

Rabbi's Message

Peas on Pesach



All year we read the labels: how many calories, how much sodium, what kind of fat? And now it's Passover time; the one time of year when many of us keep some form of *kashrut*. Our search therefore expands: is it *kosher l'Pesach* (permitted for Passover), is it a legume, is it the brand my mother always bought?

Growing up I learned that all Jews cleaned out their houses, burned their *chametz* (leavened grains), and abstained from bread during the week of Passover. For breakfast we ate tasteless cereal, matzah brei and eggs. For lunch it was soggy matzah sandwiches with tuna or egg salad. For dinner it was: "Please, anything but more matzah and eggs!"

The bread was pretty straight forward, but the legumes were always the challenge: no corn syrup, no peanut oil, no beans -- collectively referred to as *kitniyot*. The saving factor was that all Jews around the world were reliving the Exodus together by cutting out Coke, peanut butter, and rice.

Later I learned that this was not quite so. Not all Jews avoid legumes. What is *kosher l'Pesach* for one community may not hold for another community. And, *chametz* is not always what it appears to be.

According to the Talmud, "It is a mitzvah to abstain from eating leaven during the entire seven days of Pesach." *Chametz* is considered to be grain from which matzah may be baked: wheat, barley, oats, rye, and spelt. By the 13th

century, Ashkenazic authorities added legumes and rice as foods to be avoided during the festival. They argued that these *kitniyot* could be confused with *chametz* in that they are cooked in a similar fashion. There was the added danger that the *chametz* and *kitniyot* could be inadvertently mixed in the market place. By the 18th century, Ashkenazic tradition coalesced around the exclusion of rice and legumes from Pesach diets, acknowledging that this *minhag* (custom) had acquired the status of law.

Prior to the 18th century in Ashkenazic and continuing even today in Sephardic communities, dietary prohibitions only focused upon the five grains of *chametz*. Talmudic law, while forbidding the use of rice and legumes as flour for baking matzah, clearly permits their use during the festival. Today, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) and the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel (Conservative) have both published *teshuvot* (responsa) against the inclusion of *kitniyot* in the prohibitions during Passover. Some of the reasoning cited in these *teshuvot* is that the prohibitions are contrary to Talmudic law, are based on mistaken customs, and divide the Jewish community (Sephardic Jews eat *kitniyot*). They also insist that modern Jews can be trusted to distinguish between *chametz* and *kitniyot*, and furthermore, these customs emphasize the insignificant legumes and ignore the more significant five grains.

So where does that leave us today? Should we sip soda at our Seder? Feast on felafel during this Festival? Pass the peas on Passover? Ultimately, as Reform Jews, we educate ourselves as we search for an informed decision. We may ask ourselves whether refraining from *kitniyot* detracts from our celebration of the holiday or whether it enhances our observance.

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From the President...



Howard T. Katz

As I write this April Chai Lights, it is March 8, my birthday. I am in Eretz Yisrael with Cheryl, Asher, & Kovi. We join Esther & Lily on Wednesday.

Last night we had dinner with Sarit & Rinat McDonald. Sarit sends her love to her BIC family & misses us. I come to Israel and Beth Israel Congregation meets me!

Many of you have heard me say that my life is better than I deserve. It is true and Beth Israel is a big part of that. On this beautiful night in Israel, I take a moment to thank BIC and my friends in Jackson, MS.

HAPPY & KOSHER PESACH to all.
Howard Katz



Please join us in Celebrating
Passover
Saturday, April 4th at 6:15 p.m.

Reservation Deadline
Wednesday, April 1st

\$15.00 in advance - \$20.00 at the door

Kids 5-10 are \$10.00 - Kids under 5 are free

To RSVP contact Charna Schlakman:
charna 515@aol.com or (954) 629-1371

Friday, April 3, 2015 - 5:00 p.m.—5:30 p.m.
Passover Ma'ariv (Evening Services)

Saturday, April 4, 2015 - 9:00 a.m.
Passover Shacharit (Morning Services)

Oneg Shabbat
April 17, 2015
6:15 p.m.

We will celebrate and
recognize our
new members !

Take this opportunity to
become personally
involved!

BETH ISRAEL OFFICE HOURS

Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday: 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 10:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.
Thursday: 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
Friday: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Closed for lunch:
12:30-1:30 p.m.

Sisterhood Spotlight: A Message from the Sisterhood Co-Presidents

Hello from Israel!!!!

I am excited to be writing you from Israel and to have most of my family here with me. This is an amazing country and I hope you all will have a chance to visit.

I would like to thank everyone at Beth Israel for pulling together and allowing us to have a successful Bazaar this year. We are fortunate to live in a community that works together to put on such a great community event. Thank you to Jo Ann Gordon for chairing this event! Thanks to all who chaired booths and volunteered hours to work. A big thank you to our Temple staff for handling the many calls, questions and extra work that have come in.

We are busy planning for the second Seder. Please let us know if you and your family can join us by RSVP to charna515@aol.com or (954)629-1371. Sisterhood is having a baby shower/luncheon/general meeting on April 15th. The gifts will be donated to the nursery at Blair E Batson hospital to families in need. Items needed are listed in the article below. We hope you can join us. We are looking for programming ideas for future events and meetings. Please share any ideas you may have with us!

We wish all a Happy Passover!

Cheryl Katz

April Luncheon

Please join us on April 15th

Beth Israel Sisterhood
will hold our

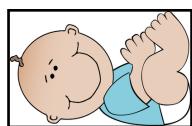
April General Meeting at
Biaggis in Ridgeland.

Our April meeting will
include a social service event for
Blair E. Batson Hospital.
We will be collecting new onesies,
blankets, bath towels, wash
clothes and burp clothes.

Time: 11:30-1:00

Cost: \$16

Location: Biaggis



RSVP! By April 10th

Frankie Springer: 601-383-1209 or
fmspringer5@gmail.com



deliver a difference

Meals on Wheels Needs Your Help on Our Monday Delivery Routes

If you have an hour or two to spare one day a month, Sisterhood needs drivers to assist with delivery of the food. The recipients profoundly appreciate our work. **It is truly a mitzvah—one that is open to the entire congregation, not just Sisterhood members.** The routes are local Jackson areas (e.g., Fondren & Belhaven), and we've mapped them out to be easily manageable. We suggest two person teams working together on each route—a driver and an assistant.

To volunteer, please contact Charna Schlakman at
charna515@aol.com

Education Spotlight

Tot Shabbat this month is Family Shabbat
April 10th—6:15 p.m.

A full sanctuary service that is family-friendly
for kids of all ages.
Religious School students will participate.
Dinner afterwards.

Bagel Bunch
April 19th—9:30 a.m.
Jewish friends, learning, fun and
(of course) food
For children not yet enrolled
in Sunday School, with caregivers
Questions and rsvp to
ericaabeles@gmail.com

IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DATES

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL APRIL 5TH, EASTER DINNER AT
STEWPOINT PREPARED AND SERVED BY BETH ISRAEL.
CONTACT THE TEMPLE OFFICE FOR MORE DETAILS

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DATES: **APRIL 12, 19, 26**

HEBREW SCHOOL DATES: **APRIL 1, 9, 15, 22, 29**

GRADE 7-8 PARENTS: FAMILY EDUCATION DAY
APRIL 19TH, 9:30 A.M.— 12:00 P.M. STUDENTS
SHOULD ATTEND WITH A PARENT, GRANDPARENT, OR
ANOTHER IMPORTANT ADULT IN THEIR LIVES,

RSVP TO RABBI KASSOFF AT
DEBRA@BETHISRAELMS.ORG OR 601.956.6215

BY APRIL 15TH

BITY Buzz:

April 17-19

NFTY-SO

Spring Conclave

Henry S. Jacobs Camp

Register through April 13th

<http://www.nfty.org/so/events/spring/>

Connect with us on Facebook, write to
BITY@bethisraelms.org or contact
Rabbi Kassoff for more information

**Beth Israel Religious School
is Now Accepting
Box Tops for Education**



Clip your box tops and place them in the box
outside the Beth Israel office
or in the box on the table in the foyer.

**Registration for Jacobs Camp
Summer 2015 Is Now OPEN!**

Jacobs.urjcamp.org/register

PRESCHOOL—SAVE THE DATE

Summer Camps
(Grandchildren are welcome)

June 22 - June 26 - Sky Hawk Sports Camp

June 29 - Leaps & Bounds with Ms. Kelly

Computer Explorers

July 6 - Soccer Tots

July 13 - Art Camp with Loris

July 20 - Computer Explorers

July 17 - Lego Bricks for Kidz

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - All Day Options Available

EARL HILL INTERFAITH ACADEMY

Earl Hill Interfaith Academy, a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue Education Program, is a collaborative initiative to foster interfaith understanding and friendship in the Jackson community. Through open and honest discussion, we hope to eliminate or reduce false stereotypes, prejudices, and fears. Each session will include dinner, presentations, and dialogue. All sessions are on Tuesday nights at 6:00 p.m. at the locations listed:

April 14th, at Dialogue Institute Mississippi: Jerusalem in three religions

April 21, at Beth Israel: Fundamentalism and religious extremism

April 28, at Dialogue Institute Mississippi : Tzedakah, Charity, Sadaka

To reserve your space or if you have questions
Please contact Rabbi Kassoff: debra@bethisraelms.org



Are you looking for a way to give something back to our community? Please help our Jackson FOOD PANTRY?

Volunteers are needed from Beth Israel:
June 29-July 3, 2015
September 14-18, 2015
December 14-18, 2015

If you can volunteer,
please contact:
Beth Orlandsky at
bethorlandsky@gmail.com



Moishe House Without Walls

The innovative initiative for young Jewish adults, Moishe House, has made it to Jackson!

In February, Lonnie Kleinman and Arielle Nissenblatt hosted an informal Tu B'shvat seder that challenged participants to ask, on the day that marks the new year for the trees, "What is your resolution for sustainability?" This was the first event that is part of a larger partnership with Moishe House Without Walls in Jackson, Mississippi. The pair will host two events a month, ranging from Shabbat Dinners to hamantaschen cook-offs, to movie nights. Moishe House Without Walls seeks to strengthen young leadership (Jews in their 20s) and support Jewish community outside traditional spaces. One of the goals is to get young Jews in the community involved in and developing programming that interests them. Anyone who goes on a Moishe House retreat qualifies to become a host. For more information, and to be added to a list for information on upcoming events, contact Lonnie Kleinman: afkleinman@gmail.com

Our BIC Membership and Engagement committee is so impressed with Moishe House Without Walls in Jackson (and Lonnie & Arielle), that we are sponsoring an upcoming event for the group.

Moishe House has 75 houses worldwide and engages more than 80,000 in total attendance a year.

For more information about Moishe House, please go to: www.moishehouse.org.

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Klal Yisrael (the unified community of Israel) may persuade us to refrain from *kitniyot* as we solidify our bonds with the rest of the Ashkenazic community. On the other hand, *Klal Yisrael* may call us to strengthen our ties with the Sephardic community by eating legumes and rice during Pesach. Our family traditions and customs also play a strong role as we connect ourselves to previous generations.

As we prepare our homes for the celebration of Pesach this year, I'm reminded that being a Reform Jew does not mean taking the easy way out. Reform Judaism requires that we ask questions, search our tradition, and reevaluate our practice as we continue the ongoing evolution of Judaism.

Hag Sameach,
Rabbi Ted Riter



MAZEL TOV

Daniel and Mado Glass of Boston
are the proud parents of a baby girl,
Arianna Elizabeth, born February 12, 2015.

The happy grandparents are
George and Sherrie Glass of Ridgeland

David and Erin Brower of Brandon
became the proud parents of a baby boy,
Samuel Reese Brower born March 14, 2015

April Birthdays

- 1 Max Palmer
- 4 Janice LeBlanc
- 4 Suzanne Rotwein
- 4 Tamar Sharp
- 5 Helen Leighton
- 8 Donna Kaminsky
- 8 Sandra Liverman
- 8 Bob Berman
- 8 Sue Jacobs
- 10 David Kweller
- 11 Mark Burleson
- 12 Richard Snyder
- 14 Don Mitchell
- 14 Dana Larkin
- 14 Dana Schallheim
- 16 Zoey Mabry
- 21 Steve Pollock
- 21 Elizabeth Rankin
- 22 Robyn Pollack
- 23 Samuel Ginsberg
- 24 Mariel Kassoff
- 25 Donna Orkin
- 27 Mindi Helsehein-Phillips
- 29 Hannah Harris
- 29 Harold Kolodney
- 30 Gilda Hesdorffer



April Anniversaries

- 7 Dave Ross and Sarah Buxbaum
- 11 Mark and Amy Burleson
- 18 Abram and Hannah Orlansky
- 26 Bruce and Charna Schlakman
- 27 Harold and Mary Gail Kolodney
- 30 David and Tara Blumenthal

BETH



ISRAEL
CONGREGATION

Non-Profit Org
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID

Permit #123
JACKSON, MS

5315 Old Canton Rd.
Jackson, MS 39211

Phone: (601) 956-6215
Fax (601) 952-0895

bethisraelms.org

We Remember — Yahrzeits for April, 2015

March 29-April 4

*Beverly Daniel
*Libby Sollek
*Toby Rubinsky
Dorothy Sherman
Joe Schneider
Selma Jacobson
Issac Elfassy
Roselyn Schlesinger
Morris Binder
Joseph Kirsch
Mollye Rones
Dinah Pack
Luise Draft
Samuel Ruvinsky

April 5-11

Jennie Landau
David Harris
Penia Stotland
*Sam Millstein
Beatrice Snyder
Jonathan Souweine
Abe Levy
Lena Levy Pritikin
Gerda Stressmann
Lillian Sawyer

Walter Lipsich
Eugenia Berger
Jules Wiener
*Nokhim Ivshin
Peter Hendrix Thames

April 12-18

Bernard Cohen
Kolman Katz
*Benjamin Freedman
Marguerite Elfassy Lercher
Earl Friedman
Bernice Lazarus
*Fanny Gordon
Clifford Abrams
H. Steve Browdy

April 19-25

Daniel Webster Ready, Jr.
Irene Lebed
*Mike Binder
George Jacob Segel
*Betty Rubinsky
Miriam Fratkin
Eileen Hanf
Paul Goodman
Milton Stiebel

April 26-May 2

Lena Mermelstein
Ruth Stamm Rice
Gerson Solomon
Henerietta Reichel
Michael Wolpin
Lena Katz
*Jacob Mitchell
Joseph Pollack
Dorothea Wernicke
*William Wiener, Sr.
Rene Amdur
Gerald Crystal
Helen Weil Loeb
Rufus Earl Branson
Eli Abromson
Abraham Plotkin
Deborah Danziger
Marx Rosenweig

*Memorial Alcove Plaque