

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 9 AV - ELUL 5763 AUGUST, 2003

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A friend of mine was troubled about attending services at his local synagogue. "Jon, I am a Jew through and through," he said to me. "I care about the Jewish people. I care about Israel. I give my share of tzedakah. The only thing I can't get about being Jewish is the praying part. Look, I am not a praying man. I never have been. Synagogue services just don't do it for me. Does that mean I am any less Jewish?"

The answer, of course, is no. You cannot be more Jewish or less Jewish. You either buy into the covenant of our people or you don't. The next question is, what am I supposed to do with this "covenant" now that I buy into it? There are many ways to participate as a Jew but I have to admit (especially as a rabbi) that praying is a core activity. Whether it is Shabbat or a holiday, sooner rather than later, you find yourself sitting with a book in a synagogue pew and you are talking to God. It is not easy, even among the so-called aficionados of prayer. But here is an offer to make it easier. On Friday nights at our Shabbaton, as part of my regular remarks, I will be teaching the meanings and structure of the Shabbat liturgy. What is the meaning of "Adon Olam"? How does the "Aleinu" fit in? Why do we say "kiddush"? Please e-mail or snail-mail your questions, and I will put them in the mailbag and ask a volunteer to pull a question out of the bag at each of our Friday night gatherings. Throughout the year, we will get a better sense of what Jewish prayer is all about. I am also working on ideas to make the service more user-friendly, like helping people understand the Hebrew.

I believe that praying for a Jew is a lot like breathing. To a Jew, giving thanks and being mindful should be a reflexive action. I realize praying isn't for everybody, but it is not as hard as it looks.

Shalom,
Jon Perlman

SHABBAT SERVICES and NATE DAVIS BAR MITZVAH HIGHLIGHT TEMPLE ISRAEL ACTIVITIES IN AUGUST

Another **Shabbaton**—and yet another opportunity to enjoy Shabbat as a community—comes on the evening of **Friday, August 1 and on Saturday, August 2.** On Friday evening, we will have a "dairy-vegetarian" potluck dinner at 6:00, followed by a Shabbat service at 7:00 and a delicious Oneg after the service at 8:00. Wondering what to bring? We are usually particularly in need of main dishes.

Then, on Saturday morning, we have meditation with Dr. Maron, beginning at 9:15. The Shabbat service itself will be from 10:00 to 12:00 with a special lunch at noon.



NOTE: Child care for the little ones will be available from 9:15 until lunchtime.

The afternoon will be filled with learning, discussion, and fellowship. You may join us in singing or learning some traditional Shabbat songs, if you like. After a mid-afternoon break, we return to conclude Shabbat. *At 7:45 p.m. those who are interested will join Dr. Maron in Abulafial chanting. This is a system of Kabbalistic chanting used as a concentration exercise (an energizing experience!)*

We will conclude with some lovely poetry reading and discussion at 8:15 p.m. and then a beautiful Ma'ariv/Havdalah service, beginning at approximately 8:45 P.M.

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 9 AV - ELUL 5763 AUGUST, 2003

SHABBATON MENACHEM AV,
AUGUST 1-2

Theme: "Why do they hate us?"

As we approach the Fast of Tisha B'av, we confront the saddest parts of Jewish history: the destruction of the Temple, the Spanish Inquisition, Pogroms, and the Holocaust. We will focus on learning about our place in history as the object of other people's hatred.

Parashat Devarim, Deuteronomy Chapter 1-11:25
Haftarah Isaiah 1:1-27

Friday night: "Ask the Rabbi: Are the Jews God's Whipping Post?"

We will discuss the theological question of "Why does God allow it?" as reflected in psalms that we use on Friday night and throughout the year.

Saturday morning Torah study: "Archetypes of Jew Haters in the Bible"

We will examine the attitudes of the non-Israelites in the Bible towards Moses and the children of Israel. Does fear and criticism of Jewish behavior translate into anti-Semitism?

Saturday roundtable discussion: "Is Anti-Semitism still with us?"

We will look at the newest episodes of anti-Semitism in the Middle East, Europe and America.

Maariv/Havdalah Poetry study: "Amichai's The Diameter of the Bomb"



NATE DAVIS BAR MITZVAH APPROACHING!

On Saturday, August 23 at 9:30 AM, the Davis family and our community will celebrate the Bar Mitzvah of Nate Davis. Kiddush will follow the ceremony. All Temple Israel Congregants are Welcome!



Nate, Karen and Hannah Davis (Feb., 1991)

A Few Words About Nate

Both Temple Israel and the Davis Family are extremely proud of Nate as he reaches his last few weeks of preparation for his upcoming Bar Mitzvah.

Nate is a boy who loves the outdoors. He really enjoys hiking and camping with his older brother and friends. The last two summers he has done a lot of wilderness/survival camping, learning to build brush shelters and make fire. He is a hard worker on the Davis farm, helping with haying and animal chores. He loves sailing and flying kites with his Dad. He is getting to be a great cook, and has loved reading, fiddle-playing, and hanging out with sisters Becky and Hannah for a long time.



Nate at 12—Fishing in Alaska

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 9 AV - ELUL 5763 AUGUST, 2003

SNEAK PREVIEW OF A NEW FEATURE FOR THE COMING YEAR: JEWISH WEBSITE OF THE MONTH



During the upcoming year each newsletter will introduce you to a fascinating Jewish website. Those of you who have Internet access—either at home or through the public library—will find a wealth of information on a wide variety of Jewish topics. **Aish.com** is the first website to which we want to introduce you. Among the topics on its home page are the following: Jewish World, Spirituality, Society Today, Family, Holocaust Studies, Ask the Rabbi, Weekly Torah Portion, Holidays, Dating, and Jewish Literacy. This month “Jewish World” features “Welcoming the New Israelis” while “Spirituality” discusses “Five Constant Mitzvahs: #4: Love God.” Another intriguing article in the “Jewish Literacy” section is “Crash Course in Jewish History: Part 55—Jews and the Founding of America.” While the “Dating” column feature “The Mensch who Looks OK,” the Family section focuses on “Thinking Clearly in Marriage” and “The Good Parent.” **Aish.com** is an amazing compendium of Jewish ideas which will provide you with hours and hours and hours of thought-provoking reading....and it's all free! Give it a try; just go to www.aish.com. It's as easy as that.

One more important point: if you are not a computer fan or if you don't have Internet access, just give your public library a try. They will help you to locate the website in just 5 minutes or less, and then you will be free to surf the net! Better yet, just give me (Mitch) a call at 978-249-9090 and I'll be glad to take you to the library (or meet you there) and give you a lesson on navigating your way around the World Wide Web. There's a whole Jewish world out there—and it's as close as your computer, as close as your town's public library!



REMINDERS...THIS MONTH

August 1-2—Shabbaton Weekend

August 23—Saturday—Bar Mitzvah of
Nate Davis

AND COMING UP...

September 5-6—Shabbaton Weekend

There's so much happening these days at Temple Israel! Please visit with us, and see what all the excitement is about! We'd love to see you!

For more information, please call Temple Israel in Athol at 978-249-9481 or contact Co-presidents Dr. Myron Maron at 978-724-0238 or Mitchell Grosky at 978-249-9090.

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 9 AV - ELUL 5763 AUGUST, 2003