



## The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

### Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

This week we read the final portions of the book of Leviticus, *B'har-B'chukotai*. The text of the portion presents a troubling measure of the worth of individual people who have been dedicated for service in the Temple. In place of their service, a monetary value is assigned to each person which can be offered in place of their laboring for the Temple. This reminds us of the birth ritual of Pidyon HaBen, by which a firstborn male is redeemed from Temple service with five silver coins. In the beginning of Leviticus 27, we read that a male between the ages of 20 and 60 must offer fifty shekels of silver in place of his serving in the Temple, but a female of the same age would offer only thirty shekels. At first read, it seems that this text places less value on women than it does on men. Rabbi Carol Meyers, in *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (Women of Reform Judaism) writes, "Because of the greater monetary values assigned to males in each age category, scholars have sometimes understood this table of valuations as an expression of gender bias, with females considered inherently less valuable than males. However, many commentators now understand that this table relates mainly to labor potential rather than to intrinsic worth." While this may help us understand this text in the context of its time, it nonetheless leaves us dissatisfied. The beauty of Torah is that it is the beginning of the conversation in Judaism, not the end. We are called to see beyond the plain meaning of the text and apply its universal values to our lives today. Today, we are called to see each person, regardless of their gender, as an image of God with inherent worth and potential.



## In-Person Worship Resumes!

We will begin in-person services in our sanctuary on Shabbat morning, May 8. There will be a number of safety protocols in place, including,

- Attendance will be limited. Registration is required.
- Everyone must wear a mask at all times when on our property.
- All attendees must be at least 2 weeks post final vaccine.

This is likely to last throughout the summer, with the possible exception of outdoor family services. If you are interested in attending a service in our sanctuary, please indicate all of the dates which you are able to attend when you register. If there are more people interested in attending than spots available we will hold a lottery to determine participants.

If you indicate interest in attending in person you will receive an email indicating which services you will be able to attend. The email will also provide detailed information regarding Covid protocols.

All services will continue to be live-streamed on Zoom. All who register by the Friday deadline (whether or not you have requested to be in person) will receive the link for the live-streamed services.

## Registration for Worship and Torah Study

**Register now to receive [May](#) Shabbat worship and Torah Study links!**

**May Zoom links are now being used.**

- To register for **Friday night worship**, [click here](#).
- To register for **Torah Study** on Saturdays, [click here](#).
- To register for **Saturday morning worship**, [click here](#).
- To register for **Wednesday morning minyan**, [click here](#).

Registrations close at noon on Fridays. Zoom links will be sent by 4:00 PM on Fridays to all who have registered by the deadline. *We cannot send Zoom links after 4:00 PM on Fridays.*

Read more about our service and our siddur (prayer book) [here](#).

## Worship Schedule

**Friday, May 7**

**Shabbat Service and Grade 12 Graduation, 7:30 PM**

This year's religious school graduating class consists of high-achieving academics, Tikkun Olam champions, and local leaders. You are invited to attend the virtual 12th grade graduation on May 7 at 7:30 PM to honor them. We look forward to seeing what these young adults achieve in the world!



Thank you to board member Nathan Szanton for making announcements.

Register to receive the **Friday Night Shabbat Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

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**Saturday, May 8**

**Torah Study, 9:00 AM**

Torah study using *The Mussar Torah Commentary* continues--but you don't need to own a copy. Read more [here](#), under the "Torah Study" heading.

Register to receive the **Torah Study** Zoom link, [here](#).

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**Saturday, May 8**

**Shabbat Morning Worship, 10:30 AM**

Register to receive the **Shabbat Morning Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

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**Wednesday, May 12**

**Morning Minyan 7:30 AM**

Thank you to Catherine Share for leading Morning Minyan on May 12.

Register to receive the **Wednesday Morning Minyan** Zoom link, [here](#).

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### Notable Upcoming Services

**Aziza Morrison Bat Mitzvah**, Saturday, May 15, 10:30 AM

# Religious School on Zoom

**Sunday, May 9**

Grades 1-10 on Zoom

## What's Happening?

Come to Zoom Shabbat Services this Friday, May 7, to wish our seniors well as they graduate from our religious school program!

**If you are interested in enrolling a child or teaching at religious school, email Sam at [sam@bethaam.org](mailto:sam@bethaam.org)**



## Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, May 11, 6:30 PM**

### Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held by Zoom on Tuesday, May 11, beginning at 6:30 PM. There are several reasons it is important for members to attend.

- Breakout groups will discuss ways to address our current unsustainable financial situation. All possibilities are on the table; this is your opportunity to let the board know how you think we should address our financial problems!
- We need a quorum for the election of new board members and officers to be valid.
- The Jane Snerson Distinguished Service Award is going to someone who has done a tremendous amount of work for our congregation for many, many years. We owe this person quite a bit. Come to the meeting to find out who we are honoring!



Registration in advance is required.

**Annual Meeting Registration**

## 11th Annual Plant Sale - May 16

**Just over a week now for...**

**The Garden Committee's 11th Annual Outdoor Plant Sale at Bet Ha'am!**

**Sunday, May 16, 2021**

**9:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**All Covid Safety Protocols will be followed.**

**The plant sale is possible only with your support!**

All plant sale proceeds support the Garden Committee's efforts to plant, harvest and donate fresh produce from our raised bed gardens to those in need, to promote educational gardening events and projects at Bet Ha'am and to care for our beautiful gardens.

**We need your help to have a nice variety of plants and seedlings for customers to purchase.** Donations of sun, shade, foliage, and flowering plants are needed. Perennials, annuals, and seedlings too!

**Leave your plant donations at Bet Ha'am.** Starting on May 9, you can drop your potted (or plastic bagged) plants off by the raised beds. Read more on how to repot home garden plants [here](#). If you purchase plants and flats for yourself at a garden center, please consider picking up an extra to donate to this fundraiser!



**Need more information about the sale?** You can find it [here](#), or get it by emailing Joan at [garden@bethaam.org](mailto:garden@bethaam.org).

**Thank you. See you at the sale!**

## Adult Learning with Rabbi Alice Goldfinger

**May 26, June 2, and June 9, 10:00 - 11:00 AM**

### **The Carob Tree in the Cave and Other Talmudic Tales with Rabbi Alice Goldfinger**

Advanced registration is required. Class size will be limited to 15. The Talmud is the primary text of Jewish law and lore whose sources date from the first few centuries of the common era. Traditionally, the highest aim in Talmud study is to elucidate Jewish law (*Halacha*). The narrative passages (*Aggadah*) have been viewed as illustrations of, or digressions from, *Halacha*. In this class we will study three Talmudic narratives and mine them for their wisdom, beauty and literary achievement.



Registration closes at 12:00 Noon on Friday, May 14, or when 15 person limit is reached - whichever comes first. Rabbi Goldfinger will email all participants directly after registration has closed.

**Class Registration**

## Solar Energy Fundraiser

### **Support Local Maine Solar, Lower Your CMP Bill and Raise Money for Bet Ha'am**

Bet Ha'am was recently contacted about a new fundraising initiative involving congregants who may be interested in community solar. PowerMarket is an operator of multiple community solar energy farms on the east coast including one located in Baldwin, Maine that is currently looking for "subscribers." Subscribers are self-designated CMP customers who wish to buy a portion of their electricity from a community solar farm. The electricity is sold at a discount and produced with a lower carbon footprint.



The initiative presented provides that PowerMarket and Darrell Cooper of Energy Audits Ltd. will donate \$150 to Bet Ha'am for each subscriber who signs up using the promo code "Bet Ha'am." There is no upfront cost to sign up, subscribers typically save about 10% on their CMP bill, and they can cancel at any time on 60 days' notice.

You can obtain more information, and if interested become a subscriber through the PowerMarket/Baldwin Community Solar project website at: <https://account.powermarket.io/bethaam.html>.

If you have questions about the donation to Bet Ha'am, please contact Mark Stone at [lmstone@lmstone.com](mailto:lmstone@lmstone.com)

## Ongoing Programs

### **Shabbat Candle Lighting**

Please consider signing up to be a candle lighter at an upcoming Zoom Friday night service. You may choose to do this in memory of a loved one for whom you're observing yahrzeit, in honor of a celebration in your life, or just because you want to engage in this ritual. You can read more from Rabbi

Saks [here](#); learn the candle lighting blessing [here](#) (on track 420); and find the words [here](#).



## Candle Lighting Sign-Up

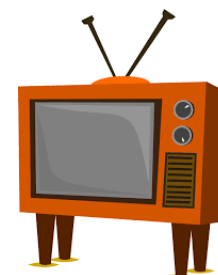
### B'Yachad | Together

Come relax and talk virtually with your Bet Ha'am community before Friday Shabbat services! We will meet every Friday except the second Friday of the month when there is a 6:00 PM Family Shabbat service. [Read more here](#). [Register here](#). Please contact congregant [Alan Davis](#) with questions.



### TV and Movie Discussion Group

Please join congregants Melissa Montefel and Wendy Hayes, co-facilitators, for a discussion group about Jewish-themed movies and shows. The group meets at 7:00 PM for fun, talk, and insights. Please email [Wendy](#) for the login or with questions or suggestions for future movies.



#### May 12:

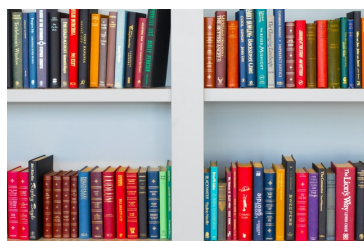
##### ***The Book Thief***

While subjected to the horrors of World War II Germany, young Liesel finds solace by stealing **books** and sharing them with others. In the basement of her home, a Jewish refugee is being protected by her adoptive parents.  
Amazon Prime

#### June 9:

##### ***Shtisel***

A Haredi family living in an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Jerusalem reckons with love, loss and the doldrums of daily life. We'll be discussing all three seasons of Shtisel available on NetFlix so we're giving you plenty of time!



### Curbside Library Borrowing

Although the building remains closed, you may borrow a book from our wonderful library using curbside pick up. Read more on our [library page](#).

## So Much Going on in Our Community!

We are fortunate to be in a community where there is so much going on Jewishly that we cannot possibly list all of the happenings here. Please check out the websites listed below for all kinds of activities – movement, art, spirituality, books, movies, Jewish education, and more. Bet Ha'am often co-sponsors programs with these community leaders.

**The Maine Conference for Jewish Life**  
**Sunday, June 13, 2021**



Join the Center for Small Town Jewish Life on Zoom for an afternoon of interactive learning and community celebration! Stay tuned for more details and information about how to register.

Sunday, June 13, 2021  
THE MAINE CONFERENCE  
FOR JEWISH LIFE



Though the Center for Small Town Jewish Life is not able to hold the Maine Conference for Jewish Life in person once again this year, they are still very excited for their online mini-conference on Sunday, June 13, 3:00 - 6:00 PM. Like all Center programming, one registration link will enable you to come and go throughout the afternoon. A full schedule will be posted online in the coming weeks and will be emailed out to registrants once finalized.

They're looking forward to announcing a full lineup later this month, but they're happy to announce right now that Tree Spirits of Oakland, Maine, will be offering a cocktail/mocktail lesson at the start of our conference! The first 50 people to register will receive a bottle of their SubLime, a fruit-bitter and brandy-based mixer for FREE!

Later registrants will have the option to buy a bottle with their registration for a discounted price. The Tree Spirits experts will lead a brief demo—you can follow along with or without a beverage!

Stay tuned for updates about speakers and sessions. They look forward to seeing you in June!

[Learn More and Register Here](#)

**Thursday, May 20, 6:30 PM**

**Biddeford Cultural and Heritage Center sponsors:  
"The History of Jewish Life in Biddeford-Saco" A  
Virtual Community Presentation In Honor of Jewish  
American Heritage Month**



BCHC board member, local historian, and fourth-generation member of one of Biddeford's oldest Jewish families, Jennie E. Aranovitch will present on topics including Jewish emigration to Biddeford; the history of Biddeford's synagogue, Congregation Etz Chaim; and the cultural aspects of Jewish life in Biddeford-Saco. Read more [here](#).

There are new exhibitions at Maine Jewish Museum starting May 13. Learn more [here](#).



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**Donate to Bet Ha'am**

Please consider donating in any amount to Congregation Bet Ha'am--with your help, we can close the budget gap! We are grateful for your support.

[Donate Now](#)

Congregation Bet Ha'am | 81 Westbrook Street, South Portland, ME 04106

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