

Temple Talk



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Purim's Secret to Happiness

By: Rabbi Tracy Nathan

"When Adar enters, we increase our joy." Babylonian Talmud Ta'anit 29a

Bookstores are full of books on achieving happiness; scientists continue to study theories of what makes human beings happy. Judaism also has a deep concern with joy and features joy as a central component of two holidays, Sukkot and Purim.

The Babylonian Talmud in Masekhet Ta'anit 29a tells us: "*mishenikhnas adar marbim b'simkha* when [the month of] Adar enters, we increase our joy." There is something about even entering the month in which the holiday of Purim takes place that increases our joy.

We associate Purim joy with the playfulness of dressing up in costumes, with eating yummy hamentaschen, with being a little raucous when we blot out the name of Haman with our groggers (noisemakers), with Purim shpiels and general silliness, and, for many, with drinking. There is a joy, though, that goes even deeper, and I believe we can find this joy through the four special mitzvot of Purim.

The four mitzvot of Purim (brought to you by the letter "M") are:

Megillah – The Public Reading of the Scroll of Esther

Mishte – Seudah – the Festive Meal

Mishloakh Manot – Sending Portions of Food to Friends and Neighbors

Matanot L'Evyonim – Gifts to the Poor

These mitzvot are derived from Megillat Esther 9:22: "...they should make them days of feasting and gladness (*mishte v'simkha*), of sending portions to one another (*mishloakh manot ish l'rey-ehu*), and gifts to the poor (*matanot l'evyonim*).

Each of the mitzvot have one thing in common: they all bring individuals into relationship with others, each in a different way.

Megillah - We gather together in groups for the public reading of Megillat Esther from a scroll, and this is done on the night of Purim and on the morning of Purim Day,

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Office Hours

Monday - Friday

9:30am - 12:30pm

Upcoming Events

Hebrew Seminar and Discussion - Thursdays 7pm

Friday Night Service/Dinner - March 18th 6:30pm

Purim - Saturday March 19th at 7:30pm

The Complete Psalms - Sunday March 27th - 10am-11am

Concert - with Hankus Netsky - Sunday April 3rd

Passover Seder - Tuesday April 19th

Marks Remarks: One Short of the Crown

by Mark Frydenberg

In a few weeks we'll be celebrating Purim again. It's a timeless story of a fat, drunk king who gets rid of his disobedient wife to marry a Jewish girl who ultimately saves her people from destruction. We boo Haman and cheer Mordechai. We also learn some very important lessons.

Purim reminds us that the most serious of holidays, Yom Kippur – which some translate as “a day like Pur[im]” is just six months away. We're at the middle of the year, 180 degrees away from a holiday filled with God's presence. At Purim, the central text, the Book of Esther, doesn't mention God at all. God's presence is nistar – like Esther, hidden.

Also hidden on Purim are some numerological gems that add insights into our reading of the Megillah. I learned about these in an article by Rabbi Avie Gold called Purim in Gematria. Gematria, or Hebrew numerology, is the study of finding related words or phrases with the same values when you add up their letter values (aleph =1, bet = 2, etc). That's why 18 is a Jewish number, because 18 = chet (8) + yud (10) and spells chai, the Hebrew word for life. We wish each other multiple lives, especially when giving Bar Mitzvah gifts or donations to the synagogue. Feel free to give yours. (Here's a shameless request: For 6 x chai, or \$108, you can sponsor a Shabbat lunch at the Temple. For 7 x chai, or \$126 we'll serve an extra package of lox. And on the seventh day, God rested.)

The Talmud instructs us to get intoxicated on Purim so we can't tell the difference between Haman and Mordechai. The Talmud teaches that the Hebrew phrases “Blessed be Mordechai” and “Cursed Be Haman” have the same gematria/numerical values (502). So we truly can't tell the difference!

When King Ahasuerus asked Haman what to do for the man he wished to honor, Haman thought the king was referring to him (Esther 6:6). And since the king had already raised Haman above all the other officials in his kingdom (3:1), Haman lacked nothing. In fact, he considered himself on

a par with King Ahasuerus. Even his name alluded to royalty: "Haman" has a gematria of 95, the same as "HaMelech" - the king.

The one thing Haman did not have was the king's crown. And he coveted that greatly. So Haman replied that the man whom the king wishes to honor should be dressed "with the royal crown on his head." (Esther 6:8) The first time Haman is mentioned in the Scroll of Esther (3:1), he is called "Haman son of Hammedasa the Agagite." The gematria of this phrase is 619, exactly one less than the gematria of "keter" - crown - 620. Haman was just one short of the crown!

We're counting on you to join us for our Purim Celebration at TBI on Saturday evening, March 19, beginning with Maariv at 7:30 pm. Back by popular demand, English subtitles will again accompany the Hebrew Megillah reading, and that will be followed by a "hidden-talents" talent show, and lots of food with three corners.

Friday Night Services

This month's Third Friday Kabbalat Shabbat Service will take place on March 18th at 6:30pm

We Need Minyanaires

Services are held at 7:00am on weekdays (except Tuesday) and at 9:00am on weekends & holidays.

Kaddish

We are not able to guarantee a minyan at each morning service, so if you need a minyan on a particular day to recite Kaddish, please let the Temple know at least 2 days prior.

Purim's Secret to Happiness

Continued from page 1

Mishteh – On Purim Day, we sit down with family and/or friends and community members for the Seudat Purim, the festive meal.

Mishloakh Manot – The Mitzvah is to send two different prepared foods to one friend on Purim Day (many go beyond this and give to several friends and neighbors). Food and gifts are each ways of connecting us to one another and nurturing our friendships, and we combine these through Mishloakh Manot.

Matanot L'Evyonim - the mitzvah is to give money to two Jewish individuals who are poor, and this is even an obligation for someone who is poor themselves and dependent on others. The mitzvah is for the individuals to receive this on the day of Purim, and presumably this helps those who are needy to participate in all the mitzvot of Purim, including sitting down to a festive meal, sending gifts of food to others, and giving gifts to the poor. Our communal joy cannot be full if there are those in the community who are unable to fulfill their own mitzvot.

The mitzvot of Purim point us to a Jewish conception of joy and happiness. Joy involves being with other people and involving ourselves in an active way in their lives – with our family, friends, neighbors. If we are struggling with poverty, our mitzvot aim to keep us within the fold of community rather than push us out; and if we are not, we are pushed into making sure we stay in relationship with those who are in need. And we find joy through giving – Judaism has known this for thousands of years and science is now finding this as well (See, for example, "Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness", *Science Magazine*, March 21, 2008).

The Jewish ideal of joy is fundamentally communal, so please join us for the Megillah Reading on Saturday night, March 19 and Sunday morning, March 20. And I encourage you to find a way to gather with others on Purim Day and fulfill your mitzvot to the best of your abilities – and if you know of anyone who might not be able to get out for the reading, reach out to them so that they might feel some of the joy of

Matanot L'evyonim - Gifts to the Poor on Purim

This Purim, Temple Beth Israel will join 50 Boston-area congregations, day schools and college Hillels in aiding needy people through Yad Chessed, which provides a safety net for individuals and families in severe economic distress. Yad Chessed distributes \$300,000 annually in emergency aid, ongoing food and clothing assistance, and special holiday allocations – as well as \$50,000 in interest-free loans to 1,400 individuals in the greater Boston Jewish community.

In 2010, Yad Chessed distributed \$80,000 in food assistance through its communitywide Purim program, which builds on the Purim mitzvah of *matanot l'evyonim*, "gifts to the poor." **Temple Beth Israel will collect funds for this purpose at our Megillah Reading on Saturday evening, March 19.**

Please bring your checks payable to Yad Chessed with you on Purim night (or bring cash) or drop it off or mail it in advance to the synagogue office.

We will tally the collection and inform Yad Chessed of the amount on Purim Day, so that all the funds can be distributed on Purim day itself.

Hebrew Seminar and Discussion Group

Reading and translating passages from the weekly parshah.

Meets Thursday evenings at 7, in the Temple library.

This group is led by Genevieve Fosa

March 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 <i>7pm Board Meeting</i>	3 <i>7pm Hebrew Seminar and Discussion</i>	4 <i>5:20pm</i>	5 <i>Pekeudei Shabbat Shekalim Cantor Band</i>
6	7	8	9	10 <i>7pm Hebrew Seminar and Discussion</i>	11 <i>5:28pm</i>	12 <i>Vayikrah Rabbi Nathan</i>
13	14	15	16	17 <i>7pm Hebrew Seminar and Discussion</i>	18 <i>6:36pm 6:30pm Service 7:30pm Dinner</i>	19 <i>Tzav Rabbi Nathan 7:30pm Purim / "Hidden Talents Talent Show"</i>
20 <i>9:00am Megillah Reading</i>	21	22	23	24 <i>7pm Hebrew Seminar and Discussion</i>	25 <i>6:44pm</i>	26 <i>Shemini Shabbat Parah Rabbi Nathan</i>
27 <i>10am The Complete Psalms with Pam Greenberg</i>	28	29	30	31 <i>7pm Hebrew Seminar and Discussion</i>	1 <i>6:52pm</i>	2 <i>Tazria Shabbat Hakhodesh Member Led</i>

**Temple Beth Israel
Presents**

Date: Saturday March 19th
Time: 7:30pm



**A Purim Celebration !
Saturday March 19th**

Our evening begins with Maariv at 7:30pm. A complete Hebrew Megillah reading (with English subtitles) will follow.

New this year will be our "Hidden Talents" Talent Show and Best Costume Contest with prizes for the winners!

Don't forget your noisemakers!!

Call the Temple office if you'd like to participate in our talent show.

Triangular Refreshments will be served!



Temple Beth Israel

25 Harvard Street
Waltham, MA 02453

Phone: 781-894-5146

E-mail: office@tbiwaltham.org

Website: www.tbiwaltham.org

**The Complete Psalms:
The Book of Prayer Songs
in a New Translation**



Author Pamela Greenberg will speak about her book.

Date: Sunday, March 27th

Time: 10am - 11am

Location: Temple Beth Israel

Ms. Greenberg's new translation has been praised for its directness and simplicity, courage and insight, and for breathing new life, passion, and relevance into the psalms.

Pamela Greenberg is a poet and writer with an M.F.A. from Syracuse University and a master's in Jewish studies from Hebrew College. A former rabbinical student, Greenberg has received several writing awards. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her husband and young son.

Copies of **The Complete Psalms** will be available for purchase at the event, thanks to **Back Pages Books**.

For more information, please contact the office of Temple Beth Israel at 781-894-5146, or email us office@tbiwaltham.org. Temple Beth Israel is located at 25 Harvard Street, Waltham MA.

This event is free and open to the public.



Lost and Found

Jewish Musical Treasures

Featuring Hankus Netsky with members of the Klezmer Conservatory Band and students from the New England Conservatory

On Sunday, April 3 at 3pm, Temple Beth Israel in Waltham will present "Lost and Found - Jewish Musical Treasures." The program, directed by TBI member Hankus Netsky will feature students from the New England Conservatory and members of the world renowned Klezmer Conservatory Band. This lively program will include Yiddish and Hebrew repertoire, including little-known melodies gathered from diverse local sources. There will be dancing and refreshments for all. All ages are welcome to come and celebrate the season and the renewal of Jewish culture!

Hankus Netsky is founder and director of the Klezmer Conservatory Band and Music Director for Itzhak Perlman's "In the Fiddler's House" and "Soul of Jewish Music" projects. He is the director of the Discovery Project at the National Yiddish Book Center and chair of the Contemporary Improvisation Department at the New England Conservatory.

Tickets: \$15 Temple Members / Seniors / Students \$20 Non-members

March Yahrzeits

Plaque Loc.	Name	Yahrzeit Date	
2-1	Rose Braverman	1-Mar	Adar I 25
1-1	Annie Alpert	2-Mar	Adar I 26
1-2	Aaron Greenblott	3-Mar	Adar I 27
3-4	Rose Wolk	3-Mar	Adar I 27
	Sandra Gustin	3-Mar	Adar I 27
1-3	Bessie Levison	4-Mar	Adar I 28
2-4	Harry Wolf	4-Mar	Adar I 28
2-4	Lena Smith	5-Mar	Adar I 29
2-4	Alice Wolf Cohen	5-Mar	Adar I 29
2-4	Aaron Smith	5-Mar	Adar I 29
3-3	Benjamin Lebowitz	7-Mar	Adar II 01
2-4	Abraham Tatelman	7-Mar	Adar II 01
1-2	Robert Gordon	7-Mar	Adar II 01
1-2	Harry Freedman	7-Mar	Adar II 01
4-3	Goldie Rachel Webb	7-Mar	Adar II 01
1-2	Eva Kaitz	8-Mar	Adar II 02
4-4	Mildred Marion	8-Mar	Adar II 02
5-4	Evelyn Myers	9-Mar	Adar II 03
1-1	Gnesia Crevoshay	15-Mar	Adar II 09
	Harold Seltzer	17-Mar	Adar II 11
4-1	Dr. Samuel Messer	23-Mar	Adar II 17
3-4	Elizabeth Rosenberg	26-Mar	Adar II 20
4-4	David Goldstein	28-Mar	Adar II 22
4-3	Patricia Wexler	4-Apr	Adar II 29

If you would like to make a donation in memory of a loved one listed above please send it along with a brief note of who you would like remembered to the Temple Office.



FRIEND US ON FACEBOOK

Temple Beth Israel - Waltham, MA is now a group on Facebook. Check us out here:
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=151997345857>

Donations

Michael and Pam Laufer, in honor of Morris Hollender.

Esther Keaney, in memory of her father, Paul Keaney.

Marvin & family, Hanna and Paul Griff Slevin Lois and David Griff-Gaebler & family and Carol and Merrill Griff in loving memory of their dad Harris Griff will be sponsoring the refreshments at our Purim celebration.

Saturday Kiddush Sponsors

Feb 26 - Ed Kaufman in honor of his birthday

Mar 12 - Diana Korzenik and Harry Baker in honor of their birthdays

Mar 26 - Frank Orovitz

Welcome Shabbat with Services and Community Dinner at Temple Beth Israel

Friday Evening: March 18th

Services: 6:30 pm

Join us for Shabbat.

Dinner: 7:30 pm



\$10 per adult, \$25 per family

Welcome Shabbat with a spirited Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6:30 pm, led by **Rabbi Tracy Nathan**, followed by a home-cooked dinner at 7:30 pm, singing, and good conversation. **Reserve now!** Payment must be received by Thursday morning, the day before the dinner you are attending.



TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL

COMMUNITY PASSOVER SEDER

**Tuesday, April 19
6:30 P.M.**

25 Harvard Street, Waltham

For reservations complete the registration below and return it before April 12th along with your total payment to: Temple Beth Israel, PO Box 540182, Waltham, MA 02454-0182

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Number of adults in party x \$30 = \$ _____

Number of children (10 - 18) in party x \$20 = \$ _____

Number of children under 10 _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

We're planning to serve a home-cooked chicken dinner. Please let us know if you have special dietary requirements or require vegetarian meals.

I CAN VOLUNTEER TO HELP ON THE DAY OF THE SEDER.

- ____ Set up. Plan to arrive by 5 p.m. on April 19th
- ____ Work in the kitchen, put out food, or serve.
- ____ Clean up, wash dishes, reset the social hall, etc.

I CAN BRING DECORATIONS FOR THE TABLE.

- ____ Candles/candlesticks
- ____ Seder Plate (empty)
- ____ Cup of Elijah
- ____ Matzah plate/cover
- ____ Flowers
- ____ Other: _____

Please RSVP BY APRIL 12, 2011

Reservations received after April 12th will be \$36 per person



Contact us at

781-894-5146, www.tbiwaltham.org or office@tbiwaltham.org

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- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
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- Morris Hollender Music Appreciation Fund
- Carl Goldstein Memorial Fund
- Other, please specify: _____

Temple Beth Israel Donation Form

For your convenience, please use this form to make your donations and send to:
Temple Beth Israel, P O Box 540182, Waltham, MA 02454-0182

I have chosen the fund indicated at the right:

(Please use a separate form for each fund. Minimum donation: \$10)

Attached is my check in the amount of: \$ _____

The donation is being made

In Honor Of _____

In Memory Of _____

Other _____

This donation is made by:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____