



Beth Israel Bulletin

CHESHVAN-KISLEV 5784/NOVEMBER
2023



Upcoming Events: NOVEMBER

Special Event

"An Illustrated Lecture: Murals in the Wooden Synagogues of Eastern Europe" presented by
Dr. Karen Blough
Sunday, November 12th at 12:00 pm

Shabbat Services

- **11/03, 6PM:** Shabbat T'filah
- **11/10, 7PM:** Shabbat T'filah
- **11/18, 10AM:** Shabbat T'filah
- **11/24, 7PM:** Shabbat T'filah

[View Full Calendar](#)

[Join Via Zoom](#)

 **From the Rabbi**

Happy November/ Chodesh tov, Cheshvan

As we settle into an autumn that should feel like a familiar and cozy routine, the Hebrew month of Cheshvan always seems like a big let-down. Part of the disappointment stems from the roller-coaster experience of the previous month Tishrei, filled with all its festive, joyous holidays. Cheshvan, on the contrary, has no holidays. So depressing did the ancient rabbis find the month of Cheshvan, they nicknamed it -Mar Cheshvan, as in bitter Cheshvan. With the cool, dampening of the fall season, shorter days and dwindling sunlight can darken one's soul, and without any holidays to celebrate, Cheshvan can serve as a bitter, harsh reminder of winter's impending arrival.

Hopefully, by the time this month's update hits the November bulletin, the shock and fog of war will have lifted from Israel. We can only pray that peace has finally broken out between Israel, Gaza, and the Palestinians. A long-lasting peace can only include the release and return of all the Israeli hostages both civilian and military (not only those kidnapped in this recent war but the remaining Israelis held by Hamas from previous wars), and of course, the removal of Hamas. Sadly, the Jewish people are no strangers to war or hostages, and neither is the Torah. In Genesis 14:14-16, Abraham is faced with a similar situation. (14) And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as Dan. (15) And he divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. (16) And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. For Abraham, the calculus is simple; he must rescue his family and kill the capturers. However, in order to succeed, he has to methodically plan the daring rescue all the while avoiding any unnecessary loss of life.

Maimonides elaborates on this concept in the Mishna Torah, when he explains, "the redemption of captives receives priority over sustaining the poor and providing them with clothing... For a captive is among those who are hungry, thirsty, and unclothed and he is in mortal peril. If someone pays no attention to his redemption, he violates the negative commandments: "Do not harden your heart or close your hand" (Deuteronomy 15:7)." For Maimonides, simply put, there is no mitzvah greater than the redemption of hostages. From this encounter, we derive some rather stark lessons regarding what constitutes a morally justified act of self-defense in battle and how best to address the painful reality of hostage taking. When we can peer into the Torah's soul, we witness just how lofty God and the Jewish people elevate the sanctity of life, especially for the most vulnerable within society. Life isn't cheap. If it is truly a precious commodity, then we must be willing to pay the price to honor and uphold such a high value for all people.

Indeed, the ancient, dusty Torah continues to illuminate us on the ethical treatment of contemporary humanity. As we march once again through the Book of Genesis/Bereshet, we re-learn many of Judaism's most fundamental tenants to living in a shared world. Whenever folks bemoan about the archaic and politically insensitive nature of Torah, I never have to look too far to find a redemptive story, whether a whimsical parody involving animals or a more serious theme surrounding the nature of human behavior. History might not always repeat itself, but it often rhymes. Unsurprisingly, the Torah's old message is new again, and Israel already has the blueprint for its response to the events of October 7th. The Torah provides the moral clarity to rescue hostages; lest anyone confuse this current war for an Israeli land-grab in Gaza or any other false justification beyond the legitimate act of self-defense and deterrence against an internationally condemned terrorist organization. Israel not only has the right to retrieve its citizens, it has an obligation to do so. Just as Abraham couldn't possibly live in a

land where marauders were allowed to kidnap members of his tribe, so too Israel could never be expected to exist under the constant threat of rocket attacks and kidnappings; an Israeli counter-attack enforces that underlying principle.

Yes, it has been a bitter Cheshvan. One can hope that time will heal the trauma of these last few weeks. God willing, December and the Chanukkah candles of Kislev will shed less misery and far more truth, decency, clarity & light onto our world.

Am Yisrael Chai

-Rabbi David Joslin

rabbi@plattsburghtbi.org

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Notes from the President

As we emerge from a robust holiday season, hopefully during this time you thought of change. Change can be in the form of forgiveness, actions, outlooks, wellness and “not sweating the small stuff” anymore. Change based on experience is foundational to Judaism. As in the early chapters of the Torah, change is evident. The stories of personal and communal change define the Jewish people. It is the ability to retain our core beliefs and rituals, while adapting to our environment and the world at large that is the basis of our survival.

The word adaptability comes to mind when I think of all of life’s challenges. We have adapted the words of the Torah to instill values and meaning into our lives. These changes make us as 21st century Reform Jews dynamic and exciting! Many people think, “I am too old to change”, or “this is the way we have always done it, so it is good enough for us to keep doing this the same way”. I get it, change is scary, but to change helps us evolve as individuals and as Jews.

At TBI, we have embraced change. We are more connected then ever before. Our technology committee has made it so anyone can hop in on Friday night services and help keeps those rituals we all love alive. Our website is growing by leaps and bounds. We can make donations, fill out religious school paperwork and catch up on the bulletin. We can take a class, listen to music watch film, or tour a museum, to feel connected with ourselves, our heritage, and our Jewishness.

If you have an idea, I am all ears. It really takes a whole congregation to run a Temple, and if one of the items you told yourself to do this holiday season was to change and get more involved, there is always room for you to help. If there is something you do not see, suggest we do it. Your inspiration helps us fulfill our Jewish identity and have a dynamic Jewish religious community.

-Cheryl Kabeli, President

THE PRESIDENT CAN BE CONTACTED AT tbipresident1@gmail.com

Murals in the Wooden Synagogues of Eastern Europe



An Illustrated Lecture by Art Historian Dr. Karen Blough

Sunday, November 12, 12:00 p.m.
Temple Beth Israel, 1 Bowman St., Plattsburgh

Dr. Karen Blough is a medievalist with a specialization in the visual arts patronage of religious women in the Middle Ages. She also has a long-standing interest in pre-modern Jewish art. As the first recipient of SUNY Plattsburgh's Rabin Fellowship in Judaic Perspectives (2004), Dr. Blough developed a course on Jewish art in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Recently, her research has focused on a 15th-century, illustrated haggadah of south German origin that is the subject of her article "Adoption, Adaptation, and Subversion of Christian Motifs in the First Darmstadt Haggadah" in the 2020 issue of *the Journal of the Early Book Society*.



Refreshments will be served after the talk in our Social Hall, which is, admittedly, less ornamental than the spaces described in Dr. Blough's presentation.

The Michelle and Lenny Zelkowitz Challenge

Only 30 Days Left!

We are closing in on the \$10,000 that the Zelkowitz Challenge will match. But, we only have 30 days left to get there!

We want everyone to participate. Every contribution will be matched, regardless of size: \$18.00 becomes \$36.00, \$50.00 becomes \$100 and \$100 becomes \$200! No donation is too small!

To date, \$ 4,547.06 has been received! Every dollar will be matched, up to \$10,000.

You can make a difference by making a donation to the GENERAL FUND at www.plattsburghtbi.org/donate .

Let's be sure that Michelle & Lenny spend their ENTIRE \$10,000!
We can do this!



Yahrzeits

It is customary to honor the anniversary of the death of a loved one by lighting a memorial candle, reciting Kaddish at a congregational service and making a donation. We hope you will do all. A donation can be made to the [Temple Beth Israel Fund of your choice.](#)

NOVEMBER 3

Joyce Fievisohn
Rosa Scheier Mendelsohn
Monty Miller
Milton Gross
Hyman H. Harrison
Tamar Farrington
Arlene Amith
Mitchell Lewis

NOVEMBER 10

Martha Jayne Clark
Chaya Lifshitz
Leah Lifshitz
Aaron Fox
Harriet Berkowitz
Henry Braunstein
Fannie Dora Kobel
Abraham Alpert
Morris Gitlin
Irving Krinovitz
Lena Fox
Ann Goldman Rednor
Joseph Aaron Schiff
Samuel Morris Schantz

NOVEMBER 17

William Levy
Samuel N. Newman
Judith Helfgott
Violetta Bill Brumfield
Martin M. Goldman
Walter Kasnowitz
Morton M. Markstone
Morris Cohen
Thelma Kaplan

NOVEMBER 24

Florence Davis
Louis Freedman
Bessie Goldsmith
Bessie Hurwitz
Abraham Moldovan
Regina L. Slatkin
Ray Miller Groetzinger
Morris Isaacson
Abraham Krinovitz Moses
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- Jeffrey & Marcy Weisburgh on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
- Sabieli & Cheryl Kabeli on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
- Judith Weisman on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
- Diane Fine to thank all involved with making our High Holy Days services and the day to day crucial behind the scenes tasks of keeping our congregation running smoothly a reality. Happy New Year to all!
- Shelley and Michel Lack in memory Mr. and Mrs. Bob Flusser's beloved daughter-in-law Rachel. May her memory be a blessing.
- Phyllis Freedman in memory of Dr. Henry Freedman to the Zelkowitz challenge
- Barbara and Andrew Katz on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
- Sister Brian Marie Latour on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
- Alice and Ronald Marx on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
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- Mark S. Goldman on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
- Susan and Howard Meyerson and Family on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
- Stephen Morris Segal
- Sharon Ratner on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund
- Ona Belser on behalf of Esther Ehrlich for the Zelkowitz Fund
- Larry Kriff on behalf of the Zelkowitz Fund

Yahrzeit Fund

- Janet and Jerry Davis in loving memory of Uncle Lester Levy
- Irene and Jeffrey Gretz in memory of Lillian Lippert
- Harold Dunn in memory of Selma and Albert Dunn and Stuart Dunn

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- Rina Goldberg

 **Take a Moment & Make a Difference**

It is easy to honor or remember friends and family with a contribution to any Temple Fund.
No donation is too small.

Make a Donation

♥ **Templegrams: NOVEMBER-FEBRUARY**

If you wish you would like to send a greeting to anyone on the list, please circle those names and send your list with \$.50 per name to Carol Staves, 26 Tom Miller Road, Plattsburgh, NY 12901. Make checks payable to Temple Beth Israel. Be sure to indicate how you would like the card signed.

Please note, that due to the excessive cost of postage, emails using Jacquie Lawson website is being used to acknowledge celebrations at no cost to TBI. All donations will go to TBI treasury.

<i>November</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>January</i>	<i>February</i>
<i>5 Sue Rech</i>	<i>2 Ann Ruzow</i>	<i>2 Irving Weisman</i>	<i>1 Sophie Kabeli</i>
<i>3 Carole Slatkin</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>5 Liz Newton</i>	<i>10 Eva Schweber</i>
<i>5 Lillian Resnick</i>	<i>4 Michelle Davis</i>	<i>9 Lilly Sarnow</i>	<i>12 Susan Cao-Ba</i>
<i>7 David</i>	<i>11 Doug Chaves</i>	<i>13 Rabbi</i>	<i>Patnode</i>
<i>Kominsky &</i>	<i>11 Natalie</i>	<i>David Kominsky</i>	<i>12 Jonathan</i>
<i>Ava Schweber</i>	<i>Mercaldi</i>	<i>13 Roger</i>	<i>Merrihew</i>
<i>9 Beth Brumfield</i>	<i>14 Alice Marx</i>	<i>Lorberbaum</i>	<i>17 Sarah Brown</i>
<i>9 Alan Goldman</i>	<i>15 Sarah Davis</i>	<i>20 Robert Adler</i>	<i>17 Ravina Seigler</i>
<i>9 John Schenkel</i>	<i>15 Eli</i>	<i>23 Lucy</i>	<i>17 Ronnie Marx</i>
<i>22 Lisa Davis</i>	<i>Goldenberg</i>	<i>Goldenberg</i>	<i>21 Aaron Davis</i>
<i>25 Beth Brumfield</i>	<i>16 Ilana Rubin</i>	<i>26 Andrew Lack</i>	<i>21 Hal Rubin</i>
<i>& Tom Dufore</i>	<i>18 Beth Nolland</i>	<i>27 Gabriel</i>	<i>23 Miriam</i>
<i>28 Ellen</i>	<i>21 Ben Grafstein</i>	<i>Malseptic</i>	<i>Worthington</i>
<i>Grafstein</i>	<i>30 Micki Smith</i>	<i>28 Max Grafstein</i>	<i>25 Mona</i>
<i>30 Phyllis</i>		<i>28 Lucy Shutts</i>	<i>Goldenberg</i>
<i>Freedman</i>			<i>26 Jeff Gretz</i>
			<i>26 Justan</i>
			<i>Portugal</i>
			<i>26 Samantha</i>
			<i>Worthington</i>

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