

From the Rabbi Michael Silbert

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I've heard Jews give numerous descriptions of the ways in which the various Jewish denominations / branches differ from one another.

The most common one - and the one that probably raises my hackles more than all others - is, "Orthodox is the most religious, Reform is the least religious and Conservative is somewhere in between." The reason for my strong dislike of this approach is that it essentially disempowers the non-Orthodox; it says "The rest of us acknowledge that Judaism isn't that important to us, that we just couldn't be bothered."

There is a sense of disempowerment here that buys into someone else's narrative of Judaism, which demands that we agree that there really is only one way to be a *real* Jew, and the rest of us who don't follow those rules are simply taking the easy way out. What I would prefer to see is for Jews to identify with their respective group because that is where they find the most meaningful and rewarding expression of Judaism. Seen this way, it becomes possible to perceive the more progressive Jewish denominations as valid religious options too, and no longer just as sell-outs.

Here's another description I've heard of the movements' distinctions: "Orthodox Judaism is *fleishik* (meat), Reform is *milchik* (dairy) and Conservative is *parev* (an allusion to a tasteless, neutral midpoint between the two extremes)."

Oy vey...

Allow me to offer a description which I would hope is more helpful: the different denominations represent the different responses of Jews living in the modern age, to *halachah* (Jewish law).

Originally, when all Jews were still prohibited from living among non-Jews, they lived and practiced as homogenous communities. When their host nations began to modernize and permit Jews to participate in newly pluralistic societies, some Jews in Germany began to feel self-conscious that



Judaism was a relic from the past and needed to be modernized in order to better fit in. These Jews saw themselves as "reforming" Judaism and the changes they sought were a radical departure from what Jews had always known.

Meanwhile, the rest of the community who were reluctant to change because they saw the status quo as timeless,

considered themselves simply as "Jews". After all, they weren't the ones who were changing or reacting to anything. Eventually though, they came to be known as the sector of the community who were holding to the "orthodoxies" of Jewish life and practice.

When German Jews arrived in the USA, these separations really exploded, much in keeping with the multitude of liberal social opportunities provided by the New World. After some time though, a significant faction of Reform Jews became uncomfortable with that movement's dismissal of Jewish law as being irrelevant in the modern age. They felt that unless they reclaimed important aspects of Jewish tradition by renegotiating their relationship with *halachah* and by seeking to cautiously adapt it to the demands of the current day, Judaism would soon become thoroughly unrecognizable and would have no connection to its origins.

All of which is not to say that this group who sought to "conserve" important aspects of Jewish tradition never responded to any pressure of social evolution and progress taking place in the general society around them. Living with the tension between "tradition and change", in the 1950s the Conservative Movement decided to condone driving to Temple on Shabbat. In the wake of the trauma of the Holocaust and also the emerging American phenomenon of "White Flight" which saw Jews and other middle class whites abandoning the cities where Temples were still located, there was tremendous fear that without a brave accommodation, Jewish life would totally disintegrate and be lost.

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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.

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In the 1980s, the Conservative movement first allowed women to be ordained as rabbis. Aside from being halachically justifiable, there was great concern about the price to be paid for not keeping up with the social changes in society at large. A way was found to make these sometimes competing forces coalesce once again in the 2000s, when it was ruled that homosexuality should be treated humanely and equally.

In the past year and a half, we have seen a similar struggle playing out in realtime at Temple Beth David and the rest of the Conservative world as we were unexpectedly forced to confront the looming issue of the day: "How do we function as a religious community in an age of pandemic when it is not feasible to gather together?" Live-streaming Shabbat services over the internet would have been unimaginable as recently as January 2020, yet look at us now!

And so, we find that we have arrived at this moment, standing on the precipice of who-knows-what awaits just around the corner. Our tradition as Conservative Jews includes both a proud sense of connection to our past, and also a sometimes-enthusiastic and sometimes-anxious anticipation of what compromises tomorrow will demand of us.

Wherever our future adventures will take us, my hope is that they will feel like meaningful steps forward in order to both preserve and adapt Jewish life to ever changing circumstances, and that we will walk those paths together.

Michael



The next **Temple Beth David Board of Trustee Meeting** will be held on Monday, November 15 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 meeting. For information on how to attend the meeting or how to contact a board member, please consult your temple directory or contact the temple office.

**Temple Beth David will be holding Shabbat service
in the Temple B'rith Kodesh Chapel, located on the first floor,
at 10:00 am on**

Saturday, November 20

For more details, visit our website or call the temple office.



2021 Congregational Meetings

10:00 am Sunday in Temple Beth David's sanctuary and via Zoom by invitation only. All members are encouraged to attend.

*** November 14 ***

*** December 12 ***

All current members are encouraged to attend the second informational meeting and to participate in the third meeting. Topics to be discussed include: leadership planning and slate of officers, work with USCJ and consultants, rental and lease, personnel, and proposed budget.

Please email Sue Eckhaus at president@tbdrochester.org with questions or call the temple office.

All in the Family

November Birthdays

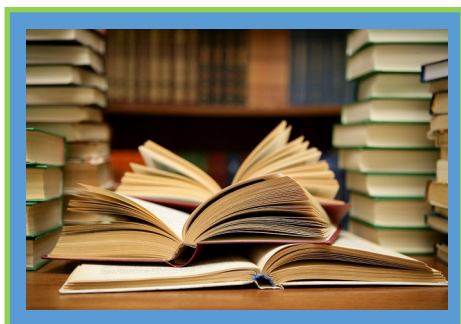
Nadav Silbert	November 11
Maureen Rosenbaum	November 21
Cindy Halpern	November 22
Scott Franklin	November 26
Tali Phillips	November 27
Harry Gan	November 28
Ed Drexler	November 29

November Anniversaries

Stan & Michelle Gross	November 3
Dan & Risa Saltzman	November 3
Ira & Sherry Goldman	November 4
Ron & Carol Schott	November 6
Howard & Helen Kashtan	November 29

Mazel Tov

Eric Newman, grandson of Maxine Newman, has passed the Texas bar on his first attempt and landed a fabulous job with a great law firm in Houston. Mazel Tov!



Jewish Short Stories Discussion Group

Special December Event

Tuesday December 7

7:00 - 8:30 pm

Featuring Betty Baker's "Flight to the Goldenh Medina"

A fictionalized account of the author's mother-in-law's tale. Fagela Rivka had been just 12 years old on arriving on Ellis Island with a sign hanging from her neck that read "Fanny Jacobs, Rochester NY," which was to be her new name and home. What crises had led to the girl's solo departure from Lithuania? What must that arduous journey have entailed? But it is also true, for the stories are a quilt of the very real experiences of her Jewish immigrant parents and her many relatives—the mishpocha—living on Joseph Avenue in the 1930s.

Betty Baker (z"l) and her family were long-time members of the Temple Beth David family.

7:00 - 7:45 pm Discussion focusing on Betty's story.

Betty's children Ken, Jeff, and Barb will join us.

7:50 - 8:30 pm Ken Baker will lead a discussion about how the diaspora has directly impacted each of our lives. Ken will open the discussion to anyone who might like to share something of their own families' history.

"I know Mom would be kvelling with happiness at the thought that her short story is being shared with the Temple Beth David community." - Ken Baker

Contact the temple office to receive a copy of Betty's story.



Left to right: 1905 photograph of Fannie (Fagela) Baker as a young woman, and (Fannie's daughter-in-law) Betty Baker, at age 76, a couple of years before she passed.



TEMPLE BETH DAVID

Chanukah 2021

Collection Drive benefitting
Brighton Food Cupboard and
Brighton Your Wardrobe

Temple Beth David is collecting personal hygiene items for Brighton Food Cupboard and new socks and underwear for Brighton Your Wardrobe (other food and clothing items will also be accepted)

The entire week of Chanukah November 28 - December 6

Drop off items at Rebecca's house or call for a pick-up
585-266-3223 for directions or to make arrangements

Gates of Everyday Holiness: An Introductory Course on Mussar with Howard Brill and Liz Ornstein

Sundays: 11:00 am -12:30 pm
October 10, 24, November 7, 21,
December 5, 19, 26, January 9, 23,
February 6

Mussar is an ancient Jewish tradition of spiritual practice. It is not philosophical or mystical but emphasizes the practical aspects of being a better person, a mensch. We study character traits (middot) such as humility, patience, order, truth, and trust. Participants will discuss and keep journals of their experience with each middah (character trait). All are welcome, whether you've just heard of Mussar or you've been practicing for some time. The group will meet every other week, and members will meet in pairs (chevruta partners) on the alternating weeks.



Jewish Environmentalism with Bonnie Abrams

Tuesdays: 1:00 - 2:30 pm
December 7, 14, 21, 28

Fee: \$40

What is Jewish environmentalism? Judaism intersects with environmentalism on many levels. The natural world plays a central role in Jewish law, literature and liturgical practices. Is it any wonder that we have a notable history of environmental thought and activism? This course will introduce participants to the history of Jewish environmentalism and to its practical implications today.

For more information or to register for a class, please visit tbk.org/learning.



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.

Hanukkah packages for Jewish Soldiers

Since 2008, the Jewish Soldiers Project has been sending care packages to Jews in the military for Hanukkah. The care packages include children's cards, gelt, dreidles and baked goods to help the soldiers celebrate the Festival of Lights.

All home-baked and purchased kosher baked goods are accepted; cookies, brownies and cakes, no amount too large or too small.

For more information, contact: Jewish Soldiers Project Community Wide Project

Keith Freedman, Chair jewishsoldiersproject@gmail.com



**Baked Goods will be accepted
at the Temple B'rith Kodesh
South Entrance**

Sunday, November 14

9:30 am to Noon

Yahrzeits			Date Observed
November 1 Donald Gallant Belle Kleinberg Julius Narotsky	November 9 Millard Schaffer	November 20 Ruth Lederer	November 27 Leonard Gordon
November 2 Philip Stark	November 10 Benjamin Markowitz	November 22 Max Roth	November 29 Rosalie Bloom Laurence Skopitz
November 3 Peter Manjos	November 14 Belle Fogelman Myrna Lutzky	November 23 Marie Goldwasser Max Rosenthal	November 30 Nathan Goldwasser
November 4 Joseph Levy	November 15 Bany Cohen Lee Rosenthal	November 25 Sara Gorelick	<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>
November 5 Helen Forchheimer Michael Simon	November 16 Mildred Levy	November 26 Ira Kinel	
November 7 Isadore Neurock	November 17 Eli Rothstein Shirley T. Schnidman	November 25 William Isaacson	
		November 26 Harold Neurock	

Donations

Receive September 16 - October 15, 2021

DAVID SOLOMON FUND

IN MEMORY

Tillie (Toby) Rosen
Ronald & Jean Brandwein

Scott Grube

Selma Eckhaus
Neal & Sue Eckhaus

Pearl Gallant
Elaine Gallant

Shirley Shapiro
Daniel Shapiro

GET WELL WISHES

Carol Schott
Joyce Towber
Karen Schaffer

Howard Brill
Cynthia Halpern

IN HONOR

Robie Hainesworth
Thomas & Judy Wolbert

GRATITUDE FOR HEALING

Karen Schaffer
Cynthia Halpern

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Dolly Fishman
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Donate



Donate online at
www.tbdrochester.org



SEND A CARD TO A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE!

Checks payable to: **Temple Beth David, 2131 Elmwood Avenue, Suite 204, Rochester, NY 14618**

Date _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____ Minimum donation \$10, or two for \$18

Donor:

Name: _____

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Phone: _____

Recipient:

Name: _____

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Card Message:

- ☐ Get Well Wishes _____
- ☐ Happy Birthday _____
- ☐ Congratulations on _____

- ☐ In Memory of _____
- ☐ In Honor of _____
- ☐ In Appreciation of _____

Note: _____

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

- ☐ David Solomon Operating Fund
- ☐ Herb Kraus Adult Education Fund
- ☐ 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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Supports Maintenance and Repair of Torah Scrolls

- **Mitzvah Kiddush Donation**

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