting. Some programs combine worship, learning, and social celebration: this year's Purim megillah reading, schpiel, and party were the best ever!

We are involved in the Jewish community and the world as we raise funds for the poor, for Israel, and for the oppressed. We take care of each other, supporting members who are ill, in mourning, or in dire circumstances. We've watched our children grow, and we share each other's joy celebrating b'nai mitzvah and other simchas.

We are fulfilling our vision of building vibrant Jewish community. As Rabbi Zevit writes, a synagogue meets our complex mix of individual needs for Jewish services, participation, and spirituality. In a consumer model, we might expect to pay only for the services we use. By contrast, we are demonstrating that membership in Beth El-The Heights Synagogue is about more than money.

Our membership dues and donations have roots in a Jewish communal tax within a covenantal framework. We are told to

(continued on p. 3)

(Priceless, continued from page 2)

leave a portion of our field unharvested (Deut. 14:22) and not to glean our fields or vineyards (Lev. 19:9). We are in a living, dynamic covenant with HaShem and each other that reflects generous giving. Membership defines and articulates the ongoing life of our community. The rewards of membership are priceless.



(Old Wine, New Nuances, continued from page 1)

play a classic in an inspiring manner. It doesn't have to be a choice between one and the other.

Yet there is a critical difference between playing a piece of music and praying the traditional liturgy. While not everyone can perform Beethoven magnificently, everyone can *daven* the liturgy with *kavanah* and thereby lift it up to God. The more often one does it, and the more of oneself one puts into it, the more proficient a *davenner* one becomes. While a less-than-excellent performance of Beethoven may earn the disapproval of music critics, a less-than-“wow” praying of the liturgy will always be lovingly accepted by God, as long as one is engaged at some level. The Sephardic prayer book says, “You hear the prayer of every mouth.” To the question of why it does not say, “You hear the prayer of every heart,” the answer of Hasidism is, “God’s love for us is so great that, even if the best we can offer is the prayer of our mouths, He accepts it as having come from our hearts.”

Creativity with our people’s classical liturgy means bringing new *kavanah*, new insight, new meaning into one’s praying. Sometimes, when one is praying the liturgy with the community, one suddenly finds that a particular prayer or phrase speaks directly to one’s own situation. The person may want to remain there for a while, basking in the glow of the moment, letting

the connection with God open wider, letting it draw him or her deeper into the prayer. Such a prayer moment enables a person to sense God’s caring presence and to respond, as Abraham did, “*hineni*,” here I am. It is heavenly bread, on the strength of which a person can travel energetically through the service and through life itself, as Elijah journeyed forty days in the wilderness on the strength of bread given to him by an angel.

Even when such a moment does not occur, the very act of appropriating the liturgy as one’s own personal prayer and offering it with *kavanah* constitutes, in itself, a prayer moment of great value. When offered by the community, the liturgy carries the synergistic power of *am yisrael*, God’s eternal covenant partner. And when offered by the individual, it enables him or her to be a “participant in spirit” in the community’s prayer. When I *daven* alone, I remain a part of *am yisrael*, and when I *daven* with *am yisrael*, I remain myself.

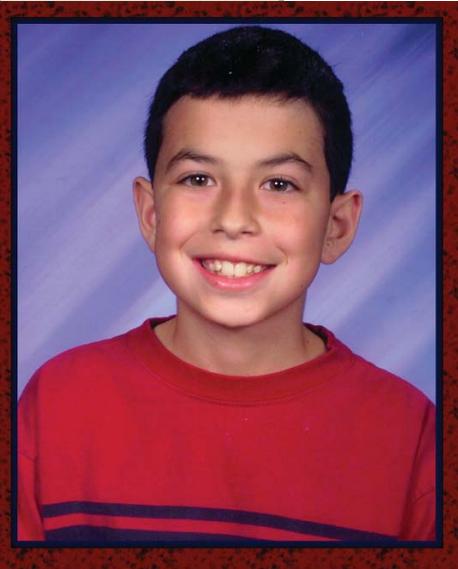
Whether traditional or non-traditional, true prayer is creative, or it risks being no prayer at all. May *HaShem* help us pray creatively, with our heart and soul.

*Abraham Joshua Heschel, “No Religion is an Island,” Susannah Heschel, ed., *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity* (N. Y.: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996, p. 263)

*Sometimes,
the most
important
thing in a
whole day
is the rest
we take
between
two deep
breaths
or the
turning
inwards
in prayer
for five
short
minutes.*

Etty Hillesum

Sam Falck Will Become Bar Mitzvah



Sam Falck will celebrate his Bar Mitzvah on June 16 / 30 Sivan. Sam is the son of Joel and Julie Rabin Falck and the brother of Josh.

Sam's favorite time of year is summer camp. He spends one month a year at Camp Wise and eleven months of the year looking forward to going to camp again. Sam is a sports nut. He plays basketball on the Agnon team and plays tennis a couple of times a week. Unless it's snowing, you can find him shooting baskets in the driveway daily. He can quote the statistics from most professional sports (hockey excluded) as he memorizes the sports pages and never misses Sports Center on ESPN. Sam also plays the trumpet in the school band. Around these many activities, Sam still finds time to attend school at Agnon where he is in seventh grade. His favorite subjects are science and *Tanach*.

Please join the Falck family in celebration at a Kiddush luncheon in the Social Hall after services.

Ieda Warshay to Facilitate Bereavement Support Group

Ieda Warshay will be starting a Bereavement Support Group on Thursday, July 19, at Park Synagogue East. The group is free and open to the community (Jewish or not), and will meet for six weekly sessions from 7:00 until 8:30 PM. The series will be followed by a reunion supper about six weeks later.

The nature of the group is both educational and supportive. It will be appropriate for adults who have lost a spouse, parent, sibling, adult child, close friend, or significant other.

Ieda is a Licensed Independent Social Worker; she has facilitated bereavement groups for about 10 years. She also did similar work during her career at Akron Jewish Family Service.

Register for the group through Ieda (216-921-8338) or Ellen Petler at Park Synagogue, (216) 371-2244. Questions about the group can be directed to Ieda.

Board Approves Sanctuary Window Purchase

At its April 22 meeting, our Board approved the purchase of seven replacement windows for the Berkeley side of our Sanctuary. Thanks to Ditte Wolin for her research, working with contractors, and securing approval from the Cleveland Heights Architectural Board of Review!

Thanks, too, to members and friends who contributed toward this essential improvement to our home. Your continued commitment to assures our community's security and success.

*The present
is the only
moment
that is
truly ours,
and we
ought to
make use
of it.*

Blais Pascal

Volunteer Opportunities

Our friends at the Jewish Community Federation sent us the following information about volunteer opportunities for people of all ages.

Sunday, June 10, 2007 Brunch and Bloom – Hebrew Cultural Garden (1160 East Blvd.), 9:00 – 11:00 AM. Join the Jewish Community Federation's Jewish Volunteers in Action and Young Leadership Division to help beautify the historic Hebrew Cultural Garden while enjoying bagels and juice. Participate in eco-friendly activities for kids! Please bring gardening equipment (shovels, rakes, brooms, trowels and gloves) to help plant flowers, clean beds and restore the garden's beauty. Plant donations welcome. Register online at <http://www.jewishcleveland.org/jva> or call JVA at (216) 566-9200, ext. 264.

Sunday, September 30, 2007 – One World Day – Hebrew Cultural Garden (1160 East Blvd.), 10:00 AM – noon Community-wide celebration featuring a lively parade, naturalization ceremony for new citizens, entertainment, food and fun! Volunteers of all ages are needed to march in the parade, greet guests, provide entertainment and assist with children's activities. Contact Marilyn Jacobs at (216) 566-9200, ext. 264, or visit <http://www.jewishcleveland.org/oneworldday>.

TOV - Tikkun Olam Volunteers – Enhancing the Quality of Life for Holocaust Survivors TOV is a new program recruiting volunteers to enhance the quality of life for Holocaust survivors in our community by providing friendly visitors and drivers for medical appointments, shopping trips, and beauty shop appointments.

The TOV Committee is comprised of representatives from the following organizations: Kol Israel Foundation, Second Generation Kol Israel, Jewish Family Service Association and Jewish Volunteers in Action, a program of the Jewish Community Federation

For more information about volunteering in the TOV program, please contact Marilyn Jacobs at the Jewish Community Federation at (216) 566-9200, ext. 264.



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 30. Courses include "Learning How to Chant the Torah," and "Zealotry: Advanced Readings in Biblical Narrative." Summer intensive Ulpan is July 14 to August 16. All courses are morning or evening hours and for all levels. <http://www.siegalcollege.edu/>

To register, call Jennifer Morton at Siegal College, (216) 464-4050, ext. 100, or e-mail jmorton@seigalcollege.edu. For more information, contact Nili Adler at (216) 464-4050 ext. 116 or e-mail nadler@seigalcollege.edu.

*Ours is not
the task of
fixing the
entire world
at once,
but of
stretching
out to mend
the part of
the world
that is with-
in reach.*

Clarissa
Pinkola Estes

NEWS FROM BETH EL

חדשות

Refuah Sh'lema to:

- Celia Jennings

רפואה שלימה!

Yasher Koah to:

➤ **Honey Massey's** Engliyada Program was featured in the Spring 2007 Ohio TESOL (Teachers of English to Students of Other Languages) Newsletter. Her class at Case was pictured. Honey's essay about her youngest daughter, Rivkah's, struggle to learn Hebrew while retaining her English when the family moved to Israel when Rivkah was seven (1986), "Dyslexia and Second Language Learning: A Personal Essay," was also published. Honey is currently an ESL teacher at Mayfield Middle School, and Case Western Reserve University and is a teacher trainer for the Jewish Community Federation/Siegal College.

י"ש כוח!

➤ **Rivkah Massey**, now 27, recently made her directorial debut in New York, with an off-Broadway play, *The Cooking King*. The play was a production of The Milk Can Theatre Company, where Rivkah is the production manager. For more information on future productions see <http://www.milkcantheatre.org>. Honey was able to travel to New York to see a performance.

Thanks for Contributions to:

- **Lisa and Russel Berusch**, toward replacement of sanctuary windows.
- **Bill and Carol Bruml**, in memory of Mary Valancy Z"L, and in honor of Anna and Maia Wachter.
- **Louis Gray**, in memory of his parents, Esther and Morris Gray Z"L, and sister, Evelyn Gray Z"L.
- **Etole and Julian Kahan**, in memory of beloved grandparents Israel and Elka Genuth Z"L.
- **Harvey and Karen Kugelman**, toward replacement of sanctuary windows, in memory of Mary Valancy Z"L and Bessie Falck Z"L, to the Rabbi's Fund for Maot Hittin, and in memory of Sonia Goldstein Z"L.
- **Cynthia and Kyle Rose**
- **Kathy and Lanny Solomon**, in memory of Jack Valancy's parents Z"L.
- **Vicki Spalding-Rosales**, to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, in memory of Mary Valancy Z"L and in thanks to Rabbi and Nili Adler, Ed Small, and Jerry Engelhart.
- **Aaron, Andrew and Arnold Stone**, in memory of William and Helen Sonnenstein Z"L.
- **Ellen Ticktin**, to the Chesed Committee, with thanks.
- **Linda Tobin and Stephen Pepper**, to the Chesed Fund in memory of Bessie Falck Z"L.
- **Beth and Scott Wachter**, in memory of Mary Valancy Z"L and Bessie Falck Z"L.
- **Marsha Weisberg**, in memory of Mary Valancy Z"L, in memory of her mother Bertha Weisberg Z"L, and toward replacement of sanctuary windows.
- **Ari Klein and Ditte Wolin**, toward replacement of sanctuary windows.

תודה!

Members' Annual Meeting, Sunday June 24

Members are cordially invited to attend Beth El-The Heights Synagogue's Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 24, 2007. Minyan starts at 9:00 AM in the Sanctuary. The Annual Meeting will follow at 9:30 AM in the Social Hall. Breakfast will be served. Babysitting and children's activities will be available.

Members in good standing will vote to elect our congregation's officers and Board for the coming year. Please call the synagogue office, (216) 320-9667, if you have questions about your membership status.

Thanks for Kiddush sponsorship to:

- April 28 – **Sue Klein, Ari Klein and Ditte Wolin**, in memory of Sylvia Lavine and Naomi Wolin.
- May 26 – **The Wachter family**, in honor of Anna's and Maia's B'not Mitzvah.
- June 2 – **The Shutkin family**, in honor of Noah's Bar Mitzvah.
- June 9 – **Leon Gabinet**, in honor of his milestone birthday.
- June 16 – **The Falck family**, in honor of Sam's Bar Mitzvah.

תודה!

Thanks for help with May newsletter mailing to:

- **Shelley Birkner**
- **Sue Greenberg**
- **Sue Klein**
- **Lynda Siff**
- **Blanche Valancy**
- **Beth Wachter**

תודה!

CALENDAR, JUNE-JULY 2007

סייון \ תמוז \ אב 5767

Saturday, June 2 – Noah Shutkin will become Bar Mitzvah. The Shutkin family invites the congregation to a Kiddush luncheon, following services. *(See full announcement in the May newsletter.)*

Saturday, June 16 – Sam Falck will become Bar Mitzvah. The Falck family invites the congregation to join them in celebration at a Kiddush luncheon after services.

Sunday, June 24 – Members' Annual Meeting

9:00 AM – Minyan in the sanctuary.

9:30 AM – Breakfast in the social hall.

Annual Meeting and 2007/2008 Program Planning Session

July 24 – Fast of Tisha B'Av צום תשעה באב



Yahrzeits, June-July 2007

סייון \ תמוז \ אב 5767

Yahrzeits, June 2007

Sivan \ סייון

Max Naiman	15 Sivan
Minnie Russack	16 Sivan
Jacob Haskell	17 Sivan
Louis Noll	18 Sivan
Max Krasny	18 Sivan
Wendy Kushner	19 Sivan
Nathaniel Starkman	19 Sivan
Ann Shalwitz Bloom	19 Sivan
John Samuels	19 Sivan
Harry Rock	19 Sivan
Samuel Booker	20 Sivan
Frieda Gavurin	20 Sivan
Sarah Horwitz	21 Sivan
Joseph H. Klein	23 Sivan
Robert Sheafe Gooch	26 Sivan
Sadie Strayer	27 Sivan
Herman Brody	27 Sivan
Ida Abrams Lewis	28 Sivan
Penina Bloom	30 Sivan

Tammuz \ תמוז

Norma Siff	2 Tammuz
Max S. Brown	5 Tammuz
Max Eisenbert	5 Tammuz
Morris Greenstein	6 Tammuz

Hyman Kirschner	6 Tammuz
Pauline Lipoff	7 Tammuz
Sally Noll	7 Tammuz
Norton Noll	8 Tammuz
Jaqueline Bruder Zucker	9 Tammuz
Sam Math	9 Tammuz
Bernard David Friedlander	11 Tammuz
Nancy Jean Hall Landis	12 Tammuz

Yahrzeits, July 2007

Samuel Lederman	15 Tammuz
Elsie Frank Birkner	17 Tammuz
Blume Zavelowitz	17 Tammuz
Leon Ballonoff	18 Tammuz
Rose Schenkelman	18 Tammuz
Sara Gabinet	19 Tammuz
Esther Zavelowitz	19 Tammuz
Rose Maremont	20 Tammuz
Jeffrey Landis	20 Tammuz
Pearl Siegler	22 Tammuz
Wolf Sender	22 Tammuz
Goldie Malamud	23 Tammuz
Siegfried Dick	24 Tammuz
Abe Kaplan	24 Tammuz
Irene Friedlander	24 Tammuz
Ann Bergmann Manson	24 Tammuz

Laille Gabinet	25 Tammuz
Isaac Keller	25 Tammuz
Fannie Kritzer	25 Tammuz
Tillie Bertman	28 Tammuz
Morley Glin	28 Tammuz
Harry M. Newman	29 Tammuz
Harry Soliton	29 Tammuz

Av \ אב

Michael Sidney Lampel	1 Av
Gutel Simon	2 Av
Louis Sobel	3 Av
Dr. William Rosewater	4 Av
Joseph Meyer Dubin	5 Av
Joseph Magden	5 Av
Fanny Wachter and Children	6 Av
Norman Slivka	6 Av
Joseph Oshuns	10 Av
Joe Neuger	11 Av
Hanna Tepper	11 Av
Maurice B. Lavine	11 Av
Sarah Fried Weiss	12 Av
Marcia L. Jacobs	14 Av
Harry Tinman	15 Av
Norman Paul Glanz	16 Av
Sarah Blume Levine	16 Av

Congratulations, Graduates!

Yasher Koach ! יישר כוח!

Joshua Pepper, will receive his PhD in Astronomy in June, from Ohio State University. Josh is the son of Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin and the brother of Dan Pepper and Maya Sissoko. He is also a graduate of Solomon Schechter Day School, Hawken, and Princeton. He has accepted an offer to do post-doctoral work at Vanderbilt University. One of his papers is entitled, *Towards the Detection of Transiting Hot Earths and Hot Neptunes in Galactic Open Clusters*.

Ilana Schmitt graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Health from Case Western Reserve University in May.

Zev Naftali Valancy will graduate from Northwestern University in June, with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre.

Rick Jennings graduated from the University of Albany (NY) in May, with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Geography.

Ben Bloom will graduate from Cleveland Heights High School in June. He will attend McGill University in Montreal in the fall and plans to study engineering.

Alexander Kushner, grandson of Enid and Irving Kushner, graduated from Temple Tifereth Israel's Hebrew High School in May and will graduate from Shaker Heights High School in June. He plans to attend Skidmore College in the fall.

Levi Schmitt won a scholarship for musical achievement from the Orange Music Dept.

Rachel Davidson will graduate from Agnon School in June.

Adam Kugelman will graduate from Gross Schechter Day School' middle school in June.

Tali Lugasy graduated from Cleveland Hebrew Schools in May and will graduate from Roxboro Middle School (Cleveland Heights) in June.

Ilana Berusch and **Gabe Schmitt** also graduated from Cleveland Hebrew Schools in May.

Sam Shiffman is graduating from Agnon School in June. He will be attending Beachwood High School in the fall.

Sophie Shiloh is graduating from West Geauga Middle School, where she is on the Honor Roll.

Stuart Kushner was confirmed at Temple Tifereth Israel in May.

Sonia Kugelman will graduate from Gross Schechter Day School's elementary school in June.