



Congregation Beth Israel
חבורת בית ישראל

CBI NEWSletter May/June 2014 - Iyyar/Sivan 5774

In This Issue:

From the Rabbi

Service times

Thanks to Jewish Federation

Omer study group

Looking back: Purim

Shabbat and havdalah times

Don't Miss Shavuot!

Lunch Bunch Going Strong

Meet Our Members: Information Needed

From the co-president

Looking back: New Member Shabbat

A Summer Celebration of Jewish Music at CBI:

My Heart is In the East

CBI Book Group (upcoming titles / meetings)

June 6: Remembering D-Day

Summer Class: Jewish Themes, Jewish Stories

May 2: Kabbalat Shabbat

Celebrate Yom Ha-Atzma'ut at CBI as we pilot

the Israel Seder Project on May 8

May 17: Hebrew School Students on the Bimah

Super Sunday on May 18

Shabbat Across the Berkshires on May 30

Happy occasions

Thanks to our donors

Seeking Shamashim

A poem for the Omer

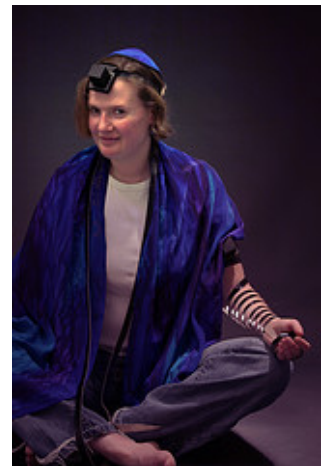
Reprint: Four eclipses, four worlds, four

holidays, four holy perspective shifts

From the Rabbi: It's Almost Time for Revelation!

Holy friends,

As I write these words we're well on our way, journeying from Pesach to Shavuot, from liberation to revelation. These two festivals—two of the *Shalosh Regalim*, the Three Pilgrimage Festivals (the third is



Sukkot)—are linked together by the Counting of the Omer. As we count the 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot, our excitement builds; soon we will reach Sinai, soon we will receive Torah again!

What does it mean to say that we will receive the Torah again? What is revelation? This question may be especially real for those among us who may not believe that each letter of the Torah was dictated by God to Moshe atop a mountain all those years ago.

For me, revelation is the process of truth unfolding into the world. Revelation is wisdom which comes to us from beyond. Revelation is a glimpse of holiness. Revelation is when our hearts open, and in a flash we're able to see how we're all connected—how we can heal our broken world—how life is meant to be.

continued on next page.

Our tradition says that God revealed Torah to Moshe at Mount Sinai. And our tradition also says that revelation continues even now. Revelation wasn't just a "once-upon-a-time" thing. It's still happening. As we read in *Mishkan T'filah* on many Shabbat mornings, "How much Torah unfolds from each new flower / from each wave that breaks upon the sea?" (That's from a poem by Rabbi Richard Levy, one of the "interpretive" choices for the Yotzer Or blessing.)

Several years ago, I went to the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center for a Shavuot retreat. Many of the luminaries of the Jewish Renewal world were there, and taught glorious lessons about Torah all night long. The highlight of the night was the teaching from Rabbi Zalman Shachter-Shalomi, "Reb Zalman," the founder of my ordination program and one of the founders of Jewish Renewal. He will turn 90 this year.

That night, Reb Zalman spoke about how Torah came down from above at Sinai...and Torah also rose up from within at Sinai. There is Torah which comes down to us from above like rain, and also Torah which rises up from where we are, like dew. In Jewish tradition dew is a symbol for divine grace, unmerited but plentiful, sustaining us even in the driest of times.

Torah too can sustain us, even when our hearts and spirits are feeling dry. Our task is to open our hearts to the Torah which may arise for us this Shavuot. What are the big questions in your life? What are your spiritual questions, your ethical challenges, the places where you wish for guidance?

Torah comes to us in many forms. There's the Torah of Jewish tradition, of course; there's the Torah we receive from our teachers; there's the Torah of lived human experience. When humankind first went into space and saw the earth from that new vantage, suddenly able to witness our planet as a whole in a way which had never been possible before, that too was

Torah: the Torah of realizing how interconnected we are, and how what happens on one side of our planet inevitably impacts the rest of the global ecosystem of which we are all a part.

Midrash teaches that the supernal Torah, the Torah "on high," is written in black fire on white fire. The black fire are the letters on the page; the white fire makes up the spaces in between. And in those spaces, our midrashic explorations and creative interpretations flourish. "Turn it and turn it, for everything is in it," our sages say of Torah. If a passage seems incomprehensible or impossible to reconcile with today's way of thinking, then turn it and turn it; new insights will arise. There's always another way to understand what we've received.

And new wisdom is always available to us, if only we will open our hearts and our minds to receive it.

May your journey to Shavuot be sweet. And may the night when we celebrate, and re-experience, revelation be meaningful for us all!

Blessings,
Rabbi Rachel

Service times

Periodic Friday nights (check our website) - including May 2

Every Saturday
9:30 a.m. Shabbat Service
11ish a.m. Kiddush & Torah Study

Meditation minyan
Friday mornings, 8:15 a.m. No experience with meditation is required; all are welcome!

We Thank Jewish Federation for Making Our Hebrew School Possible

Congregation Beth Israel gratefully acknowledges the receipt of \$7,661 from the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires in support of our students' Jewish education. Each student in the CBI Religious School received a tuition subsidy of \$273 for the 2013-2014 school year. This funding, raised during the Federation's Annual Campaign, is a vital part of our school budget and we highly encourage every member of CBI to contribute to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires Annual Campaign in 2014.

Please donate generously to Jewish Federation in May when Super Sunday rolls around...and consider spending some time in Pittsfield making phone calls to help support this important organization which helps us in so many ways.

Omer Study Group

1	ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו, אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וציוונו אל ספירת העומר. Baruch atah Adonai, elohaynu melach ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'civenu al sefirat ha-omer. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Source of all being, Who sanctifies us with Your mitzvot and commands us to count the omer.				
16 Nisan Day of omer week of chesed	25	24	23	22	21
17 Nisan Day of parashah	10 Nisan Day of omer	9 Nisan Day of omer	8 Nisan Day of omer	7 Nisan Day of omer	6 Nisan Day of omer
2	26	41	40	39	38
18 Nisan Day of omer	11 Nisan Day of omer	10 Nisan Day of omer	9 Nisan Day of omer	8 Nisan Day of omer	7 Nisan Day of omer
3	27	42	49	48	37
19 Nisan Day of omer	12 Nisan Day of omer	11 Nisan Day of omer	10 Nisan Day of omer	9 Nisan Day of omer	8 Nisan Day of omer
4	28	43	50	47	36
20 Nisan Day of omer	13 Nisan Day of omer	12 Nisan Day of omer	11 Nisan Day of omer	10 Nisan Day of omer	9 Nisan Day of omer
5	29	44	45	46	35
21 Nisan Day of omer	14 Nisan Day of omer	13 Nisan Day of omer	12 Nisan Day of omer	11 Nisan Day of omer	10 Nisan Day of omer
6	30	31	32	33	34
22 Nisan Day of omer	15 Nisan Day of omer	14 Nisan Day of omer	13 Nisan Day of omer	12 Nisan Day of omer	11 Nisan Day of omer
7	9	10	11	12	13
23 Nisan Day of omer	16 Nisan Day of omer	15 Nisan Day of omer	14 Nisan Day of omer	13 Nisan Day of omer	12 Nisan Day of omer
8	17	18	19	20	21
24 Nisan Day of omer	17 Nisan Day of omer	16 Nisan Day of omer	15 Nisan Day of omer	14 Nisan Day of omer	13 Nisan Day of omer

First week (red): week of chesed, lovingkindness | Second week (orange): week of gevurah, strength / boundaries
Third week (yellow): week of tiferet, harmony / balance | Fourth week (green): week of netzach, endurance
Fifth week (light green): week of hod, splendor / humility | Sixth week (blue): week of yesod, foundation / roots
Seventh week (purple): week of malchut, nobility / sovereignty

image: an Omer-counting chart.

In Jewish tradition, the period of the Omer -- the 7 weeks between Passover and Shavuot -- is a time for deep spiritual work, a time to take stock of oneself and refine one's qualities and characteristics as we prepare ourselves to re-experience the revelation of Torah at Sinai.

On the first Friday of the Omer, the group met for the first time. We talked about what questions we bring to this experience, and what we hope to glean. And we read a beautiful teaching from the Slonimer Rebbe about how at Pesach we are lifted up to great spiritual heights, and then we're dropped back down to earth and have to climb back up to those heights again for Shavuot... but since we've glimpsed the beauty at the mountaintop, we have the strength to make that spiritual climb.

Our group will meet at 3pm on **May 2, May 9, and May 16**. (On May 23 and May 30 Rabbi Rachel will be away; we will reschedule those two dates as needed.) All are welcome.

Looking Back: Purim



from Susan Frisch Lehrer

Thank you to all of the hundreds of volunteers who baked, packed and delivered shaloch manot gift bags of hamantashen (or, as we call it - *Joe's Project*) to so many senior adults in our Berkshire area! We know that the recipients enjoyed their Purim treats thanks to you!

Our dear late friend Joe Madison would have been pleased with the delivery of over 1000 hamantashen in the Berkshires, Southern VT and Northern CT. *Todah Rabah!* We especially want to thank all of the hundreds of bags decorated by all of our Religious School children and PJ Library families! We know that some of you helped your parents with the deliveries, too. Many thanks.

Shabbat candle and Havdalah times, May and June



If you want to light Shabbat candles and make havdalah at the halakhically-accepted times, here they are:

May 2 7:36p Candle lighting
May 3 8:37p Havdalah

May 9 7:44p Candle lighting
May 10 8:45p Havdalah

May 16 7:51p Candle lighting
May 17 8:52p Havdalah

May 23 7:58p Candle lighting
May 24 8:59p Havdalah

May 30 8:04p Candle lighting
May 31 9:05p Havdalah

June 6 8:10p Candle lighting
June 7 9:10p Havdalah

June 13 8:13p Candle lighting
June 14 9:14p Havdalah

June 20 8:16p Candle lighting
June 21 9:16p Havdalah

June 27 8:16p Candle lighting
June 28 9:16p Havdalah

Don't Miss Shavuot!

Shavuot, the festival of revelation, is coming soon! Here at CBI we'll celebrate Shavuot in two ways:



- a ***tikkun leyl Shavuot***, late-night learning party, on **Tuesday June 3**, with Beth El Bennington, at the Williams College Jewish Religious Center
- and on the morning of **Wednesday June 4**, a **festival morning service** with **Yizkor** (memorial service) led by Rabbi Pam Wax at CBI.

About the Tikkun:

There's a tradition of staying up late on the night of Shavuot, and studying Torah into the wee hours. One explanation says that our ancestors slept in, on the day when Torah was to be revealed, so we stay up all night in order not to miss the revelation when it comes!

For several years we've had a tradition at CBI of celebrating Shavuot with a *tikkun leyl Shavuot*. The name means "Healing on the Night of Shavuot." What are we healing? Perhaps our study of Torah is a way of healing our hearts and souls, which in turn allows us to heal the world.

We welcome anyone who wants to teach something at the *tikkun*. Our sages say that the best way to engage with Torah is to teach it. And we're defining "Torah" quite broadly; you could choose to teach about a passage from Torah, or about a holiday practice, or about Jewish meditation, or about something that's always puzzled you. *continued on next page.*

Each session will probably last 10-20 minutes, with discussion to follow; the idea is not that each presenter is an expert, but that each presenter is offering something which interests them, and then conversation will flow around the table as people respond. If you'd like to teach something, let Rabbi Rachel know as soon as possible. Thanks!

Lunch Bunch Going Strong



Salad Nicoise, the perfect Spring luncheon for the Senior Lunch in April, from hostesses and chefs Jane Miller and Barbara Kaplan.

Lunch photo by Jane Miller; photos of Senior Lunch attendees by Pattie Lipman.

Our Lunch Bunch program is going strong, and we enjoyed many special meals together this winter, prepared by hostesses and chefs Jane Miller and Barbara Kaplan, with pastries by Fern Sann.

Anyone who's eligible for social security is welcome to attend our monthly Thursday lunch gatherings! Upcoming dates include

Thursday, May 8 (changed from May 15)

Thursday, June 19

and **Thursday, July 17.**



Lunch begins promptly at noon; RSVP to the office on the Monday before the luncheon, 413-663-5830.

Stone School Cottage
Cheryl Sacks & Rich Cohen
Proprietors

736 North Main Street
Lanesborough, MA 01237
413.442.0996

OldStoneSchool.com

1832-1950

Looking Back: Second-Night Community Seder

by Pattie Lipman

Dear members and friends of CBI,

On April 15th, 70 people joined together on a snowy April night to share in the second Seder of Passover led by our wonderful Rabbi Rachel.

We had a full house and it was a night, indeed, different from any other night.



Our "seder players" put on an impromptu play about the Exodus from Egypt. Many thanks to storyteller Jane Shiyah! Photo by Len Radin.

To everyone who helped, thank you! Thank you for your planning skills, your strong backs, your donations, your flower arranging, cooking and uncorking finesse; thank you to the matzoh ball soup, haroseth and kugel mavens; to Haggadah readers, Afikomen hidens; to those who came early and those who stayed long after to help clean up.

Your indefatigable spirit and love is what makes it all happen.

Todah Rabah!
Pattie Lipman

Pesach Shout-outs to:

The CBI Second Night Seder Players
Robin Brickman and Jeff Strait
Jane Shiyah
Darlene and Len Radin
Steven Green
David LaChance and Joan Rubel
Maribeth and David Pomerantz
Heather Levy
Rachel Herrmann
Susan Hogan
Suzanne Graver
Cheryl Sacks
Alice Cande
Helene Armet
Chaim Bronstein
Bill Levy
John Huffaker
Greg Roach and Evan Webb and Wild Oats
Jack Hockridge
Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

More photographs of our second-night community seder are available on our congregational Flickr account, here:
www.flickr.com/photos/11721700@No8/sets/72157644028919014

Meet Our Members: Information Needed!

The Membership Committee would like to begin a new feature highlighting our members. Have something interesting about yourself you'd like to share? Want to let people know about your business? Have a unique hobby? We'd like to hear from you. To be featured, send a paragraph or two with your bio and/or information about your business to Liz Miller (emiller@isenberg.umass.edu) or to Pattie Lipman (plipman@fairpoint.net) and we'll work to get it into a future issue of the newsletter.

From The Co-President

by Bill Levy

My mother was raised Southern Methodist in a small town in eastern North Carolina, while my father grew up in a traditionally Jewish family in Hartford, Connecticut. Their relationship and subsequent marriage were unusual on several levels including the fact that less than 10% Jews married non-Jews at that time. They had 2 weddings – one for the Methodist family in the south and another for the northern Jewish family.

Obviously today in our more open American society, relationships and marriages involving Jews and non Jews are quite common. Some Jewish communities have reacted to this by becoming more exclusive, while others like ours at CBI have favored an inclusive approach. I love the background diversity of our CBI community.

We have individuals who have come to our synagogue by many pathways – traditional Jews, Jews by choice, non-Jews active in Jewish or mixed families and others with unique backgrounds of their own. We want all these folks to feel comfortable in and valued by our community.

In my previous synagogue where Karen and I were active in the outreach program, we found the terms “interfaith” and “intermarriage” to have a negative connotation and often were inaccurate description of a relationship. We favored the term “dual heritage families” that seemed more neutral and inclusive.

Later this year I would like to put together a program in which 3 or 4 of our dual heritage families can share the pathways that lead them to membership at CBI as a way of stimulating conversation about the shared concerns and experiences of these families. I hope that some of you will contact me to volunteer to share your family’s story.

Bill Levy
wklheart@gmail.com

Looking Back: New Member Shabbat

In early April we welcomed two new member families into our community with special blessings during services led by Rabbi Rachel.



Kiddush at New Member Shabbat. Photo by Pattie Lipman.

We had a fantastic crowd; many people came together to welcome our new members, and we schmoozed and chatted at the kiddush afterwards. It was lovely! We look forward to celebrating many more happy events with Steven Green and Rose Ellis, and with Carrie Greene and James McAllister, Catherine McAllister and Dakota Ross.

A Summer Celebration of Jewish Music at CBI: My Heart is In the East

On June 22, 2014 at 3pm, CBI will host "My Heart is In the East," a multidisciplinary performance of stories, music, dance, and poetry relating to Israel.

Stories told by Cantor Robert Scherr will be intertwined with Jewish music and modern dance.

The storyteller will be joined by clarinetist Paul Green, keyboardist Alan Gold, and modern dancer/choreographer Ellen Gorman.

Tickets are \$15 at the door. More information at (413) 663-5830 or (561) 302-5816.

CBI Book Group



The CBI Jewish Book Discussion Group will discuss *Tell Me A Riddle* by Tillie Olsen on Monday, June 2, at 7pm; on Monday July 14 at 7pm, we'll discuss *Jews Without Money* by Michael Gold; and on Monday, September 8 at 7pm we'll discuss *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth.

All three of these titles are fiction; the Tillie Olsen book is short stories, and the other two are novels. All are welcome!

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact Chaim Bronstein at 917-609-6732 or chaim@bcn.net.

Looking Back: CBI Pizza & Game Night Held on February 22

by Elizabeth Miller

On Saturday, February 22, CBI held a pizza and game night at the synagogue. Close to thirty people attended, representing a variety of ages (children to seniors) and gaming interests.

A wide variety of games were available to play – some brought by attendees and some generously loaned for the evening by Where'd You Get That!?, Inc., a specialty store located on Spring Street in Williamstown.

The evening began with a brief Havdalah (the ritual which brings Shabbat to an end) and then play began. Groups gathered to play games such as Scrabble, Boggle, Star Wars Monopoly, Scattergories, Spot It! and Blokus (among others). Midway through the evening, pizza was delivered and groups broke to eat salad, pizza, and yummy desserts. Laughter could be heard throughout the evening as players battled and enjoyed each other's company.

At the end of the evening, three games were awarded as door prizes. A special thank you to Where'd You Get That!? for donating the prizes, to the Membership Committee (Pattie Lipman, Alice Cande, Liz Miller, and Chaim Bronstein) for planning and running the event, to Steve Cook and John Huffaker for help during the event, and to Jack for administrative assistance.





June 6th: Remembering D-Day

This past fall, Reform Jew Alan Weinschel visited Normandy Beach and was struck by the many stars of David in the cemetery there.

"When my wife and I returned home, I was struck by the thought that Jews in the United States should be thankful for those among our people who fought and gave the ultimate sacrifice in Normandy," he writes. "It is our responsibility to remember these fallen soldiers by saying Kaddish for them annually in every synagogue in the United States on the Shabbat that falls closest to June 6th."

This year, Friday, June 6 will mark the 70th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy and the battle at Omaha Beach. On Shabbat morning June 7, at our regular Shabbat service, CBI will join many other Reform congregations in observing the 70th anniversary of D-Day by reciting Kaddish for the Jewish soldiers who gave their lives on the beaches in Normandy and elsewhere, so that we might live in freedom.

Summer Class: Jewish Themes, Jewish Stories

This summer CBI will host a class and discussion group called "Jewish Themes, Jewish Stories," taught by Rabbi Pamela Wax. Much of contemporary American Jewish fiction seeks to address Jewish themes such as

spirituality, family, repentance, bereavement and death, and the legacy of the Holocaust.

Members of the class will read a number of contemporary Jewish authors to eke out these themes and find out what, if anything, is "new" in their understandings of contemporary Judaism. The authors will include Joanne Greenberg, Aimee Bender, John Clayton, Nathan Englander, and Thane Rosenbaum, among others. Expect 20-40 pages of reading per session.

Participants are asked to register by June. The class will meet at 10:30am on June 27, July 11, July 25 and August 1. The cost for the full series is \$18 for members; \$36 for non-members. All are welcome. Please RSVP to the synagogue office (413-663-5830 or office@cbiweb.org) to sign up.



May 2: Kabbalat Shabbat

On Friday, May 2 CBI will hold a vegetarian / dairy Shabbat potluck dinner at 5:30, followed by a Kabbalat Shabbat ("Welcoming the Shabbat Bride") service at 6:30. All are welcome for one or both. Join us for a sweet taste of Shabbat joy & song! We will also gather the following morning at 9:30 am for our usual Shabbat morning service, followed by kiddush & Torah study.



Celebrate Yom Ha-Atzma'ut at CBI as we pilot the Israel Seder Project on May 8

This year CBI will be one of the pilot locations for an innovative and meaningful new observance of Yom Ha-Atzma'ut (Israeli Independence Day.) On Thursday, May 8 at 6pm (a few days after the holiday itself) we will hold a special seder, using a liturgy created by Rabbi Sami Barth, a senior lecturer in liturgy at the Jewish Theological Seminary (and Rabbi Rachel's liturgy teacher from ALEPH rabbinic school.)

Rabbi Barth writes, "Yom Ha'Atzma'ut (Israel Independence Day) provides an ideal framework for celebration but unfortunately meaningful celebrations haven't yet taken hold...[typical observances] lack a sense of engagement with deep and substantial questions and profound symbols. They don't have the power of a Passover Seder, of the sound of the Shofar, or of dancing in the street on Simchat Torah. They do not truly move us."

"What is missing is an opportunity to celebrate the reality of Israel, the actualization of our ancient dream of return to Zion, as an integral part of the shared soul of the Jewish People and as a part of our spiritual lives. Just as we celebrate other major events in Jewish life in ways that include spirituality, reflection and ritual, should we not also mark the momentous

creation of the modern Jewish State of Israel in the same way?"

We will read selections from the Prophets, ask a new set of "Four Questions;" explore Hebrew poetry both ancient and modern; ponder ourselves as the "Four Children" who in turn address issues of compromise, safety, and hope; hear excerpts from Israel's Proclamation of Independence; and more.

Join us as we pilot this new program and engage with Israel in a meaningful way. The program is open to all but will be most appropriate for teens and older.

May 17: Hebrew School Students on the Bimah

On Shabbat morning, May 17, the students in our Aleph-Tav (first through fourth grade) class and our Ne'arim (fifth through seventh grade) class will assist Rabbi Rachel in leading the morning service. Join us for a Shabbat morning service which will be enhanced by youthful energy and enthusiasm! All are welcome.



Super Sunday on May 18!

Volunteer to be part of something special!

SUPER SUNDAY: May 18, 2014

Join us as we come together as a caring Jewish community to raise money for the 2014 Community Campaign. Every call we make helps us nurture and sustain our vibrant Jewish life, ensure our childrens' Jewish future, and care for our seniors and those in need in the Berkshires and around the world. Calls will be made from the Jewish Federation Office in Pittsfield; you can sign up to help from 8-11am or 10am-1pm. Contact Susan Frisch Lehrer at jfb.volunteer@verizon.net or 413-442-4360. Please join us!

Shabbat Across the Berkshires

Friday May 30, 7:30pm
at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire
270 State Road, Great Barrington

Join with the entire Berkshire Jewish community as we gather to celebrate a joyous Shabbat service together.

Happy Occasions!

We wish happy birthdays and anniversaries to our members who have simchas during May and June:

May Anniversaries

Heather Levy & Timothy Herrmann
Richard & Elaine Parmett
Larry & Judy Weber
Joseph & Anne Apkin
Paul & Karol White

May Birthdays

Danielle Wineberg
Rose Ellis
Elizabeth Miller
Sheila Shapiro
Steve Fein
Sophie Gerry
Margaret Larabee
John Gerry
Carol Oshinsky
Kayla Rooney
Andrew Sullivan
Catherine McAllister
Adam Cohen
William Levy
Ethan Rudin
Erin Casey
Jerrold Jacobs
Marc Gotlieb
Rebecca Gold
Dr. Robert Miller
Madeline Cohen

June Birthdays

Joseph Apkin
Robert Bashevkin
Jordan Callahan
Anne Apkin
Helene Armet
Elizabeth Miller
Deborah Wineberg
Lewis Kronick
Addison Lentzner
David Pomerantz
Kenneth Sann
Carrie Greene
Noah Howard
Miriam Pomerantz
Jared Strait

June Anniversaries

Rabbi Rachel Barenblat & Ethan Zuckerman
Philip & Lori Guy
Dr. Kenneth & Fern Sann
Richard & Anna Jo Dubow
Audrey Thier & Peter Murphy
Richard & Patricia Reichler
Robin Brickman & Jefferson Strait
Jerrold & Carol Jacobs
Michael & Pamela Smith
David & Maribeth Pomerantz

Deep thanks to donors

We offer gratitude to members and friends for their fiscal support of CBI.

In Memory of Dr. William Sands

Lillian Glickman
Sandra & Allen Miller
Lewis & Esther Muhlfelder
Kyle Nichols
Kenneth & Sharon Pearlman
On behalf of Harvard Rheumatology Dept.
Barry & Diane Rosenberg
Caren Sands
Elizabeth Sands
Peter Sands
Audrey Shapiro
Miriam Soffer
Cynthia & Clifford Tepper

Other Memorial Donations:

Jerrold & Carol Jacobs
Sylvia Lenhoff
Roberta & John Sullivan
Gary & Phyllis Nichols
Robin Brickman & Jefferson Strait
Richard & Anna Jo Dubow

Other Special Donations:

Rabbi Pam Wax & Chaim Bronstein
Judy & Larry Weber
Ken & Fern Sann

Donations Welcome

Donations to CBI are always welcome, and may be directed to:

Cemetery Fund
Education Fund
Building Fund
Senior Lunch Fund
Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
Take & Eat
Program/Event Fund
Gemilut Chasadim (Acts of Lovingkindness)

The *Gemilut Chasadim* ("Acts of Lovingkindness") Fund (also known as a *gemach*) will help to support acts such as cooking meals / buying groceries for those who are in fiscal need or who are too ill to shop/cook.

Seeking Shamashim

The Shamashim are the people who facilitate the Saturday morning services, set out kiddush and bring some snacks for after services. The group is named after the *shamash*, the "helper candle" which lights the candles on a Chanukah menorah.

We are in need of additional Shamashim to help with our Shabbat services each Saturday morning and on periodic Friday nights.

The Shamashim have been faithfully hosting our services for years but we need to expand that group by a few. It takes a Saturday morning, from about 9 to noon, once or twice in a 4 month time period.

Hosting services is an honor. It is also a joy, a way to meet members and welcome potential members and visitors. Bringing your children or spouse is welcome, and they can help or just relax and enjoy the service and the beautiful light streaming through the sanctuary windows. That's up to you.

Helping at services is a way to teach children about serving the community and performing a mitzvah.

We provide challah and juice; you are welcome to bring light snacks for the kiddush afterwards, though if that would be fiscally onerous for you, let us know and we can work something out.

If it is something you would like to try, Pattie can match you with one of our hosts for your first hosting experience. If you have questions, ask away!

All are welcome!

Next Newsletter...

If you have items to submit for the July/August newsletter, please submit them to rabbibarenblat@gmail.com by **June 15, 2014**.

Thanks!

If you're ever looking for Shabbat teachings, resources, ideas, melodies, etc, check out the

Shabbat At Home

page on our website:
cbiweb.org/Shabbat-At-Home.html

A Poem for the Omer

Omer Poem: Sacred Harvest

Forty-nine days,
wandering in the wilderness
newly-birthed to
freedom,
moving toward
Sinai,
where the Holy One
will entrust us with
the Teaching.

So little time
to bring in the harvest,
to gather the sheaves
that nourish our bodies
as Torah sustains our souls.

Forty-nine days
to learn to walk,
so little time,
to grow —
from frailty to strength,
from enforced servitude to joyful service.

Each day we count
one more day.
Each day we add
one more sheaf.
Each day we are
one day closer
to the Mountain,
one day closer
to sacred embrace
and
trembling hearts.

Teach us,
God of the Mountain,
God of the Teaching,
to cherish each day,
that our hearts
may be filled with
Your Wisdom

that our
souls may bring
our freedom harvest
to You,
that our hearts
may receive
Your abundance.


—Rabbi Leila Gal Berner

from *Kol ALEPH*, <http://kolaleph.org>
("the voice of Jewish Renewal")

Find CBI Online At:

www.facebook.com/CBINorthAdams
www.cbiweb.org

Community Film Screening in Honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day



Two Who Dared
The Sharps' War

A dramatic documentary, "Two Who Dared" is the untold WWII story of a Unitarian minister and his wife who traveled to Prague and France in 1939 and 1940 to rescue both Christians and Jews fleeing the Nazis. The Sharps played a vital role in enabling hundreds to reach safety, often through clandestine means.


Sunday, May 4, 2014
3-5 pm

Two simultaneous community screenings:

The Berkshire Museum's	Berkshire South Regional
Little Cinema	Community Center
39 South Street	15 Crissey Road
Pittsfield, MA	Great Barrington, MA

A candle lighting and moment of silence will be observed
Suggested donation: \$5.00
For more information: (413) 442-4360, ext 10

Co-Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and the Unitarian Universalist Churches of Pittsfield and Great Barrington. Endorsed by the Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations, Southern Berkshire Clergy Association, and the Southern Berkshire Interfaith Committee.



Jewish Federation
OF THE BERKSHIRES

Reprint: Four Eclipses; Four Worlds; Four Holidays; Four Holy Perspective Shifts



A Jewish Renewal perspective on the tetrad of lunar eclipses, by rabbinic student David Markus and Rabbi Rachel Barenblat.

We in North America are about to experience four total lunar eclipses in a row which, incredibly, will coincide with Pesach (15 April in 2014, 4 April in 2015) and Sukkot (8 October in 2014 and 28 September in 2015). In 2014 and 2015, the full moon marking these festival times will be eclipsed at the moments of perhaps the greatest joy in the Jewish calendar – at Pesach, when we experience freedom from the Narrow Place, and at Sukkot, when we enter with thanksgiving into our fragile and impermanent harvest houses.

Jewish mystics link the moon with Shekhinah, immanent and indwelling Presence of God manifest in creation. Many Hasidic teachings depict *hester panim*, the hiding or withdrawal of God's presence from us. In every life, we experience alternating phases of God's presence and God's (apparent) absence – but just as the moon remains present even during its eclipse, so God's presence remains even when S/He may seem veiled in shadow.

Beyond mere veiling, a lunar eclipse invites a shift in spiritual perspective. If we were on the moon looking at Earth during these eclipses, we would see the Earth silhouetted in the sun's fire. Standing on the moon's surface, we would look up at the Earth and witness sunrise and sunset happening simultaneously, everywhere, along the Earth's shadowed rim. It is the red

of the Earthly sunset that we Earthlings see projected onto the moon at the time of a total lunar eclipse.

Lunar eclipses thus invite us to lift grandly above habitual ways of seeing. Reb Zalman taught that once humanity could see the Earth as a swirled green-blue marble suspended in space, a paradigm shift occurred. A door opened for us to see ourselves as cells in the cosmic organism of our planet, without artificial borders and boundaries that appear to divide us. Lunar eclipses call us toward that global vantage. Lunar eclipses project onto the moon the timeless reality that sunrise and sunset – shifts of awareness between light and dark – are unfolding at every moment. Usually this truth of nature (and spiritual life) escapes our day-to-day awareness. A lunar eclipse, however, visibly projects this truth onto our cosmic symbol for Shekhinah, the indwelling divine presence. A lunar eclipse thus reminds us that with God is our power, and our calling, to lift our consciousness beyond the narrowness of place and boundary.

That lunar eclipses coincide with our biannual festivals for two consecutive years invites especially profound opportunities. At Passover, season of our liberation, we leave behind the constrictions of slavery and limited insight. At the Passover eclipses, we can look up and see the ultimate natural image of liminality and change projected onto the springtime full moon. So too at Sukkot, season of our joy and gratitude, we leave behind old calcified patterns and emerge into deep truths of impermanence. At the Sukkot eclipses, we can gaze at the fall harvest moon and see the ultimate natural image of global interconnectedness reflected on the face of Shekhinah.

At these festival times, traditional liturgy includes Hallel, songs of praise drawn from the Psalms. At the time of these festival lunar eclipses, how amazing to proclaim the Psalmist's joyous words of unity and higher perspective:

continued on the next page.

רָם עַל-כָּל-גּוֹיִם ה' עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ
מִי כֹה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמְּגַבִּיהַי לְשָׁבֶת
הַמְּשַׁפִּילִי לְרֹאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ

God is high above all nations: God's glory is
above the heavens.

Who is like YHVH our God, enthroned on
high,
Looking down low on heaven and earth?

– Ps. 113:4-6

These eclipses are ultimate expressions of
natural liminality reflected onto our Jewish
calendar. At Pesach we stop saying the prayer
for rain and begin saying the prayer for dew; at
the end of Sukkot, we switch back the other
way. These festivals are liminal moments, as
are sunrise and sunset. During these eclipses
we'll see liminality projected onto Shekhinah

at the very moments that we ourselves are
liminal, sanctifying transitions from one state
of being into another.

And with four total lunar eclipses back to back,
every six months, timed perfectly to our
holiday calendar and seasonal shifts, we have
four chances to experience this grandeur —
one lunar eclipse for each of the four worlds of
action, emotion, thought, and spirit. One
lunar eclipse for each of the four letters in the
Shem HaMeforash, the unpronounceable
Name we denote as YHVH. Four festival
opportunities to deepen our amazement and
wonder gazing into the night sky. Four festival
moments of liberation and gratitude unlike any
that we have known before.

Reprinted from Kol ALEPH.

Congregation Beth Israel
53 Lois Street
North Adams MA 01247

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
North Adams, MA
01247
Permit Number
56

SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS & PHONE NUMBERS

Office:

Monday - Friday
9am - 1pm

Phone & Fax (413) 663-5830
E-mail cbioffice1@verizon.net

Rabbi's Study:

Mondays 8am-3:30pm
Fridays 9am-4pm
(meditation minyan 8:15am)
other times by appointment

Phone (413) 822-5267
E-mail rabbibarenblat@gmail.com

Rabbi: Rachel Barenblat
Co-Presidents: Pattie Lipman & Bill Levy
Synagogue Administrator: Jack Hockridge
Newsletter Editor: Rabbi Rachel Barenblat