



# Ma CHADASHI! מה חדש!

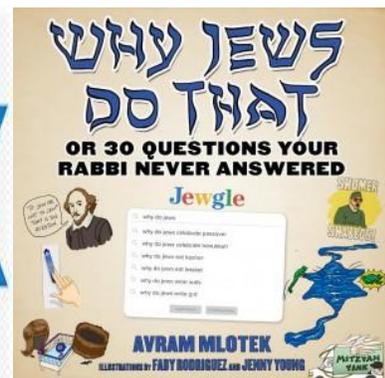
What's New! The newsletter of Temple Shalom Synagogue Center, Auburn, Maine ק"ק היכל שלום

May 2021, Iyar/Sivan 5781

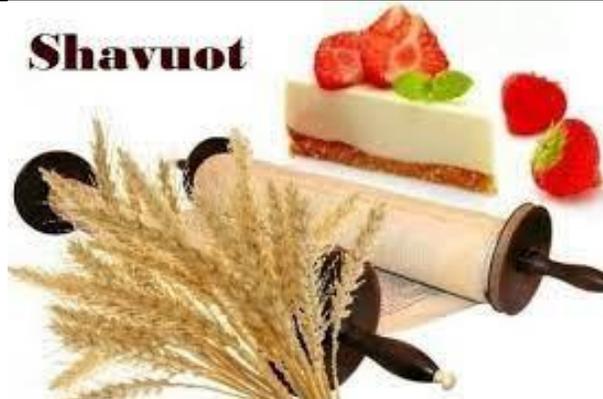
Temple Shalom Encounters a 20<sup>th</sup> Century Yiddish-American Phenomenon and an Important New-Generation Rabbi, Observes Yom HaShoah and Celebrates Yom Ha'Atzmaut, and Travels in the Footsteps of Our Beloved Patriarchs and Matriarchs!



israel 2021  
yom ha'atzmaut



**Shavuot**



Saturday, May 15th, 9:30 A.M.

## FROM THE RABBI



My older daughter Ilana, 27, wants nothing to do with Judaism. She feels Jewish and loves Yiddish culture—thank you KlezKanada—but as far as prayer, ritual, Torah study? Gurnisht (Yiddish for “nada”). I can’t blame her. It is a reaction to her being imprisoned by her mother throughout her teenage years in an exclusively fundamentalist Orthodox environment—all the while deliberately and cruelly ignoring the extreme pain and misery that this was causing her. Most of you know from various media reports and programming

(*Unorthodox* is but one recent example) that it is unfortunately all too common for fundamentalists of all religions to do whatever it takes to keep their children isolated in their fundamentalist worlds. Even preventing them from having contact with beloved parents—resulting in extreme mental and emotional suffering. Ilana is still dealing with the consequences of her traumatic childhood. She has also become allergic to religion. No matter what I say, I cannot persuade Ilana that the Judaism that we practice in our home—and with our community—is nothing like the fundamentalist Judaism that so wounded her. Her hatred of religion is just too visceral.

The world of religion in America recently received some very bad news. A March 29th Gallup report found that U.S. church membership fell below 50% for the first time in Gallup’s 80-year history of polling. In 2020, only 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque. Two years ago, that number was 50%; in 1999, 70% of Americans were members of a house of worship. Basically, in just about 20 years the number of Americans affiliated with a religious institution fell from 70% to 47%. While the fact that there would be some drop off was no surprise to anyone paying attention, the magnitude of the drop is staggering.

What accounts for this extreme exodus from religion in the 21st century? I found a clue in a recent column by the conservative-leaning and openly Catholic columnist for the New York Times, Ross Douthat. In response to the recent Gallup poll, Mr. Douthat attempts to persuade the university educated to give the Church a chance—that there’s some meaningful and necessary spirituality still to be found there. Pretty mild stuff I thought, so it came as a surprise to see that this column inspired 1961 overwhelmingly scathing comments. A typical example:

*The arrogance of the highly religious to insist that they and they alone KNOW the mind of God is totally appalling. Patriarchy that denigrates half of humanity as necessarily submissive to the other half and declares the non-heterosexual as innately defective irredeemable sinners has no appeal to those of us that think every human being is equal.*

Another:

*All religions rely on blind faith and magical beliefs whereas non-believers rely on science and facts. After years and years of seeing the damage caused by religion to humans throughout history is it any wonder that people are finding that they do not need religion to be Good people or do good for their fellow humans which is progress we should all be happy about.*

(Continued next page)

## FROM THE RABBI (continued)

And yet another:

*The problem with faith is not meritocracy or the intelligentsia or dozens of other predictable think tank notions, but religion itself. Organized religion by its enduring historical nature separates God's creatures between the save and doomed, the chosen and the unchosen, the faithful and the infidel. We've come too far to believe in the mean-spirited garbage spewed by self-serving individual sects. When God is the God of every human being, bar none, then people will flock to houses of worship.*

I would like to shake (metaphorically) every one of these almost 2000 commenters and explain that it is fundamentalism that they have a problem with—not religion itself. That there are thousands of American churches and synagogues who are open, inclusive, intellectual, and who embrace modern scientific ideas (even the social ones!). But alas it is the fundamentalists in our American society who shout the loudest, rendering religion toxic to what is now, sadly, a majority of Americans.

As someone who deeply believes in the value of connecting with our beautiful heritage, of finding spirituality, meaning and community by getting together to pray and sing and study, it is both saddening and frustrating that so many of our fellow Jews have been alienated by the perception of Judaism as irredeemably backward, anti-scientific, exclusionary, patriarchal, misogynistic, homophobic... While we will never succeed in out-shouting the fundamentalists—it is not in our nature to shout—let's at least do what we can to quietly spread the word that there's still some meaningful and necessary spirituality to be found in our synagogues. Hopefully, we won't get 1961 scathing comments in response!

Rabbi Sruli

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### From Rabbi Sruli: A Matter of Grave Importance

It is often complicated--and sometimes impossible--to correctly ascertain the appropriate Jewish name to place on a gravestone. Too frequently children are unaware, or in disagreement, about their parents' Jewish names. It would be so helpful if you could take a few minutes now to make sure Julie has your correct Jewish name (including your parents' Jewish names) in your file in the Temple office. It would also be very helpful if you could include photos of your parents' gravestones if possible. I am also happy to discuss any name or spelling questions you may have and to review your submissions. It is even possible (albeit a little creepy) to pre-order the monument from Collette Monuments who will work in turn with me to make sure all the Hebrew lettering is correct. May we all live long and healthy lives!



## FROM THE PRESIDENT



Our symbols mean something. They tell us who we are. They tell us what we believe. They tell us what is important to us.

Last Shabbat, around the dinner table, we started talking about flags. We moved on to worn out flags and the proper disposal of worn-out flags. I told my mother, boys and Anne that one burns flags in a respectful manner. I recall doing this as a teenager with some friends. They did not believe me. So, they did what we have always done....checked with the reference librarian...ours is named Google. Google confirmed I was right. (David – 1 and my son Jake -0, if you are keeping score.)

How we treat our flag tells that we love and respect this country. It tells us we want what is best for our country and those who live here.

My son Adam is looking for his first house. Very strange in this market – everything is going for well above asking price. Very strange in these times – we need to wear gloves when entering a home.

We looked at one house and he put a bid in. It is aggressive and we are very hopeful that he will get this house. The sellers are leaving a lot of stuff in the home that needs to be discarded. Adam and I talked about how we will get rid of stuff...dumpster or our pickup truck. Two items, though, will be hard to discard. We will have to find homes for them. One is a Cross with Jesus (I think that makes it Catholic.) Even though it has nothing to do with our religion, it seems very disrespectful to just throw it away. Adam suggested taking it to a church and letting them use it or give it to one of their members. How we treat symbols pertaining to others, tells us how we respect others and in turn how we want to be respected.

The second item that we need to find a home for is a tombstone. Yes, a real tombstone. Now, I have no idea why the previous owner put it in their (and soon, hopefully Adam's) yard, but nonetheless, it is there. We have asked and no body is buried there. It happens to be steps away from the back deck and in an area that he would regularly walk. So, we are going to move it to a back corner of the property.

How we, as a people, treat those who have passed, tells a lot about our values and beliefs.

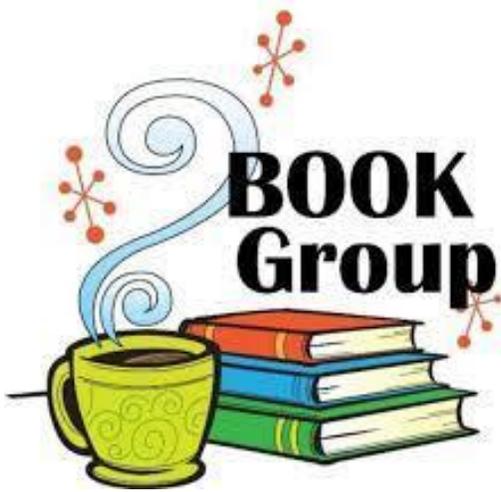
Being respectful of another religion's symbols, of our flag and of a tombstone is easy and the right thing to do. Given the opportunity, we would all be respectful and treat these items with respect. Being respectful of other people and their opinions is much harder, but being respectful is the right thing to do EVERY time.

In these times where there is so much division, let's all make a pledge to be more respectful, more kind, more understanding of others. Treat people at least as good as we would treat objects.

As of this writing, April 18, COVID is still with us, with case counts still high in Maine and very high in Androscoggin County. Please get your vaccination, wear your mask. Continue to be vigilant.

David Allen

# !!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!



We had a full house on April 12, or should I say a full zoom room! Attending were Bertha Bodenheimer, Marsha Auster, Lindsey Walker, Judy Abromson, Fredda Wolf, Margaret Meyer, Helene Perry, Bonnie Faiman and me, Lesli Weiner. *My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me* by Jennifer Teege is both a shocking title and a shocking tale. It's bad enough finding out that your maternal grandfather was Amon Goeth, a Nazi concentration camp commandant who killed thousands and thousands of Jews for sport. But Jennifer had to also reexamine her understanding of her beloved grandmother who had shared his Nazi life and professed great love for the man. And she had to reconcile her friendship with 2 Jewish Israelis, deciding if she should hide her genetic nightmare, or would they still accept

her? Then there was her strained relationship to her birth mother, her adoptive family, her biracial status in this white world she was brought up in, and it goes on and on. There was so much to discuss. While the author isn't the best writer, we all agreed that it was a fascinating book to mull over. Read it!

Our next book is *Florence Adler Swims Forever* by Rachel Beanland. We'll meet on zoom MONDAY, MAY 10 at 4PM. Based on a true story and told in the vein of J. Courtney Sullivan's *Saints for All Occasions* and Anita Diamant's *The Boston Girl*, Beanland's family saga is a breathtaking portrait of just how far we will go to in order to protect our loved ones and an uplifting portrayal of how the human spirit can endure—and even thrive—after tragedy.

Here are a couple of reviews:

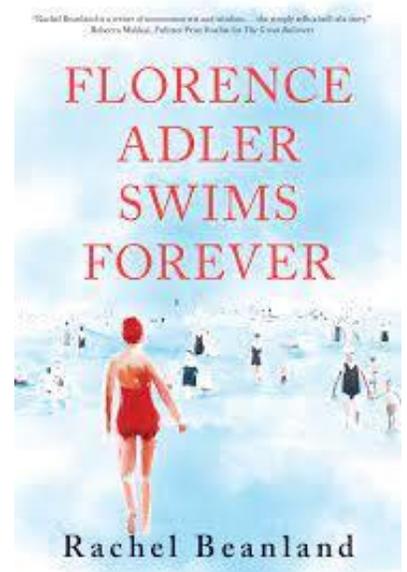
"The perfect summer read" (*USA TODAY*) begins with a shocking tragedy that results in three generations of the Adler family grappling with heartbreak, romance, and the weight of family secrets across the course of one summer.

"Rachel Beanland is a writer of uncommon wit and wisdom, with a sharp and empathetic eye for character. She'll win you over in the most old fashioned of ways: She simply tells a hell of a story." —Rebecca Makkai, Pulitzer Finalist for *The Great Believers*

We also chose our next set of books:

- June 7.....*The Yellow Bird Sings* by Jennifer Rosner
- July 12.....*House of Gold* by Natasha Solomons
- August 9.....*Paper Bullets* by Jeffrey Jackson
- September 13.....*The Lost Shtetl* by Max Gross
- October 11.....*The Plum Tree* by Ellen Marie Weisman
- November 8.....*Golem Girls* by Riva Lehrer
- December 6.....*Lost Boys* by Faye Kellerman

Happy Reading!!.....lesli



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

Laurence Faiman	May 1
Reece Greven	1
Mazie King	2
Stuart Cohen	3
Miriam Sofia Cohen	5
Jennifer Cohen	9
Jenna Wise	9
Amelia Ross	16
Susan Shapiro	16
Lucas Rau	19
Alison Fakhery	21
Mark Johnson	25
Greg Levinsky	26
Mitchell Ross	31
Lindsey Walker	31



## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO

Daniel & Kristine Rausch	May 15
Matthew & Janet Zidle	25

## Yahrzeiten

William Leavitt	May 3
Jean Renard	3
Steve Bieringer	7
Beatrice Garber	8
Sara Supovitz	9
Ernest Hyman	11
Lillian Rosen	14
Susan Goldseder	15
Aaron M. Krakower	15
Robert Allen	16
Jack Kaduson	16
Brian Magur	20
Ruth Schleicher	22
Barry Traister	22
Cecile Kates	24
Keith Seltzer	25
Bernie Nussinow	25
Lillian Cohen	28
May Tetenman	29
Milton Burke	31
Jack Maloff	31
Milton Krasner	31



Ma Chadash/What's New is published monthly by Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center. Temple Shalom is an independent congregation and a member of the Lewiston-Auburn Jewish Federation.

The mission of Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center is to foster a strong Jewish identity and an active Jewish Community.

Rabbi Sruli Dresdner

Office Manager Julie Waite

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## SPEEDY RECOVERY

We pray for refuah sh'leimah – the full and speedy recovery of **Rachel Corvi, Dougie Fleck, Sara Graf, Robert Galumbeck, Isaak Gekhtin, Detlef Gerlach, Ariella Green, Chris Hatch, Sharon Hemond, Michael Jeser, Elizabeth Johnson, Suzan Katzir, Lynn Kaduson, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Lee Leveille, Bruce Meyer, Sandy Miller, Alice Richman, Joel Salberg, Bob Scott, Sandy Traister, Neal Weiner, Jack Weinstein, William White**, and all others who are not well at this time. *We like to hear good news! Whenever you request that a name be put on this list, please let Temple Shalom know when it can be removed.*



**Rabbi Sruli is always happy to speak with and meet with members or our Temple. Please call or text his cell phone at 914-980-9509 if you would like to speak with him or to arrange a time for a meeting. You can also call or leave a message at the Temple office and Rabbi Sruli will get back to you.**



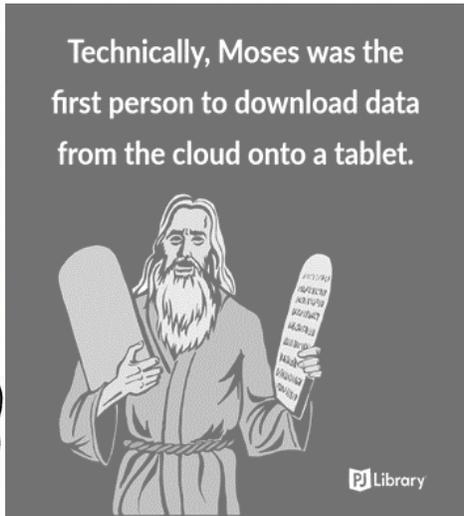
**Dry Bones** FOOD FOR THOUGHT



DryBonesBlog.com



The CARTOON KRONICLES



May 20, 1997

**Dry Bones**



www.DryBonesBlog.com

# **CONTRIBUTIONS**

## **GENERAL FUND**

Roz & Barry Kutzen

In memory of Lillian Kutzen

Estelle Rubinstein

In memory of Murray Rubinstein

Babs & Michael Shapiro

In memory of Wilfred Goodman

Arthur Silverman

In memory of Louis Silverman

Bertha Bodenheimer

In memory of Sylvia Greenberg

In memory of Bert Bodenheimer

Gladys Garcia

In appreciation

Gregory Cutler

In memory of Carl L. Cutler

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In memory of Reba Koss

Andrew & Sharon Bodenheimer

In memory of Herman Kleeger

Anne & David Allen

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In memory of Robert Allen

Phyllis Bell

In memory of Morris Amsel

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Hank & Margaret Meyer

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In memory of Lillian Schneidman

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Jonathan Berent

In memory of Gertrude Berent

Cathy & Stan Tetenman

In memory of Sylvia Greenberg

In memory of Bert Bodenheimer

In memory of May Tetenman

Gladys Garcia

In honor of Charlie & Johnny Dresdner

Joel Olstein

In appreciation

## **SHIRLEY GOODMAN MEMORIAL FUND**

Joel Goodman

In memory of Wilfred Goodman

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**2021 VIRTUAL  
ANNUAL MEETING**

**TEMPLE SHALOM ANNUAL MEETING**  
Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting  
of the Congregation will be held via Zoom  
(the link will be sent to Temple Members)

**Monday, May 10, 2021  
7:00 P.M.**

The meeting agenda will include annual reports, election of board members and presentation of the "Person of the Year."