

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 17 SIVAN/TAMMUZ 5764 JUNE, 2004

RABBI'S MESSAGE

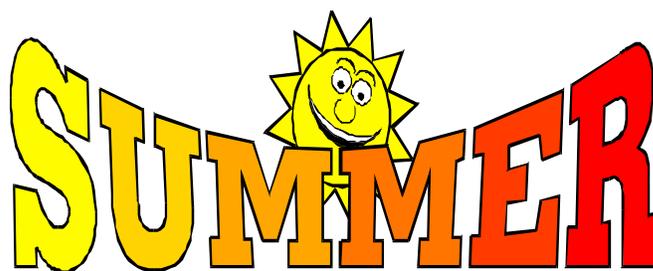
Among Jewish educators, there is debate over whether or not a program can be judged according to merits of quantity or quality. Some argue that if a room is full of participants, or if there is standing room only, then we can call the program a success. Others argue that, regardless of how many people show up, the content of the program has to be excellent and must leave an impression on the people who participate. I would tend to argue that although it is always wonderful to reach as many people as you can, first and foremost, the quality of the program must touch the lives of the people who participate – no matter how few. In our small shul, we don't have the luxury of quantity that bigger shuls have, so we must strive for quality. If we build it, they will come.

Most importantly, there is a warm quality to the members of Temple Israel that is often missing in some of those fancier shuls. At Temple Israel, everybody counts. Since we are reading the "Book of Counting" AKA the "Book of Numbers" AKA "Sefer B'midbar" this month, let me share with you a beautiful piece of Torah taught by Rabbi Modecai Yosef of Ishbitza, an obscure Hassidic rabbi who lived in Poland in the 19th century. He wrote that the Haftarah connected to the first parasha of Numbers contains a contradiction: "And the number of the children of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted" (Hosea 2:1). If the children of Israel are assigned a "number," then why does the verse tell us that they cannot be counted? The answer that Reb Mordecai gives is beautiful: only God knows the true meaning of the "number" of souls because only God assigns true value to each and every person. A true counting is the way each soul is elevated by God in this world. This is why God tells Moses to "raise their heads" (Numbers 1:2) in regard to counting the number of Israelites travelling with him in the desert. Every soul is elevated. Every

soul has infinite value. "The greatness of God," says Reb Mordecai, "is seen in the community of Israel as a whole, and if just one member of that community is missing then the mixture will be deficient."

I know this is true in our small congregation. Every person who comes is part of the mix and if one person is missing, then the mix has different flavor. We who are characterized by our warmth need to know that especially in a small shul, every person counts. We are a different community without you there. When people come to Temple Israel, I want to them to be greeted with the friendliness one person owes another. There are some of you who I haven't seen for several months. And so ... here's a bit of urging from your rabbi – please come and elevate your soul with us and know that the quality of our shul is different without you being there.

Rabbi Jon Perlman



Shabbaton Sivan

Friday, June 4th

6:00 Pot Luck Dinner

7:00 Kabbalat Shabbat Services

Sermon Topic: "Singing 'Aleinu,' our National Anthem"

We will conclude this year's study of the prayer book with a focus on the prayer "Aleinu" that is found at the end of every service. Why do we end the service with this prayer? What does it mean?

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Saturday, June 5th

9:15 Meditation with Myron
10:00 Morning Services
11:30 Torah Discussion: "What is a Jewish book?"

The rabbis claim that the smallest book in Jewish literature is found in the Torah reading assigned for this day, Parshat B'haalotecha (Numbers 8-12). What makes a book Jewish? Its content? Its lesson? The identity of its characters? The identity of its author?

12:15 Cholent Lunch (Meat and Vegetarian)

Roundtable discussion: Reviews of recent Jewish books

8:00 Chanting with Myron
8:30 Poetry study and Havdalah



A Bisel Yiddish from Mitch

My Mom always used Yiddish at home when talking with her sisters—especially when she was talking about something which she felt was not appropriate for the *kinderlech* (little children) to hear. I came across an interesting website on the Internet (<http://www.ariga.com/Yiddish.htm>) which presented a glossary of Yiddish

expressions. As I tried to add to my own vocabulary, I thought that I might share a few words with our congregation. For those who already know a great deal of Yiddish, you may get a bit of a laugh out of those expressions which I choose. For those who are just starting out to explore this rich language, you might just learn a *bisel* (a little). Anyway, as my Mom always said, it couldn't hurt, right?

A Basic Yiddish Primer: 20 Yiddish Words & Expressions

biteh---please

bobkes—small things, peanuts, nothing, worthless

chazzer—a pig, a glutton

Es gefelt mir—I like it (It pleases me)

frailech—happy

Gai gezunterhait! Go in good health!

Genug iz genug! Enough is enough!

(To) *kibbitz*—to offer unsolicited advice
(as a spectator)

kvetch—whine, complain

maiven—expert, authority, connoisseur

maidel—unmarried girl, teenager

maideleh—little girl (affectionate term)

Mazel-tov—Good luck

meshugeh—crazy

mentsh—a special man or person-highly respected

nosh—snack

Nu—So? Well?

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Oi, gevald!—Cry of pain, suffering, frustration; a cry for help

shlep—drag, carry or haul (esp. unnecessary things); to go somewhere unwillingly

simcheh—joy, a joyous occasion



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

WE WILL HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT BOARD MEETING ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 10, FROM 6:30-8:30 P.M. AT DR. MYRON MARON'S HOME IN PETERSHAM. THE RABBI WILL BE JOINING US AT 7:00 P.M. WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO END BY 8:30. PLEASE CALL 978-724-0238 IF YOU NEED DIRECTIONS. SEE YOU THEN!

REMINDERS...THIS MONTH

June 4-5—Shabbaton Weekend
June 10—Board of Directors Meeting

AND COMING UP...

July 9-10—Shabbaton Weekend
To Be Announced--Annual Meeting

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.