

Temple Israel of Riverhead Bulletin

May 2023
Volume #29

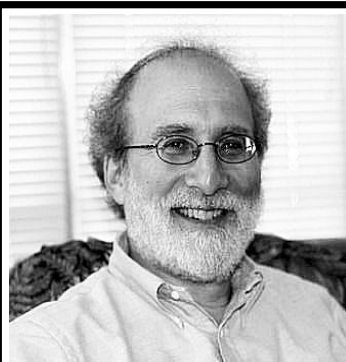
Iyar/Sivan 5783
Issue #4

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RABBI'S REFLECTIONS: We are Torah

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Rabbi Michael Rascoe

I partly stole the title and sermon from my friend and senior colleague Rabbi Joseph Radinsky, z"l, obm, who wrote a sermon entitled, "We are the Torah." My issue is the title. I will deal with this after the remarks.

He notes that since we give Torah such importance, we'd expect great pageantry on Shavu'ot. Yet traditional services don't have much. We don't because Torah itself must be what's important. We highly venerate it. People rush into burning buildings to save one. In this, we turn the Torah into an idol, to borrow a phrase from the Israeli iconoclast Yeshayahu Leibowitz, z"l. While Torah stands at Judaism's center, it is not Judaism.

Rava (*Makkot* 22b) says, "How foolish are some who stand [out of respect] before a Torah scroll, but do not stand before a great scholar."* Accordingly one shouldn't idolize a Torah scroll; one should respect the person who teaches it because that person embodies the Torah's teachings, in daily life and behavior. While it's true that in the degree of holiness of synagogue objects the Torah scroll is highest, and one can't just use it for anything

(Rabbi—continued on page 2)

else, one can sell it in order to redeem a captive, marry off a bride, or support a Torah student's learning (based on *Megillah* 27a, see *Shulhan Arukh Orach Hayyim* 153:6, cf 10 for a private Torah).

Rabbi Radinsky also mentions that Mosheh broke the Two Tablets of the Ten Sayings because they weren't intrinsically holy.[^] Their holiness was "only to the degree that they could change the people so that they would want to live good and decent lives. The purpose for studying the *Torah* is to make us want to do what we should do, to become the carriers of our faith". Shavu'ot doesn't have many symbols to stress this reason. "The *Torah* should transform us so that we become the living example of its teachings."

My issue is the word "the". "The Torah" turns Torah into an idol. In today's Jewish world, "The Torah" refers to either the scroll, or Rabbinic tradition, often to the detriment of studying Torah itself because the only thing that matters is its Rabbinic interpretations; and if Rabbis disagree, they must be harmonized or ignored out of existence. There is no one interpretation of Torah, and this idea, as well as the scroll's veneration, turns The Torah into an idol. When it's idol worship, we lose sight of its effect on people. We justify, only "The Tradition" as paramount. In turn, only the most restrictive interpretation is the best, and one excuses all behaviors that further this point. This allows the right to treat everyone to their left as sinners who must be put in their place, not only because they aren't right and true, but because they are a danger to those who are. This is idolatry.

Non-right "folk" who treat a Torah scroll more respectfully than other people aren't different from the right, even as they decry the right. This is idolatry.

The left too is guilty of idolatry. Torah only is

how we treat other people. We must call out those who don't hold the same values, for they've lost sight of Torah's point. The left is no different from those they castigate, and maybe worse. They treat opponents poorly because they treat other people poorly, which really holds that the ends justify the means. Worse, the more removed from Torah they get, the more they lose sight of it and its beauty, as well as the insights that it still has to teach us. The traditionalist quips that non-traditionalists cannot be *apikorsim*, heretics, because they don't know enough to be heretics. In Judaism, a heretic must be knowledgeable of Torah in order to violate it as a heretic. As they point out, the left which castigates them are ignoramuses when it comes to Torah. The left too loses sight of Torah leading to behavior by internalizing its teachings.

Everyone really claims that there is one Torah, and only I, and everyone like me, has "The Torah". Torah has many interpretations and paths, so no one person can have "The Torah". Only God has it; hence, they are all idolaters as they substitute their opinions for God's. We don't, and can't, know what God wants. To claim that we do makes us God; hence it is idolatry. With no one Torah, there is no "The Torah". Torah allows for a wide latitude. Only when we study it, internalize it, and act it out, will we be Torah.

Hag same-ah, a joyous and happy Shavu'ot.

* Regarding this statement, the usual translation of "some" is "rest" and "great scholar" is "great person". In the context of the *g'mara*, it is in the midst of a discussion of how the rabbis can correctly understand the Torah differently than the literal meaning, specifically on how they interpret 40 lashes to be a maximum of 39.

[^] According to some commentators, of course there are other explanations.

Shavuot

Services are in person,
or
online via Zoom



Led by Rabbi Michael Rascoe

Learning Session:

Thursday evening, May 25, 6:30 PM; details TBA.

Services:

Friday, May 26, 9:30 AM.

Saturday, May 27, 9:30 AM, including Yizkor.

Shavuot/Memorial Day Weekend Shabbat Dinner

Friday, May 26th, 5:30 PM

Sponsored by
Kelly Rosati, in memory of her sister,
Robin Prussick, and the
Siegel family in memory of Jeffrey Siegel.



Good food,
good company,
and good times.



RSVP by Tuesday, 5/23

We're Back!

Friday night Oneg Shabbats Starting in June

To our Temple Israel family,

Up until the arrival of the pandemic in 2020, the tradition of hosting an Oneg Shabbat had been a part of our Friday night service for many years. Now that the pandemic has ended and we are returning to a regular operating schedule, we ask for your participation in this community activity, which we hope to start in June. We request each member unit to contribute to this weekly community event. If there is a special date that you would like to commemorate with your participation, please let us know. You can honor a birthday, anniversary, yahrzeit, etc. The hospitality committee will do the shopping, and we will acknowledge all participants.

I / we would be happy to contribute \$72.00 to cover the cost of an Oneg Shabbat, which would be provided by the Hospitality Committee, and herewith enclose a check for same. (Check payable to "Temple Israel of Riverhead- Oneg"). Please indicate the date you would like to sponsor.

Name

Address

City, State, ZIP

Phone # / Email Address

Date / Honoring

If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Smith at 631-664-6584 or email: zagsmith.bs@gmail.com

Please send to: Temple Israel of Riverhead
 Attn: Oneg Shabbat Committee
 PO Box 1531
 Riverhead, NY 11901

Thank you for your participation!

The Oneg Shabbat Committee

Temple Israel of Riverhead Annual Meeting Will be held online via Zoom



Installation of Officers & Trustees.
Come meet our Board, our committee chairs,
and learn about everything that is going on in our temple.
Voice your opinion. Get involved.

Thursday, June 15, 2023, 7:00 PM

Instructions to enter the Zoom meeting
will be included in the mail with your proxy.

Hebrew School



Remaining class dates for the current school year are:
May 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31.
Dates subject to change.



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Holiday Weekend Shabbat BBQs

Good food, good company,
good times!

Shavuot/Memorial Day weekend dinner

Friday, May 26, 2023, 5:30 PM



4th of July Weekend BBQ

Friday, June 30, 2023, 5:30 PM



Labor Day Weekend BBQ and speaker program

Friday, September 1, 2023, 5:30 PM



Each BBQ followed by Kaballat Shabbat

Kindly RSVP if you plan to attend so we can
shop and prepare accordingly.

Labor Day weekend sponsor needed. Contact
Jaime Siegel to sponsor a BBQ/dinner.





Friday
June 30, 2023
5:30 p.m.

**4th of July Weekend BBQ
and
Raffle Fundraiser**



Thank you to our BBQ sponsors:
Abigail Moore & Len Wasserman



GET LUCKY!

\$5,000 Cash Raffle

Drawing on June 30th

at 7:00 PM

\$100 per ticket.



If less than 100 tickets are sold
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Contact Jaime Siegel, Richard Israel, or Jim Smith to purchase your tickets.



With
Rabbi Rascoe

Jewish Mysticism

Join **Rabbi Rascoe** to explore the topic of Jewish mysticism, especially the Kabbalah and its variations. Classes are held via Zoom, from 6:00-7:00 PM, on Mondays in May and June.

Jewish Philosophy

Join **Rabbi Rascoe** and explore **Jewish Philosophy** via Zoom. Classes will be held at 6 PM on Tuesdays in May and June. He will be discussing *Strauss, Spinoza, & Sinai: Orthodox Judaism and Modern Questions of Faith* by Jeffery Bloom, Alec Goldstein, and Gil Student. This book is a collection of seventeen essays from a wide variety of thinkers and doers, discussing various aspects of Judaism.

Prayer: Structure, and Meaning

Join **Rabbi Rascoe** and study prayer via Zoom. We will look at the structure of the service, the meaning of the individual prayers, and ritual actions when they are involved. Classes will be held at 7:30 PM on Tuesdays in May and June.

Talmud Classes: Tractate Megillah

Rabbi Roscoe's Talmud classes continue, via Zoom, at 6 PM on Wednesdays in May and June. There is always review. No advance reading is required. The text can be found at: <https://www.sefaria.org/Megillah.8a?lang=bi>. Attendees receive an introduction to Talmudic logic, thought, and law.

(Continued on next page)

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Bible Study: Starting with Genesis

Rabbi Rascoe will be holding these classes via Zoom, at 6:30 PM on Thursdays in May and June, except May 25 and June 15.

Please note: Congregants will receive emailed instructions for attending Rabbi Roscoe's classes via Zoom. Classes may be cancelled when the class decides to take a break, and you may come late or leave early. Contact Rabbi Rascoe for more information.

Interfaith Bible Class

The Interfaith Bible Class will meet via Zoom, on Wednesdays, May 10 and June 14, from 9:30-11:30 AM. Please contact the Rabbi for information and the link.

Where to Purchase Kosher Food Locally




Justin's Chop Shop, in Westhampton Beach, (631) 288-5532, now carries some kosher meat, poultry, and other items, along with the non-kosher items it has always carried.

The Mill Road Cheese Shop, Westhampton Beach, (631) 998-0483, now carries some kosher items.

Beach Bakery, in Westhampton Beach, is under kosher supervision.

BJ's and **Costco** also have pareve cookies in their bakeries.



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Please Note:

In an effort to reduce our postage and printing expenses, the June 2023 bulletin will also not be mailed. It will be distributed via email and posted on our website.

A Little Humor

Q: How many Jews does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Four: One to convince others to do it, a second to donate the bulb, a third to screw it in, and a fourth to make a speech saying the entire Jewish people stands behind the new bulb.

Two men are waiting for a train. The younger man asks the older man for the time, but the older man ignores him. After a while, the younger man again asks for the time and again the older man ignores him. Frustrated, the younger man finally asks, “Why won’t you answer me when I ask you for the time?”

The older man sighs and explains: “Look, if I tell you the time, we’ll start to talk. Then when the train comes, you might sit down next to me. Perhaps we’ll get to know each other, and maybe I’ll eventually invite you to my house for Shabbat dinner. Maybe then you and my daughter would really get along – why, you might even get engaged! And why would I want a son-in-law who can’t even afford a watch?”

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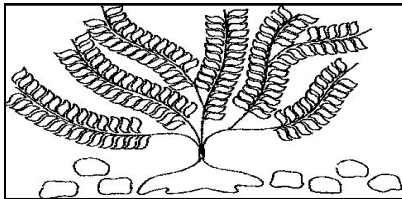
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Please contact Lorraine Richter (631-553-7635) or the Temple office to arrange a purchase. The total profit from card sales is donated to the general fund each year. Please support this silent fundraiser.

Leaves on the Tree of Life



An engraved leaf on the lovely Tree of Life which graces our Social Hall is a joyous reminder of a Bat or Bar Mitzvah, an anniversary, a wedding, or a special birthday, and also a fitting tribute to the memory of a loved one. The cost of a leaf is \$180 for members. Please contact **Phyllis VanDyne** at 631-734-7511 for information.

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David M. Rubin
Funeral Director,
Vice President

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Peninsula Wines and Liquors offers wine at discounted prices, delivered directly to the temple. A percentage of the cost is donated back to us each time you buy. Anyone needing wine or liquor can contact **Jaime Siegel**, or call Peninsula Wines directly at 516-374-0900. Ask for Jim Cari, and be sure to mention Temple Israel.

Donate an old car to Temple Israel for a tax deduction. It's easy—just call (866) 392-4483, or click on the link on our website. Be sure to designate Temple Israel of Riverhead as the recipient.

Plant a Tree in Israel



You can have a tree planted in Israel for a donation of \$18. Contact **Carole Jones** at the TIR office, 631-727-3191. All checks should be made out to Temple Israel of Riverhead, or you can use PayPal from our website.

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The Israel Family

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If you need Shabbat or holiday items for yourself, or for a gift, you will find them right in the Temple. Our Judaica Shop boasts a large inventory of beautiful items, many of them displayed in the Social Hall's glass cases. Kiddush cups, glass platters, Shabbat-to-go, kipot, Seder and matzoh plates, menorahs, children's books and toys, cookbooks, and candlesticks are all there.

Phyllis Van Dyne operates the Temple's Shop, acquiring new items several times a year. She will also fill special orders; if you see something you'd like, she can get it for you. Or, if you need ideas for a gift, she will be happy to suggest something in your price range, perfect for your occasion and recipient. For more information and personal service, just call Phyllis at 631-734-7511.

Candle Light- ing Times

5/5	7:33 PM
5/12	7:40 PM
5/19	7:47 PM
5/26	7:53 PM
6/2	7:58 PM



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Donation—Mr. & Mrs. Chris Kaplan-Walbrecht.

In memory of Florence Abrams—Harley Abrams.

Yahrzeit for Harry E. Abrams—Harley Abrams.

Yahrzeit for Paul Schroeder—Harley Abrams.

Yahrzeit for Gregory—son of Janet Maruna.

Yahrzeit for Sidney Frank—husband of Ruth Frank.

Yahrzeit for Gertrude Sandberg—mother of George Sandberg.

Yahrzeit for Ted Alpert—father of Cynthia Alpert.

Yahrzeit for Jeannette Siskind—Josh Printz.

Yahrzeit for Malvina Knopfler—grandmother of Charles Raffe.

Yahrzeit for Pauline Fivel—mother of Sylvia Hagler.

Trees for Israel: Giselle Murray—beloved Persian dog of Ladan & Billy.

Kol Nidre

Linda Prizer

Y A H R Z E I T S

We remember these lives on the approaching anniversary of their passing.

May their memories be a blessing.

May/June

Iyar/Sivan 5783

5/1	Finkelstein, Essie	Iyar 10	5/16	Korus, Fannie	Iyar 25
5/1	Leavitt, Theodore	Iyar 10	5/16	Polaniecki, Jacob	Iyar 25
5/1	Slaw, Helen Cohen	Iyar 10	5/17	Hahn, J. Jacob	Iyar 26
5/3	Krasnow, Marc	Iyar 12	5/17	Siegel, Irving	Iyar 26
5/3	Spector, Walter	Iyar 12	5/17	Zipser, Herman	Iyar 26
5/4	Damante, Risa Lynne	Iyar 13	5/18	Spitzer, Julia	Iyar 27
5/4	Hyman-Auerbach, Estelle	Iyar 13	5/20	Beil, Barbara	Iyar 29
5/5	Salpeter, Mildred	Iyar 14	5/20	Dresher, Benjamin	Iyar 29
5/6	Goldstein, Hyman	Iyar 15	5/20	Hochheiser, Harold	Iyar 29
5/7	Alpert, Lena	Iyar 16	5/21	Rosen, Charlotte	Sivan 1
5/7	Brander, Anna	Iyar 16	5/22	Cohen, Joseph	Sivan 2
5/7	Goldstein, Harry	Iyar 16	5/22	Eisenman, Bernard	Sivan 2
5/7	Levy, Lawrence	Iyar 16	5/23	Cohen, Samuel	Sivan 3
5/7	Richter, Jacqueline	Iyar 16	5/23	Goldman, Sam	Sivan 3
5/7	Yurman, Nathan	Iyar 16	5/24	Diamond, Herbert	Sivan 4
5/8	Gusky, Sheldon	Iyar 17	5/24	Faine, David	Sivan 4
5/8	Jaeger, Benjamin	Iyar 17	5/24	Polaniecki, Abraham	Sivan 4
5/8	Kallman, Irving	Iyar 17	5/25	Frank, Louis	Sivan 5
5/8	Sanders, Murray	Iyar 17	5/26	Goldstein, Esther	Sivan 6
5/9	Frank, Conrad	Iyar 18	5/26	Korman, Jack	Sivan 6
5/9	Weiss, Nathan	Iyar 18	5/26	Segal, Corky	Sivan 6
5/10	Bartick, Jerry	Iyar 19	5/26	Thompson, Sondra	Sivan 6
5/10	Beil, Lawrence	Iyar 19	5/27	Lubetsky, Harry	Sivan 7
5/11	Feiler, Lillian	Iyar 20	5/28	Gerlitz, Chaim	Sivan 8
5/11	Gerber, Kate	Iyar 20	5/29	Abrams, Florence	Sivan 9
5/12	Ettinger, Sara	Iyar 21	5/29	Anker, Lewis	Sivan 9
5/13	Brander, Irving	Iyar 22	5/29	Chizever, Henry	Sivan 9
5/13	Joseph, Reuben	Iyar 22	5/29	Remler, Norman	Sivan 9
5/13	Leon, Sophie	Iyar 22	5/30	Goldstein, Esther	Sivan 10
5/13	Warner, Arthur	Iyar 22	5/30	Goldstein, Sophia	Sivan 10
5/13	White, Jacob	Iyar 22	6/1	Davis, Rae	Sivan 12
5/14	Thompson, Irwin	Iyar 23	6/2	Nisenbaum, Benjamin	Sivan 13
5/16	Bartick, Mildred	Iyar 25			

May 2023

Please check your email and our website for information about using Zoom to attend these events.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6 PM Class: Jewish Mysticism (Zoom)	2 6 PM Class: Jewish Philosophy; 7:30 PM Class: Prayer (both Zoom)	3 4 PM Hebrew School; 6 PM Talmud Class (Zoom)	4 6:30 PM Bible Study Class (Zoom)	5 7:00 PM Services	6 9:30 AM Services
7	8 6 PM Class: Jewish Mysticism (Zoom); 7 PM Board meeting	9 6 PM Class: Jewish Philosophy; 7:30 PM Class: Prayer (both Zoom)	10 9:30 AM Inter-faith Bible Class; 4 PM Hebrew School; 6 PM Talmud Class (Zoom)	11 6:30 PM Bible Study Class (Zoom)	12 7:00 PM Services	13 9:30 AM Services
14	15 6 PM Class: Jewish Mysticism (Zoom); Bulletin submissions deadline	16 6 PM Class: Jewish Philosophy; 7:30 PM Class: Prayer (both Zoom)	17 4 PM Hebrew School; 6 PM Talmud Class (Zoom)	18 6:30 PM Bible Study Class (Zoom)	19 7:00 PM Services	20 9:30 AM Services
21	22 6 PM Class: Jewish Mysticism (Zoom)	23 6 PM Class: Jewish Philosophy; 7:30 PM Class: Prayer (both Zoom)	24 4 PM Hebrew School; 6 PM Talmud Class (Zoom)	25 6:30 PM Shavuot Learning Session	26 9:30 AM Shavuot Services; 5:30 PM Shavuot Dinner followed by Services.	27 9:30 AM Shavuot Services & Yizkor
28	29 Memorial Day	30 6 PM Class: Jewish Philosophy; 7:30 PM Class: Prayer (both Zoom)	31 4 PM Hebrew School; 6 PM Talmud Class (Zoom)			

June 2023

Please check your email and our website for information about using Zoom to attend these events.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:30 PM Bible Study Class (Zoom)	2 7:00 PM Services and Oneg Shabbat	3 9:30 AM Services
4	5 6 PM Class: Jewish Mysticism (Zoom); 7 PM Board meeting	6 6 PM Class: Jewish Philosophy; 7:30 PM Class: Prayer (both Zoom)	7 6 PM Talmud Class (Zoom)	8 6:30 PM Bible Study Class (Zoom)	9 7:00 PM Services and Oneg Shabbat	10 9:30 AM Services
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For Information:		
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Cemetery	Lisa Israel	727-5500 x10
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Education	Jaime Siegel	631-653-3985
Fundraising	Jaime Siegel	631-653-3985
High Holidays		
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Judaica Shop	Phyllis Van Dyne	631-734-7511
Membership	Jaime Siegel	631-653-3985
Oneg Shabbat	Barbara Smith	631-664-6584
President	Jaime Siegel	631-653-3985
Programs and Events		
Ritual Committee	Lisa Israel	727-5500 x10
Social Hall	Jaime Siegel	631-653-3985
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Trees in Israel	Carole Jones	631-727-3191
Tree of Life	Phyllis Van Dyne	631-734-7511
Supermarket Certificates	Carole Jones (Office) Lorraine Richter	631-727-3191 631-653-9028

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TEMPLE ISRAEL OF RIVERHEAD is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism



CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

May 25	Shavuot
May 26	First Holiday Weekend BBQ of 2023
June 15	Annual Meeting
June 30	Raffle Fundraiser & BBQ
Many adult classes are being offered with Rabbi Rascoe. See inside for details, pages 8 & 9.	