

June 2022

Sivan –Tammuz 5782

**TEMPLE
B'NAI
ISRAEL**

THE SATELL CENTER
FOR JEWISH LIFE ON
THE EASTERN SHORE

7199 Tristan Drive
Easton, MD 21601
410-822-0553
bnaiisraeleaston.org
temple18@goeaston.net

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Saturday, June 4, 10:00 a.m.

Torah Portion: Bamidbar

Numbers 1:1-4:20

Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22

Friday, June 10, 5:30 p.m.

Torah Portion: Nasso

Numbers 4:21-7:89

Haftarah: Judges 13:2-25

Saturday, June 18, 10:00 a.m.

Torah Portion: Beha'alotcha

Numbers 8:1-12:15

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7

Friday, June 24, 5:30 p.m.

Torah Portion: Shelach

Numbers 13:1-15:41

Haftarah: Joshua 2:1-24



A Proud Member of the URJ

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Abortion In Jewish Law



I recently walked into my office to find the red indicator light on my desk phone blinking. You have messages. I sat down, picked up the receiver and transcribed the names and numbers of those who wanted a return call. I dispatched with the first phone call. The second call, I looked at the name, reviewed the message and against my better judgment, dialed the number. I was calling the president of the local pro-life group in Talbot County. She wanted to send me information and material to be included in our next "**church**" bulletin.

I told her she was welcome to send the materials. Then she said, "Rabbi, you do realize, don't you, that we are fighting another holocaust? Can we count on you and your congregation to stand with us to stop this holocaust?" I knew I should not have returned that call! It was a very disturbing and unsettling call.

My first comment to this woman focused on her use of the word "*holocaust*." I tried to educate her as to why the use of the term *holocaust* in this context is offensive, inappropriate, and wrong, irrespective of your position on the abortion issue. To no avail and with obdurate sanctimony she insisted on equating the abortion issue with the holocaust.

She then told me I possessed no understanding of the intensity and the pathos of the issue; how painful it is for the women who undergo abortions. Every single woman who exercises the abortion option is haunted by her choice. "Rabbi, you just don't understand!"

Well, I most certainly do understand. As a rabbi and spiritual leader, and as someone trained in the application of religious law, I've been party to the process that helped a number of women as they struggled with this very difficult, emotionally layered, and consequential decision making process. Over the years, I have counseled individuals and couples as they faced the realities of this decision.

"But Rabbi, you don't understand, **we are** fighting a **holocaust**." I do understand. I understand that the rabbis in their wisdom never totally outlawed abortion. I understand that the rabbis, the sages of our people and shapers of our tradition, always put the life of the mother ahead of the fetus. I know that our rabbis never lost sight of the fact that a fetus is created in God's image. I know that our rabbis, generations before Dr. Freud and the era of modern psychology, understood that mental and emotional maladies are as debilitating and as acute as are physical maladies.

The abortion question continues to be complex and complicated in the social and political discourse of our nation. Because it is an important topic, and also motivat-

ed by what we are witnessing at the Supreme Court regarding *Roe versus Wade*, I thought we should look at what Judaism and Jewish tradition teach about the issue.

First, you need to know that the traditional Jewish view of abortion does not fit conveniently into any of the major camps in the current American abortion debate. We neither ban abortion completely, nor do we allow indiscriminate abortion on demand.

Jewish tradition teaches that until the fetus is born, i.e., until the fetus immerses and begins to breathe on its own, it is a part of the mother's body, and therefore she retains the right to exercise the abortion option when circumstances present themselves. Judaism teaches that the life of the mother takes precedence over the fetus.

To gain a clear understanding of when abortion is permitted (or even required) and when it is forbidden requires an appreciation of certain nuances of halacha which govern the status of the fetus.

The easiest way to conceptualize a fetus as presented in the halacha is to imagine it as a full-fledged human being — but not quite. In most circumstances, the fetus is treated like any other "person." The halacha says that one may not deliberately harm a fetus. The rabbis hold accountable one who purposefully causes a woman to miscarry, and we read in the Torah that sanctions are placed upon one who strikes a pregnant woman causing unintentional miscarriage.

The fact that the Torah requires a monetary payment for causing a miscarriage is interpreted by some Rabbis to indicate that abortion is not a capital crime. There is even disagreement regarding whether the prohibition of abortion is Biblical or Rabbinic. Irrespective, it is universally agreed that the fetus will become a full-fledged human being and there must be a very compelling reason to allow for abortion.

As a general rule, abortion in Judaism is permitted only if there is a direct threat to the life of the mother by carrying the fetus to term or through the act of childbirth. In such a circumstance, the baby is considered tantamount to a *rodef*, a pursuer after the mother with the intent to kill her. Nevertheless, the Mishna elaborates, if it would be possible to save the mother by maiming the fetus, abortion is forbidden. Despite the classification of the fetus as a *pursuer*, once the baby's head or most of its body has been delivered, the baby's life is considered equal to the mother's, and we may not choose one life over another, because it is considered as though they are both pursuing each other.

Let me make something very clear. The reason that the life of the fetus is subordinate to the mother is because the fetus is the cause of the mother's life-threatening condition, whether directly (e.g. due to toxemia, placenta previa, or breach position) or indirectly (e.g. exacerbation of underlying medical conditions of the mother). A fetus may not be

aborted to save the life of any other person whose life is not directly threatened by the fetus, such as use of fetal organs for transplant.

Judaism recognizes psychiatric as well as physical factors in evaluating the potential threat that the fetus poses to the mother. However, the danger posed by the fetus (whether physical or emotional) must be both probable and substantial to justify abortion. The degree of mental illness that must be present to justify termination of a pregnancy has been widely debated by rabbinic scholars, without a clear consensus of opinion regarding the exact criteria for permitting abortion in such instances. Nevertheless, all agree that were a pregnancy to cause a woman to become truly suicidal, there would be grounds for abortion. However, several modern rabbinical experts ruled that since pregnancy-induced and post-partum depressions are treatable, abortion is not warranted.

Jewish law does not assign relative values to different lives. Therefore, most major Rabbis qualified to decide matters of Jewish law forbid abortion in cases of abnormalities or deformities found in a fetus. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, one of the greatest Halachic authorities of the 20th century, rules that even amniocentesis is forbidden if it is performed only to evaluate for birth defects for which the parents might request an abortion.

Rabbi Eliezar Yehuda Waldenberg writes that first trimester abortions are permitted when that child would be born with a deformity causing it to suffer. The rabbinic experts also discuss the permissibility of abortion for mothers with German measles and babies with prenatal confirmed Down syndrome.

There is a difference of opinion regarding abortion for adultery or in other cases of impregnation from a relationship with someone Biblically forbidden. In cases of rape and incest, a key issue would be the emotional toll exacted from the mother in carrying the fetus to term. In cases of rape, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Aurbach allows the woman to use methods which prevent pregnancy after intercourse. The same analysis used in other cases of emotional harm are applied here.

Reform Judaism says this: Abortion is an extremely difficult choice faced by a woman. In all circumstances, it should be her decision whether or not to terminate a pregnancy, her decision being supported by those whom she trusts (her partner, physician, therapist, rabbi, etc.). This decision should not be taken lightly. Jewish tradition makes it absolutely clear that abortion should never be used as a mean of birth control. This decision has life-long ramifications. However, Jewish tradition emphasizes that decisions regarding the abortion should be left up to the woman within whose body the fetus is growing. Reform Judaism teaches that "pregnancy prevention" is an important value and sex education is appropriate and necessary.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Congregants,

Finally, spring has sprung, even if only for 10 minutes! Now, summer is here, with real warm weather and thunderstorms!

May was a full and event-filled month at the Temple, with our Annual Meeting followed by a wonderful Member Appreciation Luncheon honoring Susan and Barry Koh, Dennis Podolny, Susan Silver, and Marianne and Rob Styles — grateful thanks to each for their tireless and creative years of service to TBI!

We also enjoyed a delicious Lag B'Omer barbecue with Chef Rabbi Hyman in residence, and a fascinating visit to a working farm in Oxford, so well-attended despite the heat, where we learned so much about environmentally-conscious farming methods. Our new TBI Men's Club is cooking up an amazing project to end the utility bills once and for all — more on that next month!

June is a time for family get togethers, outdoor activities, and many anniversaries including Joyce's and my 51st! Where does the time go? Also in June, we're all looking forward to seeing/hearing great jazz sessions at the Koh Music Series on Wednesday evenings June 15, 22, and 29. This is open to the public, so hope to see you all there!

We're continuing to watch the Covid pandemic pass into history, but be careful not to let it get to you on its way out. Masks and caution are advised at the Temple. These, together with our stepped-up security in light of recent terrible events, remain a part of what we must do.

See you at the Temple!

Ben Schlesinger

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Dear TBI Members,

I would like to give you an update regarding some of the security enhancements you will see to our building and grounds over the next six months. As Ron Schechter, Security Committee Chair, mentioned at the Annual Meeting, we will soon install a gate at the entrance to our parking lot to stop uninvited guests. The gate will be open 30 minutes prior to Shabbat services or any large Temple event, and 15 minutes after the event begins. We will again keep the gate open at the end of services or any large event. At any other time, the gate will remain closed. However, there will be a call button that you may push to talk to the office whenever you arrive, and we can raise the gate remotely. Part of the cost of the gate will be paid for by the FEMA Security Grant that we were awarded.

We will also use funds from the FEMA grant to install bullet resistant film on our lower windows throughout the building. The film will not stop a bullet from penetrating the glass, but it will stop an intruder from breaking the glass and gaining entry to the building. In addition, we will be upgrading and adding more cameras to the Temple's surveillance system.

Should you have any questions regarding these enhanced safety and security changes, please don't hesitate to speak to Ron or me.

Many thanks,

TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL

Officers and Board of Directors:

President - Ben Schlesinger

1st Vice President - Barbara Spector

2nd Vice President - Norman Bell

Secretary - Cheryl Kramer

Treasurer - Seth Schanwald

Board Members:

Jim Brodsky

Merry Danaceau

Jeff Gibbs

Laurie Lewis

Elaine Friedman (IPP)

Carole Brown

Belinda Frankel

Liz LaCorte

Ron Schechter

Rabbi - Peter E. Hyman

Executive Director - Lori Ramsey

Office Manager - Nancy Cummings

Shofar Editors - Stephen & Jean Sand

Holiday of the Month - Shavuot

It is ironic that Shavuot is such a little-known holiday because, in fact, Shavuot commemorates the single most important event in Jewish history — the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Shavuot is the culmination of the seven-week-long "counting of the Omer" that occurs following Passover. The very name "Shavuot" means "weeks," in recognition of the weeks of anticipation leading up to the Sinai experience. Since Shavuot occurs 50 days after the first day of Passover, it is sometimes known as "Pentecost," a Greek word meaning "the holiday of 50 days."

Shavuot is a full-fledged Yom Tov, and as such carries most of the same restrictions as on Shabbat. In Israel, Shavuot lasts one day; outside of Israel it is two days.

Perhaps the reason for the relative obscurity of Shavuot is because this holiday has no obvious "symbols" of the day, i.e. no Shofar, no Sukkah, no Chanukah Menorah.

It is a widespread custom to stay up the entire night learning Torah. Since Torah is the way to self-perfection, the Shavuot night learning is called Tikkun Leil Shavuot, which means "an act of self-perfection on the night of Shavuot."

At synagogue services on Shavuot morning, we read the biblical book of Ruth, a non-Jewish woman whose love for God and Torah led her to convert to Judaism.

On Shavuot, it is customary to decorate the synagogue with branches and flowers. This is because Mount Sinai blossomed with flowers on the day the Torah was given. The Bible also associates Shavuot with the harvest of wheat and fruits, and marks the bringing of the first fruits to the Holy Temple as an expression of thanksgiving.



Book of Ruth

As the story opens, the land of Israel is hit by a terrible drought. A man named Elimelech moves his wife Naomi and two sons (Mahlon and Hilyon) from the city of Bethlehem to the foreign land of Moab. In Moab, Elimelech dies and his two sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Ten years pass, and the sons also die, leaving Naomi in Moab with her two daughters-in-law.

Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem. Initially, Orpah and Ruth follow her, but she urges them to turn back to their own land, saying that she cannot provide for them, either financially or by producing new sons for them to marry. Eventually, Orpah turns back to Moab but Ruth clings to Naomi and pledges her eternally loyalty in one of the most famous speeches in the entire Hebrew Bible: *Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.*



Ruth eventually meets Boaz, a wealthy landowner, who, impressed by all that Ruth has done for her mother-in-law, graciously extends privileges and protection to her. Because Boaz is related to Naomi's family, biblical traditions entrust him with certain responsibilities toward destitute relatives. In light of these kinship obligations, Naomi instructs Ruth, at the end of the barley harvest, to approach Boaz at night and alone.

Ruth does so, asking for his support, "for you are a redeeming kinsman," and Boaz enthusiastically consents. However, Boaz calls Ruth's attention to a complication: a closer kinsman must be approached first for support. The next day, at the city's gate, Boaz summons a public assembly to sort out Ruth's situation. He succeeds in clearing all obstacles to his suit and then announces his marriage to Ruth, declaring that their children will carry on the name of Ruth's deceased husband. Ruth conceives and gives birth to Obed, who in turn became the father of Jesse, who in turn became the father of King David.

Jewish law assigns this book to the festival of Shavuot for various reasons: The events take place during the summer harvest when "Weeks" is celebrated; Ruth was the ancestress of David who, according to tradition, died on Shavuot; Ruth's acceptance of Judaism corresponds nicely with the Giving of the Torah to all of humanity; and Ruth's loyalty symbolizes the fidelity to the Torah that is expected of all Jews.

June Events

Women Who Lunch Friday, June 3 12:00 pm

Please join us for Women Who Lunch at Bridges Restaurant, 321 Wells Cove Road, Grasonville. Weather permitting, we will eat outdoors.

We can arrange carpooling from the Temple. Anyone carpooling should be at the Temple at 11:00 am.



Summer BBQ! Sunday, June 12 Noon - 2:00 pm

It's the last day of Religious School. Come out and celebrate the beginning of what will be a beautiful summer! Rabbi Hyman is once again at the grill for hamburgers & hot dogs!

Susan & Barry Koh 2022 Concert Series June 15, 22, 29 at 7:00 pm



The focus this year is Jazz, featuring performers from Baltimore, Washington DC, and Talbot County, presenting a variety of styles that reflect the diversity of this American art form.

June 15: The Fred Hughes Trio — Classic Jazz Trio



Pianist Fred Hughes, bassist Paul Langosch, and percussionist Keith Killgo present tunes from Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, and Bill Evans with compositions from George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Johnny Mandel.

June 22: The Paul Carr Band, Featuring Vocalist Sharón Clark — Big Band Jazz



Paul Carr has dedicated his professional career to performing and promoting Jazz through education and community outreach.

Sharón Clark has assumed the mantle of Washington DC's queen of jazz. Jazz Times calls her "a revelation ... a singer with the range, musicality and command of tone and timbre that was Sarah Vaughan at her best."

June 29: Sac Au Lait — New Orleans Jazz



Traditional New Orleans jazz and swing music — both vocal and instrumental — from the 1920's and 30's with a modern attitude. The group includes: Frank Donn on trumpet and vocals, Rich Howard on trombone and vocals, John Dierker on clarinet, Frank Patinella on banjo and vocals, Liz Prince on tuba and David Polimene on drums.

Member Appreciation Luncheon





TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL
MEMBER APPRECIATION
LUNCHEON
May 15, 2022

Master of Ceremonies
Rabbi Peter E. Hyman

Welcome
Ben Schlesinger, President

PILLARS OF TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL

Susan and Barry Koh
remarks by Philip Feldman

Dennis Podolny
remarks by Lori Ramsey

Susan Silver
remarks by Arna Meyer Mickelson

Marianne and Rob Styles
remarks by Rabbi Peter E. Hyman

Award Artistry by
Rabbi Peter E. Hyman



Lag B'Omer BBQ



Note: If you missed this one, the next BBQ will be on June 12 noon-2:00 pm

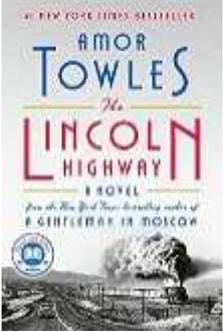
Engage! Farming 101



Save the Date

Book Club - Via Zoom TEMPLE MEMBERS ONLY
July 11, 5:00 pm

The Lincoln Highway: A Novel, by Amor Towles



In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the juvenile work farm where he has just served fifteen months for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother, Billy, and head to California where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future, one that will take them all on a fateful journey in the opposite direction — to the City of New York.

For details, contact Elaine Friedman at ejf1027@gmail.com.

Share Your Summer Events

Travel plans this summer? The kids or grandkids visiting? Boating, fishing, or laying low and just taking it easy? Whatever, we'd love to have you share it with your fellow congregants. To kick things off, here's Cheryl Kramer and Linda Kappesser, who recently met up in Charleston, South Carolina for a drink at the Market Street Pavilion rooftop bar.



In troubling times such as these, a bit of humor doesn't hurt.

At one point during a baseball game, the coach called one of his 9-year-old players aside and asked, "Moshe, do you understand what cooperation is? What a team is?"

"Yes, coach," replied Moshe.

"Do you understand that what matters is whether we win or lose together as a team?" Moshe nodded yes.

"So," the coach continued, "I'm sure you know, when an out is called, you shouldn't argue, curse the umpire, or call him a shikkur or a momzer. Do you understand all that?"

Again, Moshe nodded yes.

"And when I take you out of the game so that another boy gets a chance to play, it's not a dumb a*s decision or that the coach is a putz."

"No, coach."

"Good," the coach said. "Now go over there and explain all that to your Bubbe!!"

June 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Torah Class 12:00 pm In person & Zoom	2 Communications Committee Meeting In person & Zoom 10:00 am	3 8:06 pm candle lighting Women Who Lunch — Bridges on Kent Island 12:00 pm	4 Shabbat/Birthday Service In person & Facebook 10:00 am Erev Shavuot
5 NO Religious School Shavuot	6 Lifelong Learning Committee In person & Zoom 10:30 am	7 Executive Committee Meeting In person & Zoom 10:00 am	8 Torah Class 12:00 pm In person & Zoom	9 Membership Committee Meeting In person and Zoom 10:30 am	10 8:10 pm candle lighting Shabbat Service In person & Facebook 5:30 pm	11
12 Board meeting In person & Zoom 10:00 am Summer BBQ 12:00 pm	13	14	15 Torah Class 12:00 pm In person & Zoom Susan & Barry Koh Jazz Music Series Fred Hughes Trio 7:00 pm	16	17 8:13 pm candle lighting	18 Shabbat Service In person & Facebook 10:00 am
19	20	21	22 Torah Class 12:00 pm In person & Zoom Susan & Barry Koh Jazz Music Series Paul Carr Band 7:00 pm	23	24 8:15 pm candle lighting Shabbat Service In person & Facebook Followed by a Potluck 5:00 pm	25
26	27	28	29 Torah Class 12:00 pm In person & Zoom (last class until after the HHD's) Susan & Barry Koh Jazz Music Series Sac au Lait 7:00 pm	30		

Our Advertisers

JAN KIRSH STUDIO
LANDSCAPE DESIGN & SCULPTURE

JAN KIRSH
JANKIRSHSTUDIO@GMAIL.COM
ST. MICHAELS, MD
T: 410.745.5252
C: 410.310.1198
WWW.JANKIRSHSTUDIO.COM



LANDSCAPE DESIGN & SCULPTURE

MICHAEL J. KOPEN
Attorney At Law

- ♦ Business Law
- ♦ Wills/Trusts/Estate Planning
- ♦ Real Estate Settlements
- ♦ Zoning/Land Use
- ♦ Civil Litigation

8 Goldsborough Street
Post Office Box 1028
Easton, Maryland 21601

Phone: 410-822-3900
Fax: 410-822-8854

email: kopen@gocaston.net

(410) 822-2279 shearer@gocaston.net



SHEARER THE JEWELER
DIAMONDS-COLORED GEMS-FINE JEWELRY

STEVE SHEARER
Graduate Gemologist

22 N. WASHINGTON STREET
EASTON, MARYLAND 21601
www.shearerthejeweler.com