

Drawing by Marilyn Margolies

Temple Israel of the Poconos

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BOARD MEETING WEDNESDAY

May 6 7:00 p.m.

THE LOST CHILDREN

by Rabbi Baruch Binyamin Hakohen Melman



Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of the secret archives for perusal and examination, they are now saying that the death toll of the Holocaust is now much closer to seven million souls, taking in all the newly discovered data concerning the Einsatzgruppen, the mobile killing squads that went deep into Ukrainian and Russian territory, rounding up and slaughtering countless Jewish populations of countless country villages and towns.

But even these new figures are surely low. Well, yes and no. It depends on what you mean by "the dead." If you mean physically dead, then yes, the final death count is likely closer to seven million than to six million. But if you mean to include the total number of Jews who were lost to our people, to the Jewish people, whom we love so dearly as veritable mishpucha, then one can argue that we lost altogether eleven million Jews.

Now since the dawn of time, if nature is allowed to take its course, each generation is usually followed by a slightly larger generation. An aged couple might live to see some dozens of biological descendants before shucking their mortal coils. So when we hear that of the six million who were killed, and that of that number we tragically lost but one and a half million children, something does not sound kosher.

Follow me closely while we do some math. Perhaps take out a pencil and paper to follow along. After subtracting the deaths of the 1 1/2 million children, we are now left with 4 1/2 million adults, male and female. Assuming that at least half a million never married or had children, we now have 2 million males and 2 million females, or just 2 million couples. Now in Eastern Europe the families tended to be larger, from 5 -10 children, reflecting the traditional birth patterns. The bulk of Europe's Jews still lived in the East. But even if we lower the numbers to factor in the Western European families and that even the most fruitful of families varied in size along a spectrum depending on the age of the couple, still we find a great disparity. So even if we allow to say that each family had three offspring, from two million couples there should have been produced at least six million children!

But if "only" 1 1/2 million children died, where are the other 4 1/2 million children? Aside from the 10,000 who were saved via the Kindertransport operation before the war, these millions of children were likely given over to their gentile neighbors to be looked after until the war was over. But their parents never came home. These children grew up as Poles, Romanians, Russians and Ukrainians mostly, never knowing they were Jews. They are elderly now. And not a few received a shock to learn from many a deathbed confession that they are really Jews, like it or not.

And so it begs the question, what does it mean then, for us, to be cut off spiritually from our people and our faith? How assimilated have we become, and what are we prepared to do about it? Based on our Jewish practices and our involvement with the Jewish community, or lack thereof, what are the chances that our children and our children's children will remain Jewish and not be similarly lost to our people? Questions to ponder indeed.

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Rabbi Melman's Office Hours:
Tuesday/Thursday 10:30 — 12:00
Wednesday 6:00—7:00
By appointment ONLY

Please provide Barbara with any information that is missing for you in the above grid. Thank you.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT Dr. Sandra Alfonsi

As I sit here writing my message for May, I am looking back at the month of April at Temple Israel. Foremost in my mind is the successful Pesach week which we spent together. We koshered our TI kitchen and our shul and held a lovely First Seder. We kept the kitchen open throughout Pesach, sharing two Pesach Kiddush luncheons and our second Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Melman. Our Seder and both Shabbat Pesach lunches were well attended. Rabbi Melman's Pesach Lunch and Learn, an important addition to the observance of Pesach in our community provided insight into Kiddush prayers and practices. We plan to add a Lunch and Learn to each of our major holiday observances and we hope to have a stronger turnout. Our Yiskor service was well attended but we still need to enhance participation in services during all of our holidays to insure a Minyan each day.

As I look back on this past April it pains me to admit that what our Executive Board did a year ago to try to increase TI membership and also to bring new children into our Hebrew School has not worked. My Executive Board voted unanimously to eliminate our entire dues structure and replace it with an Affiliation Fee of \$200 per person. They also voted to make Hebrew School free for the children and grandchildren of our members. We acknowledged the economic problems faced by many – young and senior alike. We believed then that if given the opportunity people would join TI and participate in events whose prices remained the same as the previous year. We believed that young families would welcome the opportunity to give their children a Hebrew School education and be affiliated with a traditional Conservative egalitarian congregation. We believed that we could address apathy and indifference with interesting programming, communal events and meals and even shortened services.

The painful reality is that we cannot reach Jews who do not wish to be reached. We cannot grow our Hebrew School without reaching young parents who cherish their Judaism and their "Jewishness" and want to pass their heritage onto their children. We cannot fight the rising tide of Antisemitism and Antisraelism without reaching Jews who willingly identify as Jews and supporters of Israel.

With the support of the Abeloff Foundation we have modernized and beautified Temple Israel but we still have not attracted members and we still have not increased the number of volunteers needed to fill our Board, work on our events and increase our Minyans. This May we will have three Bat Mitzvah celebrations but we have not brought in 3 new children to study with us and begin the cycle of their Jewish life. I believe that there are unaffiliated Jews – young and senior, in our community, in our neighborhoods and even in our families. I also believe that it is incumbent upon us to identify them and to invite them to join with us in the celebration of Judaism. I am asking for your proactive involvement in addressing the issue of TI membership.

Sandra

Sunday, June 5 Israeli Cabaret Evening Celebrating Yom Yerushalaim

The Golan Chapter of Hadassah will hold an authentic Israeli Cabaret Evening at Temple Israel of the Poconos 8:00-10:00 PM to celebrate the Reunification of Jerusalem – Yom Yerushalaim.

Yoel Sharabi + two musicians will entertain.

Israeli salads, pita, desserts, sodas, coffee, etc. will be served.

Bring your own bottle of kosher wine.

\$15 per person to cover costs. This is not a fundraiser.

The Normal Mystics **by Norman Gelber**



The rabbis who wrote the Talmud have been described as “normal mystics.” The normal mystic is described as God-intoxicated, so drunk with his nearness to God that he sees the divine presence in everyday life: a beautiful sight in nature, a storm, a rainbow, birth, and growth. He perceives the created universe, with all its various forms of life, as the work of a divine Artist. And he interprets righteous behavior as a human aspect of divine art. Rabbi Akiba said to his disciples: “Just as the existence of a house testifies to the builder, the garment to the weaver, and the door to a carpenter, so does the world testify to the Holy One, blessed be He, who created it.”

Normal mysticism is implicit in the words of the Psalmist: “The heavens declare the glory of God,” which means that the stars, the planets, the sun, and the moon provide silent testimony to God as their Creator. Though the story of Purim doesn’t mention God, yet the miraculous deliverance of the Persian Jews from Haman’s intention to destroy them reveals God’s protective care.

In ancient Egypt, Joseph, who was the victim of his brothers’ envy and hostility, reassured them that they need not fear his vengeance because God had directed the scenario: “Now do not blame yourselves or be angry that you sold me here - for God sent me to save lives.” The unseen but protective role of God in the survival of the state of Israel also supports the beliefs of the normal mystics. Despite the many wars that the Arab nations, with superior numbers, have launched against Israel, that small nation had survived. It’s no coincidence that when Israel needed the reinforcement of more Jews to counterbalance the increasing Palestinian population in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, several thousands of Soviet Jews immigrated to Israel. Their timely arrival enriched Israel with a wave of engineers, teachers, doctors, and scientists who also strengthened Israel’s military position. We usually think of mystics as strange people who profess to have hallucinations or visions of God, heaven, and the angels, according to many incidences in the Bible.

In Exodus (29:9-10) such a mystical vision is described: "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet the like of a paved work of sapphire stone, and the like of the the very heaven for clearness."

But those who believe that the Lord “works in mysterious ways,” those who see in nature and in human life ample evidence of God’s handiwork, and those who discern in historical events His influence are, after all, normal mystics. And I guess that includes most of us.

Hebrew School News

by Rabbi Baruch Melman, Principal
and Debbie Smith, Administrative Director

Tuesday	May 3	5:00 — 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	May 10	5:00 — 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	May 17	5:00 — 7:00 p.m.
Sunday	May 22	Graduation and last day picnic 11:00 a.m.— 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday	May 24	Rain date for picnic 5:00 — 7:00 p.m.

Before all the accolades and self congratulations, let me state front and center that we need to improve service attendance in our Hebrew School. Practically every planned monthly attendance date was nearly a total bust. We are trying to integrate the younger families with the veteran shul attendees. Hebrew School is free, courtesy of the synagogue, but in return there is a minimal level of reciprocity that is expected. Okay, let's hope next year we will see improvement in this area.

As we conclude this year's final month of classes, we can take satisfaction in the positive feelings and associations that our children feel towards their studies at Temple Israel.

Our holidays are marked by joyous celebration and participation. Our children embrace Hebrew and read it fluently or are on their way to reading fluency.

Love of Israel is a central theme. And Jewish history is also prominent in the curriculum, in addition to holidays and prayers.

We had a joyous, sweet and light filled Chanukah, a joyous and fruity Tu Bishvat Seder, a joyous Purim Feast and Megillah reading, a scrumptious Chocolate Seder, and - a real Passover seder!

The weather was relatively kind to us this year, and so rarely did we lose any school days owing to inclement weather. Nothing like two years ago when half the school year was snowed out!

Finally, this month, we are thrilled that we have three back to back Bat Mitzvah celebrations!

Marla Stein on May 7.

Bailey Goldberg on May 14.

And Kyra Herschlag on May 21.

Mazal Tov to you all!

And may your families shep naches for many years to come!

And remember, a Bat Mitzvah is only a Beginning of adult Jewish commitment, NOT its end!

SLATE OF OFFICERS 2016-2017

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If you have any questions regarding the above Slate of Officers, please contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee:

Charlie Cahn — 424-7955

Irving Effross — 421-6802

Sam Newman — 421-8243

**Elections will be held on Wednesday, June 1st at 7:00 p.m.
Please attend to cast your vote and show your support
for the officers for the coming year.**

Ask the Rabbi



Dear Rabbi,

Note: This month I received a letter from my severely autistic cousin, with whom, because of technology and intensive support, we are now able to have our first interaction and conversation. Ever. It's definitely worthy of a shehecheyanu!

Dear Rabbi,

I have been curious for some time now to interview you and learn more. I am an autistic adult and I type to communicate. I hope that you will please respond with as much or as little as you are comfortable sharing.

Why did you choose rabbi as a career? Were you religious as a child? Do you like small crowds or large crowds to speak to? What is your favorite holiday? Who is your hero? When do you know when to retire? Do you cook Jewish food? Did you like rabbi school? Why or why not? How has being a rabbi shaped your life? How do you feel you have impacted other people's lives?

Many thanks for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Cousin Alan

Dear Cousin Alan,

I am delighted to answer your questions and I am thrilled that you have reached out to me through this amazing technology!

I wanted to become a rabbi because I got so much joy from being Jewish and I wanted to share that joy with others. We kept the basics of traditional Judaism while I was growing up. We kept kosher in the home and only had salads and fish when we were outside the home. My mom lit the Shabbat candles every Friday and she prepared a nice Shabbat dinner and my dad recited the Kiddush blessings over the wine. We went to synagogue every Shabbat morning. And on Sundays my dad helped out with the morning minyan and we wore tefillin. And on my own initiative I put on tefillin every weekday morning after my Bar Mitzvah.

My mom was a big influence because she was absolutely in love with Hebrew literature - both classical and modern. And a taste of Yiddish I got from my grandmother (Mrs. Deutsch), who lived with us for many years and who also was a big influence. Through her baking each and every day she made Judaism very real, very tasty and delicious.

When I was eleven, just six months following the Six Day War, my parents took me along with them on our own first trip to Israel. It was electrifying. Very intense, very satisfying, and very real. Also, Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach's vinyl recordings deeply affected me. They were a great source of spiritual comfort. They connected me to the cosmos and provided a place of psychological refuge.

I love all crowds, both large and small. Usually we get smaller crowds on a typical Shabbat. They are more intimate. But the larger ones we get on the High Holy Days are exciting to see.

Sukkot is my favorite holiday because it always coincides with my birthday and because I just love decorating my sukkah. We had our first sukkah in our home when I was thirteen. I built it myself out of plywood and 2 by 4's. I insisted to my parents that it's not enough to just attend the synagogue's sukkah on Shabbat. If the Torah says that we must dwell in it for seven days, then that's what we must do! Also, my eldest daughter's first whole sentence popped out of her mouth one year while I was decorating the sukkah. She asked me, "whatcha doin,' Abba?" Wait, did you just speak?

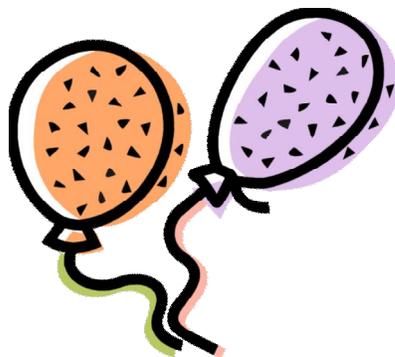
Also when I was thirteen I insisted that we make Havdalah when Shabbat is over. While we had many gorgeous Havdalah sets on the shelves, I insisted that we must live Judaism, and not let it become a museum on display.

My parents are my undisputed heroes. They transmitted to me their love of Judaism which, to their credit, was greatly integrated with the intellectual life, with the sciences and literature, and with the highest sense of ethics and the noblest values which make us fully human.

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Anniversaries	
May 04	Jeffrey and Robin Bair
May 21	Radcliffe and Sara McGowan
May 24	Allan and Carol Sitroon

May 2016 Birthdays	
May 02	Art Glantz
May 04	Andre McGowan
May 05	Barry Tremper
May 06	Edith Jacobson
May 10	James Crowley
May 12	Marilyn Goldman
May 17	Pearl Rothman
May 19	Jordan Speicher
May 20	Daniel Harter
May 21	Mariel Rodriguez
May 22	Bill Brown Howard Klein
May 24	Marla Stein
May 26	Mitchell Marcus
May 28	Marion Koshar
May 29	David Rosenberg Jacob Rubin
May 30	Abigail Stein



If you are celebrating a milestone year, whether it be birthday or anniversary, please let me know so others may celebrate with you.

**Contact: Suzanne Tremper
588-6148 or grand6ma@ptd.net**

**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR GENEROUS
DONATIONS TO TEMPLE ISRAEL OF THE POCONOS**

General Donations: **Marion Feller in memory of Lea Katz
 Art Glantz**

Yahrzeit Donations: **Melvin Rosenthal in memory of Ruth Rosenthal
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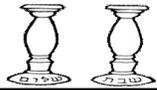
How would I know when to retire? I guess when they stop paying me. But seriously, they say that as long as you love what you do you're never really working. And I am truly grateful that I love what I do. I am my happiest when I am teaching.

Other than opening a jar, my favorite Jewish meal which I love to cook is cholent, a sort of bean and potato stew with assorted vegetables and spices thrown in for good measure. It keeps warm all Shabbat and totally fills you up. Having said that, I still love going out for a good hot pastrami on rye with a half sour pickle and a cream soda.

I loved my rabbinical studies! I was learning in yeshiva for eight years, so I'd better love it! We had very small intimate learning groups. Much like a college senior seminar. The small classes lent themselves to closer teacher and student connections. My studies were extremely rigorous. We were absolutely forbidden from reading any texts in translation. While I already knew Hebrew, Aramaic was a different story. Each word in Aramaic, the main language of the Talmud, had to be looked up individually. I literally wore the cover off my Aramaic dictionary.

Becoming a rabbi is, in a way, a heavy responsibility. If you mistreat people, Heaven forbid, people not only may hate you as a result, but they may also then hate all Jews, Judaism, and even come to hate G*d as well! And then there is the opposite! Performing acts of loving kindness helps to bring people to feel closer to Jews, to Judaism, as well as to G*d. It is a Sanctification of The Name (a Kiddush Hashem).

As for impacting the lives of others, I have become very envious of carpenters. A carpenter can clearly see the fruits of his labors each and every day. Before falling asleep each night he breathes deeply the satisfaction of knowing he has accomplished his task each day. But in my area of work sometimes you can't see the true impact for perhaps a generation (or two). I am just planting many seeds. Seeds of joy, seeds of observance and practice, seeds of learning and seeds of love. I guess I am just a holy gardener!



May Yahrzeit List



May 1	Nisan 23	Harriet Zdoresky Deborah Singman
May 3	Nisan 25	David Bernbaum Sarah Wimer
May 5	Nisan 27	Rose Burros Sarah Leiser Abraham Berkman
May 6	Nisan 28	William Odzer
May 7	Nisan 29	Herman Brown
May 8	Nisan 30	Maynard Abeloff Benjamin Sadagursky
May 11	Iyar 03	William Westheimer
May 13	Iyar 05	Barbara Gross Simon Goldberg Helen Driller Max Berman
May 14	Iyar 06	Neil Kevin Finkel Israel Malbin Caroline Rosenzweig
May 16	Iyar 08	Myron Ehrlich Anna Rabinowitz
May 17	Iyar 09	Annie Reader Harry Forster Jerry Sugarman
May 18	Iyar 10	Masha Trumpaitzky
May 20	Iyar 12	Frances Forster Sonya Fisher
May 21	Iyar 13	Abraham Lichtenbaum
May 23	Iyar 15	William Brown
May 25	Iyar 17	Beatrice Joseph
May 26	Iyar 18	Edward I. Odzer Murray Abeloff Jacob Bernbaum
May 27	Iyar 19	Rachel Jollowsky
May 28	Iyar 20	Florence Goldstein Julius Reader Leo Feinsilber
May 29	Iyar 21	Philip Goldstein
May 30	Iyar 22	Harry Smulyan



May Yahrzeit List



June Yahrzeits

June 1	Iyar 24	Stanley Iskowitz Arthur Jolley
June 2	Iyar 25	Robert Dean Cohen Sadye Rosenzweig
June 4	Iyar 27	Abraham Userowitz
June 8	Sivan 02	Minnie Glaser Jane Spears
June 9	Sivan 03	Amanda Canarte Ann Margolies
June 10	Sivan 04	Sophie Fleischmann Elsie Stelzer
June 11	Sivan 05	Carl Greenberg Irma Reicher
June 12	Sivan 06	Morton Silverman
June 13	Sivan 07	Evelyn Hill Harry Trumpaitzky
June 14	Sivan 08	Tom Breslauer
June 15	Sivan 09	Lilian August Anna Nadell Esther Parish Jerome Freiberg
June 16	Sivan 10	Max Blum Rose Goldberg Esther Jacobs
June 17	Sivan 11	Ludwig Schnog Louis Goldberg
June 18	Sivan 12	Joseph Greenberg Samuel Whitman
June 19	Sivan 13	Elsie Lustgarten
June 20	Sivan 14	Irene Mandel
June 21	Sivan 15	Norman D. Cohen
June 23	Sivan 17	Susan Carol Glass
June 24	Sivan 18	Ida Newman
June 25	Sivan 19	Hilda Garaventi Haiman Greenberg Ethel Silverwater
June 26	Sivan 20	Joseph Farber Charles Taxerman
June 27	Sivan 21	Minnie Dortort

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Friday Night Oneg: \$75

Package includes cakes, cookies, fresh fruit in season, hot coffee, milk, sweeteners, seltzer and cold beverages.

Shabbat Kiddush-Luncheon: \$125

Package includes 4 different salads, veggie platter, fresh fruits of the season, assorted cakes and/or cookies, hot coffee, milk, sweeteners, seltzer/cold beverages.

Each package is priced for 25 people.

Other special request items (including lox) are available upon request and for an additional fee; please contact me to design your own special event. For scheduling, availability and more information contact: Lois LaBarca at 421-6103

Sponsored Kiddush Luncheons must be arranged at least 2 weeks before the requested date. Dates must be given to Lois by phone or email and NOT during or following Shabbat Services.

**WE ALL HAVE SIMCHAS AND NACHES IN OUR LIFE
CELEBRATE AND COMMEMORATE WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING...**

SEND WARM THOUGHTS

Give Suzanne Tremper a call at 588-6148 or e-mail her at grand6ma@ptd.net and let someone know you're thinking of them. For a small contribution to the **Hessed Fund**, Suzanne will send a card wishing a Happy Birthday, Congratulations, Mazel Tov, Get Well or Condolences. A notice will appear in this bulletin, as well. When you call, please leave all the information needed.

TREE OF LIFE AND MEMORIALS

Add a leaf to the Tree of Life to celebrate births, birthdays, marriages, bar and bat mitzvahs, or any other special event for a minimum contribution of \$150. Remember loved ones with a Memorial Plaque at a minimum contribution of \$600 for members, \$850 for non-members.

Contact Suzanne Tremper at 588-6148.

ENDOWMENT FUND

It's always a great time to make a contribution. Make your check out to "Temple Israel." Another thought to consider, remember Temple Israel in your will.

Call the Temple office at 570-421-8781 or tipoc@ptd.net

**Honor or Remember Someone Special
with a Bookplate**

A bookplate can be placed in a Siddur, the weekly prayer book we use every Friday evening and Shabbat morning, or in a machzor, the prayer book which is used on the High Holidays. Remember a special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, bnei mitzvah or any other occasion you want to note for a relative or friend. You can also place a dedication in someone's memory. A nameplate with the donor, recipient, and occasion will be inserted. The minimum donation is \$50.



Contact Herb Rosen, 424-1161, or at herbr12@ptd.net.

Do you need a Mi Sheberach Recited?

When you can't make services, but would like a prayer said on behalf of someone important to you, please don't hesitate to call the synagogue and leave a message on the Temple answering machine for Rabbi Melman so that your prayers will be included in our services.

**FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE.....
we offer you a challenge!**

We need everyone to help with this. Surely you know individuals and families who have no affiliation with a Synagogue. Encourage them to become members of our Temple Israel Family!

**If every family brings in one individual or family,
think of the possibilities!**

At Temple events, be they regular Shabbat Services or a social occasion, introduce yourself to anyone you don't recognize. You'll make new friends and assist us in enlarging our family.

YOU CAN BE PART OF OUR SUCCESS!!

For information please contact:

Dr. Sandra Alfonsi
223-7062
sanalfonsi@aol.com

or Temple Israel 421-8781

Please leave a phone number so that we may return your call.

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For information concerning this publication contact Barbara Rosenberg, Editor, (570) 894-4537/barb74@ptd.net.

Now on the web at: www.templeisraelofthepoconos.org

All submissions are subject to review by the editorial committee.

Please submit all articles for consideration to:

Barbara Rosenberg

570-894-4537 or barb74@ptd.net

**PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE FOR THE
NEXT ISSUE OF YOUR NEWSLETTER:
JUNE NEWSLETTER: MAY 20**

Temple Israel of the Poconos is located at 711 Wallace Street in Stroudsburg. Friday evening services begin at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 a.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME!