



Ma CHADASH!

What's New! The newsletter of Temple Shalom Synagogue Center, Auburn, Maine

מה חדש!

ק"ק היכל שלום

June 2025, Sivan/Tammuz 5785



featuring
Daniel Blackerby

Friday, June 20th, 7:00P.M.

**(Musical Kabbalat Shabbat
followed by Storytelling and Desserts)**



Shabbat at the Lake

Saturday, June 28th, 10:00 A.M.

**JUNE 13-15, 2025
at Thomas College in
Waterville, Maine**



FROM THE RABBI



Most every culture has a community of “fools” that form an important part of that culture’s folk tale repertoire. For us—Ashkenazi Jews—that community is the town of Chelm. The town of Chelm—with all of their shenanigans—is even featured almost every year in the Chanukah plays that Lisa writes and directs, and that our Hebrew Schoolers perform! While these stories are intended to be humorous, they often contain an underlying moral or message.

One such (traditional Yiddish) story involves the Rabbi of Chelm (sometimes depicted to be as foolish as everyone else in town and sometimes, as here, as the only smart/wise one).

It was Shabbat afternoon on a hot summer’s day and the Rabbi was attempting to make sense of a complex Talmudic text.

Unfortunately, the town’s children were loudly playing outside right in front of his open window disrupting his concentration. Asking them to quiet down gave him only a few minutes respite before the children were as loud as before. Out of desperation the Rabbi developed a plan. He called to the children and told them that there was a very strange ten-foot tall, three-eyed monster at the lake. Naturally, the children all quickly ran towards the lake to see this monster. The Rabbi smiled to himself at the cleverness of his ruse and returned to his studies.

Unfortunately, he was soon interrupted by a small group of townspeople who yelled through his open window, “Haven’t you heard? There is a very strange ten-foot tall, three-eyed monster at the lake. Come with us to see it?” The Rabbi assured them that he had already seen the monster and returned once again to his studies. Unfortunately, several minutes later, he was interrupted by another group of townspeople who also encouraged him to join with them to see the monster at the lake. Again, the Rabbi politely declined.

Unfortunately, this happened again and again until the entire town was running towards the lake. At this point, the Rabbi grabbed his own coat and hat, joining the throngs of Chelmites running towards the lake, while muttering to himself, “Who knows? If all of these people think there is a monster, maybe they’re right!”

Questioning ourselves about the things we believe—even the things we seem absolutely certain of—is central to the Jewish way of being. Abraham questioned the pagan faith system he was born into. Moses questioned the status quo that Israelites were destined to be slaves. And Jewish thinkers and teachers (both religious and secular) have upended our—and the world’s—way of thinking, over and over again, throughout history.

Unfortunately, we seem to have landed in an era where there is absolute attachment to the certainty that what we believe is the only right way to believe—even where it is obvious that many other people disagree with us. This has impacted our Jewish way of thinking as well. Listen to the insightful words of Raoul Wootliff writing from Israel for the Times of Israel this week:

Israel has always been a nation that knew how to live inside a question.

Not the question of whether we should exist – that was the world’s question, hurled at us for generations. Ours was harder: how to exist. How to be both ancient and modern, both sovereign and self-aware, both proud and just. How to build power without worshiping it. How to root a Jewish state in moral memory while navigating the brutal demands of survival.

We never answered that question. We lived it. We argued it. We passed it down like a treasured family heirloom, a sacred tension that defined our politics, our faith, our art, our resilience.

(From the Rabbi continued next page)

(From the Rabbi continued)

We defended a homeland that sometimes defied us. A country where unity is always urgent but rarely achieved. Where the same streets that echo with prayers on Shabbat tremble with protests on Saturday night. Where faith can be both a source of strength and a tool of coercion. Where Arabs and Jews live side by side in quiet coexistence – until they don't.

But that strength is slipping away.

In this moment of anguish and war, something deeper than security is at stake. We are not only losing lives, we are losing our paradox.

October 7 didn't just break through the border – it broke through our belief that the past was safely behind us. The murders, the rapes, the kidnappings – they weren't metaphors. They were atrocities. It was a return to the most primal nightmare: hunted again, burned again, abandoned again.

The pain was raw. The fear was real. The response, inevitable. But in the months that followed, the moral clarity that once anchored our self-defense began to drift. Certainty replaced conscience. Power no longer asked questions of itself. Grief was weaponized into policy. We told ourselves that nuance was a luxury we could no longer afford, that internal conflict must wait, that justice is for peacetime.

To raise these questions is not betrayal. It is fidelity to who we are and who we still claim to be. But increasingly, we treat such questions as threats. Critics are cast as traitors. Restraint is scorned as weakness. And justice, the very word, feels increasingly distant in our public life.

But this is not what it means to be strong. Our tradition never taught us to mistake power for righteousness. The Torah calls not for blind allegiance, but for moral accounting. Our prophets did not flatter kings, they held up mirrors.

We are the people of Abraham arguing with God, of rabbis disputing law across centuries, of generations who survived by doubting, refining, challenging. Our greatness has never been in our certainty – it has always been in our struggle. We are the people of the question mark, yet we are losing our voice to exclamation points.

I will humbly add my voice to his: Our greatness has never been in our certainty – it has always been in our struggle. We are the people of the question mark, yet we are losing our voice to exclamation points.

Rabbi Sruli

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Bonnie & Laurence Faiman | June 5 |
| Darren McGinley & Gabrielle Wolfe | 5 |
| Margaret & Henry Meyer | 6 |
| Marlene Groman & Elliott Levy | 9 |
| Adam Platz & Rebecca Thomas | 17 |
| Babs & Michael Shapiro | 22 |



FROM THE PRESIDENT



"STATE OF THE TEMPLE ADDRESS"

Thank you all for coming today and showing your interest in the future of Temple Shalom. As with every year, there's been some ups and downs. Since I like to end on a high note, I'll start with the tsuris. Our finances are a constant concern. Yes, we need to do more outside fundraising, but I'd like to see our members step it up a bit too. Friday was Lag B'Omer, which should remind us that on each of the 50 days between Passover and Shavuot, it is written in the book of Leviticus, that God commanded us to make an offering of a sheaf of barley, or an "omer". Today, these, now monetary, donations are much needed to help support the Temple and our Jewish way of life. We should all feel this obligation, and do what we can.

Your Board of Directors works hard to maintain the integrity of the institution and to manage the finances in a fiscally responsible manner. You'll be hearing more detailed reports on these matters,

so I just want to say that each and every one of us needs to take some responsibility - physically, spiritually and financially - to ensure that what we've been able to enjoy here in our lifetime, with our family and friends, will still be here for future generations. L'dor v'dor. One of my biggest frustrations is there is no one in line to be next for President. While I truly do enjoy the job, my term is up next year and SOMEONE has to take the reins. While we do have an active Board of Directors, dedicated committee chairs and many volunteers who work so hard to keep every aspect of our Jewish community alive and vibrant, we do need a leader. Don't be afraid to step forward.....I only wear a size 7 shoe. Not so big!

This is supposed to be a State of the Temple Address, so I would like to state that we are alive and kicking. Temple Shalom is still a beautiful building. It is filled with special people attending worthwhile events. Rabbi Sruli, Lisa and their whole mishpuchah seem very happy to be here. And we know how fortunate we are to have them, all.

Our services have loyal followers, and I know they're not there just to hear what key I sing L'dor v'dor in. For those who stay after prayers, we have relevant discussions based on the Torah and the Mishnahs. And there's never a service without music. Did you know we now have a 7 piece band?! Joy!

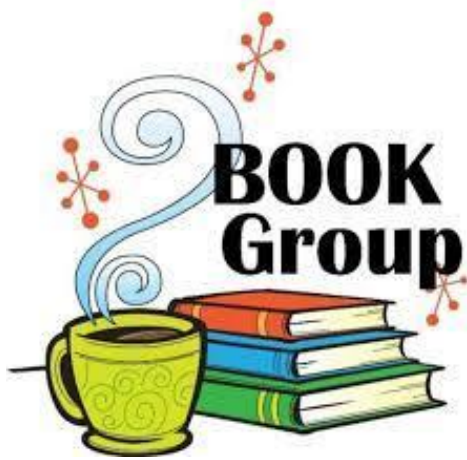
Our programs continue to be interesting and well-attended. There were 37 at Lag B'omer 2 nights ago, and over 30 for the brunch and speaker at the beginning of this month. Our membership seems to be growing, what with 2 babies born recently and a couple more to come soon. Very exciting.

Our community has changed throughout the years, and I'm proud to say that we pay attention to the needs of our congregants. The Board does listen to all your comments. We have an extremely open Board. When deliberating, the Board takes your comments, along with all other information they have and makes, what the Board believes, is the best decision for Temple members and the community. ***Just because the Board does not do what you want, does not mean they have not listened.***

I'd like to thank my Board of Directors for leading us into the future. A thank you to all the committee chairs and all the volunteers who work so hard to keep every aspect of our Jewish community alive and vibrant. A huge thank you to Julie who is the glue that holds it all together. And of course, thank you Rabbi Sruli, for the 11(12?) years you've been our spiritual leader.

Let me close with this. Yes, this has been a very exciting, uplifting year. The road ahead has some potholes, but what road in Maine doesn't?! We're on this journey together, and that's what makes us strong. I'd like to think that it wasn't just the falafel that brought you here today, but your interest in keeping Judaism alive in our community. Thank you all for being a part of our future. Thank you all for doing this with enthusiasm, and with compassion. We are a presence in Lewiston/Auburn, and we know it. Yasher koach - go in strength - and we shall grow in numbers.

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



I'm not sure why, but there were only 3 of us at Book Group to discuss "The Hyena Murders" by Ellen Frankel. Maybe it was because Ellen was unable to join us, but alas, she and Herb were in Panama! So, Deb Katz, Judy Abromson and I had our own discussion. We all enjoyed the novel, especially learning so much about the Ethiopian Jews in Israel. You can always tell Ellen does so much research. And her feel for the Israeli people is so relatable.

So our recommendation is to pick up a copy, either from the Temple library or Amazon or on Kindle, and enjoy "The Hyena Murders" this summer.

Our next book is "Woman on Fire" by Lisa Barr. Not only does Amazon give it 4.4 stars, but the Hadassah Book Group (which I am a member of) agrees. Now you decide:

"Now with Sharon Stone signed on to produce and star in the movie. From the author of the award-winning Fugitive Colors and The Unbreakables, a gripping tale of a young, ambitious journalist embroiled in an international art scandal centered around a Nazi-looted masterpiece—forcing the ultimate showdown between passion and possession, lovers and liars, history and truth.

After talking her way into a job with Dan Mansfield, the leading investigative reporter in Chicago, rising young journalist Jules Roth is given an unusual—and very secret—assignment. Dan needs her to locate a painting stolen by the Nazis more than 75 years earlier: legendary Expressionist artist Ernst Engel's most famous work, Woman on Fire. World-renowned shoe designer Ellis Baum wants this portrait of a beautiful, mysterious woman for deeply personal reasons, and has enlisted Dan's help to find it. But Jules doesn't have much time; the famous designer is dying.

Meanwhile, in Europe, provocative and powerful Margaux de Laurent also searches for the painting. Heir to her art collector family's millions, Margaux is a cunning gallerist who gets everything she wants. The only thing standing in her way is Jules. Yet the passionate and determined Jules has unexpected resources of her own, including Adam Baum, Ellis's grandson. A recovering addict and brilliant artist in his own right, Adam was once in Margaux's clutches. He knows how ruthless she is, and he'll do anything to help Jules locate the painting before Margaux gets to it first.



A thrilling tale of secrets, love, and sacrifice that illuminates the destructive cruelty of war and greed and the triumphant power of beauty and love, Woman on Fire tells the story of a remarkable woman and an exquisite work of art that burns bright, moving through hands, hearts, and history."

Our next meeting is on MONDAY, JUNE 9 at 4PM on zoom. So read up and tune in.....lesli

LINKING GENERATIONS: JEWISH GENEALOGY TIPS

By Labish Kurtz (Richard Kurtz)

#6. Family Photographs

"To truly know oneself, one must look at the roots of their family and tradition, for there lies the key to one's personal growth and mission." Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

Today, most of the photographs we hold are digital, but for many of us, the cherished memories of our parents and grandparents exist in physical form—old photographs that tell the story of past generations. I was recently struck by a bowl of photographs for sale at an antique store, each one priced at a dollar. As I sifted through these black-and-white snapshots, I was reminded of how these photos had lost their owners and the families who once treasured them. At one point, these images were likely carefully kept by someone who loved and adored the people in them. The back of many pictures bore dates and names, each one holding a piece of history.

I was fortunate to come across a photo that my aunt had preserved—thankfully, she didn't discard it. It's a picture of my great-aunt Klara and her daughter Ginette. Klara was arrested by the Nazis on July 24, 1942, and tragically, she did not survive the war. However, her daughter, Ginette, in this photograph, survived. This personal connection highlights the profound importance of preserving family photos, not just for the present, but for future generations—those yet unborn—who will want to remember where they come from.

Unfortunately, physical photos are prone to fading or being lost over time. That's why I suggest scanning or taking digital images of your precious memories. Today, it's easy to accumulate many digital photos—just think about how many you have on your phone. As time passes, these images can pile up, and often, the context of the photos fades away. Much like physical photos that get misplaced, digital photos can be lost in the digital ether.

To avoid this, I've developed a practice that works well for me. I download the photos from my phone to my computer, and I also digitize physical photos. I organize them into family folders, adding dates and descriptions whenever possible. To make them even more meaningful, I link key images to individuals in my family tree, so they can be associated with biographies in digital family trees available online.

I know organizing and digitizing photos can feel like an overwhelming task. But I've found that tackling it gradually, by organizing just a few photographs each day, helps prevent the process from becoming too daunting.

In the end, preserving our family's visual history—whether in physical or digital form—ensures that future generations can not only know their ancestors but also feel connected to the rich stories and legacies that make up their heritage.

(continued next page)

(Linking Generations continued)



Photos for sale in an antique store

Practical Resources

Websites that can help link photos to people in your family tree

<https://www.ancestry.com> – Ancestry

<https://www.myheritage.com/> - MyHeritage

<https://www.geni.com/> - Geni



Ofiaruję
swój podobiznę
Dla kochanego brata
H. Kurbard z
od H. Kurbard.
naryciem

From Klara Kurbard. I am hereby offering my likeness/photo to my beloved brother Harry Kurbard (Rich's grandfather)

For Life

Ma Chadash/What's New is published monthly by Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center. Temple Shalom is an independent congregation and a member of the Lewiston-Auburn Jewish Federation.

The mission of Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center is to foster a strong Jewish identity and an active Jewish Community.

Rabbi Sruli Dresdner

Office Manager Julie Waite

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SPEEDY RECOVERY

We pray for refuah sh'leimah – the full and speedy recovery of **Valci Braga, Rachel Corvi, Lee Jay Feldman, Andrea Finn, Sara Graf, Robert Galumbeck, Isaak Gekhtin, Ariella Green, Sharon Hemond, Alison Jaeger, Suzan Katzir, Michael Kendall, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Lee Leveille, Carolyn Marshal, Bruce Meyer, Alice Richman, Sandy Traister**, and all others who are not well at this time. *We like to hear good news! Whenever you request that a name be put on this list, please let Temple Shalom know when it can be removed.*



Rabbi Sruli is always happy to speak with and meet with members or our Temple. Please call or text his cell phone at 914-980-9509 if you would like to speak with him or to arrange a time for a meeting. You can also call or leave a message at the Temple office and Rabbi Sruli will get back to you.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Margaret Meyer | June 1 |
| Charlene Goodman | 2 |
| David Steinberg | 5 |
| Kenneth Levinsky | 6 |
| Ellen Burke | 7 |
| Joel Packer | 7 |
| Melissa Burke | 8 |
| Max Blumenthal | 10 |
| William Zidle | 11 |
| Arthur Silverman | 13 |
| Linda Isaacson | 14 |
| Molly Platz | 14 |
| Jonathan Greven | 15 |
| Matthew Zidle | 15 |
| Gladys Garcia | 16 |
| Joseph Platz | 16 |
| Mark Carlson | 18 |
| Sruli Dresdner | 19 |
| Sherie Blumenthal | 23 |
| Karen Calloway | 24 |
| Barbara Shapiro | 26 |
| Elizabeth Barter | 29 |
| Shelley Rau | 30 |

YAHREZEITEN

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Robert Allen | June 1 |
| Jack Kaduson | 1 |
| Lynne Kaduson | 1 |
| Miriam Passerman | 7 |
| Barry Traister | 7 |
| Cecile Kates | 9 |
| Bernie Nussinow | 10 |
| Lillian Cohen | 13 |
| May Tetenman | 14 |
| Milton Burke | 16 |
| Jack Maloff | 16 |
| Milton Krasner | 16 |
| Florence Salenson | 16 |
| Sara Feldman | 17 |
| Harry Shapiro | 17 |
| Evelyn Levine | 18 |
| Benjamin Barr | 19 |
| Alan Levenson | 25 |
| Brucha Fisher | 28 |
| Willard Hertz | 30 |

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Prayer Book given in honor of Drs.

Bennie & Gillian Geffin birthdays

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Sheldon

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Elcha Buckman

For Deborah Cox in memory of her husband

and Elcha's dear friend

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In memory of Wilfred Goodman

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Several weeks ago, an Israeli man named Nadav Leibovitz immersed himself at *Shmaya: A Mikveh for Mind, Body, and Soul*, in Kibbutz Hannaton. He was on his way back home to Haifa from his fourth round of reserve duty. He had done over 250 days of reserve duty in Gaza in this war, with a 5-year-old son and spouse at home. He decided to mark this transition, and hopefully a transition into a long stretch of civilian life, by stopping at the mikveh on his way home from his reserve duty — going into the mikveh building in his army uniform, immersing, and coming out in his civilian clothing. That was his vision. Here is the prayer he composed for his immersion:

“Master of the Universe, God of War and Peace, I stand here before you as a soldier of the IDF in order to release myself physically and mentally from the burden that fell upon me, and to return to the bosom of my family, as a partner and father, with a pure heart and a clear head. Please God, let these waters that surround me purify my heart and cleanse my thoughts from background noise, and plant in my soul peace, calm, and quiet of soul. I thank You for the strength to stand here and immerse in these living waters, and for the courage to deal with the challenges ahead. May the One who makes peace in the heavens make peace for us and all of Israel and all of the world. And let us say, Amen.”