



Ma CHADASH! מה חדש!

What's New! The newsletter of Temple Shalom Synagogue Center, Auburn, Maine ק"ק היכל שלום

August 2025, Av/Elul 5785



Shabbat at the Lake

**Saturday, August 16th,
10:00 A.M.**

Temple Shalom is celebrating

the end of Summer with an

End of Summer BBQ!

Friday, September 5th, 6:00 P.M.



FROM THE RABBI



There is a story in the Talmud about a very popular early Rabbinic teacher named Shimon ben Shetah.

Shimon ben Shetah was dealing with flax [as his profession]. His students said to him: 'Master, leave it behind and we will buy you a donkey and you won't need to work so much,' and they bought him a donkey from an Arab, and it had a jewel hanging from its neck]. They came to him and said to him: 'from now on you won't have to work again.' He said to them: 'why?' They said to him: 'We bought you a donkey from an Arab and it had a jewel hanging from its neck!' He said to them: 'Did the owner know?' They said to him:

'no.' He said to them: 'go return it.' [Later students objected to this story before their Rabbi:] *'Even according to the one who says an item stolen from a gentile is prohibited, all agree that an item lost by a gentile is permitted!?' [The Rabbi responded:] 'What, do you think Shimon ben Shetah was a barbarian? Shimon wished to hear 'blessed be the God of the Jews' more than any gain in this world.'* Jerusalem Talmud, Bava Metzia 2:5.

The Talmud continues with three additional similar stories where a Jew returns valuable property to a gentile who inadvertently lost it. Each of these stories ends with the same punchline being expressed by the gentile: *'blessed be the God of the Jews.'*

While the idea that it would be wrong to take advantage of an inadvertent mistake (even where it is technically permitted) may seem obvious, I think there is something more fundamental being taught here. The students of the great scholar Shimon ben Shetah were motivated by a desire to free the Rabbi from the excessive work he needed to do in order to allow him more time to study and teach Torah—described innumerable times in the Talmud as Judaism's greatest value! Yet, there is a core Jewish value that even trumps Torah study: not being a barbarian—bringing honor to the Jewish religion by causing outsiders to exclaim *'blessed be the God of the Jews.'*

On a recent Friday, we were privileged to hear a conversation with Rachel Goldberg-Polin, the well-known and very well-spoken mother of murdered hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin, of blessed memory. She movingly described how two of the hostages who were later freed described the brief time that they spent with Hersh in a Gaza tunnel. The freed hostages reported that Hersh kept their spirits up in the worst of conditions by quoting from famed psychoanalyst, author and Auschwitz survivor, Viktor Frankel, who famously taught (even in Auschwitz!) that if you can find the "why," then you can bear any "how." If you can figure out why you need to survive, that will keep you going through the most horrible times. Rachel brought us to tears as she described how her beloved son Hersh (through the freed hostages) taught her how to move on in her life despite suffering overwhelming tragedy—how she found her "why" in her ongoing desperate struggle to advocate for the safety and freedom of the hostages who remain trapped in Gaza to this day.

I humbly suggest that perhaps we have lost the "why" of our core Jewish values—that our highest value is concern for others—gentiles, Arabs—and the essence of Jewish practice is to encourage outsiders, by our actions, to exclaim *'blessed be the God of the Jews!'* If we were to wholeheartedly recommit to these values, my suspicion is that the very fraught, complicated contemporary "how" of Jewish survival would work itself out.

Rabbi Sruli

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Have you ever been to the Coastal Botanical Gardens in Boothbay Harbor? If not, put it on your to do list this summer. Or go again. I just went with Malca and Elcha because a couple years ago we had made a bucket list of things we wanted to do, and we finally got around to doing this. So while Malca and I were oohing and aahing at all the unusual flowers (we're both gardeners), Elcha was very, uncharacteristically, quiet. Apparently, she was people watching, enjoying the atmosphere of friendliness and calm, with no political viewpoint. Everyone had left all the mishegas at home. It was a very welcome news vacation. Aside from the flowers, the Gardens also has 5 humongous wooden trolls scattered throughout the adjacent forest. And to add to our feeling of contentment, I realized we were participating in the practice of shinrin-yoku, or 'forest bathing.' This is when you mindfully immerse yourself in nature which can reduce stress, improve your mood and even boost your immune system. It's the three 'r's: relax, revitalize and reconnect. I highly recommend it.

Lesli Weiner
President

!!!!!!!!!!!!WOMEN!!!!!!!!!!!!

**SAVE THE DATE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27
5PM**

ROSH CHODESH ELUL

**This will be POT LUCK DAIRY DINNER so start
thinking about what delicious DAIRY DISH you will bring.**

This year at LESLI WEINER'S LAKESIDE HOME in GRAY!!!

**PLEASE RSVP BY AUGUST 18
786-4201**

Directions from Auburn:

Take Route 100 (Washington St) south. In Gray village, you'll go through 2 sets of lights. At both, stay in the left lane, but continue straight on Rte 100. [Or if you take the Turnpike south, take Exit 63. Take right at end of ramp, then another right at light onto Rt 100]

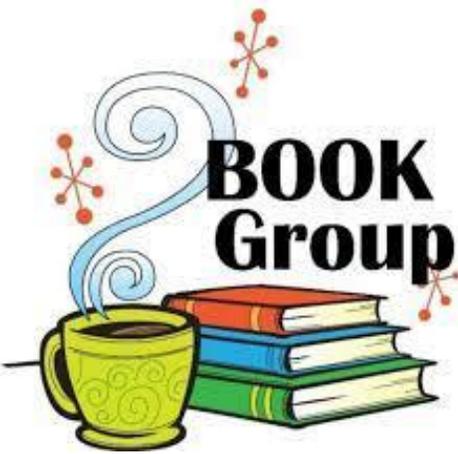
From those lights, go 3.3 miles south. Take a RIGHT on Dutton Hill Rd. Go over turnpike and take the first LEFT onto Forest Lake Rd. About a half mile up, take the second RIGHT onto Shore Rd. Stay RIGHT at the fork, then bear LEFT.

We are the FIFTH house on the RIGHT, #32 on the right, lakeside, set lower than the road. It's a white house with a blue metal roof.

You can park in my driveway or anywhere on the road.

Cell: 232-8591, Or.....use GPS!

!!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!

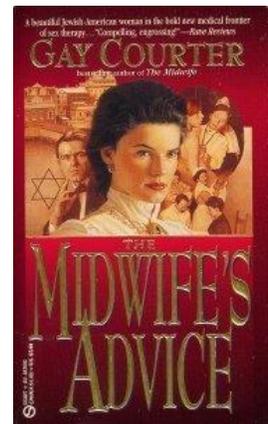


Wow! What a stimulating conversation Deb Katz, Linda Griswold, Sheri Olstein, Judy Abromson and I just had about dysfunctional families! We were discussing “We Would Never” by Tova Mirvis which is actually based on a true story about a family who conspired to kill the daughter’s husband. We might not have liked the characters, their moral compasses, their actions, or even their thoughts, but we all did keep turning the pages. I think you will too. It’s not your usual who-done-it.

Our next book “The Midwife’s Advice” by Gay Courter. It’s about a young Jewish woman who escapes the pogroms of Czarist Russia. As a midwife in America, she struggles

to win professional recognition from the conservative medical community. Here’s the Amazon write-up:

“Hannah Sokolow, the spirited heroine of Gay Courter’s international bestseller, “The Midwife,” returns in this powerful story to face new medical challenges in turn-of-the-century New York. As head midwife at Bellevue Hospital, Hannah sees her proud profession usurped by the male-dominated practice of obstetrics. So when a young immigrant woman seeks a solution to a troubling but delicate personal problem, Hannah takes a bold step toward the new medical frontier of sex therapy. Soon she is giving intimate advice not only to her immigrant patients, but also to the intellectual of Greenwich Village who inspire her with radical new ideas on such issues as birth control, sex education, and healthy care. And there are other momentous changes in store for Hannah. For when her husband follows his heart to the turmoil of the Russian Revolution, Hannah follows hers—into a searing affair with a prominent doctor who is separated from her by faith, class, and marriage, but who is drawn to her by a fierce desire that matches her own.”



Our next meeting, on zoom, will be MONDAY, AUGUST 11 at 4PM. Happy summer reading!!.....lesli

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO

- Harvey & Elaine Bell Aug 5
- Robert Rovner & Ruth Frydman 7
- Jerrold & Jennifer Cohen 11
- Christopher & Mara King 23
- Marsha & Mitchell Auster 24



'I'm sleeping in my clothes tonight' by Aliza Gillman

I was explaining what is going on in the Druze community in Syria to my 10-year-old daughter, as I was flipping pancakes for her breakfast.

She listened attentively while I tried to distill a horrible massacre into something her heart could hold without cracking any more than it has since October 7.

I told her about the Druze — how they're being hunted, how they're part of our story. I told her how many Druze Israelis died defending Israel, how they are a part of who we are, part of the threads that weave the tapestry in this complicated, beautiful country. I told her that Israel stepped in, that we tried to stop the bad guys, that we bombed Damascus, and that defending the Druze in Syria is doing the right thing, that we have a brotherhood with the Druze community in Israel that crosses borders.

She didn't flinch as I told her we couldn't stand by as a hospital was raided and the Druze staff and patients were massacred. She listened and noted that she remembers how sad we were when the 12 Druze children were killed by a Hezbollah rocket last year.

And then she said, "So, I'm sleeping in clothing tonight."

It seemed so out of place.

"Why?" I asked, honestly confused.

"Because we bombed Syria," she said matter-of-factly. "So I need to sleep dressed tonight. To be ready. But it's worth it."

To be ready.

Because when you grow up in a country that's been at war for close to two years, you learn how to read the signs. You know that if we strike, there's a chance they strike back. That if we hit them, maybe we'll have to run for safety. That if the red alert sounds at 3 a.m., it's better not to be scrambling into clothes while half asleep. Better to already be dressed. Clothing as armor. As a plan. As a given.

She's 10.

This is what it means to be 10 here. Not just sleepovers and reading Harry Potter and begging for one more episode. But calculating risk before bed. Choosing clothing over pajamas so you're not exposed if a rocket falls. Keeping your shoes near the door, because you ended your school year at war, as opposed to at the pool.

My daughter is brave. She's pragmatic. She's so damn resilient. And it breaks my heart that she has to be.

And that's what sits heavy on my chest — heavier than the geopolitical commentary or the twisted headlines. Heavier than all the "but what abouts" and "on the other hands."

This is what war looks like from the kitchen table. Not just in numbers or headlines or foreign ministry tweets. But her favorite tank top and shorts, soft and a bit worn, laid out before bed.

Just in case.

Aliza Gillman is a psychotherapist, and mother of four, living in Jerusalem. She made aliyah from the US at 14 and has developed a thick skin, an ability to bargain and has a habit of getting involved in community building, whether it's a school, shul or local pub.

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

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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, Ariella Green, Sharon Hemond, Alison Jaeger, Suzan Katzir, Michael Kendall, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Lee Leveille, Clayton Lizotte, 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.*



Wishing you a speedy and complete recovery.

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.

Linking Generations: Jewish Genealogy Tips By Labish Kurtz (Richard Kurtz)

#8. Bringing Jewish History to Life: Through Your Cities, Towns and Shtetls

"Let your home be a meet-place for the Sages!" (Avot 1:4)

I love to use Google maps to locate the places where my family originated or lived in Europe. I have even been able to locate specific houses that they lived in. Using Google maps, you can get street views of the neighborhoods that your ancestors lived in. Knowing where your family came from and when they lived in those places allows one to put the lives of your family in historical context. There are many websites that feature the cities, towns and shtetls where Jews lived. Many of these websites provide specific historical information, photographs and illustrations related to Jewish life, many are nonexistent now.

One of my favorite tools for exploring Jewish genealogy is Google Maps. It's not just about finding a place on a map it's about bringing the past to life. I've used it to locate the exact towns, neighborhoods, and even specific houses in Europe where my ancestors once lived. With Street View, I can virtually walk down the same roads my grandparents might have walked and see what remains of the world they once knew.

Knowing where your family came from and when they lived there adds powerful historical context to your genealogical research. It transforms names and dates into real lives, lived in real places.

There are many excellent websites that document the cities, towns, and shtetls where Jewish communities once thrived. These resources often include historical details, old photographs, maps, and illustrations of Jewish life that, in most places, no longer exist or have completely changed.

For example, while researching Konskie, Poland, the town where my father's family came from, I found detailed information about the town's Jewish streets, occupations, and synagogue. The shul in Konskie, which I wonder if my ancestors davened in was one of the first large synagogues in Poland. I also came across tragic stories of persecution during the Nazi occupation. One striking account involves Leni Riefenstahl, the infamous Nazi propagandist filmmaker and director of *Triumph of the Will*. While filming in Konskie, she reportedly witnessed Jews and Poles being executed in retaliation for a partisan attack on German soldiers. Even someone so deeply entrenched in the Nazi machine was allegedly shaken by what she saw.

Stories like these, tied to the places our families once called home, make history deeply personal. They remind us that genealogy isn't just about building a family tree it's also about understanding the world our ancestors lived in and honoring their experiences.

(Continued next page)

(Linking Generations Continued)

Practical Resources

Websites to Find and Explore Specific Towns or Areas

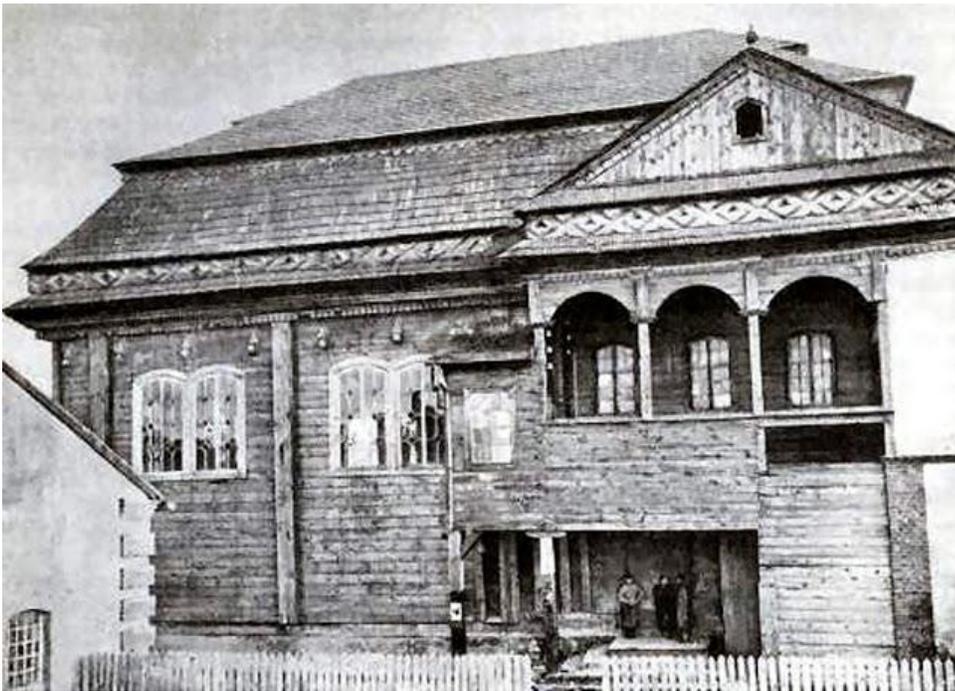
<https://www.wikipedia.org/> - General sources for town information and historical context

<https://www.sztetl.org.pl/en> - Virtual Shtetl

www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp - Communities Database: JewishGen

<https://bloodandfrogs.com/compendium/poland/cities> - Polish Cities Directory

<https://www.crag.org/ages.php> - Częstochowa-Radomsko, Poland Area Research Group



Konskie synagogue that Labish's family attended. Built in 1780s. One of the first large shuls built in Poland. Destroyed by the Nazis in September 1939



Jewish deportation in Konskie, 1942

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

Jacob Allen	Aug	12
Daniel Abromson		14
Stuart Isaacson		15
Seth Meyer		18
Danale Jensen		19
Joseph Jensen		19
Deena Weinstein		20
David Allen		22
Hali Isaacson		22
Sam Allen		23
David Gardner		26
Jerrold Cohen		30
Rocky Isaacson		30

Yahrzeiten

Dorothy Krasner	Aug.	2
George Laskoff		3
Muriel Ross		5
Bernice Harris		7
Clara Marcus		8
Fannye Roberts		12
Seymour Tetenman		15
Bessie Kurtzbard		17
Nathan Kutzen		17
Iris Laskoff		17
Lester Miller		21
Mitchell Eidel		22
Jay Graber		23
Rachel Danziger		26
Minette Lezberg		28



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Haste Family Fund/Steve Passerman

In appreciation

Mitch Ross

In memory of Howard Kates

Bertha Bodenheimer

Mazel tov to Deb Katz

In memory of Shirley Koss

Cathy & Stan Tetenman

In memory of Shirley Koss

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In honor of Bonnie Faiman's birthday

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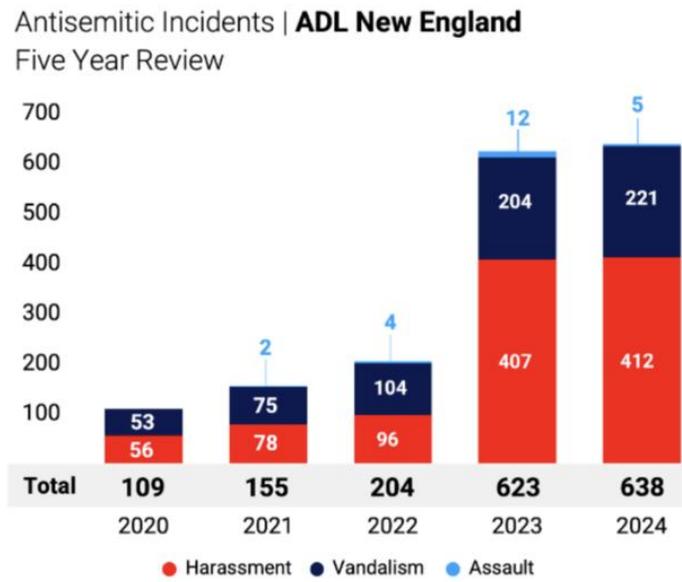
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