

TEMPLE EMANU-EL Bulletin

Volume 80, Number 14

November 30, 2007

WORSHIP SERVICES

CONGREGATIONAL CHANUKAH SERVICE

Friday evening, December 7
Temple 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, December 8

Women's Auxiliary Lounge

Torah Study—9:15 A.M.

Temple Sanctuary

Service—10:30 A.M.

Torah Portion—*Mikeitz*

Readings—Genesis 41:1-44:17;

Numbers 7:30-41; Zechariah 2:14-4:7

Sermon: Rabbi Howard Goldsmith

Temple members are encouraged to join us for Sabbath services this Friday as we celebrate the festival of Chanukah. A reception will follow in I. M. Wise Hall. RSVP to (212) 744-1400, ext. 215. We offer our appreciation to the Women's Auxiliary, Men's Club and Religious School Parents Organization for their assistance with this event.

FIRST NIGHT OF CHANUKAH:

Tuesday, December 4 (first candle is lit)

LAST NIGHT OF CHANUKAH:

Tuesday, December 11 (last candle is lit)

The Chanukah menorah will be lit each night of the festival at our 5:30 P.M. Sunset Service. Enter at One East 65th Street.



Hearing Loop installed in Temple Sanctuary and Beth-El Chapel; switch aid to T-coil. Headsets or neck loops also available for use.

EVENTS FOR CHANUKAH

The following are sponsored by Young Families of Emanu-El

For adults only...

CHANUKAH WORKSHOP

Monday, December 3 6:30 P.M.

In preparation for the Festival of Lights, parents from our Young Families group are invited to join Elka Deitsch, senior curator of the Bernard Museum, and David Wachtel, noted historian and Judaica consultant to Sotheby's, to learn about the many ways Chanukah is celebrated in other parts of the world. Participants will be able to view and handle a variety of *chanukiyahs* from different cultures and time periods that are part of the Temple's extensive collection. Enter at One East 65th Street. Space is extremely limited.

For the kids...

CHANUKAH PARTY

Sunday, December 9 10:30 A.M.

The fun includes story time, art activities, holiday foods and singing. Families are encouraged to bring a *chanukiyah* from home to participate in a community candle-lighting ceremony (candles provided!), as well as to bring a new, unwrapped book for our Chanukah "toy" drive. Enter at 10 East 66th Street.

RSVP for both events to (212) 744-1400, ext. 242.

B'NEI MITZVAH

The following students of our Religious School will become b'nei mitzvah this weekend:

Alex William Antiuk, son of Holly Antiuk and Stephen Antiuk

Lia Isabel Ashley, daughter of Diane Ashley

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

PULPIT FLOWERS

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

Bonnie, David, Richard,
Nancy and Gail Maidman
in loving memory of
William Maidman and Lea Maidman

TO BE NOTED

Plans are underway for another Emanu-El Sabbath Dinner in Palm Beach. Our three previous dinners were unforgettable, and we would love to have Temple members and their families join us again.

If you are planning to be in Florida in mid-January and would like to join us, please call Robyn Cimbol, our director of Development, at (212) 744-1400, ext. 324. Invitations will be sent automatically to attendees of our previous dinners. We look forward to hearing from you and to sharing a special evening.

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

**SUNDAYS
at SKIRBALL**

Seminars are held
from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.
Coffee and bagels are served.
Enter at One East 65th Street.
To register, call (212) 507-9580
or log on to our Web site at
www.adultjewishlearning.org.
Cost is \$50 per session.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9
Lecturer: *Dr. Robert Pollack*

**SCIENCE
AND RELIGION:
WHY NOT BOTH?**



Science and religion alike spring from human curiosity but differ in the relative weight they give to facts and to values. Not surprisingly, they do not always reach the same conclusions. Can a full understanding of any important human question emerge without incorporating the apparently contradictory conclusions of science and religion? Address this large question with specific cases, including DNA, evolution and the soul.

DR. ROBERT POLLACK has been a professor of biological sciences at Columbia University since 1978 and was dean of Columbia College from 1982 through 1989. He currently serves as director of the university's Center for the Study of Science and Religion.

SKIRBALL



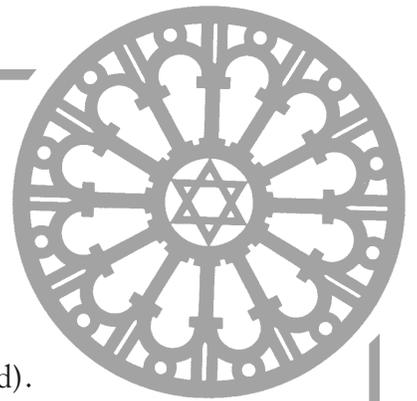
The Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning at Temple Emanu-El

**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.

CHANUKAH LEGENDS & LORE

By Rabbi David M. Posner



THE FESTIVAL OF CHANUKAH, which will begin this year on the evening of December 4, commemorates the great Maccabean victories in 168–165 B.C.E. over the Greco-Syrians. As popular as the holiday is, it labors under two interesting misconceptions.

The first one is that the holiday is celebrated universally among Jews. This is not the case. Neither the Falashas of Ethiopia nor the Karaites celebrate the occasion. Of great interest is the fact that Chanukah is nowhere mentioned in the Mishnah, the third century codification of Jewish law. The traditional reason for this omission is that Rabbi Judah the Prince (the compiler of the Mishnah) was a descendant of King David. The miracle of Chanukah, however, came about through the heroism of the Hasmonean dynasty, which was not of Davidic lineage. Judah, displeased with this apparent usurpation of the throne by a rival dynasty, appears to have ignored their heroic achievement.

The second misconception is that the Maccabees, upon liberating the Temple, found only one cruse of oil. According to the apocryphal *Book of Maccabees*, they found many cruses but only one uncontaminated. The occupying power realized apparently that more harm can be done to religion by introducing into it impure elements than by outlawing it altogether.

In addition to these misconceptions, a number of customs identified with Chanukah are of truly paradoxical character. Although this festival commemorates a victory against state-enforced religious syncretism, Chanukah over the centuries, naturally and quietly has incorporated certain originally non-Jewish customs into its observance.

For example, during the Middle Ages, the Christian community of Germany made it a custom of spinning a three-winged top on Christmas Eve, each wing bearing a letter (and representing the three-

fold Christian division of the Godhead).

Evidently, those tops spun their way into Jewish homes and became Chanukah *dreidlach*—ours with four sides and four letters, which bear directly on the dreidel game. A more worthy and redeeming interpretation of these letters is that they are the initial consonants of an acrostic representing the sentence “A great miracle happened there.”

Another custom not endemically Jewish yet common in the Eastern European communities was that of playing cards on each Chanukah night. Many rabbis had protested against it, but as is most often the case, once the custom became popular in the community, it became impossible for the rabbinic authority to extirpate it.

Still another example of a foreign, although not unwelcome, incursion into Chanukah is the custom of giving gifts. It was the practice in the traditional European communities to give Chanukah “gelt” (money) to children on the fifth night of the festival. In modern times, however, gifts often are exchanged on each night of the holiday. Indeed, perhaps because of the influence of Christmas in the western world, Chanukah has been transformed from its traditional place as a minor festival to one that assumes great importance in the holiday cycle of the Jew.

MORE CHANUKAH EVENTS...

JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP: CHANUKAH SHUL-IN



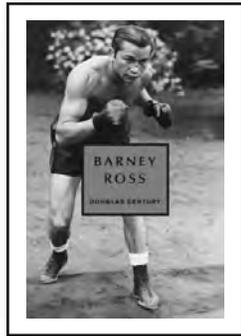
Following the congregational service on December 7, fifth and sixth graders are invited to a slumber party at the Temple complete with junk food, stories, dreidel games, a scavenger hunt and movies. We will gather in the 65th Street lobby at 6:15 P.M. Cost is \$20 per child. For more information, call (212) 744-1400, ext. 329.

AROUND THE TEMPLE

BARNEY ROSS: Champion Boxer and Marine Hero, or How a Frum Boy Became "American"

Wednesday, December 5 6:30 P.M.

Barney Ross, born Dov Ber Rasofsky, grew up in a tough Chicago neighborhood. To survive, he became a petty thief, gambler and errand boy for Al Capone. At 19, he became a professional boxer, joining a generation of Jewish boxers in the 1920s and 30s. When World War II began, Ross enlisted in the army, becoming a hero of the battle of Guadalcanal. Author **Douglas Century** brings to life this fascinating and emblematic figure in American Jewish history.



DOUGLAS CENTURY

is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, among many other publications. Born and raised in Canada, he lives in New York City.

This event, co-sponsored by the Men's Club, is a part of our Library-Museum Lecture Series, organized by the Ivan M. Stettenheim Library and the Herbert & Eileen Bernard Museum of Judaica. It is free and open to the public. Enter through the Marvin and Elisabeth Cassell Community House, One East 65th Street.

For information about other programs in this series, log on to the Temple Emanu-El Web site (www.emanuelnyc.org). Click "Lifelong Learning: Adult Education."

Questions? Call (212) 744-1400, ext. 214.

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