



Chadashot Ha'am

A bi-monthly newsletter for Congregation Bet Ha'am

November/December 2020

Kislev/Tevet 5781

Welcome to the Chadashot! Some articles are presented in part; click the "Read More" link to go to our website where you can finish the story. Other content is presented here in full.

RABBI JARED H. SAKS

Originally, Chanukah was not about light and freedom, but about something we don't believe in today. How did we get from the meaning we no longer agree with to a message that inspires joy? Rabbi Saks reflects on the history and message of Chanukah holiday.



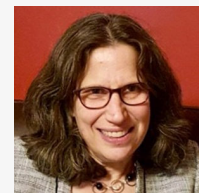
What Is Chanukah?

In the Talmud (Shabbat 21b), the Gemara asks, "What is Chanukah?" which honestly sounds like a strange question for the Sages to have asked. I mean, don't they already know what Chanukah is? Of course they do, but that's not really the point ...

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LYNN URBACH, President

This month, Lynn Urbach explains the custom of the sabbatical, shares why it is important for Rabbi Saks to have one, and outlines how we, as a congregation, will prepare for the rabbi's time away. If it feels as if Rabbi Saks just had a sabbatical, read on!



Rabbi Saks Takes a Sabbatical

It has been a very challenging, very stressful, seven months for all of us, but particularly for congregational rabbis nationwide (actually, worldwide) who not only have the same stressors we all carry, but are tasked with helping the rest of us...

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SAM SPINRAD, Religious School Director

Sam has loved Torah stories since he was a child; now, he loves teaching them to children at different stages in their Jewish education. This month, he explores how can we use children's questions to encourage their involvement with Torah.



Torah Questions

When I attended elementary school, I studied Torah stories with my father. I had many questions. Did this story really happen? Why would this person make that decision? Whenever I asked a question my father couldn't answer, he emailed a rabbi....

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L. MARK STONE, Treasurer

Our treasurer applauds everyone who has already completed their financial commitment paperwork--including those who stretched to increase their support. And there's more good news as well, including a new effort to balance the budget.



Treasurer's Ledger

The close-the-budget-gap task force has been constituted, with a mission to look at methods to close our budget gap fairly and compassionately, and in ways that preserve our open culture. Of course, we cannot continue to run deficits forever..

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RACHEL LEFKOWITZ, Synagogue Administrator

Looking for a way to communicate more successfully when we are far apart and feeling stressed, Rachel Lefkowitz proposes that asking questions may be a good way to connect.



Curiosity

By asking questions, we signal that we are open to conversation. In conversation, we can bounce ideas off each other and, even if we don't always start in the same place, we might eventually arrive at something we both agree on....

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Toby Rosenberg, Congregant

The garden committee has been busy all summer, taking care of the established gardens and creating new ones. The volunteer effort has been tremendous! Toby Rosenberg describes what you will see when you next come to Bet Ha'am.



Notes from the Garden

Throughout this entire growing season, the garden committee and volunteers have continued to look after Bet Ha'am's garden and grounds. Caring for our beloved home, even though we could not access the building, helped each of us feel connected...

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B'Nai Mitzvah

Daniel Polisner—November 7, 2020

Daniel, the oldest son of David and Jennifer Polisner, is a 7th grade student at Scarborough Middle School. He has a younger brother, Joshua, and a guinea pig, Papi. His extended family lives in the Portland area and he is very close to both sets of grandparents and to his aunts, uncles, and cousins. Daniel loves to play sports including hockey, baseball, and flag football. He keeps his family busy with traveling all over New England to play sports. He also loves to mountain bike with his dad, brother, and friends, to read, do math, and play chess, and he will resume piano when his Bar Mitzvah preparation is complete.



Daniel's mitzvah projects were greatly impacted by COVID-19. He loves animals and plans to become a veterinarian. His project, working with animals at a local vet office as well as volunteering at local animal shelters, was not possible. Instead, he worked on gathering much needed supplies for the shelters. He also had planned to read to and do puzzles with residents at a local nursing home. Instead, he baked treats and worked to raise the morale of medical workers at a local nursing home. He will continue to do his Mitzvah projects during this year and eventually fulfill his wish to volunteer with animals.

Daniel is very grateful to his tutor, Avis Smith, for her tutoring, kindness, and sense of humor during his preparation. He is also grateful to Rabbi Saks, Toby Rosenberg, and Wendy Hayes for his Hebrew preparation in the past few years. While this year has been one of constant change, we are so proud of Daniel and his fellow Bar/Bat Mitzvah students for continuing their studies and being called to Torah during a global pandemic.

Eliana Goldman—November 14, 2020

Eliana lives in Yarmouth and is in the 7th grade at Maine Coast Waldorf School. She enjoys acting in plays at Stages, swimming, creating art, and cooking. Eliana also loves to read and has participated in middle school debate. Her strong interest in current events and voters' rights contributed to her mitzvah project, where she created a poster to encourage voters to register to vote.

Eliana would like to thank her tutor, Sharon Newman, and Rabbi Saks for supporting her as she prepared for her Bat Mitzvah amid these unusual circumstances. She is grateful for hugs from her dad, Michael Goldman; her stepmother, Alex Sax; her mother, Michelle Dietz; her brothers, Satchel, Pablo, and Levi; her sister, Eva; Patty the cat; and Rocky and Louie. Eliana is hopeful for our emergence from the pandemic, so that she can return to her friends at Camp Kingswood.



Catherine Share—November 21, 2020

We do not post the b'nai mitzvah descriptions of children to our blog, but Catherine Share's story of her connection to spirituality and her conversion to Judaism is beautifully told in this short piece, written in anticipation of her upcoming Bat Mitzvah.



Becoming a Jew

Although Judaism is so different from my previous tradition, with study and perseverance I gradually understood and eventually embraced my Jewish life and identity. Along the way I have had wonderful teachers. But more important...

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NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to:

- Nathaniel Lesser
- David and Emily Smolin, Eli and Elsa
- Rosalee Lamm and Toby Rzepka, Ivy and Lyra
- Dara McCabe
- Josh Kremer and Marcie Lapido
- Emily Blau

CONDOLENCES

Zecher T'zaddik L'vrachah to:

- Condolences to Emily McEntee and Paul Rothman on the loss of Emily's mother, Frances Schwartz
- Condolences to Elizabeth Buchsbaum and Charlie Levine on the loss of Esther Buchsbaum, mother and grandmother
- Condolences to Cynthia Weitz on the loss of her brother-in-law, Eric Stein
- Condolences to Sam and Hannah Spinrad on the loss of Sam's brother, Will Spinrad
- Condolences to Ben and Lauren Bornstein, and the family and friends of Joe Bornstein on their loss
- Condolences to Lynne and David Unger on the loss of Lynne's sister, Joan Lamkin

THANK YOU!

Volunteer Opportunities

- To Catherine Share and Toby Rosenberg for writing for our blog
- To Mike Levine for organizing and leading our drum circle
- To Leslie Levy and Mike Levine for moderating the High Holy Day hallway conversations
- To our Mitzvah Corps, Reopening Task Force, Security Committee, and Garden Committee for their ongoing work
- Susan Horowitz and Gail Kass for organizing the break-the-fast video
- To the Lodish/Schardt and the Krasker Gavin families for donating to Bet Ha'am through Clynk

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- Rita and Jim Brady
- Jim and Karen Harris
- In appreciation of Sarah Szanton and Sharon Newman by Simone and Brad Feuer
- Lee and Jamie Broder
- Lawrence and Nannette Chern
- Toni Passerman
- Andrew Gelman and Rosie Lenehan
- In memory of Jeff McMillan by Susan McMillan and Jason Singer
- Judith Wohl
- In honor of Ellie Miller by Andrea and Chip Gavin
- In honor of Avis Smith by Catherine Share
- Mark Pechenik
- Ginger Spiro
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- In memory of Carl and Shirley Lerman by Jodi Lerman
- In memory of Edward Weinstein by Jane Weinstein
- In memory of William Lehman by Ginger Spiro
- In memory of Peter Szanton by Ginger Spiro
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- Mark and Deborah Tillman Stone
- Allan and Sandra Levinsky
- Joshua and Rebecca Frances
- Thea Johnson
- In memory of Will Spinrad by Lee and Lisa Tabenken
- In memory of Malcolm D Mogul by Harriet Mogul
- Greg and Denise Masalsky
- In memory of Doris Grossman by Hal D'Amico
- Penny Altman
- In memory of Bernone Rooks and Kathryn Rooks by Ki and Bill Leffler
- In memory of Yetta Roberts and Edie Dubovsky by Juliana Dubovsky
- Joanie and David Caldwell
- Maya and Mylan Cohen
- In appreciation of Ellie Miller by Dustin and Molly Curran Rowles
- Robert McComish
- Andrea Schick

Capital Campaign

- In memory of Bill Lehman by Rachel Reed

Rabbi Berkowitz Open Door Fund

- In honor of our Garden Committee by Jane Weinstein

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks by Lauren and Mark Dietlin
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks by Simone and Brad Feuer
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks by Gina Easley
- In memory of Jerry Bubela by Donna Landau
- In memory of Mayer Fistal by Sheri Fistal
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks by David and Harriet Pinansky
- In appreciation by Sharon Tancredi
- In appreciation by Brad and Simone Feuer
- In memory of David Kramer by Asher Kramer
- In memory of Will Spinrad by Michael Spinrad
- Dr. Fred Peck

General Fund

- In memory of Dora Goldberg by Carole and Sol Israel
- In memory of Irving Goldberg by Carole and Sol Israel
- In memory of Alexander Hammer on his Yahrzeit by Robert Hammer
- In memory of Bill Lehman by Charlie and Ellie Miller
- In appreciation of Chris Skidgel and his soup-making skills by Steve and Lynda Hubbell
- In memory of Zadie David Rickless by Wendy and Bill Sirois
- In memory of Evelyn Rosenthal by Bob and Rona Rosenthal
- In memory of Emily McEntee's mother by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of Mark Carignan's mother by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of Bill Leffler and Alana Leffler on their Yahrzeits by Rabbi and Ki Leffler
- In memory of Kurt Messerschmidt on his Yahrzeit by Evie and Duane Polisner
- In memory of Willie Mae Moore by Arleen Goldberg
- In appreciation of our Reopening Task Force by Diane Newman
- In memory of Mark Carignan's mother by Tom Rosen
- In memory of Emily McEntee's mother by Tom Rosen
- In memory of Edward Rosen and Ilana Strauss Kaurman by Tom Rosen and family
- In memory of Emily McEntee's mother by Ginger Spiro
- In memory of Will Spinrad by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In appreciation of Chris Skidgel by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of M Peter Moser, Bain Kittle and Betty Beilstein by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of Ronni Feuer by Sandy Feuer
- In memory of my mother by Solange Kellermann
- In memory of Faith Schreier by Ginger Spiro
- In honor of Sharon Newman for gracing our congregation by Rachel Reed
- In appreciation of our Stone Soup by David and Joanie Caldwell
- In memory of Daisy Kaplan by Doug and Ann Kaplan
- In memory of Charles Cole by John and Beryl Cole
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks and our meaningful Holiday services by Sharon and Perry Newman
- With thanks to Rachel, Chris, and Ivan for their support at the holidays and throughout the year by Sharon and Perry Newman
- In memory of Will Spinrad by Rachel Stamieszkin
- In memory of grandmother Leah Newman by Diane Newman
- In memory of Will Spinrad by Tom Rosen
- In memory of Gertrude Schick by Andrea Schick
- In honor of Declan Rowles as he became Bar Mitzvah by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of Sonja Messerschmidt on her Yartzeit by Evie and Duane Polisner
- In memory of Amilla Polisner on her Yartzeit by Duane and Evie Polisner

Rabbi David Sandmel Education Fund

- In memory of Will Spinrad by Donna Landau

Rabbi Goldfinger Fund for Israel Travel

- In appreciation by Julie Krasne

Religious School Library Fund

- In memory of Aaron Messer by Patricia Watson

High Holiday Donations

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- Diane Newman
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