

# TEMPLE EMANU-EL Bulletin

Volume 78, Number 10

November 11, 2005

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, November 15 12:30 p.m.  
**Women's Auxiliary: Book Group**

**R**abbi Amy Ehrlich will discuss the *New York Times* bestseller and notable book of the year *Revenge: A Story of Hope* by Laura Blumenfeld. In 1986, a Palestinian terrorist shot and wounded Blumenfeld's father.



More than a decade later, Blumenfeld, a reporter for *The Washington Post*, undergoes a journey to find the would-be assassin and in the process learns about vengeance. *Feel free to bring your own lunch; coffee and dessert will be provided.* RSVP to (212) 744-1400, ext. 235.

Wednesday, November 16 6:30 p.m.  
**An Evening of Contemporary Israeli Literature With Savyon Liebrecht**

**T**hrough the assistance of the Consulate General of Israel, author Savyon Liebrecht will be the first speaker participating in Temple Emanu-El's annual "Meet the Author" series, sponsored jointly by the Ivan M. Stettenheim Library and the Herbert & Eileen Bernard Museum of Judaica. In 1987, Ms. Liebrecht received the Alterman Award for her first short-story collection, *Apples From the Desert*. She has twice received the Prime Minister's Prize for Literature and in 2004 was named Israeli Playwright of the Year. This fall she is on a U.S. tour promoting the English translation of her new book, *A Good Place for the Night*.



*Attendance at all "Meet the Author" lectures is free and open to the public. Enter through the Marvin and Elisabeth Cassell Community House, One East 65<sup>th</sup> Street.*

Sunday,  
November 20 10 a.m.  
**Coffee Talk With  
Rabbi David Posner**

FOR  
FAMILIES



**R**abbi Posner will discuss, "Making Judaism a Greater Part of Your Family's Everyday Life — The Role of Judaism in



Your Important and Everyday Decisions."

This event is sponsored by the Religious School Parents Organization. Enter at the Marvin and Elisabeth Cassell Community House, One East 65<sup>th</sup> Street. RSVP to the Religious School office at (212) 744-1400, ext. 226 by Wednesday, November 16.

## SABBATH SERVICES

**Friday evening, November 18  
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, November 19  
Women's Auxiliary Lounge**

Torah Study—9:15 a.m.

**Main Sanctuary**

Service—10:30 a.m.

Torah Portion—Vayera

Readings—Genesis 18:1-22:24

II Kings 4:1-37

**Sermon: Rabbi David M. Posner**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, November 18 6:30 p.m.  
**Senior Youth Group: Movie Night!**

Senior Youth Groupers are invited to join us for a viewing of *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (that's Gene Wilder, not Johnny Depp!)—complete with a chocolate fountain. Pizza will be served beforehand. Cost is \$5 per person. Enter at One East 65<sup>th</sup> Street. RSVP to Rabbini Intern David Young at (212) 744-1400, ext. 501.

Sunday, November 20 9:15 a.m.  
**Young Families: Storytime**

Temple librarian Elizabeth Stabler will read about Thanksgiving from our wonderful collection of children's books. Storytime is for preschoolers from age 2½ years. Attendees must preregister by calling (212) 744-1400, ext. 362.

Sunday, November 20 10 a.m.  
**Power, Morality and the State of Israel**

Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller examines traditional sources on the nature of Israel's holiness and considers their ramifications for the notion of land for peace. This is the last of three Sunday seminars sponsored by the Skirball Center. Cost is \$50. Coffee and bagels will be served. Enter at One East 65<sup>th</sup> Street. To register, call (212) 507-9580.



## PULPIT FLOWERS

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

Sally F. Broido in loving memory of the birthday of her dear friend  
*Anita S. Hochman*

Eve, Jeffrey and Mitchell Haberman in loving memory of *Maurice Haberman*

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

## New Season of Ideas Café

SKIRBALL  
CORNER

The Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning at Temple Emanu-El resumes its popular Tuesday evening Ideas Café. The weekly salon—a Jewish environment open to all voices—offers attendees a chance to meet others over wine, cheese and coffee at small, candle-lit tables and to discuss vital current issues that affect Jewish and American Life. Cost is \$10 at the door, \$5 if you're registered for a Skirball class. Enter at 10 East 66<sup>th</sup> Street. For a list of this semester's topics, log on to [www.adultjewishlearning.org/ideascafe\\_about.html](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/ideascafe_about.html).

Sunday, November 20 10 a.m.  
**Anti-Semitism: Its Root Causes**

Temple members are invited to an enlightening discussion led by Dr. Judson R. Shaver, president and professor of religious studies at Marymount Manhattan College. Dr. Shaver will provide a scholarly analysis of anti-Semitism, who started it and why it has continued to permeate throughout our lifetime. Cost is \$20 per person, which includes a hot breakfast. RSVP to the Men's Club at (212) 744-1400, ext. 250.



## BAR MITZVAH

**The following student of our Religious School will become a Bar Mitzvah this weekend:**

*Steven Michael Kawer*, son of Susan and Max Kawer

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

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.

# AVADIM HAYINU — “WE WERE SLAVES”

By Rabbi Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi

AMONG THE MOST influential texts of our tradition is a two-word phrase: *Avadim hayinu*. “We were slaves.” The phrase is most familiar in its context at the Passover seder where we eat and retell our most difficult ancient experience of being enslaved and also our most glorious experience of redemption. That ours is a God who redeems, who hears the cry of the oppressed, is the reason that on so many other occasions we recall the Exodus from Egypt. We recall it in the morning prayer, in the grace after meals, in the Sabbath evening Kiddush, in the celebration of the arrival of a new baby. At every turn in our daily lives and throughout the year, we remember the power of a single moment in our history and about what it continues to teach us. The prophet Ezra and many of the Sages after him repeated “We were slaves” as a foundation for why we do what we do.

However, we also repeat ritually the seemingly simple but difficult historical fact: “We were slaves.” The sheer repetition of a simple statement of our particular history appears throughout Jewish rituals and prayer precisely because it explains and is intended to inform nearly everything we do. Indeed, according to Deuteronomy 6:20-21, these three words contain the very meaning of all the rituals and laws of our tradition.

We do what we do because we were once slaves. Since that moment of history, thousands of years ago, we have not a single celebration, not a single Sabbath, without remembering our responsibility toward anyone who is a stranger, toward anyone

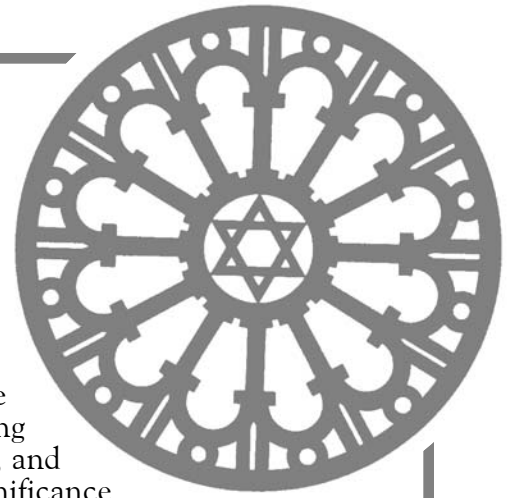
who is oppressed, who is vulnerable. We know the suffering of the oppressed, and we know the significance of freedom. We know that no person can be fully human unless that person is free. Thus, we are connected intimately and passionately to all those who are oppressed, and we are involved with all those who work for freedom.

“We were slaves” is the mantra of the Jewish tradition. We repeat it often so that we won’t forget—not in the haughtiness of success and power, not in the drunken joy of celebrations—that with freedom comes responsibility. Judaism, its texts, its God and its people are committed to ethics. While particular rituals or prayers may shift in music or particular wording, while our people’s intellectual interests and social programming may change necessarily as times change, our commitment to ethics is constant.

Imbedded in Jewish life are our own constant self-teaching and our own teaching for the world. We are an ancient people obsessed by the memory of the past because of how it helps us to redeem the future.

**AND WHEN YOUR CHILD ASKS YOU IN TIME TO COME, SAYING, “WHAT DO THE TESTIMONIES, AND THE STATUTES, AND THE JUDGMENTS MEAN, WHICH THE ADONAI OUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU?” THEN YOU SHALL SAY TO YOUR CHILD, “WE WERE PHARAOH’S SLAVES IN EGYPT, AND ADONAI BROUGHT US OUT...” — DEUTERONOMY 6:20-21**

Rabbi Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi, a founding faculty member of the Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning at Temple Emanu-El, is a member of the faculty at the Shalom Hartman Institute and HUC-JIR in Jerusalem.



## SHABBOS IN PALM BEACH

**P**lans are underway for another Emanu-El Shabbos dinner in Palm Beach, Fla. Our 2005 dinner was unforgettable, with more than 80 members of the congregation and our extended Temple family gathering at The Colony Hotel. Guests included many who are now year-round Florida residents, as well as snowbirds and members who were visiting family Florida at the time.

This special evening also provided a chance to socialize with Rabbi David and Sylvia Posner in an intimate setting. We will be mailing invitations in early December for our next dinner, to be held January 13, 2006. Please call one of our rabbis if you plan to be in Florida in mid-January so that we may keep you advised as plans develop. We look forward to seeing you there!



*Temple Trustee Herbert Bernard with Marshall and Coleman Shear, Alix and Danielle Greenberg at the 2005 Shabbos dinner.*

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*Associate Rabbi*

**Nadia E. Gold**

*Assistant Rabbi*

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