



Beth Israel Congregation

1625 RESERVOIR ROAD
GREELEY, COLORADO 80631
970/353-0869
<http://www.bethisraelcolorado.org>

March/April 2009, No. 204

Calendar *(location is the synagogue for all events)*

March 2009

- 8 Sunday, 5:00 p.m.
Purim, Rabbi Sara Gilbert
Dairy potluck, followed by:
Costume contest for all ages
Reading of the Megillah
(Book of Esther)
- 15 Sunday, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Rabbi Gilbert's Sunday class
- 16 Monday, 7:00 p.m.
Board meeting
- 22 Sunday, deadline for Seder RSVP
- 23 Monday, 6:00 p.m.
HP Sisterhood
- 28 Saturday, 7:30 p.m.
Havdalah Service followed by:
Kosher Wine Tasting and Appetizers
(Sponsored by BIMA)

April 2009

- 2 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Board meeting
- 9 Thursday, 5:00 p.m.
Passover Community Seder
- 12 Sunday, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Rabbi Gilbert's Sunday class
- 13- Holocaust Memorial Observances
17 See insert or visit Web site,
www.bethisraelcolorado.org
- 17 Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Holocaust Memorial Observance and
Erev Shabbat Service,
Rabbi Sara Gilbert
- 26 Sunday, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Rabbi Gilbert's Sunday class

Looking ahead

- May 2, Saturday, Shabbat Service
May 29, Friday, Erev Shabbat Service
May 31, Sunday, HP Sisterhood
June 12, Friday, Erev Shabbat Service
June 27, Saturday, Shabbat Service,
Riley Reed Bar Mitzvah



From Rabbi Sara's Desk **Why Be Jewish?**

RABBI SARA GILBERT



In response to a request from people who had asked to read some of my sermons about “Critical Jewish Questions” from the Holy Days, I included an excerpt from my talk, “Why Be Jewish?” in my column a couple of months ago. I continue now with more from this sermon. With the approach of Passover, our celebration of liberation from Egyptian bondage for the purpose of entering into a special relationship with our God at Mt. Sinai, I find this message continues to be especially timely.

Why Be Jewish? How to summarize the wide-ranging intellectual and emotional responses that come to mind? Rabbi David Wolpe’s book *Why Be Jewish?* was helpful to me as I framed my response for you. Rabbi Wolpe spoke of fulfillment as the ultimate good, for our Jewish tradition tells us that the most important aim in our lives is to grow in soul. Judaism, he said,

“insists that God not only created human beings, but gave them the tools and wisdom to raise themselves above the physical daily-ness of life into the realm of the spirit.” (pages 78-79)

It is for our soul’s self-realization that we are in relation with the Holy One. Whether we praise God, thank God, feel humble before God, or strive to accomplish what we believe is God’s work on earth, all this does nothing for God, but does everything for our souls. Judaism tells us that we should rise to the

potential of the Divine spark within for our own sake.

Against our will, the Talmud teaches, we are born, and against our will, we die. But the tale told within those brackets is not fated, Rabbi Wolpe reminded us. A “self” is born of choice. Although we do not create our circumstances in this world, we do decide upon our responses to them. Each individual is faced with practical and ethical choices everyday.

And what are the tools for making good choices? Rabbi Wolpe saw two, the two that our Jewish religion provides for us:

- moral discipline and
- spiritual discipline.

Both are expressions of self-love and self-respect. A life of discipline shows esteem for one’s own soul, he said. And we know

(continued on p. 3)

that is true. If you are a parent now, if you ever were a child yourself, you know that true caring involves discipline, first from another and then self-directed.

I've made reference before to those *mitzvotben adam l'chavero*, commandments or obligations among persons, that is moral discipline. That framework for how we are to be engaged with the world and to get along with others in the world is so important in Judaism. Those others are our family members, teachers, those with whom we do business, the poor and ill, and people in our neighborhood, and on the other side of the world. The moral framework that our tradition provides addresses all of these relationships.

And Judaism provides the framework for how we are to get along with our God. This structure is provided by the *mitzvotben adam l'makom*, commandments or obligations that affect the relation between a person and God, spiritual discipline. It is in this area that our lives are elevated, sanctified and made rich. Our Judaism helps us to develop the attitudes of appreciation and gratitude that make for happiness in our crazy world. It is not to say that getting along with God will make our lives perfect.

*Judaism is
designed to give
you a life
of meaning,
of purpose,
of importance,
and of the
knowledge
that you are
never alone.*

The practice of Judaism will not make you thin, or rich, or smart, or popular. That's not what it is designed to do. But it is realistic to say that getting along with God provides spiritual partnership for us. Judaism helps us to know how to make that relationship satisfying and comforting. Judaism is designed to give you a life of meaning, of purpose, of importance, and of the knowledge that you are never alone.

Our Judaism instructs us how to brighten our souls, stimulate our minds, and enrich our lives. Judaism is inspiration, energy, and will. It is a guide to investing your life in what really matters. Everything that could be ordinary can be made holy. We are encouraged to celebrate life with joy, and to

mourn and comfort, with compassion. We are to improve the world, along with others who have the same lofty goals.

Being Jewish makes me proud and humble, satisfied yet yearning, peaceful and impatient. How does being Jewish make you feel? If you were asked, what answers would you include?

Pose this question to your Jewish friends. Share your answers with your family members. I would love to hear your responses, too!

Officers and Board Elections

JULIE GIVAN-WITTOW

On January 25, 2009, at the Annual Membership Meeting, the following members were elected:

Tracey Adams and **Rick Silverman**, board members (three-year terms)

Becky Weeder will continue as Vice President (two-year term)

Barry Shelofsky was elected President (two-year term).

Congratulations to everyone who was elected by acclamation that evening. Please remember to contact any board member or officer with any concerns or suggestions.



From the President

BARRY SHELOFSKY

My name is Barry Shelofsky, and I was elected President of Beth Israel Congregation on January 25, 2009.

When I was first contacted by the nominating committee to see if I was interested in running for president, I said, “I’d think about it.” Well, I mulled it over for a few days and reached a decision. “Yes, I would be willing to be nominated for president.”

I decided that I was willing to be nominated because I truly want to make a positive difference for our congregation and community. Maybe I was inspired by President Obama’s focus on community service or that I just wanted to be a good role model for my kids.

So as I take on a new role, I will strive, with the guidance and support of the Board of Trustees, Rabbi Sara Gilbert, and our tremendously talented congregation, to meet the needs of our congregation and any challenges ahead.



Hebrew Progressive Sisterhood

DOROTHY RESNICK

HP Sisterhood met with synagogue President Barry Shelofsky and donated the money from the Beth Israel Cookbook fundraiser to pay for the new floor in the entry, kitchen, and social area. We also discussed who would bring Hamentaschen to our Purim potluck and plans for our Seder.

Monday, March 23, 6:00 p.m.

Bring a sack lunch. Naomi will be in charge as we organize the archives and help in the library. We will work on materials for our Beth Israel 100 Year Celebration and finalize Seder plans.

No meeting in April.

Sunday, May 3, 11:00 a.m. (Perkins)

This will be our annual baby shower for the United Way Promises for Children.

Why Be Jewish?

RABBI SARA GILBERT

Yosef Abramowitz, a human rights activist, ecologist in Israel and journalist, was questioned about the value of being a Jew. He explained that the real, down-to-earth reason to be Jewish is because living Jewishly is good.

- Be a Jew and be a link in a holy chain stretching back to Abraham and Sarah and forward to messianic times, Abramowitz explained.
- Be a Jew because it may shape you into a better person.
- Be a Jew and enter a pluralistic community that thinks, nurtures and acts.
- Be a Jew and discover that every year, season, month, week, day, joy and sorrow are sanctified by our tradition.
- Be a Jew and through Jewish study dialogue with a third century rabbi over issues of justice, family life and even food.

Being actively Jewish is difficult and requires constant learning and attention to detail. Perhaps it is not for everyone. But if it is for you, its treasures are yours to seek out, and in the process you can help fill the moral vacuum in a tumultuous world searching for meaning and peace.

Ta Sh'ma* Come and Learn!

RABBI SARA GILBERT

"A Taste of Texts" Study Selections from Our Significant Writings, including Tanach, Talmud, Codes, and Israeli Literature

The series of classes continue on Sunday mornings, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., at the synagogue. It is not too late to come!

Interested adults and teens are invited to participate in Jewish learning with Rabbi Sara while enjoying text-based discussion and Sunday morning coffee with friends. Classes of one- or two-session lengths are offered during the winter and spring.

Dates of upcoming classes and texts

March 15	<i>Gemara</i>
April 12	Maimonides' <i>Mishneh Torah</i>
April 26	<i>Shulchan Aruch</i>
May 17	Hasidic Masters
June 7	Israeli writer Shai Agnon

Participants may choose the number of classes to attend, based on your schedules and interest. Come to every session or just one. Purchase your "pass" and come when you are able.

Fees

Four classes: \$54

single or additional class: \$15

Payment is requested in one or two payments at the first and/or second class attended, with checks made payable to Beth Israel.

PLEASE NOTE: It is very important that everyone participate in Torah study! Scholarship assistance will be available. Please be sure to speak to the Rabbi about your need. No one will be turned away due to financial concerns.

Please write or call Rabbi Sara (sgilberet772@msn.com / 303-832-4051) if you have any questions. I look forward to studying with you!

*TahShma – is a term found in the Talmud, meaning “come listen” or “come and learn this,” used by the sages to call our attention to a particular issue, lesson or answer to a problem

To Not Stand Idly By –

RABBI SARA GILBERT

Who does not have a friend or family member who has lost a job? Been phased out? Become the victim of downsizing? We all fear that we have not seen the worst yet in our depressed economy. We all hope that President Obama's recovery plans will speedily bring relief for those who are most in need.

The situation has led me to ask what we as a community can do to help those going through the agony of a job search and the terrible worry about finances at this most difficult time. In our Beth Israel family and extended family of friends, there are those who are in need of new work. My hope is that there are those, too, who might have jobs

in need of filling, who might know of positions that are available, who might have work that needs doing.

I would very much like to serve as a confidential network or "clearinghouse" on behalf of our congregation for this information. If you have lost a job, please send me a brief description of the type of work you seek. If you know of job openings in your firm, business or company, please let me know, too. I cannot secure employment or fill positions, but can hopefully put people in touch with each other. Together, we can find some creative ways to help each other through challenging times. Thank you!

BE SURE TO COME IN COSTUME !!

Come join us
Beth Israel
Purim Celebration
Sunday, March 8
5:00 p.m.
Dairy potluck
Reading of the Megillah
(Book of Esther)

Costume contests for kids, teens, and adults.

Prizes will be awarded for the best, most creative, funniest, or most elaborate costumes!



People

Our sympathies on the recent passing of **Jill Bland**'s brother Jeffrey Marmeizat in California. May the Holy One grant this family comfort and consolation, and may Jeffrey's memory always be a blessing to all who loved him.



Jo-Ann Mullen has recently been chosen as a selector for the 2009 Colorado Book Award in the Juvenile Fiction category. Congratulations, Jo-Ann.

Ben Bellman will be part of the Greeley West High School cast in their upcoming production of *Cats*. He will be playing Admetus. When you attend, pay particular attention to his "fur." It was knit by Debbie, his mother. Performances are Fridays, 7:30 p.m., March 13, 20, 27; Saturday, 7:30 p.m., March 14, 28; and Saturday, 2:00 p.m., March 14.

Greeley Central High School's Thespian Troupe 657 presents *Little Shop of Horrors* by Alan Menken, March 25 to 28 at 7:30 p.m., in the Greeley Central High School auditorium. For tickets, call 248-5133. **Dylan Shelofsky** plays the part of Ronnette in the trio, and **Gabe Goodman** plays the role of Ski-Snip.

Colorado high school girls' swimming meet results: **Dylan Shelofsky** was 16th in the 100 back stroke with a time of 1:05.03 and was part of the medley relay team that was 8th with a time of 1:58.01.

Greeley Central High School Chamber Choir will be singing during this year's Holocaust Memorial Observance Service at Beth Israel on Friday evening, April 17. **Dylan Shelofsky** is part of the choir and was instrumental in the choir performing for us.

Dear Friends,

As I have continued the long, long process of sorting through my parents' thousands of papers, letters, photos, etc., I have come to realize some important things. One is how very much all of you, Beth Israel friends current and past, meant to Morris and Eleanor. I hope you believe me when I tell you that they saved EVERY note, letter, invitation, birthday card, get well card, anniversary card, thank you note, etc. etc. that every one of you ever sent them! (This includes, of course, friends who moved far away as well as those who stayed in Greeley.)

As Beth Israel approaches its milestone anniversary (I think we can wish it more than 120!), my family and I continue to value your friendship and connection down through the generations.

With affection, Nina Judd

Contributions

Mitzvah Fund

In honor of Bob and Monica Kahn's 50th wedding anniversary, from Joe and Carol Bluestein, Michael and Rabbi Sara Gilbert, Jerry and Nancy Weil.

In celebration of Roger and Sylvia Greenberg's new home, from Jonathan and Deborah Bellman.

For a wonderful Saturday service, from Tessa Kershner.

For Yom Hashoah, from Laura Manuel.

In honor of Jerry Weil's award as the North Colorado Medical Center Foundation's 2009 Honoree, from Hilda Moskowitz.

In honor of Michael and Rabbi Sara, Sara Reed, Arie Drapeau, and Dorothy Resnick for all they have done for Beth Israel Congregation, from Robert and Rebecca Weeder.

In honor and appreciation of Julie Givan-Wittow, from Jerry and Betty Goodman.

A general donation from Bob and Monica Kahn

Roof Repair

From Bob and Monica Kahn, Laura Manuel

Stone

In honor of Rachel Bus, from Rae Barnett Weiland, Stephen Barnett, and Mark Barnett.

B'not Mitzvah

In celebration of the B'not Mitzvah for Linda Blanton, Julie Givan-Wittow, Laura Levine, Bonnie Rohn, Lucie Shelofsky, Becky Weeder, and Michell Wilson, from Bob and Monica Kahn



Office Hours at the synagogue

Wednesday, March 25
4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 26
12:00 Noon – 2:00 p.m.

Rabbi's Office Hours

Anyone wishing to counsel, consult, study or just chat with the rabbi is very welcome. It is best to make an appointment in advance by calling 303-832-4051 or e-mailing sgilbert772@msn.com but you can drop in, too. Of course, Rabbi Sara is available by phone or e-mail if you need to contact her, and other appointment times can be arranged.

Calling All E-Addresses!

If you have an e-mail address and do not receive e-mails from Rabbi Sara once-in-a-while, please send her your address (sgilbert772@msn.com). Those on the Beth Israel list receive helpful reminders about services and events, and timely extra congregational notices.

Editor's Note: The newsletter is always posted on the Beth Israel Web site each month. If you would like a personal e-mail as to when the newsletter is available for downloading, please let me know: mc_nelson@hotmail.com

The Yiddish Corner **aroysgevorfen**

SUBMITTED BY NANCY WEIL

Pronounced *ah-ROYCE-ge-vor-fen*, the *royce* rhyming with "choice," the *vorfen* with "orphan." From German.

Thrown out.

This simple adjective carries a cargo of regret, for it means "wasted," and Jews are not second to New Englanders in their disapproval of wastefulness; *aroysgevorfen* is applied not only to material things.

My mother would often end a lecture to me with the dour lament that her words were probably in vain: *Aroysgevorfeneb verter* (thrown out words)!" Was ever a phrase more heartfelt?

Aroysgevorfeneb yoren (years), enunciated with a sigh deep from the diaphragm, or with bitterness, refers to the wasted years that can never be relived. Jewish women are, by tradition, prone to lament their lot with this phrase.

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Aroysgevorfeneb gelt (money) describes a useless purchase, an investment that did not prove fruitful, or (as in the story below) a gesture that went awry.

Benny and Moe wanted to give their mother a new and different birthday present. They went from shop to shop until, to their wonder and delight, they found – a parrot that spoke Yiddish! This astonishing bird cost \$500, but the devoted sons decided it was worth it.

Think of the hours of hours of pleasure their old-fashioned mother would derive from conversing with the extraordinary parrot; and think of the admiration the bird would

elicit among Mamma’s friends in the sisterhood.

So, the sons bought a beautiful gilded cage, and placed the parrot inside, and had the singular birthday gift delivered to Mamma.

Then, in great excitement, they telephoned: “Mamma, mamma, how did you like your present?”

“Delicious!” said Mamma.

FROM: *The Joys of Yiddish* by Leo Rosten. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.

Please accept my donation of \$ _____ for the indicated fund. (Check one)

In Honor of In Memory of

If *yahrzeit*, date: _____

Name and address of person to be notified of contribution (if applicable):

Your name and address:

Check here if you do not wish to have your contribution publicized in the *Greeley Jewish News*.

For any of the following funds, make checks payable to Beth Israel Congregation and mail along with this form to Jeff Goodman, P. O. Box 867, Greeley, CO 80632

- Mitzvah
- Aliyah/Youth Scholarship
- Dinner Memorial Torah
- Building
- Resnick Endowment
- Singer Memorial Garden
- Leaf (\$54)
- Stone (\$500) -- In Memory of
- Other

The *Greeley Jewish News* is published by Beth Israel Congregation as a service to the Jewish community of Northern Colorado.

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All others: \$20.00 per year

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President Barry Shelofsky (356-4163)

or

Treasurer Jeff Goodman (352-7229)

Or mail to: P.O. Box 867, Greeley, CO 80632

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