



# MA CHADASH! **מה חדש!**

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

December 2025, Kislev/Tevet 5786

## Annual Mega-Chanukah Party! Friday, December 19th, 6:00 p.m.



Mega-Menorah lighting, followed by a catered latke dinner, music, magic and games.

Featuring a brand-new Chanukah play performed by our Hebrew Schoolers and written and directed by Rebbetzin Lisa!

Suggested Donation: \$10 for members (\$20 for families),  
\$15 for non-members (\$30 for families)

RSVP – 786-4201 or [temple6359@aol.com](mailto:temple6359@aol.com)

Save the Date!



## FROM THE RABBI



When I was in the fifth grade, we began to study the Talmud in earnest. We were first introduced to a section entitled Lulav HaGazel—the Stolen Lulav. I suppose someone decided that this would be the perfect introduction to the language, reasoning, and back and forth of the Talmud. The section begins with the assertion that a lulav (the palm branch used in the annual Sukkot ritual) that was stolen may be not be used for the mitzvah. Now this idea may seem odd to those of us in Maine—who would steal a Lulav? But if you live in a place where palm trees grow everywhere—as the sages of the Talmud did—you can understand how easy it would be for someone to

rationalize taking (stealing) just one branch from a neighbor's palm tree. Who would miss it? But the Talmud assures us that such a taken/stolen lulav is not kosher and cannot be used to fulfill your ritual obligation. This is based on an important general rule in the Talmud known as Mitzvah Ha'baah B'veira—that this mitzvah was accomplished by way of a transgression—something improper.

Philosophers famously debate whether there are ever circumstances where the “ends can justify the means.” This is, admittedly, an area of great complexity. This past August we observed the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States, reviving this very debate. Did the fact that the bombing brought an end to the war justify the killing of hundreds of thousands of people?

While I hesitate to absolutely apply the principle of Mitzvah Ha'baah B'veira to complex, contemporary real-world problems, I do feel comfortable contending that this teaching should at least be top of mind. When we are facing a dilemma as to whether we should cut ethical corners in order to achieve a noble goal, we should consider that this vital teaching from our tradition, at the very least, creates the presumption that the cutting of ethical corners is generally wrong—a presumption that should only be overcome in the most extraordinary of circumstances.

I am thinking of this teaching a lot these days for two reasons. The first is my conviction that this idea, Mitzvah Ha'baah B'veira (that absent the most compelling case we should never do harm in pursuit of good), is now too often being discarded both in public and private arenas. That we have lost our sensitivity to the severe damage that doing harm does to our very souls—no matter the circumstances. That doing harm puts so much negative energy into the world (whether on a grand or small scale)—and that this is rarely compensated for by the good that is supposedly accomplished. That we have become so focused on “winning,” that we have lost sight of the greater importance of adhering to the highest ethical standards. For the good of all of our souls.

The second is Bertha Bodenheimer, of blessed memory, who just passed away leaving a gaping hole in all of our hearts and lives. Bertha was an exemplar of integrity—a woman who always knew what was right and was never shy to remind the rest of us. Whether at a board meeting or during discussions of religion, politics or family, Bertha kept us rigorously honest as she kept herself honest. Her voice will be sorely missed.

I feel grateful that my first introduction to the Talmud deeply embedded within me the notion of Mitzvah Ha'baah B'veira—the notion that ethical behavior is above all. Even above religious imperatives. And I feel so grateful for Bertha's voice in my ear over the past 12 years reminding me that it is our devotion to integrity that truly defines us. May her love, wisdom, strength and integrity live on in all of us.

Rabbi Sruli

P.S. On Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, at 2:30 p.m., Rabbi Sruli and Lisa will perform for Lewiston's annual “Holiday at the Plaza” event (Dufresne Plaza, 72 Lisbon Street). Our Temple's large, portable Menorah will also be lit at this public event. All are invited to attend.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



This month we celebrate Chanukah, the rededication of the Temple. So I think now is a good time to talk about why I feel we should be dedicated to our Temple here in Auburn, Maine. First of all, Temple Shalom is a beautiful building that was built with the idea of uniting the entire Jewish population of the area. Some pieces of the old building in Lewiston were incorporated in the design, like the stained-glass windows in the chapel. We've also added some pieces of Beth Abraham, such as the memorial plaques. They are reminders of those who, along with their ancestors, settled in this area, operated their businesses here, and helped to create a vibrant Jewish community. I also have memories of raising my family here. We lived in a town with no other Jews, so the Temple served not only as a place to worship and for Jewish education, but

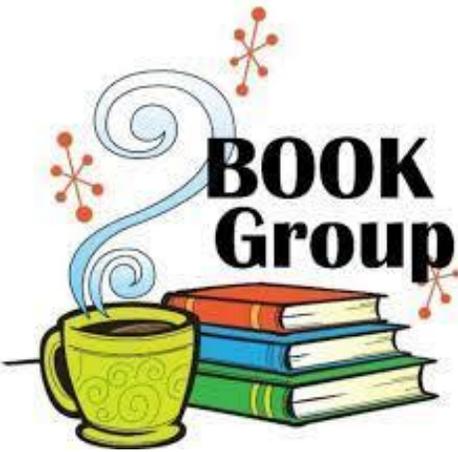
also as a place to bond and make life-long friends. Now my children are grown, with families of their own, one 15 minutes away, the other 2 ½ hours. (And believe me, I call that 'close by'!) I no longer live in their childhood home, but staying dedicated to Temple Shalom is just as important to me now, especially since Jewish families no longer settle into homogenous neighborhoods and our numbers are dwindling. We are now far-flung, and really need that central gathering place. We are also more varied in background, combining many belief systems, so we can use this building, and its teachings within, to help us forge our Jewish identities. The building itself is as important to the future of this area's Jewish community as the people who proudly call themselves members. So as we come to the end of another tax year, consider making an extra donation to Temple Shalom to help ensure its future in our lives and in the lives of the generations to come. Consider it a Chanukah gift to your community!

Happy Chanukah to all, and may we keep the eternal flame 'burning' in our community's Temple.

Lesli Weiner  
President



!!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!



On November 11th it was a small group with a lot to talk about. Present were Deb Katz, Marsha Auster, Judy Abromson and me, Lesli Weiner. Noticeably absent was Bertha who has left a big hole in our small group and in our hearts. Coincidentally, the meaning of this month’s title, “The Book of Two Ways” refers to the path one takes in the afterlife, according to the ancient Egyptians. We learned a lot about Egyptian mythology and hieroglyphics along with a philosophical debate between fate and free will. With all its plot twists and character relationships, the story was totally engrossing. (Not much Jewish content though.)

Our next book is “Typewriter Beach” by Meg Waite Clayton. Here’s the synopsis of this historical novel:

**“Set in Carmel-by-the-Sea and Hollywood, *Typewriter Beach* is an unforgettable story of the unlikely friendship between an Oscar-nominated screenwriter and a young actress hoping to be Alfred Hitchcock's new star.**

1957. Isabella Giori is ten months into a standard seven-year studio contract when she auditions with Hitchcock. Just weeks later, she is sequestered by the studio’s “fixer” in a tiny Carmel cottage, waiting and dreading. Meanwhile, next door, Léon Chazan is annoyed as hell when Iz interrupts his work on yet another screenplay he won’t be able to sell, because he’s been blacklisted. Soon, they’re together in his roadster, speeding down the fog-shrouded Big Sur coast. 2018. Twenty-six-year-old screenwriter Gemma Chazan, in Carmel to sell her grandfather’s cottage, finds a hidden safe full of secrets—raising questions about who the screenwriter known simply as Chazan really was, and whether she can live up to his name. In graceful prose and with an intimate understanding of human nature, Meg Waite Clayton captures the joys and frustrations of being a writer, being a woman, being a star, and being in love. *Typewriter Beach* is the story of two women separated by generations—a tale of ideas and ideals, passion and persistence, creativity, politics, and family.”

Join us on zoom at our next meeting on MONDAY, DECEMBER 8th at 4PM.....lesli

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**CHINESE AND A MOVIE**

A DECEMBER 25<sup>th</sup> TRADITION

MOVIE AT FLAGSHIP CINEMA, AUBURN  
SHOWTIME (TBD)

DINNER AFTER THE SHOW  
AT LOTUS  
(Approximately at 6PM)

**!!!!RSVP!!!!** BY DECEMBER 18  
786-4201



**Bertha Bodenheimer, of Blessed Memory**  
*by Rebbetzin Lisa*

I read that the average American lives 79.4 years. I figured that Bertha lived at least three lives worth—but even at 238.2 years old it's impossible to imagine life at the synagogue—our lives—without her. I really thought she was going to live forever.

When we first got here, 12 years ago, she said to me, “I know I'm probably older than your mother, but I'd like to be friends. Friends. Is that ok?” Bertha, it was an honor to be your friend.

We would sometimes hang out. I would visit her at her place in town, meet her and Estelle at Starbucks, or swim past the house on Taylor Pond and she'd come outside and we would chat while I stayed in the lake like a mermaid. She told me about helping the Russian side of her family make *aliyah* to America. She told me how she met Bert Bodenheimer. And she told me other womanly things I still think about but can't repeat.

How could such a tiny person make such a huge impact? On her family? On her friends? On this Shul, this synagogue, and I don't mean just sitting at the little front table collecting money.

Bertha invited Rabbi Sruli and me and the little twins to *Shalosh Seudos* that first Shabbos we came to Maine. She was a *balebusta* with beautifully manicured nails.

She took the twins and me along with her great grandson Chase, to a magic show.

Her love and loyalty to the Allen and Bodenheimer families was fierce and true. So was her love for Estelle Rubenstein—Bertha's “bestie” for SIXTY-NINE YEARS.

Bertha, I will always see you raising your finger to make a point. I will always mimic that thing you did with your hands to say—without words—that “it's weird, but it's alright.”

I will always love you, my friend.

And it might be a while—But save me a seat.

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**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO**  
Sophie & David Steinberg

Dec. 5



# Linking Generations:

## By Labish Kurtz (Richard Kurtz)

**“Music is the language of the soul.”** – Hasidic saying

When I’m doing genealogy research, I love listening to Jewish music especially Klezmer and Cantorial melodies. The music inspires me and helps me lose myself in the lives and stories of my ancestors.

As members of Temple Beth Shalom, we are no strangers to the beautiful vibrations of Jewish music thanks to our rabbi and rebbetzin, who fill our community with song. One of my favorite sources of Jewish music is the free **Judaic Music Collection** housed at Florida Atlantic University. Check it out, you’re sure to discover some personal song gems of your own.

### Resources

<https://rsa.fau.edu/judaic>



Any questions about Jewish Genealogy: [asklabish@gmail.com](mailto:asklabish@gmail.com)

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Look at all the babies at a recent Shabbat Service!

## Eight thoughts as we light our Chanukah lights this year (one for each night), by Shoshana Judelman, a passionate teacher of Torah and Jewish History in Israel:

1. **Remember that the journey is just as important as (if not more important than) the destination.** We spend far more time in it and we often forget to value how we are growing along the way.
2. **Constant growth as a value.** Each one of us wakes up every morning with the opportunity to grow, to do something a little bit differently, to respond a bit more positively, to learn a new skill or smile at someone new, to take a chance, and to bring more light into the world.
3. **Acknowledge each achievement.** Each candle represents one small achievement and we acknowledge and celebrate all of them. This type of encouragement and positive reinforcement strengthens us to keep trying.
4. **Setting achievable goals.** Each night when we light one more candle, we have achieved another goal. That sense of accomplishment empowers us to dream our dreams...and then to try and reach for them.
5. **No one is expected to be able to do something perfectly the first time.** We don't jump straight to 8 candles. We must have patience with ourselves and not give up. We need to learn that only through time, effort and repetition can we become proficient at whatever tasks we set for ourselves.
6. **Life happens one day at a time.** Try to remember to take each day as it comes and to not make yourself afraid by stressing out over what is coming up. Your life is happening right this minute and now is when you can make all the difference. Be here now.
7. **Keep moving forward.** Life presents us with many challenges and we just have to keep going, not wallow in what was or what "could have been"- just keep going and trying.
8. **Little. Bit. Counts.** All of the effort that we ever put in has an effect on us and the world around us.



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, Sara Graf, Robert Galumbeck, 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.*



*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.**

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

Sawyer Steinberg	Dec.	2
Estelle Rubinstein		3
Susan Scott		5
Andrew Bodenheimer		6
Joshua Goodman		7
Lillian Zidle		7
Briana Robillard		9
Jennifer Nussinow Tasker		11
Carla Marcus		15
Cole Steinberg		16
Sarah Levine		30

## Yahrzeiten

Harvey Shain	Dec.	2
Sonny Isaacson		6
Renee Laine		7
Morris Supovitz		8
Hebert Scott		12
Charles W. Marcus		13
Becky Binstock		15
Dorothy Fishman		17
Morris Zallen		17
Morris Silverman		18
Sherman Shapiro		21
Frances Stern		21
Marcia Bell		24
Jack Simons		26
Keyla Fuchs		29
Harriet Passerman		29
Deborah Isaacson		31

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BODENHEIMER PASSOVER FUND  
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MINYANAIRE'S FUND  
SHAPIRO MEMORIAL FUND  
SHIRLEY GOODMAN MEMORIAL FUND**



## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **GENERAL FUND**

The following gave donations  
in memory of Bertha Bodenheimer

Michael Gagne  
Philip Laine  
Babs & Michael Shapiro  
Ellen & Aaron Burke  
Marianne Wise  
Estelle Rubinstein  
Phyllis Wilner

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Robert A Scott

In memory of John H. Scott

Phyllis Bell

In memory of Sina Amsel

The Bell Family

In memory of Reva Finks Roth

In memory of Irving Bell

Phyllis Bell

Wishing all a successful & peaceful  
year

Estelle Rubinstein

In memory of Hyman Rubinstein

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In memory of Bertha Bodenheimer

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In memory of Trudy Nemeth

In memory of Bertha Bodenheimer

**Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center**

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