

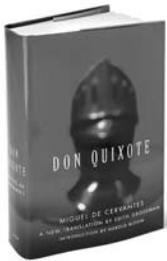


TEMPLE EMANU-EL Bulletin

Volume 77, Number 6

October 8, 2004

UPCOMING EVENTS



Tuesday, October 12 8:30 a.m.
Men's Club Reading Group

Our first discussion of the new season will be about *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, as translated by Edith Grossman. Please confirm your attendance by calling (212) 744-1400, ext. 362.

Sunday, October 17 11:15 a.m.
Young Families: Music With Shira

Join us for an afternoon of singing Sabbath music. All attendees must preregister. RSVP by Friday, October 15 to (212) 744-1400, ext. 242.

Sunday, October 17 12:30 p.m.
**Junior Youth Group:
Bowling at Chelsea Piers**

Students in grades seven and eight are invited for an afternoon of bowling vs. Shaaray Tefilah. Cost is \$20 per person. We will be leaving from the Marvin and Elisabeth Cassell Community House, One East 65th Street, and returning to the Temple by 3:30 p.m. Parents, if you will be picking up your child, please be at the Temple no later than 3:30 p.m. Checks made payable to Congregation Emanu-El should be delivered to Rabbi Nadia Gold, or cash may be paid on the day of the event. Students also should bring their own money for lunch. RSVP to Rabbi Gold at (212) 744-1400, ext. 244.

Wednesday, October 20 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, October 24 9:15 a.m.

Young Families: Storytime

Temple Librarian Elizabeth Stabler will read about "Kindness to Animals" from our wonderful collection of children's books. Storytime is for preschoolers (from age 2½) with a parent. All attendees must preregister by calling (212)744-1400, ext. 362.

**Wednesday,
November 10
3 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**
Annual Blood Drive

NEW YORK
BLOOD CENTER

Don't miss this chance to save a life—one pint of blood can help up to five people. In order to qualify for donation, volunteers must:

- Be between the ages of 17 and 75
- Weigh at least 110 pounds
- Be in good health
- Not be a donor within the last 56 days



In addition, you must present photo identification with proof of age. Donors should enter at 10 East 66th Street. Call (212) 744-1400 for details.

SABBATH SERVICES

**Friday evening, October 15
Main Sanctuary**

Organ Recital—5 p.m.
Sabbath Eve Service—5:15 p.m.
WQXR Radio (96.3 FM) and Internet
(www.wqxr.com) broadcasts—5:30 p.m.

**Saturday morning, October 16
Women's Auxiliary Lounge**

Torah Study—9:15 a.m.

Main Sanctuary

Service—10:30 a.m.
Torah Portion—Noach
Readings—Genesis 6:9-11:32
Isaiah 54:1-55:5

Rabbi Nadia E. Gold preaching

PULPIT FLOWERS

Pulpit flowers at Sabbath worship services this weekend are the generous donation of our congregants:

Robin M. Laden
in loving memory of *Alice Laden*

Helene Swedowsky
in loving memory of her aunt,
Dorothy L. Fecher

For more information about sponsoring Pulpit Flowers or an Oneg Shabbat, call Sherry Nehmer at (212) 744-1400, ext. 312.

EVENTS (CONTINUED)

Saturday, October 23 5 p.m.
**Senior Youth Group:
Bowling at Chelsea Piers**

Students in grades nine through 12 are invited to our bowling party. Cost is \$20 per person, plus money for food. We will meet at Chelsea Piers, 23rd Street and the Hudson River, between piers 59 and 60. *Call Rabbi Gold for full details—(212) 744-1400, ext. 244.*



Tuesday, October 26 10:30 a.m.
**Women's Auxiliary:
Museum of Jewish Heritage**

Women's Auxiliary members and their friends are invited to a docent-led tour of the exhibitions "New York: City of Refuge" and "Ours to Fight For: American Jews in the

Second World War" at the Museum of Jewish Heritage. The cost is \$45, which includes lunch in the new Morgenthau Wing Dining Room. Call the Women's Auxiliary at (212) 744-1400, ext. 235 for directions to the museum or to arrange car service (at an additional fee). *Checks must be received in the Women's Auxiliary office by Monday, October 11.*

Charles S. Salomon
The Universal Funeral Chapel
1076 Madison Avenue (212) 753-5300
Our service is available in the Temple, home, or our Chapel.

B'NEI MITZVAH

The following students of our Religious School will become B'nei Mitzvah this weekend:

Elizabeth Jane Levi, daughter of
Renée and Philippe Levi

Rebecca Esther Gelwan, daughter of
Alice and Mark Gelwan

Annabel Kate Frank, daughter of
Jane and Alex Frank

We are grateful for their sponsorship of Friday evening's Oneg Shabbat.

TO BE NOTED

**Free Yizkor Prayer Books
for Visually Impaired**

JBI International, established in 1931 as the Jewish Braille Institute, offers free, large-print *Yizkor* prayer books, as well as other liturgical materials in Braille or large print, for those who are unable to read standard print. *Call (800) 999-6476 for more information.*

Sunday Lunch Volunteers Needed

For more than 20 years, Congregation Emanu-El has been preparing meals for the needy. The time commitment is minimal—just two hours from 10 a.m. to noon on Sundays in the I.M. Wise kitchen. Sign up every week or as it fits your schedule. All volunteers are truly appreciated, but we're limited to Temple members only. *For more information on how to participate, please call the Temple office at (212) 744-1400, ext. 210.*

Sanctuary Restoration

A reminder to Temple members that Phase I of our Sanctuary restoration project will begin October 12, 2004, following the end of the High Holy Day season. Please be aware that the Beth-El Chapel and the rear half of the Main Sanctuary will be closed during Phase I.

The Cemeteries of Congregation Emanu-El
Salem Fields and Beth-El

A limited number of above-ground crypts are available in our community mausoleum. For information, please call Dr. Mark W. Weisstuch at the Temple Office, (212) 744-1400.

350 YEARS OF AMERICAN JEWISH THINKERS: A CELEBRATION OF JEWISH CREATIVITY (PART 2 OF 10)

By Rabbi Rachel Sabath-Beit Halachmi

If American Jewry has experienced alternating periods of decline and revitalization, as the historian Jonathan Sarna claims, then we would be wise to consider carefully the leaders of the periods of renaissance. Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of the Reconstructionist Movement, was among the most important and creative leaders of American Jewry.

Kaplan is best known for defining Judaism as an “evolving religious civilization,” a radical new way of thinking about how Judaism might survive the new era, which demanded a revitalization of Judaism. He argued that the understanding of the meaning of the traditional content of much of Judaism needed to be transformed. He sought to extract the most universal, ethical and humane elements from the traditional content and to integrate them into a new ideology in which not only rationalism but also science and ethics—and not religion—were the concern of most American Jews.

Kaplan spoke, led and wrote about a Judaism whose essence was an ethical and cultural heritage that need not be at odds with modernity. Jews, he believed, should be understood more as a nation and culture and less as a religion of faith.

In *Judaism as a Civilization*, his most comprehensive expression of these ideas, and in *The Meaning of God in Modern Judaism*, Kaplan described systematically the kind of reconstruction that Judaism needed. Throughout his writings, Kaplan embraced the understandings of modern science and its natural explanations; he also often rejected notions of a supernatural God. Rather, Kaplan viewed God as that within nature

which allows for order and goodness. This Kaplanian theology sought to understand God not in ways that conflict with a modern person’s experience and intellect but in ways that are self-consistent and “consistent with whatever else we hold to be true.”

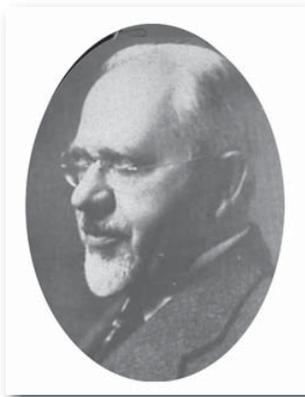
Of God, Kaplan wrote:

*God is in the faith by which we
overcome the fear of loneliness, of
helplessness, of failure and of death.*

*God is the hope which, like a
shaft of light,
Cleaves in the dark abyss of
depression, suffering and
despair.*

*God is in the Love which
creates, protects, forgives.
God is the Spirit which
broods on the chaos we have
wrought, ...*

*And stirs into life the formless
beginnings of the new and
better world.*



**MORDECAI KAPLAN
(1881-1983)**

This kind of theology certainly had implications for prayer. Rather than teaching that one should pray to God for rain, as traditional Judaism teaches, one should pray with a yearning for the abilities of mind and body, as well as for the attitude and character that will allow a person to engage with the most worthwhile aspects of life, which “in their totality, spell God.” In addition, Kaplan saw a place for praising God, and for engaging in ritual, which are part of an effort to articulate a sense of life’s worthwhile nature and is, thus, a means of realizing the presence of the divine in daily experience.

While devoting himself to the creative survival of American Jewry, Kaplan was also an ardent Zionist, an outgrowth of his under-

continued on next page



JEWISH THINKERS (continued)

standing of Judaism as a civilization, which possesses a land and a culture. He therefore maintained very close ties with several Israeli thinkers, and his followers established a Reconstructionist congregation in Israel.

Not only are Kaplan's ideas being lived out today in the Reconstructionist Movement, the Reconstructionist Rabbinic School and now through its summer camps in America, but his ideas also continue to thrive at Congregation Mevakshei Derekh in Jerusalem. At this single Reconstructionist synagogue in Israel, the teachings of Kaplan are brought to bear on the liturgy and education.

Some believe that the ideas of Kaplan are just beginning to have resonance among secular Israelis as they become increasingly interested in their Judaism without aban-

doning totally their secular ethical understanding of Jewish culture.

Rabbi Rachel Sabath-Beit Halachmi, a former instructor at the Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning, is director of Lay Leadership Education at Shalom Hartman Institute and an instructor at Hebrew Union College, both in Jerusalem.

From The Meaning of God in Modern Judaism by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan:

With the progress of civilization, religion ceases to be utilitarian and becomes ethical. This change of function is Judaism's contribution to the spiritual life of humankind. (page 197)

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Web site: www.emanuelnyc.org

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