

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 13 KISLEV/TEVET 5764 DECEMBER, 2003

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Hanukah is our holiday of fire. It is miraculous to consider that we are the only creatures on the planet that can create fire. Bears can't do it; Dogs can't do it; even our primate cousins with all their cunning can't do it. We possess the creative ability that we share with God to create the spark that becomes a fireball. Rabbi Yehuda Leib Alter of Ger, also known as the "Sefat Emet," commented that the real miracle of Hanukah was that the Jews--even in a weakened state against the Hellenizing tyrant--were able to ignite a "spark of holiness" that burned inside them during those dark days. Even though their spirits were crushed and their Judaism was in jeopardy, they managed to fan the tiny spark into the fire of wholeness. They regained their wholeness, says the Sefar Emet, and it is for this reason that the holiday is called "Hanukah" meaning "here they rested" (Hanu-koh). The ability to find true rest is a sign of confidence and strength. It is a sign of wholeness. The rabbis in the Talmud argue about whether one should add a candle each day to the Menorah increasing to eight candles for eight days or begin with eight candles and subtract one every day for eight days. It appears that the Jewish ethos won out and we start with one and build to eight glowing flames – the principle in Judaism known as "maalin bakodesh,"--growing in holiness. From one tiny spark we can create a conflagration. That is the Jewish secret of holy struggle. Eight days (one weekly cycle plus one day) is a celebration of our regaining wholeness. Let us pray for wholeness even when our spirit is weakened.

Happy Hanukah.

Jon Perlman

FAMILY EDUCATION WITH OREN COMING UP ON SATURDAY, DEC. 13

Please join us for a very special family program with Oren, our superb Jewish family educator, on

December 13th. The title of the program is "Climbing Jacob's Ladder: Discovering our family values." We will explore the story of Jacob and the ladder. Parents can bring their children for a special Shabbat activity with Oren at 10:30 AM. Parents are invited for Shabbat services in the Uchitel Chapel followed by an adult Torah study session with the Rabbi on the meaning of the Jacob story. At 12:00 PM, parents and children will reconvene for lunch followed by a special program involving children and parents in a creative art project with Oren and the Rabbi.

MAJOR NEWS ALERT! DECEMBER SHABBATON MOVED TO WEEKEND OF DECEMBER 12-13!

Another Shabbaton—and yet another opportunity to enjoy Shabbat as a community--comes on the evening of Friday, December 11 and on Saturday, December 12. Note the change of date! The schedule is listed below.

Shabbaton Kislev“ The Sabbath of Jacob's Ladder”

Friday, December 12th

6:00 PM Pot Luck Dinner

7:00 PM Shabbat Services

Prayer study: "Jacob as a model of the evening service"

Friday, December 13th

9:15 Meditation

10:00 Morning Service

10:30 Children's Program: "Climbing Jacob's Ladder" with Oren

11:30 Torah Study

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Parent and Child Program: "Discovering our Family Values"

4:00 Chanting with Myron

4:30 Poetry Study

5:00 Havdalah and Pre-Hanukah Party

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TEMPLE ISRAEL SHABBATON AND HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Please mark your calendars!

December 12-13 Shabbaton Kislev –
Family Program with Oren
December 19 First Night of Chanukah
(Chanukah ends Dec. 27)
January 2-3 Shabbaton Tevet
February 6-7 Shabbaton Tu B'shvat –
Family Program with Oren
March 5-6 Shabbaton Adar / Purim Party
and Megillah Reading at 6:30 PM
April 2-3 Shabbaton Nissan –
Family program with Oren 7:00 PM
April 5 First Passover Seder at home
April 6 2nd Passover Seder at home
April 18 Yom Hashoah
Commemoration 6:30 PM at Temple
May 7-8 Shabbaton Iyyar
June 4-5 Shabbaton Sivan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

THIS MONTH'S BOARD MEETING WILL BE
ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 10
FROM 6:30-8:30 P.M. AT MITCH GROSKY'S
HOME, 114 RIVERVIEW AVENUE IN ATHOL.
PLEASE CALL 249-9090 IF YOU NEED
DIRECTIONS. SEE YOU THEN!

***REMINDER: Watch your mailboxes!
DUES NOTICES WILL BE SENT OUT
IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS!***

HANUKKAH BLESSINGS

Place candles in the Menorah from right to left. The shammes (servant candle) is placed above the other candles. Say the blessings first before lighting the candles:

Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel hanukah.

Blessed are you Lord our God, King of the universe, who commands us to light the hanukah lights.

Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam she'asah nisim l'avoteinu ba'yamim ha-hem ba-zman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you Lord our God, King of the universe, who did miracles for our ancestors in those time and still in these times.

(First night only: Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam shehehiyanu v'kiyamanu v'higiyanu lazman ha-zeh)

(Blessed are you Lord, King of the universe, who keeps us alive, sustains us and brings us to this day)

Light the candles from left to right. Light the candle closest to the left first. This is the candle for day one, day two, etc. Sing "Maoz Tzur" (found in any siddur).

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.