TEMPLE OF AARON'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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**December 1, 2021** 

27 Kislev 5782

Spiritual Theme of December (Avodah): Rising out of Darkness to Light

### Kehillat Shabbat Hanukkah Style Musical Service

With Musician-in-Residence Coleen Dieker & Clergy

December 3rd at 6:00 pm

See more information on page 4.

# Hallel with Harmony December 4th

Join C/E Joshua Fineblum,
Musician-in-Residence Coleen Dieker,
David Baldinger, Erin Baldinger, &
Mark Divine on Shabbat morning with a
musical Hallel to enhance Hanukkah.

## Family Latke Bash

December 5th at 9:30 am

Enjoy a concert with Musician-in-Residence Coleen Dieker, Latkes, & Hanukkah Crafts!



# The Rabbi's Desk

**December Avodah:** 

Rising out of Darkness to Light

Oil Makes It All Better

The best chicken is fried chicken. Proof #1: The (in)

famous incident of the nation-wide obsession with the

Popeyes fried-chicken sandwich in 2019. I still lived in Middletown, NY at the time and I remember passing

by our local Popeyes restaurant, surprised to see the

drive-thru line winding around the block fifty cars

deep. They all were waiting for one thing — the famous Popeves Fried chicken sandwich (by the way given

outstanding reviews by such esteemed publications as the Washington Post, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the

Business Insider.) Now, let's be honest, I never was

able to taste the sandwich since there is no Popeves

restaurant that is kosher. That being said, whenever



Rabbi Marcus Rubenstein

651-252 6411 Fmail:

rabbimarcusrubenstein@templeofaaron.org I'm given a choice over how I like my chicken, dumplings, noodles, potatoes, ice-cream, Oreos, Milky Ways there is only one answer: fried. Thank God, we now have a kosher fried chicken spot right here in the twin cities, "Chickies" at the Mall of America, a ToA clergy favorite hang and the location of an exciting, upcoming ToA young adult event on Nov. 29.

That all being said, what is the magic behind this fried madness? Oil. The food is bathed, one might even say anointed, in oil. It is a tradition during the Hanukkah holiday (coming soon to a synagogue near you) to eat foods cooked with oil. For that reason, we will hopefully soon be stuffed with delicious latkes, donuts (known as sufganiot in Israel) and yes, maybe even fried chicken during the Hanukkah Holiday. The tradition stems from a famous single cruse of oil which miraculously kindled the Temple menorah for eight whole days. To remember this miracle, we try to eat oily foods during the Hanukkah holiday.

What is so special about oil? The story surely could have been about a single bottle of water that lasted eight days, arrows that multiplied, walls that just wouldn't crumble - why oil?! Oil always marks occasions in the Torah, where surprising goodness and blessing spring up from the darkest of place. The first time oil appears in the Torah is after Jacob dreams of a ladder from Earth to Heaven with angels descending up and down, he wakes up and in gratitude proclaims, "Surely God is present in this place and I didn't know it!" (Gen. 28:16) Marking his surprise and gratitude, he takes the rock he used as a pillow the night before and poured oil over it setting it up as a permanent altar before the Lord. He marks this seemingly inconspicuous rock as miraculous by pouring oil on it. Oil here symbolizes the transformation of a simple common rock to a holy gateway to the heavens. (For deeper study, check out the sidebar for how Hebrew Scripture uses oil similarly in other areas.)

Oil symbolizes a similar message in Hanukkah. Hanukkah is all about finding light in seemingly very dark places. Hanukkah takes place during the darkest time of year yet is the holiday of lights. The Maccabees surprisingly overcame the mighty Greek military. This month, we will be reading the Torah portions that detail the famous Joseph story (Watch Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat for spark notes!) Joseph too, rises from the darkest depths - he is literally thrown into a deep hole by his brothers and sold into slavery to the highest heights — becoming second to Pharoah, through which he saves the whole region from an intense famine. Through the stories of Joseph and Hanukkah we will explore the theme of rising out of darkness to light. Join us at Shabbat services, classes and in videos where we will further explore this month's avodah theme: Rising out of Darkness to Light. If the Washington Post can find light in a fast-food restaurant, we too can find light anywhere. Celebrating Hanukkah with oily foods and candles helps us to remember that light can come from even the darkest of places.



Here are a few other examples within Hebrew Scriptures where oil has a similar symbolic meaning of finding blessing in a dark or unlikely place:

"He set him atop the highlands, To feast on the yield of the earth; He fed him honey from the crag. And oil from the flinty rock."

- Deuteronomy 32:13 -

In Moses' final prophetic song in parshat Haazinu, Moses begins by describing how God took care of a ruddy naïve people in the hapless desert. One of the ways the Torah describes this is like finding oil in a flinty rock. Just as likely was it to find olive oil spurting out of a flinty rock was God's lifting and protecting the Jewish people in the desert.

"Samuel took a flask of oil and poured some on Saul's head and kissed him, and said, "The LORD here anoints you ruler over His own people."

- 1 Samuel 10:1 -

Saul, the first King of Israel, states right before this that he is not worth to rule over the Israelites because of his being from the small tribe of Benjamin. Samuel responds with anointing him with oil, transforming someone who felt he was not so worthy to the next king of Israel.

"You spread a table for me in full view of my enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my drink is abundant."

Psalms 23:5 —

At the time of deepest fear. when the psalmist is "walking through the shadow of death," he is anointed with oil, meaning, he finds blessing, peace and light.

### Shmita —

### **A Year of Learning** with Rabbi Rachel

Many of us are familiar with the concept of Shabbat, the Seventh Day, a Day of Rest. Fewer of us are familiar with the concept of Shmita, the Seventh Year, a Year of Rest. Since the time of the Torah, the Jewish people have been counting years, marking the seventh year as a Shmita, a year of rest for the land. As it turns out, this year, the year 5782, is a Seventh Year, a Shmita Year.

I invite you to join me this year as we delve into the teachings around Shmita to see what lessons we can learn and apply to our own lives. We will explore concepts of identity, community, what it means to claim ownership, our obligations to the poor and needy, and more. Each month, I will provide a short teaching about Shmita in the Aaronion along with a question or questions for reflection. I invite you to read along and send me your thoughts, questions, or insights RabbiRachelRubenstein@ TempleofAaron.org — I may even feature your questions and insights in next month's Aaronion!

### Questions for Reflection:

- 1) How will you give an intentional and caring gift of generous love to someone in your life this Hanukkah?
- 2) What other actions can you take to embrace the Shmita lesson of giving up ownership over the physical possessions in your own life?

## **Bringing Shmita Home:**

**Harvest Totals** from our ToA **Campus Garden** 

132 pounds of herbs and tomatoes were harvested!

# The Rabbi's Notes

When I say the word "Hanukkah." what is the first word that pops into your mind?

I asked this question of a few of my office mates and the answers were as follows: menorah, light, latkes, gelt, candles. (I'll let you guess who in the Temple of Aaron office gave me which answer!)

For a lot of people, the word that they most associate with the holiday of Hanukkah is presents. While there are many wonderful themes associated with the holiday of Hanukkah like standing up for what you believe in, light overcoming the darkness, and the power of faith, for many people less familiar with the holiday, it is an opportunity to give and receive presents and a Jewish twist on the season of holiday cheer that permeates American culture every winter.

I happen to love giving and receiving presents. I know that some people protest the commercialization of our holidays, but at its core I think that gift giving is a rabbirachelrubenstein@templeofaaron.org truly beautiful act of generous love. At its best, the act



Rabbi Rachel Rubenstein

651-252-6412 Email:

of giving a gift is a process of taking real notice of the person in front of you. Think back to a moment to the best gift you have ever received-remember how it made you feel seen and cared for. With each gift we give and receive, there is an opportunity for real connection, real love to be passed between us.



This opportunity for generous love is also one of the key lessons we learn from the laws of Shmita. (Need a reminder about Shmita? Check out the sidebar on this page for a refresher.)

There is a loophole in the Torah's description of Shmita, the Sabbatical Year. On the one hand, we are forbidden to plant or to harvest. But the Torah also tells us, "But you may eat whatever the land during its sabbath will produce-you, your male and female slaves, the hired and bound laborers who live with you" (Leviticus 25:6). The famous 11th century Torah commentator, Rashi, notices

that this is a real contradiction-how can the Torah say that we cannot harvest, but yet we are allowed to eat whatever the land produces? How can we eat without harvesting? The answer, Rashi tells us that the Torah never intended to forbid all food that ripens during the Shmita year. Instead, what the Torah is trying to teach is that we should not act like we are the exclusive owners of what our land produces-everyone must be allowed equal claim to it- "you, your male and female slaves, the hired and bound laborers who live with you."

This is a radical notion! For some people, the idea that I would let the produce of my field rot would be preferable to the idea that the produce of my field that I purchased and worked and cared for would be up for grabs, as much my neighbor's as it is mine. Shmita recognizes that impulse within us and challenges us. Shmita teaches us the hard-toswallow lesson that what we think of as ownership is actually fleeting no matter how much we try to hold onto the "what's mine is mine" mentality.

What Shmita teaches us to aspire to is a state where we let go of ownership as the goal and transform our aspirations toward generous love.

Gift giving, when done with intentionality and care, can be a small taste of Shmita in our own lives. It says that I don't claim exclusive ownership over my money or possessions, instead I will share them with those I love for the sole purpose of bringing more joy, more love, more connection into the world.

So, this Hanukkah season, I invite you to give gifts freely-to your loved ones, your neighbors, to those in need, maybe even to a stranger. Let us embrace this taste of Shmita, this small reminder of the teaching of our rabbis: Who is pious? One who says what's mine is yours.

Happy Hanukkah! 3

# Cantor's Corner



Joshua Fineblum, CJE Cantor/Educator 651-252-5403 Email: JoshuaFineblum@TempleofAaron.org

How are we already in the middle of Hanukkah, Hanukah. Chanukah. חנוכה? It feels like we went straight from the High Holidays, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah to celebrating the rededication of the Temple with Hanukah, also known as Sukkot in winter. Time is something extremely important to each of us and it feels like time is flying by and I haven't taken the time to stop and reflect upon this first half of the year.

One time I have taken and paused for is Shabbat each week. It has been so wonderful to be in our new-look chapel and back in our main sanctuary with members of our congregation from babies thru 90+ year-olds. We have sung together, learned together, and spent time concentrating on our relationship with those around us and with God during each service. Shabbat has always been a special time for me to rest, relax, and rejuvenate but these past few years have obviously been different. Now that we are back in our singing together and filling our community with joy and words of Torah we can once again be uplifted together.

This holiday of Hanukkah also lets us lift our song and enjoy not just on Shabbat but every evening as we light the Hanukkah candles and sing songs of our youth about dancing, playing games, and being together. While the holiday has already begun and we have had a few programs for our Young adults and delivering donuts to our partner organizations, we look toward Shabbat for our Musician-in-Residence Coleen Dieker to be back with us. She along with the clergy team, and other members of the community will be helping to spiritually lift all of us throughout the rest of the holiday and Shabbat.

Please join us for this fun and meaningful programming throughout the rest of the holiday.

- Kehillat Shabbat in the round (December 3rd)
- Hallel with Harmony on Shabbat morning (December 4th)
- School and ECFE Latke Bash crafting and concert (December 5th)

Please look in our weekly email for more details about all of these programs and sign up today to be part of the fun!

Chag Ha'Orim sameach, have a joyful Hanukkah from our family to yours!

- Josh, Andrea, Jonah and Gordon



A wonderful November morning with our ECFE (Early Childhood & Family Education)! We learned with our friends

PJ Library St. Paul about how to choose the right books for our little ones and made the most adorable hand print Hanukkiahs!

Most of all we had a fun morning with all of our friends at ToA!



Lane and Saxon Families



Edelstein/Willis Family



Nykelmoe Family

## December Education & Youth Calendar

1-6	Hanukkah
1	Community Hanukkah
	Event at Sholom
2	Hannukah At Home
5	Latke Bash, Crafting
	and Concert
22-31	Break No School
26-30	USY International
	Convention, D.C.

### Need Scholarship for Overnight Camp & Israel?



Go to this link and scroll down for the latest scholarship application.

http://templeofaaron.org/ education/schools/

Questions?

Joshuafineblum@templeofaaron.org

**Apply Today!** 



## Youth & Education News

## **Mitzvah Day**

Thank you to Etta Lambright and Sue Schwartz for your help with the B'yachad project on behalf of ToA, to Raleigh and Andrea for your help in making Bracelets for The Good Bead, to Hadar Pe'er Shaliach for your work with Israeli Soldiers and our Sovev Kinneret region, and to Brian Zaidman and Alexandria Ganzel for being here on behalf of the Social Justice Committee, to all of our teachers for staffing our stations so wonderfully, to Cantor/Educator Joshua Fineblum and Rabbi Rachel Rubenstein for helping to plan a great day, and to all of our families and community members who came out to do good with us at Temple of Aaron Family Mitzvah Day!

















# <u>Congregational Update</u>

# Smooklers Create New Endowment for Early Childhood



Diane and Dr. Richard Smookler have helped shape our Minnesota Jewish community through their care, volunteerism, and donations. They have supported the Temple of Aaron, Minnesota JCC, St. Paul Jewish Family Service, St. Paul Federation, Minnesota Jewish Theatre, St. Paul Talmud Torah, Sholom, PJ Library and Israel.

Temple of Aaron has watched their three children (Harrison/Rachel, Michelle, Marc/Marisela) advance through our programs and start their own families. Here at Temple of Aaron, Diane & Richard donated the famous silver Havdalah Train Set in 1984, endowed the Annual Event for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Families with clergy in 1989, and later endowed our family service booklet for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in honor of their children and grandchildren. The Smooklers have continued to be supportive members and have stepped forward in 2021 as leaders to create a new endowment focusing on the youngest members of our community.

The new Dr. Richard and Diane Smookler Family Early Childhood Family

Education (ECFE) endowment will provide annual resources to enrich programming for this meaningful program. The ECFE program serves as a feeder into our Toddler Class and Rabbi Bernard S. Raskas Religious School. We meet once per month providing programming for our youngest members from birth through two years of age.

Cantor Educator Joshua Fineblum and Rabbi Rachel Rubenstein have begun creating a safe space for parents with young children to interact and create meaningful Jewish moments. The program includes monthly speakers/facilitators featuring discussions on how to make your house Jewish for your family, how to choose the right book, as well as music and art projects.

Thank you to Diane and Dr. Richard Smookler for this new endowment helping shape our bright future for intergenerational activities. We look forward to continuing the program for many years to come as we continue to nurture our children *L'dor Va'dor*, from one generation to the next.

### **Making Mitzvot Matter**

By Annie Sperling, Member and ToA School Parent



Bob from N.C. Little Hospice with Annie, Evie, and Sam Sperling and Jonah Fineblum donating blankets from Mitzvah Day.

Last month, Religious School students took pleasure in giving back to their community through various Mitzvah Day projects. Amid the many wonderful activities, a favorite among the children was crafting fleece blankets. My son Sam (5th grade), approached Cantor/Educator Josh and suggested to gift the blankets to N.C. Little Hospice, after watching how compassionately their staff cared for his dad, Adam, during his battle with grade 4 glioblastoma, back in 2020.

In honor of his father and for the community that helped the family during this difficult time, Cantor Josh agreed that it would be a great idea. Located in the heart of Edina, N.C. Little Hospice is a not-for-profit independent hospice facility, providing compassionate care with specialized pain management to those living with a terminal illness.

As a local organization that has given so much of themselves to the patients and families they serve, Sam couldn't think of a place more deserving of a warm blanket—something he knows will provide great comfort to those who are receiving end-of-life care.

Thank you to all who participated in this year's Mitzvah Day. Not only were we able to do incredible things for our community, but every child came away with having learned the true value of giving back.

Thank you to Sam and Cantor Josh for making this happen in memory of Adam.

## Hebrew School & TiKone Fun

Students enjoyed fun learning experiences from sprinkled Challah, finger-painted Hanukkiah, and making sushi.









# **Group & Committee Voices**

### **Temple of Aaron Sisterhood**

SISTERHOOD EVENT: MANDALA STONE PAINTING WITH ARTIST SUSAN WEISLOW — December 12 at 1:00pm. Greenberg Room. Limited to 40 participants. Cost: \$20.00 for Sisterhood Members; \$28.00 for Non-Sisterhood Members/Non-Temple of Aaron Members. This is your opportunity to tap into your creative spirit and learn the meditative art of Mandala Stone Painting. Absolutely no painting or artistic skill or experience needed, PROMISE! You are sure to be surprised how learning just a few, easy dotting techniques will lead to gorgeous painted stones. RSVP by December 8. Send your reservation check to Etta Lambright, 1769 Sheridan Ave, St Paul, 55116. You can call Etta at 612-229-4340 or e-mail her at ettalambright@gmail.com.

**MAHJONNG IS IN SESSION!** All player levels are welcome, including beginners. We are happy to teach you how to play! Next game Sunday, December 19 at 1:00pm in Stein Hall. Contact Margie Schneider at 651-698-4358 or 7381jbs@comcast.net if you have questions and to reserve a spot at the table.

**BUILDING FUND CARDS** — For a minimum donation of \$10 (please note change), a card will be mailed for a happy (or sorrowful) occasion. All funds raised will be presented to the Temple for a targeted donation to enhance the building. Contact Susan Kushner at suzikush@yahoo.com or 651-454-8336 with the pertinent recipient and donor information. Mail your check, payable to Temple of Aaron Sisterhood, to Sue Schwartz, 1474 Wachtler Avenue, Mendota Heights, 55118.

**TORAH FUND** — Torah Fund financially supports conservative/Masorti rabbinical and cantorial seminary students in the United States and around the world. Contact Torah Fund Chair Amy Miller Stern at 651-235-6758 or at amyms@comcast.net for donation information. Donation checks should be made payable to Torah Fund with honorary or memorial information. Mail checks to Amy at 1480 Woodview Ave East, Eagan, MN 55122. Donations can also be made online at inspired.jtsa.edu/torahfund/ and an e-card can be sent as an honorarium or memorial. Be sure to note "Temple of Aaron" on the Sisterhood line.

**FOOD SHELF** — Sisterhood continues to support the Francis Basket Food Shelf through the St. Paul Neighborhood House. Years ago, many Jewish children from "The Old West Side" participated in Neighborhood House programming. You can donate by check or through the Temple website (templeofaaron.org). To donate by check, mail your check, payable to Temple of Aaron Sisterhood, along with honorarium or memorial information to Susan Gonzalez, 5015 42nd Ave S., Minneapolis, 55417. To donate online through the Temple website: click on the yellow "Support" button in the upper right-hand corner of the homepage. Type in "Sisterhood Food Shelf" in the "Desired Category" section. You can also enter information in the "Comments" section. You have the option to pay by credit card or through PayPal. If you have questions, call Susan at 612-701-5606.

**TEMPLE OF AARON SISTERHOOD GIFT SHOP** is open Sundays, from 9:30-11:30am, Wednesdays, 11:00am - 1:00pm, and we will be open one Wednesday evening a month, and as soon as we know which Wednesday it will be, it will be announced in the weekly blast. Our annual Hanukkah/Winter sale will begin Nov. 1 and run through Dec. 31. All merchandise, except books, will be discounted 20%. Books will be reduced 10%, and there is no discount on mezuzah parchment. Come in and select some lovely Hanukkah merchandise, as well as items that can be used at any time during the year. We have some beautiful Judaic and non-Judaic merchandise. For an appointment that is needed outside of our regular open hours, please contact Marcia Taple, 651-688-3030 or 651-402-6891, or Etta Lambright, 612-229-4340.

# Thank you תודה רבה

## Donations in memory of loved ones (\$10 or more) October/November 2021 Cheshvan/Kislev 5782

Aaron, Marjorie Andler, Bill & Mary Appelbaum, Arlene Baskina, Ella Bergal Folger, Jean Bordeaux, John & Virginia Bubar, Sana Calof, Stanley Chudnoff, Leslie DeMaat, Lisa Engelson, Gene & Rhoda Finkelstein, Bert & Paula Garnett, Sue Geller, Loren & Rosie Gerr. Murray & Karen Getsug, Ray & Elissa Goldberg, Judy Goldman, Howard & Irene

Grobovsky, Richard & Nancy Hirsekorn, Barbara Kanivetsky, Veniamin & Rozita Kaplan, Burleigh Kaplan, Harvey & Sue Katz, Sidney Khaskin, Iosif & Sofiya Klein, Ilene Kloner, Louise Kopilenko, Alexander & Bella Krugman, Faina Lang, Hermine Lee, Lynne Levinshteyn, Leonid Malmon, Cathy Munic, Doris Passon-McNally, Linda

Phillips, Jan & Janet

Redstone, Shelley Rein, Myndel Ringer, Jan Sanderson, Anne Rae Schraber Ross, Sondra Schwartz, Jerry & Sue Sherman, Ronna & Tom Shneur, Revekka Smith, Ethel Smookler, Richard & Diane Soroka, Tanya Stacker, Howard & Tillie Stipakov, Mark & Izabella Swartz, Gary & Kristi Bader Tilsen, Robert Tragar, C.A. Uchenik, Esfier Wolkowicz, Joe

# <u>Blessings</u>

## DECEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

We display every 5 years and all anniversaries of more than 50 years



- 62 Burton & Lucille Garr
- 56 Stuart & Joann Marofsky
- 54 Steven & Barbara Rutzick
- 52 Mark & Elaine Adelman
- 51 Stan & Loree Rosen
- 50 Barry & Darlene Goldman
- 40 Scott & Sally Johnson
- 5 Mark & Allie Divine

# נחמו נחמו עמי

Our deep and sincere sympathy to the family of the following member who has passed away

Klara Volodarskaya

KISLEV BANNER: In honor of Dr. Louis E. Epstein's 75th birthday (William Saltzman Design). The banner is a combination of cloth and metal with eight Hanukkah candles burning brightly. The banner was made by Laeh Raskas, Ruth Ann Schumeister and Mary Calof and took six months to complete.

### Todah Rabah . . .

- ... to Etta Lambright, Sue Schwartz, Brian Zaidman, Alexandria Ganzel, Raleigh Miller, and Andrea Fineblum for volunteering during our Family Mitzvah Day.
- ... to Howard Goldman for his assistance with the Rent Control Program.
- ... to Erin Baldinger, David Baldinger, Eli Perr, Michael Levin, Dan Perelstein, Alisha & Jesse Simon, and Carter Pederson for leading Kehillat Shabbat Services.
- ... to St. Paul PJ library coordinator Ellen Konstan for speaking to our ECFE families in November.
- ... to Jim Berg and Twin Cities Magic and Costume for clothing Cantor Fineblum in a coat of many colors during his Shabbat sing-a-long.

### Help Those Who Need Food Shelf Every Week



Thousands of Minnesota families rely on food shelf for a simple meal. We can help working families, children and seniors who might go with-

out food. Bring food to synagogue, go to website and donate, or mail check to chair-person Susan Gonzalez. Susan will mail a card for get well, celebration or condolence. Help us help others!

## **Cemetery Planning Reduces Stress**



We sell affordable graves to members and non-members with multi-month payment plans. Act now to solidify family plans. We have a mixed faith section for members.

Contact Executive Director Ken Agranoff at 651-252-6406 or kenagranoff@templeofaaron.org for an 18-minute meeting. Seize the opportunity to avoid a last-minute emotional meeting.

### **Stabilizing Rent**







Thursday, October 28, Temple of Aaron hosted a deeply informative program on the Saint Paul Rent Control/ Stabilization ballot measure. We heard presentations from Margaret Kaplan of the Housing Justice Center and Cecil Smith of the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association. Both speakers spoke passionately and respectfully on this important issue while fielding a series of questions on multiple sides of this complicated housing issue. Rabbi Marcus Rubenstein then presented key Jewish values underlying the issues of housing justice, tenant/landlord relations, and maintaining a robust economy while illuminating the path to clear analysis.

One attendee wrote after the event, "This event was REALLY REALLY good. Rabbi Marcus, your insight was spot on! So glad to hear 1+ perspectives on this issue from our speakers who presented strong arguments. I am in a better position to make a more informed decision come November 2nd. Thank you, TOA!!!" Thank you to Social Justice Committee member Howard Goldman for critical assistance with this event. We hope you will attend future programs as we work to make Temple of Aaron a home for engaging learning and discussion, bringing Jewish values to life around relevant issues in our community.

# ...and More

### L'Dor V'Dor (From Generation to Generation)

A New Monthly Aaronion Column dedicated to teaching and interpreting the Torah of R. Bernard Raskas, Rabbi of Temple of Aaron for 38 years (1951 - 1989)

## 'Rescuing Hanukah'

by R. Marcus Rubenstein

Although Hanukah is a beloved and powerful holiday within the Jewish calendar, some have argued that is quite problematic. For example, google search "The Hypocrisy of Hanukah," an op-ed that appeared in the *New York Times* in 2018, by Michael David Lukas, in which appeared the following sentence, "At its heart (Hanukah) is an eight-night-long celebration of religious fundamentalism and violence." I remember quite a few rabbinic students and congregants also expressing similar distaste for a celebration of a violent military victory of Jewish religious zealots over the oppression of Greek and Greek-influenced Jews. Many would like to bury or even delete the story of a Jewish military victory from our tradition while preserving the nice story of the oil miraculously lasting eight days.

R. Raskas offers a powerful critique of that perspective. R. Raskas certainly did not vouch for religious fundamentalism as we know he made the intentional decision to move away from the Orthodoxy of his youth, yet he *did* see great meaning in the military victory of the Maccabees over Greek oppression. He writes:

"The reason that so much emphasis is placed upon the Hanukah festival is that it commemorates the first successful revolt in history on behalf of religious liberty. The abiding miracle of this festival as stamped in Jewish observance reminds us of the value of religious freedom in our lives.

The spirit of Hanukah animates the Magna Carta and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and there is a parallel to the Maccabean revolt in the Declaration of Independence. For without the willingness of early Jews to fight for the religious rights and the inspiration of Hanukah, these great movements on behalf of human freedom might never have been born. Not only Jews, therefore, but all humankind must be grateful for the abiding miracle of Hanukah."



Rabbi Bernard Raskas z"I

- R. Bernard Raskas z"l, Seasons of the Mind, pg. 57

Hanukah, according to R. Raskas' disarmingly insightful teaching, is *not* a holiday celebrating religious fundamentalism, but rather a holiday celebrating the right of each people to celebrate, believe and observe their won religious traditions. Part of the light of Hanukah is the idea that every people deserve the sanctified right to observe their own religious faith, of course, with the caveat that it doesn't harm others. The story of the Maccabean revolt ought to serve as inspiration for other oppressed peoples to pursue their freedom.

We, today, must pursue and continue to secure a place for ourselves to practice our faith, values and traditions in peace and sincerity. We must understand that our freedom to practice our faith should never be taken for granted — our not-so-distant ancestors lost their lives for the sake of their Jewish identities. May their memories be a blessing and their lives avenged. With that said, the message of Hanukah teaches us that we must not only be contented with our own religious liberty but rather not to rest until all people are able to practice and live out their faith traditions and beliefs. Each people practicing their own unique faith tradition fosters an environment of compassion and diversity, helping every human-being pursue their best selves. May the message of Hanukah, inspire us to love, fight for and connect to our own tradition as well as awaken all people to pursue their liberty and their connection to their religious traditions.

# ...and More

### **Welcome to Temple of Aaron!**

# New Member Spotlight: The Edelstein/Willis Family

Our membership committee is sitting down with new members with a Q&A and introducing you to them here in the *Aaronion!* This month we want to welcome Brittany Willis & Sam Edelstein and their 16-month-old, Harper! Make sure to say "Hi" next time you see them!

### Q: Where did the people in your family grow up?

S&B: Sam grew up in Omaha, Brittany grew up in Philadelphia and Harper is our first-generation Minnesotan!

### Q: So neither of you are from Minnesota - what ultimately brought you here stay?

S&B: Sam went to the University of Kansas and after graduating, had a lot of friends in the Twin Cities and moved here for work (and never left!). We met in Philadelphia

where Sam was on assignment for work, dated long distance for two years and when we got engaged in 2017, Brittany moved to Minnesota.

### Q: What do the two of you do for work? Hobbies? What keeps Harper busy during the day?

S&B: Brittany is an occupational therapist and certified hand therapist, working at TRIA in Saint Louis Park, Sam is an architect at Hammel, Green & Abrahamson located in downtown Minneapolis, and Harper is an honor roll student at the Sabes JCC ECC program. Harper enjoys singing Wheels on the Bus, blowing bubbles, looking for bunnies in our backyard and playing in the bathtub. Together, we like to cook, travel and explore Minnesota by foot or bike. Since Harper has been born, as a family we love spending time at local parks and playgrounds. We always look forward to spending Friday nights together celebrating Shabbat.



### Q: Why did you choose the Temple of Aaron?

S&B: We were looking for and really felt a great sense of community. Temple of Aaron has a very welcoming environment and the new ECFE program was definitely a draw for us! Harper has already made some great lifelong friends here. We also knew Cantor Josh prior to joining and look forward to building a relationship with Rabbi Rachel, Rabbi Marcus and the entire community

### Q: Favorite Jewish Food?

Sam: Brisket

Brittany: Matzah Ball Soup

Harper: Challah (or 'cha wah' as Harper pronounces it). Challah was Harper's first word!

### Q: Favorite Jewish Holiday?

Sam: Shabbat Brittany: Passover Harper: Purim

## Sisterhood Hamantaschen Are Coming in January!



Sisterhood is happy to announce that we will be baking hamantaschen once again in 2022! Pre-orders will be accepted for four varieties: Mixed fruit, apricot, poppyseed and chocolate. (Gluten-free by request only). Contact Etta (612-229-4340) or Margie (651-698-4358).

# Cemetery Prices Increase

Temple of Aaron has respectfully operated its Cemetery in Roseville since 1918. The current Cemetery Committee is composed of Past Presidents to insure continuity of operation and tight oversight. The Committee includes Chair Gerry Frisch, Gary Swartz, Mark Adelman and Gary Portnoy. John Parker has maintained the cemetery for the past 25 years succeeding his father Herb Parker who previously worked for us with a high level of dedication.

The Cemetery sells single graves and double graves to members and non-members. In addition, we sell double graves to members in a mixed faith relationship.

Prices will be rising by 14 percent as of January 1, 2022. The percentage appears slightly higher because we do not raise fees each year. We try to be very cost conscious, competitive with other cemeteries, while recognizing perpetual care is our major long-term responsibility. Please contact Executive Director Ken Agranoff (651-252-6406) if you would like to make cemetery plans in advance and take advantage of 2021 pricing.



# Welcome to Temple of Aaron! New Member Spotlight: Merrill Biel & Leslie Hahn

Our membership committee is sitting down with new members with a Q&A and introducing you to them here in the *Aaronion!* This month we want to welcome Merrill Biel & Leslie Hahn! Make sure to say "Hi" next time you see them!

### Q: Where did the people in your family grow up?

A: Merrill grew up in Rockford, IL and Leslie grew up in Vineland, NJ.

## Q: So neither of you are from Minnesota – what ultimately brought you here stay?

A: We both moved to Minnesota in 1981 for residency training at the University of Minnesota.

## Q: What do the two of you do for work? Hobbies? What else keeps you busy during the day?

A: Merrill is a retired Ear, Nose and Throat doctor and works part-time in drug development at Cortexyme Inc. He enjoys reading, hiking, camping, biking and kayaking. Leslie is a retired Internal Medicine and Geriatrics doctor. She is on various committees and boards in the St. Paul Jewish community. She enjoys reading, weaving, exercising, camping, hiking and kayaking. We also love spending time with our two adult sons Elie and Reuben, their wives Julia and Fran, and our six granddaughters!



### Q: Why did you choose the Temple of Aaron?

A: The new Rabbis, Rabbi Marcus and Rabbi Rachel are personable, welcoming and provide interesting interpretations of the Jewish texts. As well, the Shabbat and Holiday services are melodious and meaningful with Cantor Fineblum, with great special programming. We look forward to meeting more of the congregants, which is somewhat difficult during Covid.

### Q: Favorite Jewish Food?

Merrill: Brisket. Leslie: Falafel.

### O: Favorite Jewish Holiday?

A: Passover.

### Blessed Be These Names Who Have Invested In Our Future Through Endowments

...a gift that will help fulfill a deep and sincere wish to ensure that Judaism and the Temple of Aaron are strong and vital for generations to come. Our *It's Your Legacy* Committee is steadily working very hard to provide a comprehensive program. We are grateful to the supporters of our *Temple of Aaron L'Olam Endowment Program:* 

Tracey & Ken Agranoff High Holyday Family Service

Bob Baldinger Greenie Beanie

Ruth Hallock Bearman Music Enrichment

David A. Berg Family Hanukah Party

David A. Berg Family Passover Kiddushim

David A. Berg Family Rosh Hashanah Apples & Honey

David A. Berg Family Shavuot Kiddush

David A. Berg Family Simhat Torah Caramel Apples

David A. Berg Family Simhat Torah Flags David A. Berg Family

Sukkot Kiddushim
David A. Berg Family

Yom Kippur Break the Fast

Brittani & Danielle Berg Yom Kippur Havdalah Ceremony

Marcia & Herbert Bernick Purim Seudah

Marcia & Herbert Bernick Passover Breakfast For First Born

Marcia & Herbert Bernick B'nai Mitzvah Tutoring

Lois & Dr. Paul Bloomberg High Holyday Tashlich Service

Harvey Braufman Shabbat Lunch

Rick Brody & Maggie Flynn Clergy Discretionary Fund

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Martin & Esther Capp Centennial Cantor Chair Clergy Chair

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Edith & Frank Cohan Lunch & Learn

Barbara & Stanley Cohn Baby Gifts

Susan & Dr. Alan Divine Shabbat Lunch

Sylvia Dudovitz

Marian & Joe Dworsky Mishpacha/Service/ Oneg Shabbat

Marvin & Beverly Edelstein High Holyday Music

Marvin & Beverly Edelstein Shabbat Lunch Fund for All Ages

Jay and Evelyn Etlinger Programming

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Tallitot

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Saul S. and Charlotte Garelick Wedding Anniversary Certificates Anita & Ronald Geller Yahrzeit Candles

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Rabbi Jonathan Ginsburg Continuing Education

Cecil Glickman

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Shirley & Sidney Goldberger Bar & Bat Mitzvah Bibles

Howard Goldberger USY Activities

Cele & Aaron Goldetsky Music, Minyan, Food Shelf

Arnold & Sylvia Goldman

Clergy Chair

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Annette & Theodore Goodman
Adult Education

Rabbi Julie Gordon Continuing Education

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Nancy & Richard Grobovsky Golden Kepah Award

Lester & Sylvia Gubman Youth Activities

Elsie & John Halper/Lieberman Family Jonah Sculpture & Adult Education

Mervin E. Hites

Introduction to Hebrew Class

Reuben & Esther Kaplan Programming

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Young Adult Education

Bertha Katzman Singles Programming/Havurot

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Shabbat Babysitting Howard & Elaine Kuretsky Centennial Cantor Chair

Max & Jeanette Kurnow Centennial Cantor Chair

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Yale Libman Haftorah Education

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Marvin Scherzer Annual Financial Review

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Felicia & Max Schulz High Holyday Programming

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Ethel & Hymen Simes Education/Culture Enrichment

Nancy M. & Dr. Stanley C. Skadron Lunch and Learn Series

Samuel I. Sloane Veteran's Shabbat Oneg David & Dede Smith

General Programs
Diane & Dr. Richard Smookler
Annual B'nai Mitzvah Reception

Beryl & Frank Stricken Shabbat Food

Manya & Ben Sturrey Kids in Shul

Helen & Donald Swartz Wedding Ketubot

Alex & Mollie Tankenoff Foundation Centennial Cantor Chair

Esther & Edward Tilsen Shavuot Blintz Bletter

Sandy & Bob Tilsen Simhat Torah Band Esther Tucker USY Activities

Helene & Hillard Ward Synagogue Sukkah Project

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Jewish Performing Arts Memorial

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Rabbi Bernard S. Raskas Religious School Teacher Endowment Funds

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Angy & Milt Moore Seventh Grade Teacher

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Judith & Alvin Brown Kindergarten Teacher

Dr. Henry Oselka Fifth Grade Teacher Leonora Greenberg

Confirmation Teacher
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A.Y. Dworsky, Joseph Dworsky Tuition Assistance

Diane & Dr. Richard Smookler Early Childhood Family Education

### A Basic Bequest Helps Our Synagogue Future

Each of us can add a short sentence to our Will or Living Trust, or a beneficiary to a life insurance policy, to make a powerful gift to Temple of Aaron. During our first century of operation we have received thoughtful bequests ranging in size from \$500 to \$1,000,000. Our endowments produce interest and dividend income which have created an important financial foundation for our daily operation. We would be pleased to acknowledge you in a future *Aaronion* if you have already made plans to help us in the future. President Barry Divine and Executive Director Ken Agranoff are prepared to discuss any and all aspects of our Dor L Dor Endowment Program with you at your convenience.

Anne Sheinberg Fisher Hamantashen Baking

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Wendy, Steven, & Charles Goodman Tuition Assistance

Anne & Charles Smaby Hersch Smaby Family Foundation Tuition Assistance

Nancy & Dr. Stephen Lane Polly & Michael Saxon Speakers on Special Topics

Louis Makiesky Synagogue Skills Training

Rhonda Schwartz, Curtis Meltzer& Sons Jacob & Joshua Meltzer Tuition Assistance

Ann Miller Tuition Assistance

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Confirmation Class Curriculum

Rossy & Richard Shaller Hebrew School

Nancy & Dr. Stanley Skadron Tuition Assistance

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Dr. Jeffrey Weingarten Outstanding Students Award

Mildred Yager Tuition Assistance

### Sanctuary Banners

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#### General Gifts

Myrna R. & Elliott G. Belzer South Wing Conference Room

Rachel Cardozo Deeds of Loving Kindness (Gemilut Hasadim)

Morris Cooperman Cantor's Pulpit

Dr. Abraham Falk Memorial Delores & Ernest Fink,

Marian Fink Perling, Bruce Fink Fink Youth Lounge

Charlotte & Saul Garelick Chapel Chuppah

Eileen & Joe Garelick President's Tablet

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Etta Jacobs Special Gift

Faye & Jeff Kantorowitz Special Gift

Jeannette & Max Kurnow South Wing-First Floor

Stephen & Nancy Lane Grandparents Supporting Grandchildren

Sidney Makiesky

South Wing-Early Childhood Room Ann Miller Marriage Table

Rose Mirsky South Wing Classroom

Sue & Dave Rosner Bnai Mitzvah Gift Bag Fund

Betty & Leonard Shapiro Education, Youth Administration

Addie & Harry Silverman South Wing Kitchen

Sam E. Smith Family Library

Diane & Dr. Richard Smookler Havdalah Set

Bradley Straus Confirmation Class Trip

Helen & Donald Swartz Front Entrance Benches

Temple of Aaron Sisterhood Administrative Entrance

Toushin Family Sanctuary Wedding Chuppah Minnie Weisberg Memorial

### Youth Camping Scholarships

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### Daily Minyan Endowments

Ernest Fink & Neil Fink Thursday

Mildred & Louis Kaplan Sunday

Addie & Harry Silverman Tuesday

Harry Silverman Tuesday

Dr. Henry Oselka Wednesday

Faye & Jeff Kantorowitz Monday

Ben Mirsky, Ida & Louis Smith Monday

Warren Patterson Wednesday

### Music Endowments

Anonymous Choir

The Garber Family & Rose Asch Adult Choir

Mervin E. Hites

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Sidney Makiesky Choir Director Fund

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### Smith Library Endowments

Marlene & Jerome Gotlieb Children's Library Fund

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I	emple c	of Aara	Temple of Aaron Calendar	lar	Decemb Kislev ~ T	December 2021 Kislev - Tevet 5782
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Check Face Schedt	Check Facebook & Weekly Email Blast for Updates. Schedule Subject to Change.	mail Blast	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 5:30pm St Paul Community Candle Lighting at Sholom 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv 7:00pm Judaism 101	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv 6:30pm Talmud & Bible Class Hanukkah at Home	3 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Kehillat Shabbat In-Person Only	8:30am Digging into the Parsha 9:30am Shabbat In-Person & Livestream Service – Hallel with Harmony during Shabbat Service
9:00am Zoom Shacharit Minyan 9:15am School & ECFE/ Toddler, Latke Bash, Crafting & Concert	6 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	7 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	8 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 4:00pm Hebrew School 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv 6:30pm TiKone USY 7:00pm Judaism 101	9 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv 6:30pm Talmud & Bible Class	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Evening Shabbat Service	8:30am Digging into the Parsha 9:30am Shabbat In-Person & Livestream Service
9:00am Zoom Shacharit Minyan 9:15am School & Tikone USY 1:00pm Sisterhood Event	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 4:00pm Hebrew School 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv 6:30pm TiKone USY 7:00pm Judaism 101	16 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv 6:30pm Talmud & Bible Class	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Evening Shabbat Service	8:30am Digging into the Parsha 9:30am Shabbat In-Person & Livestream Service
9:00am Zoom Shacharit Minyan 9:15am School & Tikone USY	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	21 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan No School / TiKone 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv 6:30pm Talmud & Bible Class	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Evening Shabbat Service	8:30am Digging Into the Parsha 9:30am Shabbat In-Person & Livestream Service
26 9:00am Zoom Shacharit Minyan No School	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan No School / TiKone 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv Maariv 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan	7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Minyan Maariv	31 7:15am Joint Morning Minyan 6:00pm Multi-Access Evening Shabbat Service	

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