



# MA CHADASH! מה חדש!

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

April 2025, Nisan/Iyar 5785

## Temple Shalom Passover Seder 2025



Sunday, April 13th, 5:00 P.M.

At Temple Shalom

(also available on Zoom)

*"I love Passover because for me it is a cry against indifference, a cry for compassion." —Elie Wiesel*

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Save the Date

*Cafe Shalom*

Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00 P.M.

## FROM THE RABBI



It is almost impossible to tell the story of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt—the story we tell each year at our Passover seders—without talking about Moses. (While the Passover Haggadah itself curiously does not mention the name of Moses in its telling of the story, Moses of course plays a crucial role in the redemption of the Israelites in the Biblical account as described in the Book of Exodus). Interestingly, however, Moses gets off to a pretty rough start.

As the story goes, Moses grew up in Pharaoh's palace raised and loved by Batya, one of Pharaoh's daughters, as her own. At some point Moses becomes aware of the tremendous suffering of the Hebrew slaves and feels

called to intervene.

*Some time after that, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his kinsfolk and witnessed their labors. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen. He turned this way and that and, seeing no one about, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand...When Pharaoh learned of the matter, he sought to kill Moses; but Moses fled from Pharaoh. Exodus 2:11-12, 15*

As you can see, this didn't go very well for Moses. Not only was Moses forced to give up his privileged life in Pharaoh's palace (he ended up a nomadic shepherd in the deserts of Midian) but his impetuous act did nothing to help ease the plight of the Hebrews who continued to be enslaved. It took many more years for Moses to gain the maturity and wisdom to effectively lead his brothers and sisters out of bondage.

The young Moses is clearly sickened by the sight of one human torturing another human. We can all relate to Moses' anger and we love him for it—how easy would it have been for Moses to simply ignore the injustice that he witnessed and return to his privileged palace life. Still, by acting on his anger, he didn't actually help. He only made things worse for himself. We can only wonder what the young Moses could have accomplished if he had instead calmly chosen to use his influence in the palace to advocate for better treatment of the Israelite slaves.

Fortunately, Moses does not give up on his dream to better the plight of his brothers and sisters. From the deserts of Midian, Moses heeds the call to return to Egypt, confront Pharaoh, and ultimately secure the Israelites' release from bondage.

*Work smarter not harder* is a maxim that has gained much popularity in recent years. It is not enough to feel passionately about wanting to do or change something—it is also necessary to calmly develop a strategy that will be effective and helpful. One that furthers the ultimate objective and is not simply performative. Sure, killing an Egyptian taskmaster in the act of torturing a Hebrew slave must have made Moses feel good. For a few moments. But, in the end, it didn't solve anything and actually made things worse. We live in an era where almost all of us have very passionate beliefs about everything—especially politics. What is unfortunate is that although our passionate feelings are, typically, passionately embraced by as many as half of the people in our society, they are also, typically, vehemently opposed by the other half of the people in our society. It always feels good to take action—when “our half” has the power—that validates our passionately held beliefs. But, if the end result is to incite a backlash in the complete opposite direction, then we have made things worse, not better. For everyone.

My wish this Passover is that we learn from Moses—both his failures and successes—to ensure that whatever action we take—on either side—will have enough general support to actually make things better. For everyone.

Happy Passover.

Rabbi Sruli

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



This is one of my favorite times of year. Not only is my birthday this month, but it's usually the month that Passover is in. I don't even mind when my birthday cake has to be made out of matzo meal! Cooking and baking for this holiday is a joy I look forward to. And I always try at least one new recipe each year just for the challenge! It's fun getting together with friends and family where everyone brings their special concoctions. Aside from the food, the actual seder, in my opinion, is the best service that Judaism has to offer. Even when I was a kid, and my grandfather from the old country kept shushing us as he mumbled through the **WHOLE** Hagaddah, we still looked forward to doing the four questions and searching for the afikomen. Nowadays, we hold a less-kosher seder, singing irreverent songs at the top of our lungs, reading both in

Hebrew and in English and using a modern Hagaddah with added poetry and new prayers for peace.

Even though the seder is mostly about remembering the hardships and sorrows of our people in Egypt, it is meant to be a joyous time celebrating our freedom. The truth is, if you don't know what you gained freedom from, you have no reason to rejoice. But this year, I will be thinking of all the freedoms I do have that seem to be in jeopardy. What would it mean to lose the freedom of free speech? How about the freedom to vote? Or the freedom to make my own medical decisions? Or to get a free education? How about the freedom of religion?

As an American, I was always thankful for the freedoms we have, but I'm growing ever more fearful. While these scenarios are not as dire as the ones in the Hagaddah, they are what's on our minds and in our lives today. As Jews, freedom is especially important as we remind ourselves during Passover, what it was like to be slaves.

May your Passover be filled with family and friends and lots of good food!

Lesli Weiner  
President

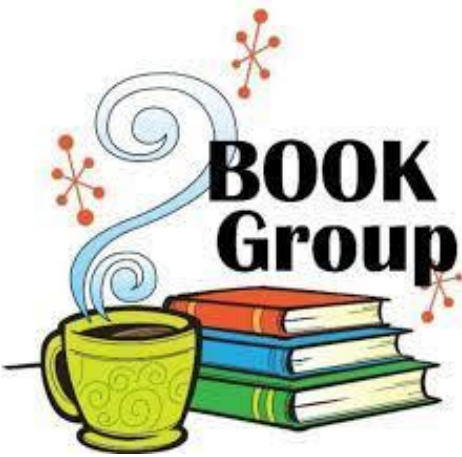
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**With joy and love Mara & Christopher King invite you to join them as their daughter, Mazie, is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, April 5, 2025, at 10am at Temple Shalom and to share in our celebration at a kiddush following the service.**



# !!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!



On March 10th, Bertha Bodenheimer, Babs Shapiro, Judy Abromson and I went back in time to 1938 when the young Estee Lauder was trying to sell her beauty creams in New York salons. It was fascinating to learn about the ins and outs of the makeup business, and how Estee dreamed of getting her product into Saks Fifth Avenue, for she was sure that would be her big break. Once she did, she revolutionized the makeup counter. She was a determined woman and didn't take no for an answer. My kind of girl! "Fifth Avenue Glamour Girl" was a fun historical novel to read.

Our next book is "By Any Other Name" by Jodi Picoult.

Here's the synopsis from Amazon:

**"#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • From the co-author of Mad Honey comes an "inspiring" (Elle) novel about two women, centuries apart—one of whom is the real author of Shakespeare's plays—who are both forced to hide behind another name.**

Young playwright Melina Green has just written a new work inspired by the life of her Elizabethan ancestor Emilia Bassano. But seeing it performed is unlikely, in a theater world where the playing field isn't level for women. As Melina wonders if she dares risk failure again, her best friend takes the decision out of her hands and submits the play to a festival under a male pseudonym.

In 1581, young Emilia Bassano is a ward of English aristocrats. Her lessons on languages, history, and writing have endowed her with a sharp wit and a gift for storytelling, but like most women of her day, she is allowed no voice of her own. Forced to become a mistress to the Lord Chamberlain, who oversees all theatre productions in England, Emilia sees firsthand how the words of playwrights can move an audience. She begins to form a plan to secretly bring a play of her own to the stage—by paying an actor named William Shakespeare to front her work.

Told in intertwining timelines, *By Any Other Name*, a sweeping tale of ambition, courage, and desire centers two women who are determined to create something beautiful despite the prejudices they face. Should a writer do whatever it takes to see her story live on . . . no matter the cost? This remarkable novel, rooted in primary historical sources, ensures the name Emilia Bassano will no longer be forgotten."

Please join us on zoom on April 7th at 4PM. We will also be choosing our next set of books, so bring your ideas and a synopsis. Also the book must be available in the Minerva system and under 400 pages. And of Jewish content, of course!.....lesli



## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO

Paul & Marion Rausch                      Apr 14  
Daniel & Dina Blackerby                      30

## Linking Generations: Jewish Genealogy Tips

By Labish Kurtz (Richard Kurtz)

### #3. Stories in Stone: Unlocking Jewish Ancestry Through Gravestones

"May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life." (I Samuel 25:29)

When researching your family history, locating a lost grave or deciphering a gravestone can provide invaluable insights. Gravestones often reveal a wealth of genealogical information, including names, birth and death dates, and parental lineage.

For example, when I visited the grave of my great-grandfather, Matityahu—my namesake—I discovered the name of my great-great-grandfather, Avigdor Mendel, inscribed on the stone. This single visit unlocked a deeper connection to my ancestry and new avenues of research.

Jewish gravestones vary in the information they provide, but they remain crucial sources for genealogical research. Across the world, efforts are ongoing to document and digitize Jewish cemeteries, making it easier to find burial records. Personally, I have uncovered family burial sites in Warsaw, Poland, Toronto, Canada and many locations in the USA through these databases. In the resources section below, you'll find a collection of searchable databases that can help you locate Jewish graves in Europe and North America.

#### Understanding Jewish Gravestones

- Jewish tombstones typically include the Hebrew letters **תנצב"ה**, an acrostic meaning "May his/her soul be bound in the bond of life." Another common inscription is **פ"נ** ("Here is buried").
- Tradition advises against excessive praise on tombstones, as some believe the soul must account for what is written during divine judgment.
- Engraving human images or mounting photographs on Jewish tombstones is prohibited.
- Before ordering a tombstone, it is advisable to consult with the **Chevra Kadisha** (Jewish burial society) or a knowledgeable rabbi to ensure proper wording.

#### Practical Resources

For a deeper understanding of Jewish gravestone inscriptions and symbols, visit:

🔗 [Understanding Jewish Gravestones](#)

#### Online Jewish Cemetery Databases

- ✦ [Find a Grave](#) – exceptional search engine for finding graves
- ✦ [JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry](#)
- ✦ [Foundation for Documentation of Jewish Cemeteries in Poland](#)
- ✦ [The Gidonim Project - Tombstone Database](#)
- ✦ [International Jewish Cemetery Project](#)
- ✦ [Lo Tishkach - European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative](#)
- ✦ [Forgotten Cemeteries Project](#)



Labish's great grandparents and their graves, Mattityahu and Tille Gela Kurtzbard



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 **Valci Braga, Rachel Corvi, Lee Jay Feldman, Andrea Finn, Sara Graf, Robert Galumbeck, Isaak Gekhtin, Ariella Green, Sharon Hemond, Alison Jaeger, Suzan Katzir, Michael Kendall, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Lee Leveille, Carolyn Marshal, Bruce Meyer, Alice Richman, Sandy Traister**, 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.**

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

Finley Barter-Levine	Apr	1
Robert Laskoff		2
Elliot Katz		5
Stanley Tetenman		6
Sharon Day		7
Zachary Olstein		8
Judith Ross		12
Julie Cohen		13
Teagan Barter-Levine		15
Daniel Penan		15
Allyson Casares		16
Janet Zidle		16
Joan Levenson		17
Lesli Weiner		17
Andrea Levinsky		19
Riley Barter-Levine		22
Steven Cohen		24
Susan Brown		25
Michael Meyer		29

## YAHREZEITEN

Edward Koss	Apr.	1
Harold Pearlman		1
Sheldon Nussinow		2
Gertrude Berent		5
Ida Perry		5
Edward Reeves		7
Irving Isaacson		10
Robert E. Meyer		11
Edward Laine		12
Lydia Izenstatt		14
Abraham Perry		15
Joseph Margolin		16
Sally Faiman		17
June Margolin		18
Murray Nussinow		18
David Woods		19
Pearl Salberg		20
Lillian Schneidman		21
Esther Binstock		23
Marianne Miller		26
Joel Salberg		26
Carl Cutler		27
Murray Rubinstein		27
Mark Johnson		29

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To be used for the Passover Seder  
in memory of Marcia & Irving Bell  
Stephen & Lisa Plavin  
To be used for the Passover Seder  
in memory of Len, Marcy, Manny Plavin  
Estelle Rubinstein  
In honor of the birth of Noah Platz Herbert  
Bertha Bodenheimer  
In honor of the birth of Noah Platz Herbert  
In memory of Bert Bodenheimer  
In memory of Abe Tetenman  
Joy & Lewis Zidle  
In memory of Lillian & Joseph Zidle  
In memory of George Rosenberg  
Cathy & Stan Tetenman  
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Judy Abromson  
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In memory of Rabbi David Berent

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In memory of Leonard Nemeth

### **SHIRLEY GOODMAN MEMORIAL FUND**

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