



Chadashot Ha'am

October 2013

Tishrei/Cheshvan

A Message from Rabbi Saks

As I am writing this, we are in the midst of our four autumn holidays that fall during the Hebrew month of *Tishrei*. I am reminded of a *midrash* on the four species that together create the *lulav*. This *midrash* describes the species as different types of Jewish learners. The *etrog*, which has both a good taste and a pleasant aroma, is like one who both possesses Jewish knowledge and also performs *mitzvot*. The palm branch, which comes from a date-palm and has flavor but no aroma, is like the one who has knowledge but does not perform *mitzvot*. The myrtle branches, which have aroma, but no flavor, are like the one who performs *mitzvot*, but has no *Torah* knowledge. Finally, the willow, which lacks both smell and taste, epitomizes the one who neither has Jewish knowledge nor performs *mitzvot*.



Reform Judaism, rooted in the premise of informed choice, requires us to become knowledgeable members of the Jewish community as we decide how to practice Judaism. We are fortunate to have many talented teachers in our community and many opportunities for you to deepen your Jewish knowledge. I want to share some of the wonderful adult learning opportunities that are available to you at Bet Ha'am. You can read about all of our adult learning opportunities by picking up this year's brochure at the office or by contacting the office.

Let me begin with a few ongoing classes. These require no previous knowledge or advanced preparation

and are a great way to dip your toes in the sea of Jewish learning. Each Saturday morning at 9:00 AM, I lead a *Shabbat Torah* study on the weekly portion. Our conversation is guided by both classical and contemporary texts that help us understand the relevance of an ancient text in our 21st century lives. I'm also happy we offer a monthly study opportunity with Rabbi Alice Goldfinger, a member of our congregation and our former rabbi. On the third Friday of each month at noon, Rabbi Goldfinger teaches a *Poetry of Talmud* class, which pairs passages from the *Talmud* with poetry from later periods and a variety of cultures. Both of these classes afford you the opportunity to come to any individual class and not worry about what was taught at a previous session or will be covered in the future. I hope you'll try them!

There are also a few short-term opportunities coming up in November and December that should be on your radar. On three Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM in November (7, 14, & 21), we will offer our semi-annual *Beit Midrash*. You can sign up to attend three sessions of one class, three weeks in a row. In the past, we have offered Jewish cooking, Reel Theology (theological encounters in popular culture), classes on the Jewish idea of the messiah, and so much more. On the weekend of December 6-8, we will welcome Dr. Nehemia Polen, this year's Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence. Dr. Polen is a faculty member at Hebrew College and is a leading expert in Hasidism and Jewish thought. Each of

these offerings provides you with intense study but only a short commitment. I hope you will mark your calendar to save the dates for both.

Finally, I will offer an *Introduction to Judaism* course beginning in January 2014. This course is designed for new and renewed Jewish learners. Though some who enroll will be considering conversion, this is by no means a conversion course. It is open to anyone who wants to develop his or her Jewish knowledge beyond the basic level. We will explore Jewish history, life cycle, holidays and rituals, theology, and so much more. If you are curious about Judaism or know someone who is, please contact the office. I plan to meet with prospective students in October and November and set a mutually convenient schedule to begin our studies in January 2014.

It is said that Rabbi Akiva, one of the great rabbis of the *Talmud*, who was compared to Moses in his command of Judaism, didn't learn a thing about Judaism until he was 40 years old. At the age of 40, his wife encouraged him to engage with Judaism and he went on to become one of the greatest teachers that we've ever known. He is said to have realized, after seeing water dripping on a rock, that even though the water only fell drop by drop, it had eroded the rock. He recalled a verse from Job, "Water wears down rock," (Job 14:19) and this became his motto. Rabbi Akiva said, "If water can wear down a stone, then every member of the Jewish community can and will study *Torah*." It is never too late to deepen your Jewish knowledge.

President's Message - Lisa Munderback

The month of *Tishrei* is almost over as I write this: *Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah*. I don't think we could possibly fit another holiday in there. I don't know about you, but I'm exhausted from the introspection, the worship and the communal gatherings. And yet, I am refreshed. The same things that have left me physically drained have spiritually renewed me. How can this be?

Sacred spaces: worshiping in the sanctuary, *Oneg* and *Kiddush* in the social hall, meetings in the library, walking the Eastern Trail at Scarborough Marsh, kayaking at Panther Pond, welcoming friends into our home, laughing together. In the quiet of silent prayer, in the joyous singing, in the adult education class in the *sukkah*, in the warm hugs and smiles of all of you, I have been in sacred spaces.

When I am at Bet Ha'am, I am in a sacred space. This is not just because of its curved ceiling, windows that let in the sunlight, beautiful garden and reflecting pool, and simplicity of the ark and *bimah*. It is also because of all of you. At *Shabbat* services, a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* celebration, an adult education class, Religious School, weeding the garden, and even at meetings, Bet Ha'am is a sacred community. We call the divine presence to be with us when we gather together.

I feel re-created when I am out kayaking, paddling near loons who are fishing or turtles who are basking in the sun on logs. I feel renewed when I am out walking and hear and see the amazing variety of birds, flowers, trees and



animals. I know I am in a sacred space, I feel the divine presence, and I am in awe when I am in nature.

A sacred space is where the eternal is present. I believe the eternal is within us and all around us if we are just open to its presence with all of our senses. I see, hear and feel it when the wind moves the leaves of the trees. I see and hear it when the rain flows off the roof into the reflecting pool. I see it when the sunlight reflects off the water onto the sanctuary ceiling. I hear it in the harmony of our voices as we sing prayers of peace. I smell it when I bend my nose to a beach rose, when it rains and when there is an ocean breeze. I taste it when I eat the *challah* on *Shabbat*, the apples and honey of *Rosh Hashanah* and the good food we have at potlucks, especially that first bite of Break-Fast at the end of *Yom Kippur*.

A sacred space is wherever and whenever we are. We will recognize it when we have an open attitude. The prayer I most often murmur during silent meditation is, "Holy One, give me a quiet heart and help me to hear the still, small voice within me. It

calls me to come close to You and to grow in Your likeness."

My hope for all of us in these days after the High Holy Days is to be more aware of the divine presence in ourselves, each other and in the world - and to grow in its likeness.



Chadashot Chai-lights

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Congregation Bet Ha'am

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Orly Mendelson Biggie, Religious School Director
 Kris Dorer, Executive Director
 Teri Berenson, Bookkeeper
 Karen Hindall, Administrative Assistant
 Chris Skidgel, Custodian

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 Lee Tabenken
 Deborah Tillman Stone

Office Hours:

Tuesday - Friday, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM
 The office is closed on Mondays.
 Building Use: All meetings, events or gatherings must be scheduled with the office.

Office extensions and email addresses:

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From the Religious School Director

Orly Mendelson Biggie



Learning to read Hebrew can be an easy task for some and a difficult one for others. We each approach learning with our own strengths, styles and habits.

Over the years, many parents have shared with me that they do not read Hebrew and cannot help their children with their Hebrew learning. We have some resources that can be helpful to you if you have

never learned Hebrew or have forgotten what you learned in years past. If you have a student in third grade, we send a transliteration of the Hebrew materials home along with a CD for parents to use with their children. There is also a simple and helpful website that one of our new students (who is older) has used successfully this fall. I was impressed that he had mastered the first four lessons independently after only a few weeks. I encourage you to take a look at the *Shalom U'Vracha* book (www.behrmanhouse.com/learn/hebrew) if you want to learn to read Hebrew or refresh your Hebrew reading skills!

This year, all of our fourth, fifth and sixth graders will use the Behrman House on-line center (OLC) as part of their Hebrew studies. We are hoping that the variety of motivating activities available through this website will help our students increase their Hebrew reading fluency and have fun learning.

Religious School News

Thank you

Thank you to Jerri Donn for helping prepare our classrooms for the new school year.

We also are grateful for the wonderful and informative workshop that Julie Meltzer conducted for our teachers. Julie's wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm were inspirational.

Parent meetings in October:

2nd grade - Sunday, October 6, at 9:30 AM
 6th grade - Sunday, October 6, at 11:15 AM
 3rd grade - Sunday, October 20, at 9:30 AM
 5th grade - Sunday, October 20, at 11:15 AM

First Grade Shabbat Family Program

We invite all parents of first grade students to join us on Sunday, October 20, from 9:30 AM to noon for a program about *Shabbat*.

Sixth Grade Bar/t Mitzvah Family Program

We invite all sixth grade families who plan to celebrate a *bar* or *bat mitzvah* at Bet Ha'am to join us on Wednesday, October 23, from 6:30-8:00 PM for the first session of this family program.

Schedule of Services

Friday, October 4

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, October 5

Torah Study 9:00 AM
Worship Service 10:00 AM
Parsha Noach

Friday, October 11

Family Kabbalat Shabbat 6:30 PM

Saturday, October 12

Torah Study 9:00 AM
Worship Service 10:00 AM
Parsha Lech-Lecha

Friday, October 18

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, October 19

Torah Study 9:00 AM
Worship Service 10:00 AM
Parsha Vayera

Friday, October 25

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, October 26

Torah Study 9:00 AM
Worship Service 10:00 AM
Parsha Chayei Sara

Executive Director Corner

By Kris Dorer



Under the big roof...

Many of you come to services and events at our beautiful synagogue. Visitors continue to revel in the beauty of our facility and grounds. We are so fortunate to enjoy this wonderful space, which is now over four years old.

The office and maintenance staff and several volunteers bustle to keep our building safe and in good shape. Routine fire inspections, sporadic maintenance, capital improvements (as our budget allows) and the daily cleaning and upkeep keep us busy "behind the scenes." Our goal is to keep our facility beautiful and clean, while also planning ways to reduce our expenses in the future.

In the past year, we gradually upgraded our building security and risk management program, partly in reaction to two break-ins. One break-in occurred last fall and our *tzedakah* box was unfortunately destroyed. The other incident was an attempted entry through a roof panel just prior to our High Holy Days this year.

We are striving to improve basic security practices without affecting the comfort of Bet Ha'am as our community's spiritual home. Safety enhancements over the past year included:

- ◆ installing additional motion sensors to our internal and external security system,
- ◆ adding telephones in key locations,
- ◆ installing video cameras,
- ◆ posting caution signs for local youngsters who might be tempted to skateboard or trespass,
- ◆ limiting unnecessary use of external doors and changing some external door locks,
- ◆ installing panic buttons,
- ◆ posting a local police officer to moderate traffic and facilitate pedestrian crossing during the High Holy Days and
- ◆ working with our security response team and the local police to help streamline our internal processes and to educate us on overall safety practices.

As you continue to enjoy the welcoming loveliness of our synagogue, know that we will continue to plan well and work hard to maintain its impressive glory now and into our future generations.

Kirtan Rabbi Concert

Sunday, November 3, 2013

2:00-4:00 PM

Rabbi Andrew Hahn, Ph.D., who is known as *Kirtan* Rabbi, combines a variety of tools to introduce Jewish wisdom to an increasingly global religious village. *Kirtan* Rabbi's music is characterized by great energy, passion and melodic flow. *Kirtan*, also known as *Bhajan*, is a form of chant developed in India to heighten participation, communal feeling and ecstatic communion with the divine. Its usual, distinguishing feature is a formula of singing based on call-and-response. The chant facilitator offers something and then the participants return the favor. *Kirtan* is fully participatory. It breaks down the barrier between leader and listener. Its improvisational and experimental nature make it a fun, yet strangely deep, game to play - for both adults and children.

This free concert is open to the public. Join us and bring a friend!

For more information, call (207) 879-0028 or kris@bethaam.org
Sponsored by Congregation Bet Ha'am & Adas Yeshuron

October Garden Notes

It has been a busy summer for the Garden Committee. We planted a pear tree donated by Annette Goodman and some Rosa Rugosas donated by Marilyn Sherrie. We harvested our wheat crop and planted mums in the harvested border. We hosted two weed-a-thons, in June and late August, that were well-attended and productive.

Four of our college-age members worked for us this summer and helped with weeding and tending our gardens. Caleb Grant, Elias Grant, Andy Lukas and Jacob Wasserman did a wonderful job keeping our grounds looking good during an unusually challenging season.

Our raised garden beds were remarkably healthy and bountiful this year. Thanks to Alice Peters for helping us harvest. We had enough produce to enjoy at Bet Ha'am and to donate. We also enjoyed the flowers that interspersed among the vegetables. They often graced our front desk.

The Social Action Committee helped us establish a relationship with Community Partnerships for Protecting Children in South Portland, who ensured that our produce got into the hands of families in need.

We also established a relationship with Day One residents, who assisted us in sprucing up our gardens before the High Holy Days. The guys did a fantastic job! Thanks also to Panera Bread for providing food for that event.

You may have noticed the beautiful new benches that invite us to sit in the garden. Thanks to Jeremy Moser for designing the benches and engineering their installation by our staff. Thanks to Shai Levite for raising the level of water in the reflecting pool to hide the black liner and cleaning out the algae. Shai also installed a new spigot near our wheat crop so it would be easier to water.

Please join us and help to put our gardens to bed for the season.

Sunday, October 27, 8:00 AM to noon

Bring your favorite tools or use ours to trim, weed, rake and deadhead.

This is a family-friendly activity and we will provide refreshments!

We hope you will travel to Israel with Bet Ha'am



Join Rabbi Saks and members of our Bet Ha'am family on a tour of Israel from February 13-23, 2014.

Click here <http://prezi.com/yaaplxtduawl/bet-haam-israel-trip/> for more information on the wonderful places we will visit!

Questions? Please feel free to call the office at 879-0028.

Join Us at Bet Ha'am on Sunday Evenings for a Beginning Hebrew Class!

Learn the *alef-bet*, decode words and prayers, and practice reading fluency. We will be offering classes for both beginner and more advanced Hebrew reading levels.

Class started September 22 and will meet most Sunday evenings that Religious School is in session, from 5:30 – 6:30 PM.

Running for Habitat - Back Cove, Portland, October 27

Hey, runners and walkers! Hoping you will put this race on your list for the afternoon of Sunday, October 27 in Portland. This event is organized by the Habitat Interfaith Group. Timed/prizes/food! What's not to like?

<http://www.firstgiving.com/habitatme/run4habitat/home>

Have you ever been intrigued by the idea of chanting the *Torah* and other books of the Hebrew Bible? Now is your chance to learn!

On nine Sunday evenings this fall, Rachel Stamieszkin will teach a class for anyone who would like to learn to chant *Torah*. You don't need to be a fluent Hebrew reader, just able to read accurately, no matter how slowly – even syllable by syllable. If you can carry a tune and have access to e-mail and the internet, we encourage you to join us.

The class will meet from 5:30 to 6:30 PM on September 29 through November 24. If you have any questions or are not sure if the class is right for you, please contact Rachel Stamieszkin at 767-3603. If you would like to register, please contact the office at 879-0028 as soon as possible.

Yom Kippur Break-Fast



Welcome New Members

- David & Harriet Pinansky
- Sharon & Jeffrey Fiarman, Hannah & Ilan
- Jennifer & Jarod Harriman, Edie & Emma
- Ari & Kirsten Berman, Gabriel, Isabel & Matthew

Join the Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery

We invite you to join the Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery today! We have many needs and many ways for you to contribute. If you have an event you would like to celebrate, a person you would like to honor, a *yahrzeit* to remember, or you just want to help support our programs, please fill out the form and send it along with your check to Bet Ha'am. Include an address if you would like an acknowledgement to be sent.

Our Donor Gallery listing should read:

Please acknowledge to: _____

Your name: _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____

Fund choice (please check one):

- Annual Fund
 General Fund
 Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
 Adult Library Fund
 Berkowitz Open Door Fund
 Building Capital Campaign
 Cohen Fund for Worship & Learning
 Goldfinger Fund for Israel Travel
 Lehman Fund for Gardens & Grounds
 Religious School Library Fund
 Rosalyne S. & Sumner T. Bernstein
 Scholar in Residence Fund
 Sandmel Education Fund
 Tutor Fund
 Youth Fund

Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery

We thank our generous contributors

Annual Fund

- Susan Horowitz & Gail Kass
- Dana & Erik Anderson
- Wilma Rose
- Charles Passerman
- In honor of Lisa Pierce by Erin & Chris Koepf
- In memory of Shirley Lerman by Carl Lerman
- Anonymous
- Heidi Nottonson
- Barbara Riegelhaupt & Mo Mehlsak
- Lisa & Russ Pierce
- Charles & Deirdre Oehrtmann
- In memory of mother and grandmother, Esther King,
by Nanette & Lawrence Chern
- Alan & Jill Morris
- Sam & Deb Barouch
- Piotr & Rachel Stamieszkin
- Andrew & Denise Mancall
- David Miller
- Randi Greenwald in memory of Adrian &
Augusta Greenwald
- Howard & Jane Rosenfield in memory of Sadie &
Max Newfield

Berkowitz Open Door Fund

- In celebration of Faith Moritz & Janet Jones on their
marriage by Larry Landau

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- In appreciation of Lisa Pierce's joyful service to Bet
Ha'am by Larry Landau

General Fund

- Anonymous

- In memory of David Rickless on his *yahrzeit* by Wendy
Sirois
- In appreciation of High Holy Day services by Louise
Backer & Nick Ciciratti
- In memory of parents, Pauline Moser and Paul Mills,
by Teri Wilner
- In memory of husband, Julius Wilner, by Teri Wilner
- In memory of grandparents, Benjamin & Frances
Kroot and Louis & Anna Bean, by Beryl Cole
- In memory of aunts, Mildred Kroot Warner and
Rebecca Bean Fox, by Beryl Cole
- In memory of cousins, Leonard Michael Niman and
Brian H. Kroot, by Beryl Cole
- In appreciation of High Holy Day services by Jim
Gelbort
- In appreciation of High Holy Day services by Mayor
Redding
- In appreciation of our Garden Committee by Marilyn
& Gerry Sherry
- In appreciation of Karen Lukas by Marilyn & Gerry
Sherry
- In appreciation of High Holy Day services by Mark
Rich
- In memory of Sylvia Smith by Beatrice Potenzo
- In appreciation by Jane Sloven & Joe Py
- In appreciation by Barry & Roberta Zuckerman

Zecher T'zaddik L'vrachah

- Condolences to Louise & Stu Abramson on the loss
of Louise's aunt, Claire Fournier
- Condolences to Lindsay Cadwallader & Jeremy
Stein on the loss of Lindsay's father, George
Cadwallader

October 2013

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

		1	2	3	4	5
			Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM		<i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
6 Religious School Grades 1-6 9:00 AM Kindergarten 9:00 AM Religious School Grades 7-10 5:00 PM	7 Office Closed	8 Finance Committee 10:00 AM Executive Committee 11:00 AM	9 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Education Committee 6:30 PM	10 JCA Cook-Off 5:30 PM Adult Learning Committee 6:30 PM	11 Family <i>Kabbalat</i> <i>Shabbat</i> 6:30 PM	12 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
13 No Religious School	14 Office Closed	15 Garden Committee 5:30 PM	16 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	17 Gabbai Committee 6:30 PM	18 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM <i>Poetry of Talmud</i> 12:00 PM	19 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
20 Religious School Grades 1-6 9:00 AM Kindergarten 9:00 AM First Grade Parents Program 9:30 AM Youth Group Pumpkin Carving Contest 4:00 PM Religious School Grades 7-10 5:00 PM	21 Office Closed Membership Committee 7:00 PM	22 Board Meeting 6:30 PM	23 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Grade 6 Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Program 6:30 PM	24 Library Committee 1:00 PM	25 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	26 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
27 Religious School Grades 1-6 9:00 AM <i>Shalom Yeladim</i> 11:00 AM Garden Tending 8:00 AM Religious School Grades 7-10 5:00 PM	28 Office Closed	29	30 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	31		