

From the Rabbi Michael Silbert

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Our tradition teaches us that exactly seven weeks after our people escaped from Egypt, God appeared at Mount Sinai and gave the Torah to Moses, to give to us. To this day, we celebrate this turning point in our history and develop-

ment as a people with the festival of Shavuot. (Come to think of it, two turning points just seven weeks apart – the Exodus and Mount Sinai, corresponding with Pesach and Shavuot – make for a wonderfully busy and frantic period in the birth of a nation. Surely just a single one would have been enough for us – *Dayenu!* – but instead, we were blessed with two!)

The words and teachings of Torah are the life and soul of the Jewish people. As we approach Shavuot in the coming weeks and we remember this moment of God's revelation to the Jewish people, what comes to mind for me is a moment of personal revelation that was experienced by one of the greatest teachers of Torah who's ever lived, Rabbi Akiva.

Avot DeRabbi Natan teaches that despite Rabbi Akiva's storied reputation as a sage contributor to Jewish scholarship, he himself did not even begin to study Torah until he reached middle age:

"By the age of 40, Rabbi Akiva had still not learned anything. One time he was standing at the mouth of a well, and asked 'Who hollowed out this rock?'"

They answered him, 'It was the water that constantly falls on it. Akiva, are you not familiar with the verse "Water wears away stone... (Job 14:19)?"'

And so it turned out that Rabbi Akiva uttered his first logical inference of Torah study: "Just as the soft [water] shaped the hard [stone], how much more so do the words of Torah, which can be hard as iron, shape my heart which is but flesh and blood."

In this very moment, his life was forever changed as the extent of the reach of Torah's truth and influence suddenly became apparent to him. Soon after this moment of revelation in his own

life, he left his home and family – with their blessing – for almost 24 years, to study in the great Yeshivah. Having accomplished a depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding of Torah in the latter part of his life alone that very few ever manage to achieve in an entire lifetime, he once reflected: "To love one's neighbor as oneself is the single greatest principle of Torah."

This, above all else, is what he understood to be the essence of Torah's teaching, the key message at the core of the soul of the Jewish People. Our *Mission Statement*, if you will.

At Temple Beth David, we have been offering modified Shabbat services online, every Shabbat – **"TBD-LOL"**, which is short for "Temple Beth David – Live, On-Line". In order to get around some of the complexities of which aspects of a typical Shabbat service we could and could not realistically offer on-line, we made the decision that what is most important for us is to continue to hear the words of Torah. To allow our Jewish souls to be touched by the word of God. As the custodians of a faith which offers volumes upon volumes of the teachings of God's will, and which when distilled into a single essential sentence, amounts to "Love your neighbor as you love yourself", it is clear to us that there is nothing more important for us as a religious congregation to be doing each week.

Don't get me wrong: not for a moment am I saying that all the other "stuff" is unimportant. It's just that we are *still* living in the age of a deathly global pandemic and there are still numerous details in the way of us being able to come together again physically. The words *"She Yibaneh Beit HaMikdash BiMeheirah BeYameinu"* – "May the Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days" come to mind as a fitting aspiration for our time: may the time when we are able to sit in our holy space come speedily in our days. We are working at making all the necessary arrangements to reconvene in-person services as soon as it is possible, while contending with all the various remaining parameters.

But in the meantime, we continue to do what feels most important of all, and I invite you to join us. Please come join us on Zoom on a Saturday morning and share in our community as we share the words of Torah with each other.

Michael

The mission of Temple Beth David is to provide an environment where the concepts of community prayer, education, and service to the greater Jewish community are provided within the context of Conservative Judaism. We take pride in being a friendly, participatory, egalitarian community, welcoming all to be a part of our synagogue family.



Hello Fellow Congregants and Friends of TBD!

Here we are...only a few short weeks until we will be celebrating the festival of Shavuot. We will study together, hear the Ten Commandments, read the Book of Ruth, and eat some cheesecake!

Shavuot commemorates what is said to be the single most important event in Jewish history - the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. I certainly have heard and read this story many times. As I prepared to write to you, I read it again but with a different perspective. I thought about how it might have felt to be waiting for Moses for 40 days and 40 nights, without ever knowing when the waiting would end. Talk about the need for patience. If on May 1st you were told that you would need to wait until June 10th until you could return to in-person services, how would you feel? OR, if on May 1st you were simply asked to wait with no end time given, how would you feel? Maybe it would still be 40 days but during those 40 days and nights you would not know how long you would be waiting. Such a challenge waiting can be.

*"And sure enough, even waiting will end...
if you can just wait long enough."*

William Faulkner

So we ask you to patiently wait a bit longer. Some congregations in Rochester are, like us, only meeting online, while others are now holding

in-person services. Please know that we are working diligently through the details required to once again gather together in our sanctuary. We are following the guidelines provided by the CDC, New York State, and Monroe County to create a plan that will allow those of us who wish to gather together to do so as safely as possible. Not everything will be exactly as it was before the pandemic, but we are working to provide the best of what is possible.

In closing, please know this about me - I like open communication. I am really big on asking questions. I ask others to ask questions. Asking questions is what life is really all about. Just ask Dr. Laura Forsyth.

"Most everybody knows Big Bird. But have you ever really listened to what the Bird says? One day, years ago when my kids were little, I was fixing lunch while they watched Sesame Street. Looking up from flipping the grilled cheese, I was just in time to hear Big Bird say, 'Asking questions is a good way of finding things out.' I about dropped the spatula. The Bird had nailed it."

<https://www.drlauraforsyth.com/blog/bird-has-the-word>

I request that while we are asking the questions, we engage with each other to discuss and to look for the answers. We are all in this together and it is a great time and an important time to get involved and engaged in our community. I encourage all of you, congregants and friends of Temple Beth David alike, to reach out with questions and answers and open minds.

We're almost there!

I'm excited to tell you that Temple Beth David's Board of Trustees and I are already taking the necessary steps to reopen our sanctuary for Shabbat services! We are making sure that our plans are in compliance with New York State regulations and that social distancing, PPE and other precautions will be in place so that we can be safe in our space. We also anticipate that until all restrictions are lifted, there will be live video streaming of our services in order to reach those who still feel safer participating from home.

In the meantime, please stay tuned for news of the actual reopening date, which we look forward to announcing soon! *Bivrahah* / With blessings, Michael

All in the Family

May Birthdays

Alice Nussbaum	May 2
Kevin Fleissig	May 4
Vivian Rothberg	May 13
Karen Schaffer	May 14
Susan Lederer	May 20
Judy Wolbert	May 21
Elena Davis	May 24
Maxine Newman	May 24
Ronald Kraus	May 25
Beverly Zwick	May 25
Burt Segelin	May 26
Shelby Nelson	May 29

June Birthdays

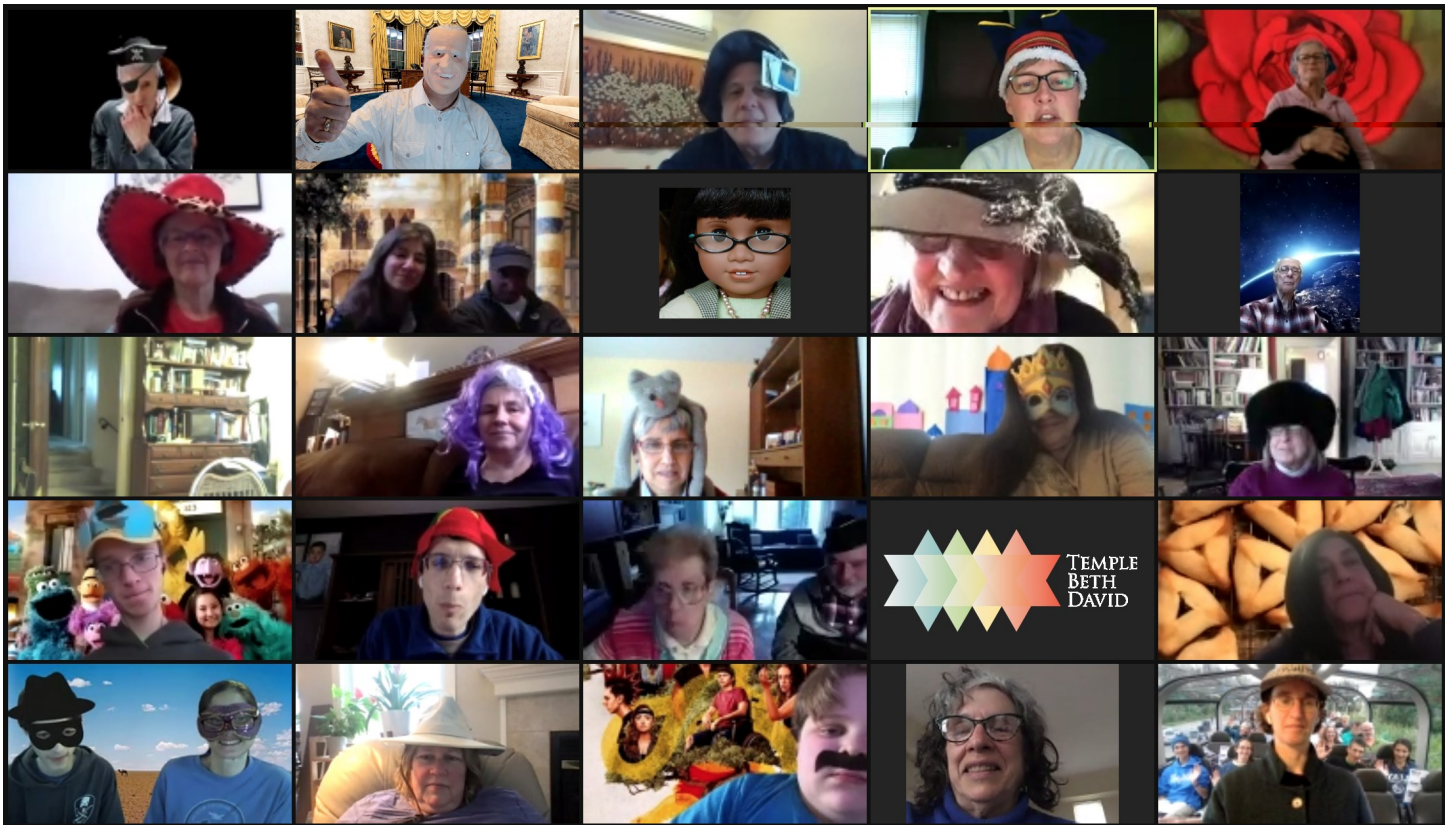
Barbara Grosh	June 1
Risa Saltzman	June 1
Teresa Kielar	June 2
Rheva Kleinberg	June 2
Sue Eckhaus	June 6
Nancy Kraus	June 10
Ruth Aranov	June 11
Judy Fleissig	June 16
Juliet Lande	June 16
Olivia Meynadasy	June 26

May Anniversaries

Susan Wood	May 20
Thomas & Judy Wolbert	May 24
Stanley & Elaine Schaffer	May 26
Michael & Laurie Peres	May 29
Richard & Joyce Towber	May 30
Ronald & Nancy Kraus	May 31
David & Susan Langmann	May 31
Burton & Marilyn Segelin	May 31

June Anniversaries

Myron & Rheva Kleinberg	June 7
Michael & Beverly Zwick	June 10
Michael & Toby Berke	June 13
Steven Meyers & Barbara Weber	June 14
Ronald & Jean Brandwein	June 18
Edward & Susan Drexler	June 18
Daniel & Alice Nussbaum	June 20



Pirates, Presidents, Persian Princesses and purple perms:
the pandemic Purim party proved to be perfectly pleasing!

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Received February 16, 2020 - April 15, 2021

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Bill & Lisa Keeley
Samuel Markus
Sidney Markus

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Daniel Goldman

THANK YOU

Scott & Lori Davis

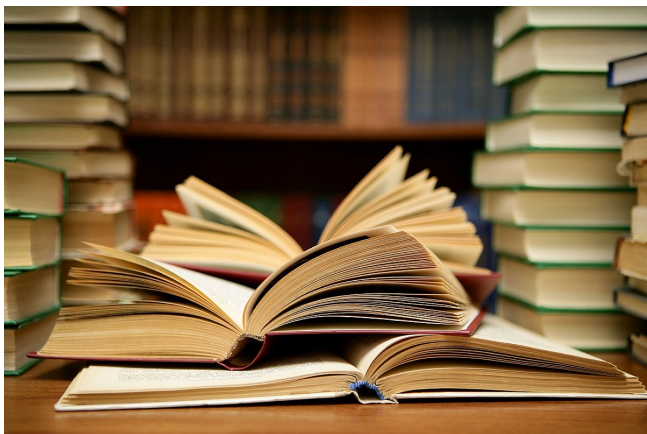
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IN MEMORY

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Rita Schnidman
Frank Schnidman & Kim Liberty



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Jewish Short Stories Discussion Group

Please join us for our
May and June meetings.
Details, including dates, times,
titles and Zoom information, may
be found in our weekly enewsletter.

We invite you to join with other readers for two new sessions of our Temple Beth David Jewish Short Stories Discussion Group. In May and June we will be featuring stories by two winners of the Moment Magazine-Karma Foundation Short Fiction Contest.

When you read the selected winning stories, you will be introduced to promising young writers who use themes of Judaism, Jewish culture, or history in their work. Previous winners of the award have included prestigious writers such as Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Pinsky, Walter Mosley, Nicole Krauss, Erica Jong, Jonathan Safran Foer, Geraldine Brooks, André Aciman, and Dara Horn.



Watch for the newsletter announcements and join us for a lively discussion.



The next **Temple Beth David Board of Trustee Meeting** will be held on Monday, May 24 at 7:00 pm, via Zoom. All temple members are welcome to attend or you may address any questions or concerns to a board member for consideration prior to the next meeting. If you need information on how to attend the meeting or how to contact a board member, please consult your temple directory or contact the temple office. Mark your calendar for the June meeting on June 21 at 7:00 pm.

Shavuot will begin on the evening of Sunday, May 16 and end on the evening of Tuesday, May 18. TBD will be hosting a study session, Tikkun Leil Shavuot, on Sunday afternoon.

Many more details will follow in the weekly newsletter, including details for first day services and second day services and yizkor.

"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. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. Thus and more may God do to me if anything but death parts me from you." Ruth 1:16–17



Yahrzeits

Date Observed

May 1 Bruce Newman Lillian Pies	May 19 Calvin Rosenbaum Sylvia Roth	June 2 Esther (Erma) Przewuzman Ida Rosenbaum	June 16 Emil Schott
May 2 Solomon Berke	May 21 Harris Markus Ben Smith	June 3 Joseph Blumkin	June 17 Elva Wexler
May 3 Irwin Applebaum	May 23 Annette Strassman	June 5 Eugene Brandwein	June 18 Beverly (Stark) Schaffer
May 5 Phillip Keirn	May 24 Arlen Brodksy	June 6 Hyman Freedman	June 19 Chaya Sarah Schnidman
May 7 Betty Herman	May 26 Joseph M. Haymoff	June 7 Burton Lurie Philip Lurie	June 20 Anna Roxin
May 9 Harry Eissenstat	May 27 Sara Rouso	June 8 Edith Krovetz Jaffey Ida Markus	June 24 Jacob Neuberg Kurt Peter Schaffer
May 10 David Bauman	May 28 Harold Baker	June 9 Marcus Phillips	June 26 Al Diamond
May 13 Mollie Markus	May 29 Nellie Eissenstat	June 11 Hyman Cherkasky Helene Davis Penzik	June 27 Joseph Retta
May 14 Milton Stoler	May 30 Lois Markus Thelma Messinger	June 12 Celia Lurie	June 29 Daniel Markus
May 16 Anne Hoffman Jack Weber	May 31 Estelle Frieder Berke Janet Steinfeld-Feldman	June 13 Aaron Kinell	June 30 Tillie Gross
May 18 Doris Cherkasky Rachel Gross Solomon Kashtan Leo Langmann	June 1 Eunice Freedman	June 15 Morris Segelin	<i>The yahrzeit date that appears above is the date of observance using the secular calendar. These dates match those of the Hebrew calendar for the actual date of death.</i>



Find us on Facebook at **Temple Beth David - Rochester, NY**. You will find photos and videos, event information, recipes, and more. If you are interested in certain types of content, please send suggestions to office@tbdrochester.com.

SEND A CARD TO A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE!

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- ☐ Get Well Wishes _____
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Note: _____

Fund: If no fund is specified, your donation will be made to the David Solomon Operating Fund. Thank you.

- ☐ David Solomon Operating Fund
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☐ Marsh Fishman Youth Education Fund
☐ Mitzvah Kiddush Donation

- ☐ Rabbi Discretionary Fund
☐ Rabbi Skopitz Fund
☐ Soldiers Project
☐ Torah Repair Fund



Donations and dues payments may now be accepted online! Visit our donate page at www.tbdrochester.org/donate Online donation minimum \$10.



Do you receive our Weekly News email?

If not, you are missing out on the latest news about Temple Beth David services and events, as well as community information. Call or email the Temple Office to add your name to the mailing list!

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) is United States legislation that provides data privacy and security provisions for safeguarding medical information. Hospitals are no longer permitted to contact the temple office to notify us of admitted congregants.

Please contact the office with family news.



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