

THE PATH SEEKER

CONGREGATION M'VAKSHE DEREKH
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February 2016



From Our Rabbi's Desk

The first Shabbat in February this year happens to be among my favorite of all parashiyot—Parashat Mishpatim. It's a peculiar choice, for sure. It contains none of the majesty of the revelation at Sinai; none of the poignancy of the deaths of the patriarchs, matriarchs, Miriam, Aaron and

Moses; none of the awe of creation. Rather, Mishpatim is a series of laws beginning, of all things, with the laws of Hebrew slaves.

Yet it is within Parashat Mishpatim that core Jewish values ultimately inform basic human values.

All social species operate with their own modes of societal control, strategies for species protection and even hierarchies within groups. Any of us who have owned multiple dogs and cats can attest to that.

Humans are driven by urges to create, to expand, to understand, to recognize self. That ability to recognize self can alas lead to self aggrandizement which in turn can lead to the least elevated of human behaviors.

In our Torah narrative, we have grown from a family with a recognition of one God to a numerous people who have just been given the gift of Torah. The pyrotechnics have passed in Exodus 20. Now it's time to get to the specifics of creating the kind of society that Torah demands.

Parashat Mispatim represents a microcosm of civil and criminal law with a little cultic law mixed in. Whether in the treatment of indentured servants (Hebrew slave is a literal translation but doesn't convey the meaning of Exodus 21), kidnapping, murder, or torts and damages Torah has an organizing principle.

Exodus 23 exhorts us to maintain personal integrity (do not follow the majority to do evil), to remember the needy, to judge fairly in criminal and civil matters. It repeats the festival cycle and repeats the promise of Eretz Yisrael.

Nonetheless, Mishpatim poses challenges to contemporary life. Torah unequivocally mandates capital punishment in a number of cases. Talmud as well retains this understanding. Can Jewish tradition be used to substantiate this very debate within our own society or are we free to declare that aspects of Torah were relevant to a society other than ours?

While only using capital punishment as one issue and contemporary point of contention, quite simply Kaplan's answer to these varying conundrums would be to emphasize the need for societal principles based upon Jewish tradition but also recognizing that Judaism is a continuously evolving religious civilization. There may be certain points at which Jews may declare that we have evolved beyond identifying witches, stoning murderers or condemning homosexuals.

Mishpatim gives us a number of principles and it is those principles of law, justice, tradition and holy land which give us the basis for the specifics into which Jewish civilization can evolve.

If February holds true to form and we have our share of snowy stay at home days, pick up Parashat Mishpatim and identify those many amazing value statements contained within it. Consider how those principles can evolve into guidelines for a just and Godly world.

Rabbi Ned Soltz

Dates to Remember

Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Thomas J Burke Lounge, Spellman Hall, Iona College, New Rochelle

Iona College and AJC sponsor Amy-Jill Levine, Professor of New Testament Studies and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University on . Dr. Levine will speak on "Jewish-Christian Relations: Remembering the Past, Celebrating the Present, Seeking the Future".

March 9th, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Thomas J Burke Lounge, Spellman Hall, Iona College, New Rochelle

Rabbi David Fox Sandmel, Director of Interfaith Affairs, Anti-Defamation League, will discuss "Jews, Christians, and Israel"

April 23rd. Our Congregation's Seder be Saturday night, April 23rd. Be sure to watch for information in our next issue about our Seder to be held on the second Seder night. See Iris for preliminary details if you are interested. Friends and family are welcome. You will be receiving a reservation letter closer to the date.

KIDDUSH SPONSORS – JANUARY 2016



Thanks to
Rabbi and Mary Soltz
for providing Kiddush,
in
memory of the Yahrzeits
of their mothers,
Sylvia Soltz and Lois
Abel.

Also celebrated on Jan-
uary 30th was the
Rabbi's upcoming
birthday.



We all enjoy the food and camaraderie of Kiddush. Please consider helping to sponsor one in the future, either by making a financial contribution to offset our



costs, or by cooking and baking the goodies in your own kitchen. Just contact Harriet or Rita to let them know when you'd like to sponsor.



How We Got Here-Schneidemuhl

By Joe Fibel

My father's paternal grandparents, Moses Levy, born in the town of Lindenbaum (Peartree) in the Grossherzogthum (Grandduchy) of Posen in 1806 and his wife Leah Levy, nee Cohen, born in 1815, lived in Schneidemuhl (Sawmill), Posen, until 1846 when they left there to come to America. They brought with them their three sons, Jacob, Jonas, and Meyer. They came through the port of Philadelphia, where they lived for a short time. They then moved to Easton, Pennsylvania where they had two more children, Frederica, born in 1848 and my grandmother, Rosalia, who was born in 1850.

Although I have been doing genealogical research for many years, I have not been able to find a ship's Manifest for the Levy family. We were able to find a book about Easton, called Considered The Years, The History of the Jewish Community of Easton, 1752-1942, by Rabbi Joshua Trachtenberg, Rabbi of Temple Brith Sholom, the Temple in Easton, where Moses and Leah and their children prayed.

Moses was listed as being a member of this congregation in 1856. I was also able to obtain a copy of Moses Levy's Naturalization Certificate as a U.S. citizen, dated in 1851. When my mother, Martha Fibel, z"l, died, I discovered among her papers. The Easton, Pa., Marriage Certificate of Rosalia Levy and Herman Feibel, my paternal grandfather. This certificate is dated July 15, 1883. We framed it and hung it in our den. Although we have many

family pictures on our walls, this perhaps is our most precious.

Herman Feibel became a member of this congregation in 1870 and a Trustee in 1875-1877, as per the above book. Rosalia seemed to prefer to spell the name as Fibel but Herman kept his spelling as Feibel. Since Herman was in Easton in 1870, I figured he arrived in the U.S. at least two years earlier but there is no ship's manifest either in the Philadelphia or New York archives. Aunt Gerty wrote on an application for a delayed birth certificate that Herman was born in Kalisz and I believed this until the complete Kalisz birth records were indexed about ten years ago and no Feibel is included there. Maybe Herman said something like "I was born near Kalisz" or perhaps Aunt Gerty just guessed.

We learned more about Schneidemuhl some twenty five years ago, when we joined Wave Hill in the Bronx. A cousin of my father's saw our name on the new members list and contacted us. My parents never discussed their roots and hers did. I brought our copy of the Easton book to her apartment in the Bronx and she pointed out a picture of her grandfather, Emanuel Meline, and she filled in her family data for our tree.

So all the above is how you research your family. Take the information you have, talk to other family members, and get involved with Jewishgen. You can do it even if you didn't ask questions all those years ago.

Dear Members;

Please let us know if there is a simcha in your family.

Kindly call or phone Mary Soltz if you would like to share an important event in your or your loved ones' lives.

Let us all be happy with and for you.

Mary's phone: 817-654-9572

E-mail: masoltz@aol.com

Yahrzeits: February and March

The following names will be read on the dates mentioned:

Philip Adler	Father of Herbert Adler	2/6/2016
Deborah Ann Fortier	Sister of Jimmy Fortier	2/6/2016
Marion Stern	Mother of Florence Reiff	2/6/2016
Harris Wasserman	Grandfather of Helene Miller	2/13/2016
Jack Seligman	Father of Philip Seligman	2/13/2016
Claire Seider	Mother of Carole Rubin	2/13/2016
Moses David Katz	Father of Jeff Katz	2/13/2016
Frances Dworetsky	Mother of Ed Dworetsky	2/13/2016
Mamie Sieger	Grandmother of Irma Volk	2/13/2016
Percy Wisoff	Father of Hugh Wisoff	2/13/2016
Michael Leonard Freedman	Husband of Cora Freedman	2/13/2016
Susan Sussman	Wife of Ken Sussman	2/13/2016
Minnie Urvant	Mother of Lorraine Weber	2/20/2016
Ann Newman	Mother of Leonard Newman	2/27/2016
Isaac Clark	Father of Jack Clark	2/27/2016
David G. David	Husband of Jane David	3/5/2016
Hugh Wisoff	Husband of Irene Wisoff	3/5/2016
Adele Diamond	Mother of Joan Silver	3/12/2016
Barbara Leggett	Sister of Jane David	3/12/2016
Dora Wasserman	Mother of Helene Miller	3/19/2016
Seymour Polden	Husband of Iris Farber	3/26/2016

Please Remember the Poor and the Hungry:

Bring a can or two or package(s) of dry food on Shabbat
for the Food for the Hungry.

Iris is continuing the work she had done with our
beloved Izzy, and will transport collected food
to the Church for distribution to those in need.



TRIBUTES

From

Gordon L. White, MD.

In memory of Dr. Hugh Solomon Wisoff, and in honor of Irene Lutzky Wisoff, both of whom have had a significant influence on Dr. White's life-through the arts, science-medicine and the importance of faith, hope and mishpacha.

Susan Adler

In honor of her fellow congregants

James Fortier

In memory of beloved sister, Deborah on her Yahrzeit

The Beauty Parlor

By Bernice Schwartz

There is an establishment
on Main Street
in Elmsford, NY,
where hope never dies.

It is Tony's Beauty Salon.
Largely patronized by
women and men in their eighties,
mostly overweight,
and wrinkled.

Their belief, tightly held,
Is that
they can improve their appearance
by succumbing to the ministrations
of talented Tony
and manicurist/psychologist, Rene.

If the white hair
is colored and curled
one can avoid
noticing the face which it surrounds.

If the nails
are colored,
filed and shaped,
one can avoid
seeing the liver spots and blue veins.

Rene gently listens
with a twinkle in her eye
to problems and solutions,
strengthening egos.

They gladly pay the required compensation
to validate their illusion.

Well worth it, they say,
with a smile on their faces.

***SHABBAT & HOLIDAY TORAH AND
HAFTARAH READINGS***

February 6

Torah: Parashat Mishpatim

Exodus 21:1 - 24:18

Haftarah: Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26

March 5

Torah: Vayakhel

Exodus 35:1-38:20

Haftarah: I Kings 7:13-7:26

February 13

Torah: Parashat Terumah

Exodus 25:1-27:19

Haftarah: I Kings 5:26-6:13

March 12

Torah: Pekudei

Exodus 38:21 - 40:38

Haftarah: I Kings 7:40 - 7:50

February 20

Torah: Tetzaveh

Exodus 27:20-30:10

Haftarah: Ezekiel 43:10-43:27

March 19

Torah: Vayikra

Leviticus 1:1 - 5:26

Haftarah: Isaiah 43:21 - 44:23

February 27

Torah: Ki Tisa

Exodus 30:11-34:35

Haftarah: I Kings 18:20-18:39

March 26

Torah: Tzav

Leviticus 6:1 - 8:36

Haftarah: Jeremiah 7:21 - 8:3; 9:22 - 9:23

Save the date
Our Congregational Seder
(held on the second Seder night)
Saturday, April 23 here at the synagogue.
Watch for more information.