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**Congregation Beth Hamedresh – Beth Israel**

# BULLETIN

Editor: Stan Schaffer

## ***May President's Message***

Dear Friends,

This is the 48<sup>th</sup> President's message I've written, marking the end of my second stint as President of BHBI. This is a good time to thank people for all the help I received while in office. First is Steve Teitel, who has done a lot of supervision of projects, has taken on the cemetery management, coordinated kiddushim, has contributed many good ideas, and reins me in when I get overly enthusiastic (he also makes great soup). Stan Schaffer as bulletin editor and membership chair is largely responsible for how our congregation interfaces with the rest of the world. Ira Cohen has kept our finances in order for years, making sure that we have the resources in hand to get things done. All of the other officers and Board members have made significant contributions to our ongoing management, but I would especially note Paula Bobb and Helen Gulack, as two of the newest Board members, who have made suggestions that us old timers might not think of. On the ritual side of things, we've had the help and advice of Rabbi Goldberg for these past two years, which I deeply appreciate. I also appreciate the help of George Kornfeld, our High Holy Day cantor, who has made significant suggestions about how our services run. We've also had two of our newest members, Rabbi Simeon Kolko and Hermann Vogelstein, who have made significant contributions to leading services and reading Torah. Aaron Marsh of Temple Beth Am has been of great help to me with his cooperation in arranging joint activities between our congregations. The crew of people who been preparing our kiddushim, Steve Teitel, Andrea Paprocki, Judith Mercer, and Aline Honickman have contributed greatly to our Shabbat experience. Finally, I want to thank everyone who participates in any way as an attendee at services and other events. If you weren't coming here, what would be the point of keeping the doors open? In making these thanks, it's likely that I've overlooked some one. If so, my apologies, and I do appreciate all of you.

The 2011 Annual meeting will be on May 15<sup>th</sup>. We will elect officers and Board members. As with all other years, we need a quorum to conduct business. You can send a written proxy for your vote with someone else if you desire, but proxies don't count toward a quorum. Please come. One important item of business is a proposal to increase dues by 5%. Our expenses have been rising but our dues have not gone up for several years. The Board is requesting this increase to help meet our needs. Please come to the meeting to participate in the discussion. I look forward to seeing you there.

Another upcoming event on the weekend of May 21 and 22 is the New York Landmarks Conservancy Open House weekend in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> year of their program of grants to religious institutions, one of which we received about 15 years ago. If you are interested in participating as a tour guide on May 22 please contact me. Also, I'm looking for photos of our building as it looked before the renovations. If you have any please call me.

Thank you.

*Leon Metlay*

## **BHBI Annual Membership Meeting**

**Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.**

**Please be sure to attend!**

**If you cannot make it, you may give a written proxy to another member to vote on your behalf. Only members whose dues are paid up may vote. Each member may hold up to 2 proxies. Only attendees count toward the quorum.**

## BHBI CALENDAR OF EVENTS – MAY 2011

Sunday	May 1	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Friday	May 6	7:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service at Heather Heights in Pittsford Light candles at 7:58 PM
Saturday	May 7	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service <span style="float: right;">Torah: Emor</span>
Sunday	May 8	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Monday	May 9	7:30 PM	Monthly Meeting of the BHBI Board of Trustees
Wednesday	May 11	7:30 PM	Joint Torah Study with members of Temple Beth Am and Temple Beth David at BHBI
Friday	May 13	8:00 PM	Joint Shabbat Evening Service with congregants from Temple Beth Am at Beth Am with Rabbi Goldberg officiating Light candles at 8:06 PM
Saturday	May 14	9:30 AM	Joint Shabbat Morning Service with congregants from Temple Beth Am at BHBI <span style="float: right;">Torah: Behar</span>
Sunday	May 15	9:00 AM  3:00 PM	Service and Discussion  Annual BHBI Membership Meeting
Friday	May 20	8:00 PM	Joint Shabbat Evening Service with congregants from Temple Beth Am at Beth Am with Rabbi Goldberg officiating Light candles at 8:13 PM
Saturday	May 21	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service <span style="float: right;">Torah: Bechukotai</span>
Sunday	May 22	9:00 AM  11 AM – 3 PM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion  NY Landmarks Conservancy Open House at BHBI
Friday	May 27	8:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service Light candles at 8:20 PM
Saturday	May 28	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service. Blessing for the New Month. <span style="float: right;">Torah: Bamidbar</span>
Sunday	May 29	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion



**Join Us as BHBI Hosts visitors from the NY Landmark Conservancy  
on Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.**



## FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

By  
**RABBI GEOFFREY GOLDBERG**

May 2011

On the second night of Passover we started to count the *omer*, the counting of which continues for seven weeks until we reach Shavuot. The Counting of the *omer* connects the physical liberation of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt to the true spiritual liberation of the people by means of the giving and acceptance of the Torah at Sinai.

The meaning of the *omer* (lit. “measure”) is multifaceted. The original biblical meaning referred to the harvesting of the new grain of barley on the second night of Passover and the waving of the first sheaf before the altar in the sanctuary the following morning (according to the explanation of the Mishnah). The Torah commands that seven weeks be counted from the time of the offering of the *omer*. This entire period became known as the *Sefirah*, the literal meaning of which is “counting.” After seven weeks *shtei ha-lehem*, two loaves of bread were offered in the sanctuary. Originally, therefore, the *omer* was entirely agricultural in significance, and the offerings with which it began expressed hope for the harvest and thanksgiving for the land and its produce. When, however, Shavuot (lit. “weeks”) was reinterpreted by the rabbis and connected with *Matan Torah*, the Giving of the Torah, so too was the counting of the *omer* associated with anticipation and preparation for spiritual liberation under the Torah.

Later, another level of meaning, one of mourning, was associated with the counting of the *omer* and the *Sefirah* period. The most common explanation for this is a very brief Talmudic passage which refers to the death of thousands of pupils of Rabbi Akiva in a plague because they did not treat each other with sufficient respect (*Yevamot* 62b). However, no mourning practices in connection with the *omer* period before the eighth century. In the time of Rashi the *omer* period was associated with persecutions and massacres of German Jewry during the time of the Crusades, a far more convincing historical event than the story about the pupils of Rabbi Akiva. In recent years the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly has limited the mourning restrictions of the *omer* period after *Yom Ha-Atzma'ut*, Israeli Independence Day, which falls during the *omer*.

In the sixteenth century R. Isaac Luria and his students transformed the *sefirah* period entirely. The seven weeks were not only a historical journey from Egypt to Sinai, but a personal, inner journey and struggle to free oneself from inner slavery. Each day of counting was connected to one of the seven kabbalistic *sefirot* of the emanations of God. Each *sefirah* was connected to an attribute of God, such as the *sefirah* of *Hesed*, or loving kindness, or the *sefirah* of *Tiferet* (beauty) with compassion. Hassidic thought adopted this level of meaning and so Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav taught, “When a person pays attention to what happens to him during the days of the *sefirah* period, he soon becomes aware of all he sees and hears on that day is but the activity of that *sefirah* and that can align him to God’s blessed will.”

What an incredible journey the *omer* has taken since Biblical times! In addition to the journey of liberation from Egypt to the Giving of the Torah at Sinai—an outer journey—there is an inner journey, a personal, spiritual one, as well. We travel them both, the historical and the personal.

*Rabbi Geoffrey Goldberg*

### THE RABBI FUND

Contributions to the Rabbi Fund enable us to engage Rabbi Goldberg to lead additional services at BHBI during the year. Whenever the funds in the Rabbi Fund reach a predetermined level, we will schedule an additional service with Rabbi Goldberg. To contribute to this purpose, please send a check in to BHBI with a notation that the contribution should be used for the Rabbi Fund.

## Yahrzeits

At the following Shabbat Services, we will read the names of our late loved ones whose Yahrzeits will occur on that Shabbat or during the following week.

May 7-8	Iyar	May 14-15	Iyar	May 21-22	Iyar	May 28-29	Iyar - Sivan
Louis Goldman*	3	Samuel Sanow*	10	Libbie Goldberg*	18	Esther Leah Silverman*	24
Beverly Honickman	4	Harry Cominsky*	11	Samuel Gastel*	21	Reuben Cohen	26
Hyman Goldberg*	6	Dr. Murray Cowan	12	Pauline Hobel	22	Leopold Beechbinder*	27
Morton Lewis	6	Chasa Tillie Yablin*	12			Charles Bertman*	27
Albert Bernstein*	7	Johanna Schild*	13			Isadore D. Goldberg*	27
Harry Gordon*	7	Haskell Isaac Smith*	15	* Denotes name		Harry T. Levinson*	27
Minnie Rothbard	9	Samuel Lederman*	16	memorialized on		Abraham Goldman*	28
		Samuel J. Weisenberg*	16	BHBI Memorial		Arnold Kauffman*	28
				Plaque		Samuel Schwartz*	1

We pray that our mourners will be comforted among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and that the memory of the deceased continues to be a blessing to all who knew them.

## MEMORIAL PLAQUES

You can also memorialize a friend or loved one by purchasing a BHBI memorial plaque. Our memorial plaques are very reasonably priced. For more information, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or [stanschaffer@frontiernet.net](mailto:stanschaffer@frontiernet.net)

## TORAH STUDY

Join us for an interactive session of Torah study with our friends from Temple Beth Am and Temple Beth David at BHBI on Wednesday evening, May 11th at 7:30 p.m. The discussion is always lively!

## LAG B'OMER

What is Lag B'Omer and why do we commemorate it? The Hebrew letters lamed gimel represent the number 33. Lag B'Omer therefore marks the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the counting of the Omer between Passover and Shavuot. This day is commemorated for 2 reasons: 1) Generally the days between Passover and Shavuot are considered days of mourning because of the thousands of disciples of Rabbi Akiva who died during this period in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Traditionally, it is believed that on Lag B'Omer the outbreak that killed them ended; and 2) Lag B'Omer also is the day on which Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, a sage of the Mishnah and the author of the Zohar, passed away. Since he had requested that the anniversary of his death be celebrated as a happy day, Lag B'Omer is commemorated as a day of picnics and bonfires in Israel. This year Lag B'Omer falls on Saturday evening, May 21<sup>st</sup> and Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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**So far our TOPS Gift Card fundraiser has been quite successful. Remember, TOPS Gift Cards are now available through BHBI in \$50 denominations. To purchase TOPS Gift Cards, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or by e-mail at [stanschaffer@frontiernet.net](mailto:stanschaffer@frontiernet.net)**

# TO OUR DONORS – THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

## RABBI AARON SOLOMON SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Muriel Hobel  
*James Mancuso*

### GENERAL FUND

*Malcolm and Annette Weinberg*

In memory of Sylvia Kowal  
*Phil and Annette Garver*

In memory of Charles Levy  
*Paul and Rose Israel*

### RABBI FUND

*Helen Arditi*

In memory of Lea Kron  
*The Pastin and Ceisel Families*

## THANK YOU TO OUR KIDDUSH SPONSORS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL

- April 2    The Congregation  
April 9    Cathy and Winston Block in memory of Winston's father, Max Block  
              Joshua and Sheva Faber in honor of the baby naming of their son, Charles  
April 16    Phil and Annette Garver in memory of Sylvia Kowal  
April 23    The Congregation

## DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO IS UNAFFILIATED AND INTERESTED IN JOINING A CONGREGATION?

Let them know about BHBI's special free 3 month trial membership (available to prospective first-time new members only). Have them contact BHBI at 244-2060 or BHBI@frontiernet.net and we will be happy to give them information about BHBI and this great offer!!

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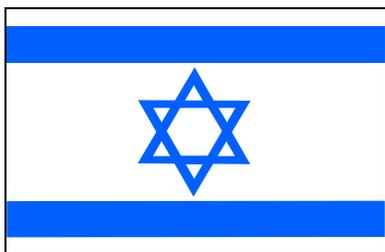
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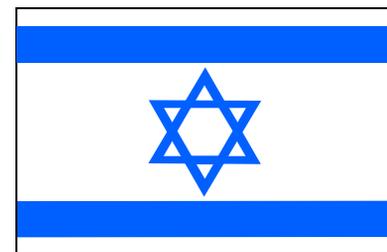
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## EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

**Israel Independence Day (Yom Ha'Atzmaout)** will be celebrated by the Rochester Jewish Community at Temple B'rith Kodesh on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. with a concert by Seeds of the Sun, a leading Israeli jazz ensemble. The evening will begin with a brief commemoration of Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day for Israel's fallen servicemen and women) led by area religious school students.



Happy Birthday, Israel!



**OFFICE:** The synagogue office is checked regularly for mail and messages. The synagogue phone is 244-2060. For urgent issues, call Steve Teitel at 473-5741 or Stan Schaffer at 473-8072. You can also e-mail us at BHBI@frontiernet.net

**WANT TO REMEMBER OR HONOR SOMEONE OR A SPECIAL OCCASION?** *Consider sponsoring a kiddush or making a donation to any one of our funds* (General Operating, Kiddush, Library, Torah, Rabbi Aaron Solomon Scholarship, Our Youth, Special Events, Rabbi Fund or the Sam Malina Memorial Fund). Please indicate which fund you would like your donation to go to and we will send out an acknowledgement card as you indicate and print an announcement in this bulletin. A standard sponsored kiddush at BHBI costs just \$40 while a larger enhanced kiddush is just \$50.

**BULLETIN CONTENT** What do you enjoy reading in the BHBI Bulletin? Is there something that you would like added (or taken out)? If so, please let Stan Schaffer know. We always appreciate feedback.

**DID YOU MISPLACE YOUR BULLETIN?** Don't worry. BHBI Bulletins going back 6 years can now be found on our web page: [www.BHBIRochester.org](http://www.BHBIRochester.org)

**WANT TO GET YOUR BULLETIN HOT-OFF-THE-PRESS?** Consider having us e-mail it to you! Contact Stan Schaffer at: [stanschaffer@frontiernet.net](mailto:stanschaffer@frontiernet.net)

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