

THE MESSENGER

THE VOICE OF CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

JULY / AUGUST 2011
SIVAN / TAMMUZ –AV / ELUL 5771



901 MAMIE STREET HATTIESBURG, MS 39401 601-545-3871 RABBI URI BARNEA

Kol HaRav... The Rabbi's Voice

This is the third and final column that I dedicate to the subject of religious challenges facing us in the 21st century.



Rabbi David Ellenson, President of HUC-JIR, has confronted these challenges several times recently, and much of this column relies on opinions expressed by him.

We have heard that the Reform movement is, at best, in stasis and, at worst, facing a significant decline in its membership rolls. Some argue that Reform institutions are insufficiently nimble and overly bureaucratic. Others point to what they see as an underlying ideological or theological malaise, suggesting that Reform Judaism does not galvanize Reform Jews to acknowledge and act upon their covenantal obligations.

Many of the critiques come from within our movement, others from outside it. Most are offered as constructive criticism, while a few are mean-spirited polemics (even Glenn Beck has gotten in on the act!)

Amid this wave of criticism and consternation, we should not lose sight of the great strengths that Reform Judaism displays: There are many synagogues where attendance at services is significant and worship is spiritually inspiring. There are thriving Reform day and afternoon religious schools, and summer camps where Judaism is a richly lived experience. There are countless numbers of Reform Jews engaged in meaningful Torah study, acts of social justice, and the forging of inclusive communities. Still, one need not ignore these triumphs to recognize that there is more than a modicum of truth in many of the expressions of concern

and the critiques that are offered.

The organizational structures of the Reform movement often do not act in purposeful and coordinated ways to address the many challenges confronting the Jewish people. Too seldom is there an overarching vision of liberal Judaism present to guide the Reform movement as we attempt to address the great demographic and religious issues of our day.

To be sure, the fuller context of North American Jewish life as a whole must be taken into account if the challenges that the Reform movement faces are to be properly assessed and appreciated. After all, the unprecedented opportunities that Jews on this continent enjoy have resulted in ever-increasing assimilation and indifference among millions of North American Jews. This is the communal price exacted for living in an open, ever more secular, and accepting society.

In such a setting of individualism, where traditional kinship and associational patterns among Jews have been eroded by mobility and acculturation, each Jew is now a "sovereign self," and it is not easy to "command" Jewish participation. These forces that challenge the continuity and relevance of Judaism for so many Jews constitute a sociological storm with which the Reform movement has had to cope.

It is only fair to remember that this is a challenge for all Jews, not just for the Reform movement. However, the Reform movement is committed to outreach and inclusion, to not neglecting any Jew. The Reform movement's hope is that we can inspire and motivate those persons on the periphery of our community and bring them back to the center. Reform Judaism calls upon itself to address Jews of "thin" Jewish culture, i.e., those on the fringes who

(Continued on page 2)

lack a strong background of Jewish education and involvement, while not neglecting those who were raised in an environment of “thick” Jewish commitments and affiliations. Needless to say, this is no easy task.

There is no magic bullet to resolve the challenges we face. Organizational reform is surely desirable, but institutional reorganization cannot accomplish the task of making Reform Judaism relevant to all Jews. Similarly, theology and vision are crucial. Nevertheless, we should not be naïve and assume that a commanding and compelling theology will inspire all Jews to participate meaningfully in Jewish life.

Here we must recognize that Judaism is an adult religion. We must acknowledge that the complexity and plurality that mark modern life, especially in North America, do not allow for simple answers to multivalent and textured problems. Indeed, no one should have illusions that there are quick fixes to the challenges that confront North American Judaism.

And yet, the recognition of the enormity of the tasks that confront the Reform movement does not excuse us from our responsibilities. If anything, this knowledge requires us to ask with urgency how the movement can best be organized and act. Our goal must be to inspire modern Jews to affirm traditional Jewish commitments to God, Torah and Israel while simultaneously insisting upon an open and honest engagement with the modern world.

Rabbi Leo Baeck (1873-1956), who was captured by the Nazis and spent three years in the concentration camp of Teresienstadt, once wrote: “An inheritance cannot be fabricated, let alone forced. It can only be assumed by a freedom that has the ability to build on it. When a man forms his life, he begins to create community. He is not only born into a community as if by fate, but he has now been called to the task of molding it.”

We, who are his heirs, must live up to this call.

Rabbi Uri Barnea

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B'NAI ISRAEL SISTERHOOD 2011-2012

NICK AND RACHEL CIRALDO LITTLE SON LUCA TERRIBLY ILL

As some of you may have already heard, Nick and Rachel Ciraldo's little boy, Luca -- who is not yet two--is terribly ill.

Last week, he was diagnosed with liver cancer, with traces found in his lungs and his heart. He is now undergoing chemotherapy

They are receiving care at St. Jude's in Memphis--apparently one of the very best places they could be for this. Still--it is unspeakably horrifying and sad.

Nick and Rachel are communicating and receiving messages through the website shown below. There is also a place to make tributes, but Nick mentioned that he and Rachel would really like it if those who wanted, to make contributions to St. Jude's.

Sisterhood is passing this information along to the members of the Congregation, if perhaps someone could/would want to do something.

<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/lucaciraldo>

For those who do not know, Rachel played the flute for a Sisterhood Shabbat and she and her husband performed last year at the Temple for Festival South Rachel plays flute for the Baton Rouge symphony and Nick teaches classical guitar at USM.

Rachel has been a guest at Sisterhood this year.

Bnai Israel Sisterhood 2011 - 2012

Looking forward to A New Year with
Fun Get Togethers
restored Energy & renewed spirit...

MY LAST NEWS LETTER

I have enjoyed my four years as co-editor of The Messenger and will miss working with Rabbi Uri, and the members of the congregation. I appreciate those who consistently helped fill the pages with Temple news, Religious School activities, photos and other articles;
Thank-you !

Sincerely,

Teresa Sackler

FUTURE THE MESSENGER PRINTINGS & DEADLINES

2011 DEADLINE			2012 DEADLINE	
Sep - Oct	Aug	20	May - Jun	Apr 20
Nov - Dec	Oct	20	Jul - Aug	Jun 20
2012 DEADLINE			2012 DEADLINE	
Jan - Feb	Dec	20	Sep - Oct	Aug 20
Mar - Apr	Feb	20	Nov - Dec	Oct 20

2011 B'NAI ISRAEL YARTZEITS

2011 JULY YAHRZEITS		
JULY 1	JUNE 26	MORRIS SCHERER
	27	HENRY TAYLOR
JULY 8	2	JENNIE S. BUCHALTER
	2	HAZEL SILVER FELDMAN
	2	RUTH GLASS
	2	MARCUS LONDON
	6	ROSA F. ROSENTHAL
JULY 15	11	HELEN BERNICE KELSEY
	11	EVA STAMM SIGNOFF
	13	RUTH CRAMER LONDON
	14	TERI WALDOFF
JULY 22	16	CELIA M. REUBEN
	17	MOLLYE GREENBURG
	18	DAVE MATISON
	19	JACOB KERN
	21	MILLIE KRELL
	22	SAMUEL ADLER
JULY 29	25	BESSIE FREEMAN SACKLER
	25	AN AIS G. LEHMAN
	26	WOLF BOTNICK
	28	CHARLES SIGNOFF
	29	BEN SEMP ER
AUG 5	30	MILDRED B KERN
	30	SAM SEIDLER

2011 AUGUST YAHRZEITS		
AUG 5	JULY 30	MILDRED B KERN
	30	SAM SEIDLER
	1	ROSE LEVY GINSBERG
	5	LEON HIRSCH DREYFUS
AUG 12	5	JEAN BAKALAR WALDOFF
	8	LENA SHAPIRO
	9	SALLY D. HIRSCH
	9	HENRY G. HTOTLAND
	11	IRENE FRIEDMAN
AUG 19	12	JACOB ROSENTHAL
	13	ROSE PEVSNER
	13	MERVYN B. GLASS
	14	SIGMUND STAMM
	15	BERISCH BILFELD
	15	KILYA M. BILFELD
	17	IDA ADELMAN HANDELMAN
19	FRANCES RUBENSTEIN	
AUG 26	21	ALLAN C. HIRSCH
	21	DAVID MILLER
	23	MIRIAM LEHMAN MARK
SEPT 2	29	SARAH LEVET BLORSKI

TEMPLE FUNDS

ERS Fund

In honor of Esther R. Shemper - with Interest used to help with Temple expenses

Marvin Shemper Building Fund

In honor of Marvin's constant maintenance and loving care for our building

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

To be used at the discretion of the Rabbi

Religious School Fund

Materials & books for Religious School

Tree of Life

In memory of Marvin Reuben for the Marvin Reuben maintenance fund

General Fund

General maintenance and upkeep of TBI Building

Cemetery Fund

Upkeep of the cemetery

Social Action Committee

To care for our own, Jews everywhere & the rest of the world

Temple B'nai Israel Endowment Fund.

For the existence and operation of the Congregation

CONTRIBUTIONS

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THESE CONTRIBUTIONS WITH APPRECIATION

General Fund

A donation has been made by *Arnold and Gloria Himmelstein* in memory of **Debbie Shemper**.

A donation has been made by *Howard and Sue Schwartz* in memory of **Debbie Shemper**.

A donation has been made by *Allen and Cathy Gersh* in memory of **Debbie Shemper**



L'Dor VaDor • From Generation to Generation • לדור ודור

Camp Scholarship Fund

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES

WHOSE CHILDREN WHO WANT TO ATTEND HENRY S. JACOBS CAMP.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT LOU GINSBERG: 601-584-8878

IN MEMORY OF

ADDRESS

IN HONOR OF


ADDRESS

OTHER

ADDRESS

SEND TO:
Treasurer, TBI
P.O. Box 15636
Hattiesburg, MS
39404-5636

JULY 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 NO SHABBAT SERVICE	2
3 Rabbi on vacation until July 4th		5	6	7	8 7:30 PM SHABBAT SERVICE & ONEG	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 7:30 PM SHABBAT SERVICE & ONEG	16
17	18	19	20	21	22 7:30 PM SHABBAT SERVICE & ONEG	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 7:30 PM SHABBAT SERVICE & ONEG	30
31	<p>IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.</p> <p>The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,</p>					

AUGUST 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5 7:30 PM SHABBAT SERVICE & ONEG	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 7:30 PM SHABBAT SERVICE & ONEG	13
14 11:00AM -1:30PM CANEBRAKE COUNTRY CLUB JEWISH FEDERATION BRUNCH WITH JEFF JACOBY	15	16	17	18	19 7:30 PM SHABBAT SERVICE & ONEG	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 7:30 PM SHABBAT SERVICE & ONEG	27
28	29	30	31			