

Happy Chanukah from Congregation Agudas Achim Anshei Sfard!

Shalom 5757
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The Adams Street Synagogue

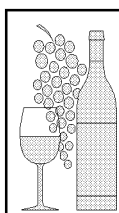


The Situation in Israel

Rabbi Joseph Polak, the shul's Rabbinic Consultant, holds a special session of his monthly study series next month when the topic will be "*The Situation in Israel*," a reflection of his recent trip to Israel. Rabbi Polak will speak at the shul on January 18 at 9:00 AM.

A *minyan* will be held beforehand (at 8:00 AM) and refreshments are served between the *minyan* and the educational event. Come for either or both.

Rabbi Polak has been Director of the *Boston University Hillel House* for over a quarter century. He is also the Chairman of the Law Committee of *The Vaad HaRabbonim of Massachusetts*.



To sponsor a *Kiddush* or *Shalosh Seudos*, call Albert Kalman at: 899-0293.

Chanukah Shopping Spree



Education Source, a new toy store at 244 Needham Street, Newton Highlands, has pledged to donate 10% of its sales on Thursday December 18 from 6 PM to closing to the Adams Street Synagogue.

Please help us to take advantage of this offer to benefit the shul and get some Chanukah shopping done.

And don't miss our Annual Chanukah Party, featuring live music by members of the Klezmer Conservatory, refreshments, raffles, and assorted fun! Join in the celebration on December 27th (the evening of the fifth candle-lighting) at 7:30 PM.

Erev Shirah Rescheduled

The *Erev Shirah* (Evening of Song) originally scheduled for December 13, has been rescheduled for January 17 at 7:30 PM at **Congregation Beth El** in Newton Centre. This event is held in conjunction with other Newton synagogues which take turns hosting the festive musical evening. Come meet people over refreshments, learn new songs, and enjoy old favorites. Admission is \$5 per person, \$12 per family. All proceeds go *Tzedekah*.

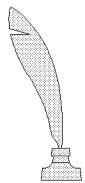
The Imported Bridegroom

The Imported Bridegroom, the story of the mixture of the old and new worlds and Jewish immigration to America, is returning. Some might remember that the film was partially shot at Adams Street, and included some Adams Street members in some scenes. Now *The Imported Bridegroom* has been made into a play to be presented at **Boston College** next month.

Nechama Cheses is organizing a visit to the production. Look for more details in our next newsletter.

Services: Fri. eve. at candle-lighting time; Sat. AM at 9; Sat. PM at 15 min. earlier than Fri. eve.

Weekly Torah Study, Mondays at 8 PM, followed by maariv at 9 PM



From the President

As I write this column, our fall holiday season is fading into history and we are presently looking forward to *Chanukah* festivities. However, this interim period is not completely uneventful, i.e. it is appropriate to take note of the secular holiday of Thanksgiving, which occurred recently. Besides serving as a wonderful occasion to bring families together, this holiday drives home one of Judaism's greatest moral teachings: *hakarat hatov*, acknowledging in a concrete way when we have benefited from the kindness of others and God. It is thus appropriate to take stock and acknowledge the spiritual and material blessings we enjoy as a community.

On the material side, the restoration of the shul is now virtually complete except for the ceiling stenciling in the sanctuary. We are thus blessed with a lovely edifice of which we all can be proud. On the spiritual side, we have put life into the bones of this edifice with a program of religious observance and educational activity that is also a source of pride. Above all, we have created a holy community, a *kahal kadosh*, which functions well, despite the wide range of life style that characterizes all of us.

Perhaps this is also a good time to take note of some of our challenges. One of our major concerns is the temptation to overextend ourselves with our limited numbers of active members, i.e. to "bite off more than we can chew." It is easy to let one's enthusiasm take over and plan lots of ambitious activities, only to have difficulty in carrying them out, and have a meager attendance. Such events can be religious (minyans), educational (lectures), or social. The most critical area is in the realm of minyans, where a dedicated core group of active participants is vitally essential. Since we are a small congregation, we cannot rely on a substantial pool of individuals saying *kaddish*, who make up the backbone of the daily minyans in some larger congregations.

In this vein we decided to discontinue our regular Sunday morning minyans for the time being. To have persisted in continuing this service would have been unrealistic and raised some ethical considerations, since it would involve some uncertainty for those saying *kaddish* who might be under the false assumption that we do have a reliable Sunday morning minyan.

It must be emphasized that this is a realistic last resort decision, since this has been a longstanding recurring problem, and we have tried numerous unsuccessful attempts to bolster attendance. Basically we must be realistic in recognizing that there is currently not enough general enthusiasm for maintaining this minyan. We must therefore consider new approaches to this problem and to make revival of this minyan one of our priorities. The answer may ultimately lie in the recruitment of a few more active families, not only to strengthen our minyans but other shul activities as well. Please remember that taking two steps forward occasionally requires taking one step backwards. Finally let me inform you that our Sunday morning minyans will still continue once a month when Rabbi Polak comes to hold Torah study sessions.

--- Leonard Berman, President

Large Type Prayerbooks





Hanukah 5758

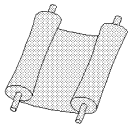
One could write a novel about a group of people who have been in prison so long that they have forgotten that the rest of the world exists, and believe that the only reality is the one that they inhabit.

American Jewry appears to be in a position not unlike this. We are fully accepted by the world in which we live; gentile families, as the demographers have recently reported, are seeking Jewish spouses for their offspring; at universities Jews are no longer treated as a minority; it is illegal in most States of the union to discriminate against a Jew in the workplace by denying his right to observe his holidays. Jews are equals in a land of plenty, with more political freedom than they have ever had in their history.

The price of all these blessings has been very high. The intermarriage figures shout a litany with which everyone is familiar. For me more significant, and more symptomatic of my opening metaphor, is that American Jews have stopped studying Judaism. Is it possible that they are so far removed from it that they can't imagine any value in studying this extraordinary heritage? American Jews, in short, have forgotten that the American world of plenty in which they live is not the only reality. We have a way to characterize such abysmal forgetting; one that has even entered into our vocabularies; we say *a person who has forgotten all this is in the dark*.

Hanukah, according to the Hasidic masters, is a rebellion against this forgetting. It insists that this dark world needs to be lit by a fire that emerges from a divine Command. Hanukah is G-d making himself omnipresent in the exile (by which I mean this exile of forgetting, this darkness); and of His doing so by *our* invitation, family by family, home by home. Hanukah is a celebration of the particularity of the Jews -- the menorah in the window says to America: we are a nation apart with a unique history. And the fire? The fire is a call to Torah study (Moses referred to the Torah as *Esh Dat*, "the fire of Law"), and symbolizes how bright one's world becomes when it is suffused with holy words and fiery letters.

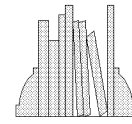
--- Rabbi Joseph Polak



Yasher Koach

Yasher Koach to all congregants who led services since our last newsletter:

Ira Milman, Michael Walker, Nachman Kalyuzhny, Michael Itzhakov, Pinchas Zaltsman, Lloyd Cohen, Burt Freedman, Tzvi Rubinstein, Len Berman, Rabbi Zalman Gurkow, Aryeh Cheses, Noah Cheses, Bert Grand, Morris Hollander, and Jordan Lee Wagner.



Book Notes

We are pleased to note the following additions to our lending library of Jewish books:

"Sippurey Ma'asioth -- The Stories of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov", in Russian translation, donated in memory of **Sol and Celia Schwartzapfel**;

"The Inside Story", thirty-five inspirational essays on Biblical stories, by Yanki Tauber, in English, donated by **Lloyd A. Cohen and Zissi Cohen** in memory of **Beth Deena Cohen**, wife and mother.

"Biblical Images" by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, in Russian translation, donated in memory of **Sylvia and Sam Wagner**.

To donate books, call Jordan Wagner at 332-2507.



David Kazhdan

David Kazhdan will be speaking on January 27 at 8:00 PM, on "The Ten Commandments". He is a professor in the Department of Mathematics at **Harvard University** who has made deep contributions in areas of enormous complexity.

This presentation will be entirely in Russian and will be followed by bi-lingual tours of the shul. This is the first educational event produced by the New Americans Committee.

For more information, call Helen Kroner at 964-4871.

The shul thanks the following for their generous donations:

James and Adelaide Rosen

Rakhil Partensky

Charles Rosengard

in memory of

beloved brother

Jacob Rosengard

Orna and Kenneth Bresler

Lisa Kaplan

Adelaide Rosen

in memory of

Arthur Green

Sanford Rosenzweig

Marcia Fredlich

in honor of the start of

Miriam Kramer's

Jewish education

Steven & Sarah Lesser

Rebecca Sternberg

for the health of

granddaughter

Yohanna Bas Chai Etta

Barry Cohen

in memory of

his parents

George H. Cohen

and Marion B. Cohen

Beatrice Langbort

in honor of

Pinchas Zaltzman

The Endowment Fund

A trust to ensure the maintainance and preservation of our synagogue.

The following gave \$1,000 or more:

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Sara Hochberg, in memory of Ira Hochberg

**Gerald M. Swartz, in memory of
Gertrude Weiner and Eli Swartz**

Bertram and Polly Grand

**Ms. Ida Rosenblum,
in memory of the Rosenblum Family**

Gerald M. Swartz, in memory of Jean M. Swartz

**In memory of Dr. David Michael Hochberg,
late son of late**

Ira I. Hochberg and Sara Hochberg

Edith G. Shoolman, in memory of Jean M. Swartz

Dr. Leonard & Audrey Berman

James and Adelaide Rosen

**In memory of Aaron J. Birnbaum
by H. Jean Birnbaum**

Harry L. Roiter

Gerald M. Swartz

In memory of Beth Dina Cohen by Lloyd Cohen

**In memory of Jacob & Anna Kligman
by Mr. & Mrs. Myron L. Bloom**

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**Betty and Myer Nieberg
in memory of daughter and sister**

Libby Marcia Nieberg

Edith G. Shoolman

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**Rabbi Abraham Nowak and Ann Segal Nowak
remembered by sons Welville and Peter**

In memory of

**Rosella Horvitz, Dallas and Samuel (Shy) Goodman
by Ruth and Gene Fax**

In honor of the birth of our granddaughter,

**Dina Michelle Rabinovitz,
by Mel and Shane Rabinovitz**

Celia and Joel Seskin

Caroline and Alan Wu

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