



Rabbi Moshe Adler

Lighting Up the Darkness

Before Moses' death, God teaches him a poem that recalls Israel's past and looks ahead to its future. Foreseeing that the people will turn away from Him, God says, "I will hide My face on that day" (Deuteronomy 31:18). The stories of Purim and of Hanukkah take place in the age of the hiding of God's face, as does the rest of Jewish history until God reveals His face once more.

But the hiding of God's face is not an absence of God. As Eliezer Berkovits reminds us, God must absent Himself from human affairs so that humanity can have free will, yet He must remain present enough to keep good people from despairing. God therefore remains present but hidden. "You are indeed a God who conceals Himself, O God of Israel, who bring salvation!" says the prophet Isaiah (45:15) – You bring salvation even while hiding Your face.

Like the Jews' victory over the forces of Haman, their victory over the Syrian Greek armies was not an open miracle, like the splitting of the sea, but a hidden one, whose miraculous character was not apparent until after it had occurred. Judah Maccabee could not guarantee the success of his guerrilla forces against the might

of the Hellenic empire; he could only read the signs, exhort, and encourage. Of their own volition, the Maccabee fighters would have to go into battle knowing that if they fell, it would mean death for them and intensified oppression for the Jewish people.

The Maccabees' deed is comparable to that of Nahshon, who, according to the Midrash (B'midbar Rabbah 13:4), walked into the sea until he could go no further, whereupon God opened the sea. A critical difference, however, is that, whereas Nahshon beheld the divine Presence in the pillar of cloud and of fire, the Maccabees acted on faith in a time when God's face was hidden.

Ours is the world of the Maccabees. Like them, we are called to do what we can do, leaving it to God to do what we cannot. And like them, we must act on faith. Their story assures us that we are not alone and that light can break through the darkness. That's what the founders of the State of Israel proved, and what its defenders repeatedly prove. It's what we recall as we light the Hanukkah lights and enjoy their warm glow.

Happy Hanukkah!



חג
אורים
שמה

Beth El - The Heights Synagogue builds vibrant Jewish community.
We welcome all in participatory, traditional, egalitarian worship and learning.



**Sherry Ball,
President**

How Do You Fit In?

What does it mean to “fit in”? Do you sometimes wonder how you fit in at Beth El-The Heights Synagogue?

“Fitting in” connotes belonging to a static and rigid system. Yet one may propose that a feeling of “fitting-in” breeds complacency while a feeling of concern breeds conscientiousness. I am not the first to propose that fitting in is overrated (for example, see “Fitting in is Overrated” by Leonard Felder).

President Obama spent his childhood and young adulthood looking for a place where he could fit in. As a dark skinned person in a world of predominately light skinned people he was forced to self-define. Just fitting in was not an option in his childhood or in his adulthood. He’s clearly not white and yet to some he’s also not black – enough. There are those who even question whether he is American.

What happens to a person under those circumstances? What does one learn? What can one do with a PhD in being an outsider? Perhaps there are two outcomes: 1) learning to engage others and to build bridges; or 2) spending a majority of time alone. With either outcome one might ask “Can feeling different promote the ability to make a difference?” For Barack Obama it has led to two terms as president of the United States. In Susan Cain’s 2012 best-selling book “Quiet” she makes a strong case for the value of introverts.

BE –THS does not fit neatly into any category of Judaism. We are not Reform,

Conservative, or Orthodox, East or West, Democrat or Republican, extroverts or introverts, gay or straight, paper or plastic. We don’t fit neatly into any one of these labels. Neither do our members. Yet we each find our connection to others within our diverse community. We come together on Shabbat for services and we learn from each other because we are all different. The uniquely participatory nature of our services promotes sharing and learning for all, with few pre-defined expectations.

On the other hand, we all yearn to feel comfort and to feel at home. Yet do we all feel like we “fit in”? Again, perhaps “fitting in” is overrated. When we gather on Shabbat, on holidays, or on work days, we gather as real people with individual personalities. Yet we gather to fulfill common goals and in the process gradually form strong connections to each other. Our diversity is part of our strength. BE –THS offers a place where we can all grow and find new and unexpected connections. We are a compassionate, interesting, and creative group. BE-THS is not static and rigid but is dynamic and flexible. As a member of BE –THS prepare to be challenged, and who knows where it could lead?

Your continued connection and support allows us to offer a place where everyone is welcome. We hope to connect with you soon either at Shabbat services, one of the many classes or events offered by our Adult Education Committee, or for a social event such as the upcoming Hanukkah Party and the Pancake Breakfast.

**QUESTIONS? CONCERNS?
COMMENTS?
COMPLAINTS?**
Please do not hesitate to contact the President by e-mail president@bethelheights.org or home telephone (216) 371-8827

**HELP US
STAY IN TOUCH!**
Please be sure we have your current contact information. Send changes to info@bethelheights.org or call (216) 320-9667

**KEEP UP WITH THE NEWS!
JOIN THE
BE–THS LISTS!**
Send an e-mail to Mick Miller, mick@mickmill.com, if you need help with signing up.

E–MAIL NEWSLETTER:
If you’d like to get the pdf e-mail version, contact news@bethelheights.org

New Mishna Study Group

The second meeting of the Mishna Study Group will convene in the sanctuary after Kiddush on December 28. Alan Lerner will facilitate the discussion on the tractate of *Bava Metzia* (according to the English translation in the Art Scroll Series). Interested participants may purchase the book online or at a local Judaica store. We will provide a few copies of the first three pages, for those who do not have the book.

This will not be a lecture series but a participatory study group (*Chevruta* in Hebrew).

Questions? Contact Alan Lerner, lerner44120@yahoo.com or 216-932-5950.

As we say in the morning prayers “*Talmud Torah keneged kulam*,” “The study of the Torah is equivalent to all the other Mitzvot combined.”

Welcome, New Members

Bruce and Polly Wilkenfeld

Bruce and Polly have been married for 44 years. Both are recently retired. They are the parents of three married sons, all of whom have provided grandchildren.

Bruce has a PhD in American History. He has taught in New York and Cleveland. Most recently, he served as Director of Strategic Planning at University Hospitals. Polly, a librarian, most recently worked as head of Patron Services and Instruction at Ursuline College. She previously founded libraries at both the JECC and Fuchs Mizrahi School.

The couple spends as much of their time as possible enjoying their four grandchildren: two in Washington, DC, one in Columbus, and Samantha, here in Cleveland; Samantha sometimes brings her parents to BE –THS with her. Polly and Bruce are both avid readers and have a large eclectic music collection, much of it on LP's. Both Bruce and Polly continue to take classes at Siegal College. Polly comments that she has taken Hebrew literature classes from Nili and that Moshe has taught all three of their sons, at various points, at Schechter, Pardes, and at Akiva High School.

Our two new members look forward to becoming active at BE –THS. They also say that they hope to counter the prevailing liberal politics with a tiny dose of conservatism!

Learn with the Rabbi 5774 (2013-2014)

Kavanah (devotion): A Guiding Principle of Jewish Life

Rabbi Moshe Adler will offer a six-part class series this fall, on *Kavanah: A Guiding Principle of Jewish Life*. Classes will meet in the sanctuary, after kiddush, on the dates below. *Details of the full schedule were published in the September newsletter. Further sessions are scheduled on January 18, February 15, and March 22.*

2nd session: December 14 (*rescheduled from November 16*)

Kavanah (devotion) in life cycle events: birth, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage

3rd session: - **Postponed: Watch email or newsletter for reschedule date!**

Kavanah (devotion) in time of sickness: coping, healing, visiting, and helping the sick

Your Turn: *Our Members Write*

A letter from former member Joel Heller, who now lives in Washington, DC, about beginnings, and belonging.

A Sense of Belonging

We have spent much of the past few months thinking about beginnings. The new year, a new chance to do better, the start of a new cycle of Torah readings (beginning with the creation of the world and progressing through the early chapters of our biography of peoplehood). For us, these beginnings do not stand alone, however. We start again, but we know that we have done this before. Along with the beginnings are memories. When I spoke with Scott Wachter a few weeks ago, I was reminded once again of my year in Cleveland and as a member of the BE –THS community. When he asked me to share a few thoughts about my experiences there for the newsletter, I readily agreed.

When I first arrived in Cleveland, I consulted the map to find the closest synagogue to my apartment, and headed there on Shabbat. The first thing that BE –THS had going for it was proximity. What at first was a decision grounded in convenience soon became a purposeful choice. Here was a group committed to traditional Jewish worship and practice in a way that was open and welcoming. It was a space shared by the learned and the learning. I was grateful to find a community that was both so kind and so aligned with my own values and approach to a Jewish life. Having grown up in a small Jewish community, I was somewhat overwhelmed with the options that a place like Cleveland offered. (For some perspective, there are nearly four times as many Jews in Cleveland as in my entire home state of Tennessee.) And yet, just a mile up the road from the spot where I had somewhat blindly chosen to live, was a place that felt just about right.

Although my stay in Cleveland was temporary, the presence of the BE –THS community provided me with a sense of belonging while I was in town: you allowed me to live there, not just be there. What could have been a year just about work became a year filled with community, hospitality, learning, and friendship. As I start another new year here in DC, with its beginnings and promises, I continue to hold fast to my memories of BE –THS and remain grateful for the year that I spent with all of you.

Chesed at BE –THS

Since the inception of Beth El –The Heights Synagogue, the Chesed Committee has been a key to keeping our community thriving. Chesed, a Hebrew word, generally means “loving-kindness.” We provide support to those who are ill, to those celebrating a simcha (such as a new addition to the family), or to fellow members who need a minyan. We provide meals, visits, and the like, to all of our members who need some extra support.

Our Chesed Committee is comprised of Frank Buchwald, Jeanette Buchwald, Janice Carrick, Richard Krueck, Marilyn Malkin, Honey Massey, Vicki Rosales, Eran Shiloh, Linda Tobin, Beth Wachter, Scott Wachter, and Marsha Weisberg.

If you need assistance, or know of a fellow member who may need support, please notify any Chesed committee member. We will work with that member, and do everything we can to meet his or her needs.

“The world is built with chesed.” (Psalms 89:3.)

Learners' Torah Discussions

Join us to study and discuss selections from the weekly Torah portion. We consider commentaries, raise questions, and share tips for using the *Chumash*. Each week's lesson is self-contained so come as your schedule permits. The sessions are accessible for non-Hebrew speakers or readers and open to all. We meet after the Torah is taken out and the portion is introduced (about 10:20 AM to 10:30 AM) and rejoin the service in time for the d'var Torah.

Questions? Contact Mia Buchwald Gelles: miabgelles@gmail.com or 216-321-6717.

Upcoming Learners' Discussion Group Dates:

November 30 – *Miketz and Shabbat Chanukah* (we will start a little later, due to *Hallel*)

December 14 – *Vayechi*

Yahrzeits, December 2013

Henry Tepper	28 Kislev 5703	Milton Gutentag	13 Tevet 5738
Nat Slobody	28 Kislev 5723	Minnie Jacobs Weinberger	
Louis Eifer	28 Kislev 5741		13 Tevet 5725
Robert Mittman	29 Kislev	Margaret Jacobs	15 Tevet 5721
David Davis	30 Kislev 5713	Marion Siskind	15 Tevet 5762
Helen Citron	30 Kislev	Eliezer Lindenbaum	16 Tevet 5697
Ginda Rouse bat Boruch	Yuzefovich	Henry Rocker	16 Tevet 5727
	2 Tevet	Frederick Sadock	16 Tevet
Lenke Vamos	2 Tevet 5737	Frieda Amsel	18 Tevet 5773
Manual Collin	4 Tevet 5714	Morton Glaser	18 Tevet 5750
Moses Horwitz	4 Tevet	Annie Moll	18 Tevet 5761
Dr. Richard Bloomfield	5 Tevet 5773	Louis Shifrin	18 Tevet 5727
Sol Olshansky	5 Tevet 5726	Tamar Tepper	18 Tevet
Zoltan Saunt	5 Tevet 5736	Fannie Eisenberg	19 Tevet 5733
David Elliot Sobel	5 Tevet 5769	Jack Gordon	19 Tevet
Sam S. Birkner	6 Tevet	Steve Cernigoj	20 Tevet
Jack Lertzman	6 Tevet 5719	Jacques R. Simons	20 Tevet 5739
David L. Susman	6 Tevet 5721	Samuel Soffer	21 Tevet
Carl Gilbert Lampel	6 Tevet 5726	Charlotte Hope Saltzman	
Adolph Weinberger	6 Tevet 5738		22 Tevet 5765
Doug Keller	7 Tevet 5765	Fannie Fromson	23 Tevet 5717
Harry Samuel Weiss	7 Tevet 5710	Lillian Ratner	23 Tevet
P.F.C. Michael Marks	7 Tevet	Linda Robinson	23 Tevet 5767
Lawrence Mesnick	7 Tevet	Celia Sobel	23 Tevet
Rebecca Dorothy Charms		Joe Silver	25 Tevet 5733
	8 Tevet 5729	Sylvia Tucker	25 Tevet
Bella Sobel	10 Tevet	Charles Robert Brumbl	26 Tevet 5755
Sidney Russack	10 Tevet 5755	Rosalyn Louise Berkman	
Max Adler	10 Tevet		26 Tevet
Isadore Litt	11 Tevet 5722	Morris Givertz	27 Tevet
Bertha Weinberg	12 Tevet 5692	Alfred Adler	28 Tevet 5751
Max Levinsky	13 Tevet 5719	Joseph Savino	28 Tevet



The Jewish Federation of Cleveland's winter clothing drive for children, families and individuals in need is under way.



Operation Warm-Up

Our winters are long and cold, and these items can make a tremendous difference.

For further information on Operation Warm-Up, including bin locations, visit www.jewish-cleveland.org/volunteer, or contact Susan Hyman, JVN Director, at shyman@jcfcl-level.org or 216-593-2887.



NEWS FROM BETHEL

חדשות

Condolences to:

ניחום אבלים

- **Bill and Carol Bruml, and their family,** on the recent death of Carol's mother, Patrice Lydia Cain Freed Z"l.

Refuah Sh'lema to:

רפואה שלימה

- Nili Adler
- Molly Brudnick
- Joyce Tavill
- Ieda Warshay

Welcome, Returning Member:

ברוכים הבאים

- Fern Grunberger

Yasher Koah to:

י"שר כוח!

- **Brondy Shanker,** who received the "Most Treasured Volunteer" award from the Center for Community Solutions in a ceremony at the City Club on November 8 for her decades of "English in Action" service, teaching a "new" language to hundreds of men, women, and children from around the world.

Thanks for Contributions to:

תודה!

- **Moshe and Nili Adler,** in memory of Nili's father Yehuda Leib Shultz-Shalit Z"l.
- **Sherry Ball and Marty Gelfand,** for dedication of a Siddur in honor of Mike and Rob Belusko.
- **Kenneth C. Bardach,** in honor of the Valancy Family.
- **Leonid and Mariya Baron,** in memory of Yevgenia Baron Probst Z"l.
- **Stephanie K. Berger and Alan S. Mintz**
- **Bill and Carol Bruml,** in honor of Bruce and Judie Amsel, and Joe and Mia Buchwald Gelles.
- **Bill and Carol Bruml,** in memory of Carol's mother, Patrice Lydia Cain Freed Z"l.
- **Ruth Cantleberry,** in memory of her mother Doris Glaser Z"l.
- **Adele Eisner,** in appreciation of the open, excellent High Holy Day services.
- **Joan Friedman and Nancy Shimer**
- **Ilene Gertman,** in memory of her father Isadore Gertman Z"l.

- **Stephanie Gordon,** in memory of Jennie Gordon Z"l, mother of Chester Gordon Z"l.
- **Betty and Meyer Hoffer,** for the recovery of Nili Adler and Miriam Palevsky.
- **Philip Kazdan**
- **Fredric V. Kiml**
- **Seth Lettofsky,** in honor of Rabbi Moshe and Nili Adler.
- **Mick Miller and Jamie Saunt,** in memory of Jamie's father, Jim Saunt Z"l.
- **Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin**
- **Shari E. Robins,** to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, in memory of her mother Helene Robins Z"l.
- **Mark, Bonnie, and Betty Rosen,** in appreciation of the High Holy Day services.
- **Charlotte Saunt,** in memory of her husband, James Saunt Z"l.
- **William I. and Ilana L. Schmitt,** in memory of Manny Levenson Z"l.
- **Arnold Stone,** in memory of his parents Helen and William Sonnenstein Z"l.
- **Laurie Ticktin,** in memory of Phil Ticktin Z"l.
- **Jeffrey and Shari Weitzner,** in honor of the birthday of their son-in-law, Shaul Janes.

Thanks for High Holy Days Ticket Contributions to:

תודה!

- **Amy and Alan Cadesky**
- **Martin and Nancy Kosmin**
- **Eric Mazelis**
- **Devorah J. Silverman**

Thanks for Kiddush Sponsorships to:

תודה!

- **NOVEMBER 9 LUNCH AND LEARN WITH DR. ERIC KODISH – Fern Grunberger, Alan Lerner and Erica New.**
- **NOVEMBER 16 – Abby and Jeff Halpern,** in honor of their son Rafi's birthday.
- **DECEMBER 7 – Adi and Judith Gerblich,** in honor of the Lunch and Learn on Jewish musical theater, to be presented by Lenore Koppel that day.

CALENDAR, DECEMBER 2013

כסלו \ טבת 5774

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, ABOUT 10:30 AM – **Learners' Torah Study** will meet in the room across from the Babysitting Room, to discuss *Parshat Miketz and Shabbat Hanukkah*. (we will start a little later than usual, due to Hallel) (see page 3 for details)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 4:00 TO 6:00 PM – **Hanukkah Party** Bring your menorah, enjoy latkes, and forget the turkey leftovers for a night! (see November flyer for details)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, AFTER SERVICES – **Lunch and Learn: Lenore Koppel will present *A Taste of Broadway, and its Jewish Legacy***. (see flyer for details)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14,

ABOUT 10:20 AM – **Learners' Torah Study – *Vayechi*** (see page 3 for details)

AFTER KIDDUSH – **Rabbi's Class, session 2: *Kavanah (devotion) in life cycle events: birth, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage***.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON (breakfast served until 11:30 am) – **Annual Community Pancake Breakfast** (see flyer for details)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28,

AFTER SERVICES – **MONTHLY SIMCHA KIDDUSH: JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE SOME OF THE HAPPY EVENTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN DECEMBER.**

AFTER KIDDUSH – **Mishna Study Group will meet in the sanctuary** (see page 3 for details)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, AFTER SERVICES – **Lunch and Learn with US Attorney Steven Dettlebach: *Combatting the Scourge of Human Trafficking***.

Thanks for Simcha Kiddush Contributions to:

תודה!

- Nili Adler, in honor of Rabbi Moshe Adler's birthday.
- The Buchwald Gelles family, in honor of Noam's birthday.
- Marty Gelfand, in honor of Sherry Ball's birthday.
- Ilene Gertman, in honor of her birthday.
- Shulamit Magnus, in honor of her son Natan's "homecoming," on leave from the Israeli IDF (she states home is really Israel; thus, the quotes), and celebrating the end of his commando training and the beginning of his full service in that capacity, in the IDF.
- Mick Miller, in honor of his birthday.
- Mick Miller, in honor of Jamie Saunt's birthday.

- Sam Miller, in honor of his birthday.
- Alan Mintz, in honor of his birthday.
- Beth and Scott Wachter, in honor of their 22nd wedding anniversary.

Thanks for November Newsletter

Mailing Help to:

תודה!

- Robin Dubin
- Marty Gelfand
- Sondra Jacobs
- Richard Krueck
- Nina Sobel
- Terri Tomberg
- Beth Wachter
- Scott Wachter

The wonders of technology: Eden Gelfand, in South Euclid, chats with Rafi Halpern, in Haifa, Israel, over the Internet.



Lunch and Learn on December 7, after Kiddush



A Taste of Broadway and its Jewish Legacy

Lenore Koppel will present a fascinating Lunch and Learn program, after Kiddush on December 7, on the roles Jewish men and women have played in American Musical Theater.

From the early twenties to the late seventies of the last century, the American musical on Broadway brought to the world an indigenous and new art form. It wasn't exactly pure drama, nor was it an operetta. Neither was it jazzy and it surely was not a "revue" nor "vaudeville" nor "burlesque". It was MUSICAL THEATER. Included within was a "book", lyrics, dance, set, and design....all working together, collaboratively.

Where did the people who developed it come from? How was their creativity nourished? What was their philosophy of theater? Why did musicals become immensely popular globally? Why did this art form disappear, only to be revived in a far different format?

The answers go back to the people involved, some four dozen men (and a few women) who in those fifty years celebrated their ethnic backgrounds and their American dreams via writing, composing, and producing great theater. Most of them were children of immigrant Jews; their music was strongly influenced by cantors, synagogue, and prayer. Composers and lyricists, in particular, leaned on their Jewish legacy as they presented new concepts of blended music and drama.

From the early days of Eddie Cantor and Irving Berlin, through the years of smash hits by Rodgers and Hammerstein, up to the genius of Stephen Sondheim, musicals developed beyond the status of pure entertainment. They became the vehicle for composers and lyricists to raise issues and confront America's problems.

Lenore P. Koppel's Jewish Studies specialty is in Jewish literature, from the Enlightenment to contemporary studies, including novels, plays, and music. She had a forty-year career as a teacher and administrator in Special Education in the Cleveland Heights and Lakewood City Schools. She grew up in a Hebraic-Judaic home where she received her biblical and language education. She served as member and president of the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Libraries and as chairperson of the Cleveland Chamber Music Society.

Lenore and her husband Harold edit the Index to Jewish Periodicals, which indexes Jewish issues and scholarship published in 200+ journals of Jewish content.



A Taste of Broadway and its Jewish Legacy

Lenore Koppel - Lunch and Learn!

Jews in American Musical Theater:

Learn how some four dozen men, and a few women, celebrated their ethnic backgrounds and their American dreams via writing, composing, and producing great musical theater, in the mid-20th century.

A kiddush lunch precedes the talk.

When: December 7, 2013, after morning services

Where: Beth El –The Heights Synagogue

3246 Desota Avenue, Cleveland Heights

Questions? info@bethelheights.org

www.bethelheights.org

216-320-9667



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(and have fun)

December 25th

Morning minyan at 9:30 AM

PANCAKES and FAMILY FUN:
10:00 AM to Noon

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Family Maximum \$32

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