

From Rabbi Michael Silbert

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It's no secret that for most rabbis, some of their sermons are better than others and I am certainly no exception to this rule! On the odd occasion, some of you tell me how my words resonate with you. At other times though, the body language – and here I'm referring to heavy eyelids(!) – is a clear sign that I'm underwhelming you, to say the least. And then there are the times like one Shabbat this last February, when I'm not sure that even I could make sense of what I said!



On the morning in question, which will live forever in infamy in my memory of my own public addresses, I attempted to show an example from the *parashah* of the ongoing relevance of Jewish law in the sphere of global human rights.

At the same time, I acknowledged that these historical humanitarian advances, which have influenced the lives of both Jews and non-Jews alike, were sometimes couched by our ancient sages in attitudes which might cause us to recoil in horror in 2023 / 5783. Incidents such as these might lead us to great ambivalence: how do we reach a balance between some distressingly anachronistic views in both the Torah and Jewish legal codes, on the one hand; and their frequently compassionate judgments and approaches on the other? How is it that a such an ancient civilization and its legal / ethical / moral system were often nothing short of revolutionary relative to the prevailing orthodoxies of their day, and at other times, apparently blind to various human conditions and experiences?

Many moral and ethical aspects of Jewish law have come to influence American law. If you've ever visited the U.S. Capitol Building in Wash-

ington D.C., you might have noticed that the House Chamber is decorated by 23 marble relief portraits over the gallery doors which depict historical figures noted for their work in establishing the principles that underlie American law. It might surprise you to learn that one of these faces represents the Torah's Moses,

while another face is said to be that of a different Moses, **Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon** (the Ramban, or Maimonides), the 12<sup>th</sup> century rabbi, philosopher and physician. Their inclusion is a remarkable testament to the impact that ancient moral and ethical advances gifted to humanity by Torah and *halachah* (Jewish law) have had on the laws of our country.

However, how often do we not hear criticism in our current age of Torah's paucity of women leaders? Can a document which appears to be out of step with some important modern-day sensitivities still be held up as the source of compassionate humanitarian developments? Does the one negate the other?

If we approach it in absolutist terms – needing to see it as either all good or all bad – do we not stand the risk of throwing the baby out with the bathwater? Furthermore, if we acknowledge the presence of some attitudes (e.g. towards homosexuality) which might alienate many of us today, but try to understand that they would have been acceptable in ancient times when the text was written, does this amount to apologetics? Maybe we have the right to expect more of a text that is so revolutionary in other respects? Bottom line: how do we remain committed to something which liberates some of us in one paragraph and

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which denies the humanity of others in the next?

Even our early sages recognized that some aspects of Torah did not – dare I say – age well (e.g. the stoning of the wayward child), yet they did not walk away from it. They remained inspired by the Torah's many magnificent attributes while resolving to intervene and minimize the practice of harsh laws where necessary.

In other words, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Jewish law continues to be more of a *process* than a cold, dispassionate treatise gathering dust on the shelf. The word *halachah*, after all, comes from the Hebrew root for the word "walk", which indicates forward movement, fluidity and progress. I think it's legitimate to align ourselves with aspects of our tradition which endure and inspire timelessly and at the same time, to acknowledge that there are those aspects which demand our ongoing attention and efforts to make consistent with the exquisitely humane ethos that imbues the vast majority of Jewish life and learning. This is very much the tradition of our sages who came long before us and it continues to be our obligation to this day. Our work with and our love for Torah, continues.

*Illo natan lanu et haTorah veloh hichnisanu le'Eretz Yisrael, dayenu!*

If God had given us the Torah and had not brought us into the land of Israel, it would have been enough for us!

Chag Same'ach,

Michael



The flyer features a parchment background with a green border. On the left is a circular emblem with a Star of David and various symbols. On the right is an illustration of four wine glasses. The title 'Pesach' is written in a large, stylized green font, with the year '2023 / 5783' below it. The flyer is divided into two columns: 'Seder Sign-Up' and 'Services'. The 'Seder Sign-Up' column lists the 1st Seder on Wednesday, April 5, and the 2nd Seder on Thursday, April 6, with a deadline for sign-up on Wednesday, March 29. The 'Services' column lists services for the 1st, 2nd, 7th, and 8th days of Pesach. A small logo for Temple Beth David is at the bottom center.

# Pesach

2023 / 5783

## Seder Sign-Up

**1<sup>st</sup> Seder, Wednesday, April 5**  
Host a Beth David member or be hosted  
in a Beth David member's home

**2<sup>nd</sup> Seder, Thursday, April 6**  
Attend our annual Beth David  
Communal Second Seder

**Deadline for Seder Sign-Up:  
Wednesday, March 29**

## Services

**Thursday, April 6 (1<sup>st</sup> Day)**  
9:00am Morning Service followed by  
Kiddush Lunch and Study Session

**Friday, April 7 (2<sup>nd</sup> Day)**  
9:00am Morning Service followed by  
Kiddush Lunch and Study Session

**Wednesday, April 12 (7<sup>th</sup> Day)**  
9:00am Morning Service

**Thursday, April 13 (8<sup>th</sup> Day)**  
9:00am Morning Service with Yizkor,  
followed by Kiddush Lunch

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# All in the Family

## April Birthdays

Robert Dworkin	April 5
Henry Markowitz	April 10
Rhea Feinberg	April 12
Lisa Klein	April 14
Elijah Silbert	April 16
Phillip Lederer	April 19
Gail Spitulnik	April 23
Lauren Yesowitch	April 24
Susan Wood	April 25
Martin Yesowitch	April 26
Ruth Rappaport-Kristal	April 27

## April Anniversaries

Neal & Sue Eckhaus	April 6
Marc Lande & Linda Servetnick	April 30



## Kiddush News

**Food and friends!** From now on we can look forward to sit down kiddushes after services on the last Shabbat of each month. See you there on April 29 (Parashat Aharei) -- and onward throughout the spring and summer.

**Mark your calendars** and be ready for plenty of good food and conversation! We can stay as long as we like at these end-of-the-month kiddushes, but we need to wear masks at all times unless we are sitting down and eating.

What food or foods do you associate with each week's parashah? **Contact Alison Helms**, at [alison.helms@gmail.com](mailto:alison.helms@gmail.com), and she will try to include those foods in the kiddush/take home treats for that Shabbat.

**Please consider sponsoring a treat** at \$18 or cholent at \$36 in honor of a good news event!



Thank you to Stanley & Elaine Schaffer for sponsoring kiddush in memory of Werner Schaffer



**Shabbat Service will be held in the Temple Beth El Chapel on Saturday, April 15 at 9:30 am**

## Riverside Cemetery Plots

are available to purchase from

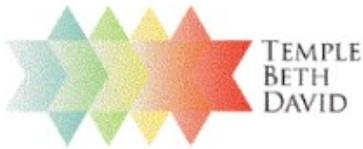
## Temple Beth David

at reduced temple member rates for Jewish burials in adherence to Temple Beth David ritual requirements. For questions regarding purchase, contact the temple office. For questions pertaining to Jewish burial ritual requirements, contact Rabbi Silbert.



# Temple Beth David and Temple Beth El

present



## ***6th Annual Joint Golf Outing***

*Mendon Golf Club (Mendon, NY)*

**Save the Date: Monday, July 31**



The next **Temple Beth David Board of Trustee Meeting** will be held Tuesday, **April 11 at 7:00 pm** via Zoom. All temple members are invited to attend or you may submit your questions or concerns in advance of the meeting for consideration by the board of trustees. Board member names are listed on the last page of this bulletin. For more information on how to attend the meeting, please contact the temple office at 585-266-3223 or [office@tbdrochester.org](mailto:office@tbdrochester.org).



# Donations

Received February 16 - March 15, 2023

**DAVID SOLOMON FUND**  
**IN MEMORY**

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Lisa Klein

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Paul Eissenstat

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## April Yahrzeits

**April 2**

Richard Braiman\*  
Sadie Leitmen

**April 3**

Katherine Gan\*  
Solomon Gordon  
Ruth Haymoff Comisar  
Lester Rappaport

**April 5**

Sylvia Kowal

**April 6**

Rita Schnidman

**April 8**

Blanche Gordon  
Regina Schott

**April 10**

Harvey Louis Priveman

**April 12**

Benjamin Ritter

**April 13**

Ruth Drexler

**April 14**

Eli Caplin  
Sylvia Gertzog

**April 15**

Milton Kerker  
Leonard Lutzky

**April 16**

Nancy Grube

**April 17**

Anita Bauman

**April 18**

Harry Abelson\*  
Marvin Fogelman  
Norma Levine  
Sylvia Vicker

**April 19**

Obbe Abelson\*  
Penelope Nelson  
Sally Zeif

**April 20**

Belle Shwartz

**April 21**

Sidney Gallant\*

**April 22**

Molly Baker

**April 24**

Barbara Phillips

**April 25**

Blanche Diamond

**April 26**

Gerald Norry  
Herbert Rosenstein

**April 28**

Harry Gordon\*  
Solomon Gross

**April 29**

Rose Feinberg

**April 30**

Raymond Kinel

*\*Memorial plaque on display in the Temple Beth David sanctuary.*

*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.*

## 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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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congregant Services             | <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbi Aaron Solomon Torah Repair Fund |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Herb Kraus Adult Education Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbi Skopitz Fund                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mitzvah Kiddush Donation        | <input type="checkbox"/> Unspecified Donation                  |

**Temple Beth David will no longer be collecting donations for the Marsha Fishman Youth Education Fund. Please contact Eric Brandt at [ebrandt@jewishrochester.org](mailto:ebrandt@jewishrochester.org) for details about donating.**



It's so easy to make donations and dues payments online! Visit our donation page at [www.tbdrochester.org/donate](http://www.tbdrochester.org/donate). The minimum online donation is \$10.



### Do you receive our Weekly News email?

You may be missing the latest news about Temple Beth David services and events, as well as other important community information. Call or email the Temple Office to add your name to the mailing list!

Please call the office if you or a family member is scheduled for surgery or is admitted to the hospital. We want to offer comfort to congregants who are ill but regulations do not permit the hospital to contact us with your news. We will only know if you let us know.



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