

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 12th 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



Pesach
2023 / 5783

Seder Sign-Up

1st Seder, Wednesday, April 5
Host a Beth David member or be hosted
in a Beth David member's home

2nd Seder, Thursday, April 6
Attend our annual Beth David
Communal Second Seder

Deadline for Seder Sign-Up:
Wednesday, March 29

Services

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

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

Wednesday, April 12 (7th Day)
9:00am Morning Service

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

TEMPLE BETH DAVID

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



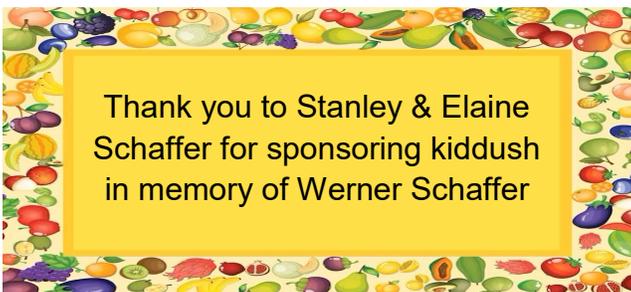
Kiddush News

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, 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.

Donations

Received February 16 - March 15, 2023

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Elynor Vine
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Sandra Cohen
Norman Klein
Lisa Klein

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Paul Eissenstat

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Bluma Schonbrun
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Werner Schaffer
Stan & Elaine Schaffer

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RABBI AARON SOLOMON

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April Yahrzeits

April 2

Richard Braiman*
Sadie Leitmen

April 3

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Lester Rappaport

April 5

Sylvia Kowal

April 6

Rita Schnidman

April 8

Blanche Gordon
Regina Schott

April 10

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April 12

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April 13

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April 14

Eli Caplin
Sylvia Gertzog

April 15

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Leonard Lutzky

April 16

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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

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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**

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Note: _____

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

- | | |
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|--|---|

Temple Beth David will no longer be collecting donations for the Marsha Fishman Youth Education Fund. Please contact Eric Brandt at 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. 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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• Rabbi Discretionary Fund

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