



The Shofar

February, 2018

Congregation House of Israel

1 Shevat - 13 Adar, 5778



Esther and Mordechai

Ta'anit (Fast of) Esther

13 Adar - February 28, 2018

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The Shofar

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members, local clergy and other interested
parties.

Purim

Pre 1990 (we think)



Millie Baron and Sharon Waxler

*Our thanks to Patti Fleischner for uncovering
this rare, historic photograph.*

Davar - A matter for discussion



I write this article on MLK Day. Martin Luther King was the most important figure in the 20th century Civil Rights Movement, but his accomplishments have been diminished and even scorned by the present administration.

The rabbinic and administrative leaders of Reform Judaism were involved in Reverend King's causes since he assumed the helm of religious and political leadership of the African-American community. We Jews marched with Dr. King in Selma, helped promote issues of equality for all peoples of color, and supported the groups and institutions that served as the backbone for minority rights. Of this we can be very proud. The Reform Rabbis of the time referred constantly to the words of our ancient biblical prophets who decried injustice and insisted on basic rights for all, and not just the chosen (read: wealthy) few.

To see the strides this country took in the election of Barack Obama nearly obliterated and clearly undermined is both emotionally devastating and intolerable. We find ourselves in the fight of our lives to reestablish the principles upon which our country was founded. To do less would be to ignore

the religious message offered in the first pages of the Bible. That simply is, all of us descend from the same family. If we do not understand this precept, we are able to indulge in the prejudices and flaws that come with our less than noble human condition.

Before the presidential election, I had a sense of what might be coming. I turned to the magisterial 3-volume study on Martin Luther King written by Taylor Branch. Note the titles: *Parting the Waters*; *Pillar of Fire*; *At Canaan's Edge*. In other words, the study of Martin Luther King's life contributions may be compared to the career of Moses. Presumptuous? Not at all. Especially when one considers the historical animus and human depravity directed toward the African-American community.

One other, more recent study, should also be considered. Ron Chernow, author of *Alexander Hamilton and Washington*, has written a biography on US Grant. It is a stunningly new perspective on a much misunderstood general and president who was deeply committed and involved with the end of slavery and the promotion of civil rights for the American Negro.

Determination to better ourselves and other people begins with knowledge. Start here. And let us then act accordingly.

Rabbi Chapin

Life and Legacy Plan

As congregants of CHI, all of us know that donations, dues, gifts, memorials and bequests are an integral part of keeping our congregation functioning for the entire Jewish Community. We have only a short time – about one month to receive the required “Letters of Intent” (pledges) to name CHI (and/or our other Central Arkansas Jewish Congregations and organizations) as a beneficiary in your Will, Trust, Annuity, life insurance, or IRA, in order for CHI to receive a \$5,000 incentive grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

NO MONEY IS REQUESTED NOW! The Life and Legacy Plan is a partnership among JFAR (Jewish Federation of Arkansas), CHI and the Grinspoon

Foundation, whose purpose is to promote and “ensure Jewish tomorrows”. By signing a Letter of Intent, committing to make a post-death gift to the Congregation, CHI is eligible to receive the \$5,000. We must receive 18 new pledges by March, 2018. There are no contracts, and no minimums, but we must have the Letters ASAP.

Please contact Karen Baim Reagler, Sherrill Nicolosi, Stuart Fleischner, or our Rabbi to sign the required form so that our grant will be given.

Please think how hard it is to work to receive \$5,000, and remember this incentive gift has only a few short weeks left before the grant period expires.

Advancing Progressive Values in Israel: The Conversion Bill

By Chelsea Feuchs

During Hanukkah, we learn about the story of the Maccabees. We are told that this righteous group of Jews resisted the forces of assimilation to assert their own religious identity. When we are children, the Maccabees are presented as heroes, examples of what it means to take pride in who you are. While this account is true in many ways, there is a more nuanced version to consider in which our famed heroes are presented as less sympathetic zealots. After the Maccabean revolt succeeded and The Temple was rededicated, some of the more warmongering revolutionaries insisted on continuing to fight. What began as a movement for religious freedom soon left its leaders clamoring for more power, not only through conquering more land, but also through forcibly converting other peoples.

All this to say that Hanukkah has a complicated connection to issues of power, coercion and conversion. These issues have taken on new forms in the Land of Israel today. While the ruling parties of today are not focused on forcible conversion, they are pursuing a policy against their fellow Jews that is problematic and coercive. Ultra-Orthodox political parties proposed a law to grant the Haredi Chief Rabbinate total authority over Jewish conversions in Israel. This Conversion Bill aims to delegitimize Reform, Conservative, and even Modern Orthodox rabbis, and the Jews by choice in their communities.

Our rabbis are driven by a desire to serve *am Yisrael* (the People of Israel), and are steeped in a love of

Jewish learning and tradition. Our congregations celebrate ancient rites of passage, observe rituals in inspiring ways, and dedicate time to text study. In short, they do what Jewish communities have done for the Jewish people throughout our storied history. They also welcome newcomers and Jews by choice into our tradition in legitimate ways. There is no reason to doubt the commitment of our leaders or any of our community members, or to deny them recognition and respect in the Jewish State.

In opposing the Conversion Bill, we call on Israel to fulfill the promise enshrined in her Declaration of Independence:



“The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions.”

Let this be a moment for Israel to live up to her highest ideals. Let this be a moment to more fully understand the choices of our ancestors, and to choose a more accepting path. Let this be a moment to dedicate ourselves to creating a wholly just and inclusive Israel.

Editors note: Chelsea Feuchs is the Communications and Social Media Associate for ARZA, the Association of Reform Zionists of America. After studying for a year in Israel as a Dorot Fellow, she now works and lives in New York City.

In Memoriam

Joanne Reagler

By Robin Reagler

I spent an hour alone with my mother the night she died. She was unconscious, but I held her hand and talked to her. I sang songs from childhood - "I love you a bushel and peck." I read her poems I've been writing. I reminded her of the puppies born in cardboard boxes and Gram's porch in New Iberia and the sounds of freight trains we could hear from our house in Wynne.

My mom probably weighed a hundred pounds during the last year of her life, but as I sat with her that night, I thought about what an immense presence she was in my life and in the lives of so many of us. She liked bold colors, the brashness of modern art, the music of the Tijuana Brass, the flavor of Cajun gumbo, and the bitterness of strong black chicory coffee. No pastels for my mom. She believed in making an impact. She threw huge parties every time I came home, inviting everyone in the town to celebrate as we gathered around her signature artichoke dip. She would try her best to dress me up for these parties. If you've ever seen the picture of me with sequins and make-up and a mink coat, it was thanks to her!

You see, my mom never took no for an answer. I remember once I was very ill, and my mom wanted to come help me in Houston. I said absolutely not. But my mom kept calling. "When can I come?" At the time, I was trying to be grown-up; I was "adulting" with a brand new job, and the last thing I wanted was my mom showing up for the "assist." One morning I was at the school where I worked, and suddenly, over the loudspeaker, I heard this announcement: 'Robin Reagler, please report to the principal's office. Your mother is waiting.' Yes, my mom was in the office with her suitcase. She had flown into Hobby and taken a taxi cab straight to my workplace. That was Mom in a nutshell. When she decided she was going to do something, nothing stopped her. And to be fair, when my Mom left the following week to return to Arkansas, I had a diagnosis and treatment plan, clothes that fit, and a bunch of co-workers who were newly anointed

Fans of Joanne.

On a related note, if giving advice is considered a form of love, then my mom was the most loving person I ever knew. Mom always wanted me to become a doctor, and she gave me plenty of practical reasons why. When I finally confessed that I wanted to be a poet instead, she might have been a tad disappointed. However, she quickly recovered and went into Advice Mode. She produced a list of things I should do to insure my literary success. She gave me my first journal (technically, it was an accountant's notebook) and said I should write in it every day. She had me memorize the names of 25 kinds of flowers and quizzed me until I had horticulture down cold. She said poets needed to know their flowers! She gave me her personal copies of the classics, including John Dos Passos, Herman Hesse, and Gertrude Stein, books that made her think. Although my doctorate in poetry was not exactly what she originally had in mind, I suspect she was proud of me. When it came to dreams, Mom believed in finding a way to make them happen.

She truly was one of the most determined people I have ever met. In fact, one of her favorite sentences was, "Tomorrow begins my new regime." After Mom's first round of cancer, she became an avid walker. No hill was a match for her when she made up her mind. If you ever tried to take a leisurely stroll with my mom, you know what I mean. There was no such thing. For many years in Wynne, her walking buddy was Martha Murray. One of my favorite stories is about them doing a 5K fun run together. They sprinted through town, side by side. As they approached the crowded finish line, Martha stopped for a second to chat with friends, but Mom powered through to the finish line for the win. Mom loved her friends, but she totally meant business.

I don't mean to say that my mom didn't have a soft side. Mom taught me that asking people open-ended questions and remembering people's stories is a powerful form of love. When she wasn't on one of her missions, when she took the time to slow down and sit on her patio with a Scotch in hand, she could be reflective and present in a deep and abiding way. In addition to my mom expecting me to become a doctor, she also planned that I would marry a nice Jewish boy. "Coming

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Thank you to the following
for sponsoring an Oneg
during the month of
February:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Feb 2 | Stephen and Clarissa Kirsch
Jerry and Jodi Chalmers |
| Feb 9 | Mick Stoyanov and Millie Baron
Lynda Kass |
| Feb 16 | Hal and Sue Koppel
Barbara Morgan |
| Feb 23 | Ira and Stephanie Kleinman
Larry and Carol Levi |

Reminder: If you are scheduled for an upcoming Oneg and need to change dates, please find someone to switch with and then let Ruth Sedler know so the information printed in the bulletin will be correct.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

February Anniversaries

Barbara Bushee	Feb 11
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February Birthdays

Ken Baim	Feb 1
Louis Reagler	Feb 2
Tillie Reagler	Feb 2
Katherine Klein	Feb 10
Carol Greenberg	Feb 12
Diane Goltz	Feb 13
Elan Grenman	Feb 13
David D. Reagler	Feb 18
Imy Marcus	Feb 21
Ian Nicolosi	Feb 21
Mark Koppel	Feb 22

February Yahrzeits

Kaddish Recited February 2

Helena Peterson

Mother of Cheryl Cohen

Ira Gershner

Husband of Jean Gershner

Lewis Goltz

Father of Susan Siegel

Father of Diane Goltz

Harriette Korngut

Wife of Fred Korngut

Kaddish Recited February 9

Milan Mandel

Step-father of Lenny Mendel

Pinchas Grenman

Father of Oded Grenman

Eric Ross

Father of Elaine Wolken

Julia Levine Bauman

Mother of Cynthia Rephan

Rose Ginsburg

Grandmother of Millie Baron

Anni Hannah Grenman

Mother of Oded Grenman

Kaddish Recited February 16

Max Singer

Father-in-law of Lenny Mendel

William Boswell

Father of Anita Williams

Kaddish Recited February 23

David Staffin

Father of Myrna Taxer

Refuah Shelema

The following people are in our thoughts and prayers:

- Angie Tollefson
- Louis Kleinman
- Ken Baim
- Rabbi Mark Miller
- Imy Marcus
- Robert Burns
- Sherrill Nicolosi

Please offer prayers that they all have a full and speedy recovery.

If you are aware of anyone needing spiritual or any sort of assistance, please let Barbara Morgan know. Our Caring Committee is here to help all of our members in any way we possibly can.

Joanne Reagler

Continued from page 5

out” is never easy, but when I told my mom, she listened quietly. She put her hand on my arm and looking me in the eye said, “Robin, the most important thing is love.”

Today we are here, on the anniversary of my dad’s death and in honor of my mother’s passing, to commemorate what matters most in life. Love.

There’s an old spiritual that says when Death comes knockin’ at your front door, you buckle up your traveling shoes and move on down to the Jordan stream. I will remember Mom walking so fast it’s hard to keep up with her. I can see her charging along right now. She is encouraging us to come on, come on, come on, because there are so many flowers to name and races to run, and we are meant to be there. All of us. Together.

Weekly Parshah

February

Yitro

February 3, 2018

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, hears of the great miracles which G-d performed for the people of Israel, and comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons.

On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the Exodus, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai. G-d descends on the mountain amidst thunder, lightning, billows of smoke and the blast of the shofar, and summons Moses to ascend.

G-d proclaims the Ten Commandments. The people cry out to Moses that the revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the Torah from G-d and convey it to them.

Mishpatim

February 10, 2018

Following the revelation at Sinai, G-d legislates a series of laws for the people of Israel. These include the laws of the indentured servant; the penalties for murder, kidnapping, assault, and theft; civil laws pertaining to redress of damages, the granting of loans, and the responsibilities of the "Four Guardians"; and the rules governing the conduct of justice by courts of law.

Altogether, the Parshah of Mishpatim contains fifty-three mitzvot -- 23 imperative commandments and 30 prohibitions.

G-d promises to bring the people of Israel to the Holy Land, and warns them against assuming the pagan ways of its current inhabitants.

T'rumah

February 17, 2018

The people of Israel are called upon to contribute fifteen materials -- gold, silver and copper; blue, purple and red-dyed wool; flax, goat hair, animal skins, wood, olive oil, spices and gems -- out of which, G-d says to Moses, "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I shall dwell amidst them."

On the summit of Mount Sinai, Moses is given detailed instructions on how to construct this dwelling for G-d so that it could be readily dismantled, transported and reassembled as the people journeyed in the desert.



Tetzaveh

February 24, 2018

G-d tells Moses to receive from the Children of Israel pure olive oil to feed the "everlasting flame" of the menorah, which Aaron is to kindle each day, "from evening till morning."

The priestly garments, to be worn by the Kohanim (priests) while serving in the Sanctuary are described. All Kohanim wore: 1) the ketonet -- a full length linen tunic; 2) michnasayim -- linen breeches; 3) mitznefet or migba'at -- a linen turban; 4) avnet -- a long sash wound above the waist.

Tetzaveh also includes G-d's detailed instructions for the seven-day initiation of Aaron and his four sons -- Nadav, Avihu, Elazar and Itamar -- into the priesthood, and for the making of the Golden Altar on which the ketoret ("incense") was burned.

To read more complete descriptions of the weekly parsha, visit the CHI Website at http://hschi.org/Parsha_lp2.html