



# The Voice

Founded 1906

Congregation Ahavath Israel  
A Liberal Conservative Synagogue  
Affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

November 2009

On the web at <http://ahavathisraelkingston.org>

Cheshvan-Kislev 5770

## Message from the Rabbi



### **Creation, Midrash, and Thanksgiving: A charge for a slight change in our annual American holiday**

We have begun the New Year and with it I would like to discuss a midrash about the creation of the world and the upcoming American holiday of Thanksgiving. “Bereshit bara elohim” are the first three words of the Bible. “In the beginning God created...” The Rabbis wished to understand every aspect of the Bible. (Rabbi Akiva was known to even derive meaning from the way the calligraphy of the text was displayed.) They asked the question, “Why does the Bible begin with the letter ‘ב’?” there are many different midrashic answers to this question. In one place they discuss that the world often feels like it is bound on all sides (like the letter ב is) but if we keep looking there is always a side left open with which to continue our

progress as God continued the progress of creation. In another they discuss the difficulty of taking that first step so why not start with the second. (ב is the second letter of the Hebrew aleph-bet.) The answer that I would like to focus on though, is a story about a competition.

*Continued on page 4*

## Message from the President

**-30-**

Thirty years ago at New York Law School graduating editorial board members of the school newspaper (of which I was one) were given the opportunity to write one last column. This was called our -30- column, as -30- in newspaper talk means the end. Well folks, this is my -30- column. As of November 1 I will be stepping down as president and turning the show over to Rebecca Balzac. At the annual meeting in June, I agreed to stay on so that our two new vice presidents, who had not been officers prior to their election and had only been on the board for a short period of time, could ease their way into their positions. I said I would stay on until the end of the year, at the latest. Well, the time has come. I am confident that the shul is in good hands with Rebecca and Rhona, so I am ready to step aside.

*Continued on page 5*

# Congregation Ahavath Israel

On the web at  
<http://ahavathisraelkingston.org>

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## Congregation Officers and Staff

President. . . . . Jerry Weiss  
Email: [president@aikny.org](mailto:president@aikny.org)  
1<sup>st</sup> V.P.. . . . . Rebecca Balzac  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP. . . . . Rhona Schiffres  
Treasurer. . . . . Susan Hirsch  
Financial Sec'y . . . . . Howie Liefer  
Recording Sec'y . . . . . Daniel Rafkind  
Office Sec'y . . . . . Mary Lessner  
Sisterhood Pres. . . . . Candace Belles

## The Voice

Editor: . . . . . Susan Rafkind  
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## Sponsor a Shabbat Luncheon

Have a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion? Why not sponsor a Shabbat luncheon? We hope to have a monthly Shabbat luncheon. If you have a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion, please consider becoming a sponsor. Call the office at 845-338-4490 or Arlene Cohen at 845-339-8413 or 845-389-2342 (cell) or [gcohen@hvc.rr.com](mailto:gcohen@hvc.rr.com) for information.

Sign up for Goodsearch. Go to:  
<http://www.goodsearch.com> ; Sign up for the charity Congregation Ahavath Israel and every time you use Goodsearch as your search engine you help make money for the synagogue.

The Voice is currently accepting advertisements. Please contact Susan Rafkind at [srafk@gmail.com](mailto:srafk@gmail.com) for rates and details.

## Schedule of Weekly Services

### Shabbat Services

Friday 7:30 pm  
Saturday 9:30 am  
Sunday Minyan 9:00 am



### Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday  
10:00-3:00

## Cell Phones and Services

When attending synagogue on Shabbat or festivals, please remember we are Shomer Shabbat and therefore the use of cell phones is prohibited. Please make sure they are turned off or on silent during services. Also be aware that calls should not be made to the Synagogue from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday night on Shabbat and including sundown to sundown on certain festivals. Check the calendar in each issue of The Voice and on our website for candle-lighting and end times.

Even though your own observance may not be the same as the synagogue, please make sure that no synagogue business is conducted on Shabbat (ie: shopping for synagogue functions, phone calls or emails to synagogue members regarding synagogue business, etc.).

If you have specific questions please, please see any Ritual Committee Member.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.



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***Attention Congregants!! Discount Cards  
on the Way***

Ahavath Israel will be selling Discount Cards good for many, many local establishments. A flyer with all the details will be forthcoming. The price of the card is \$10.00 and is good throughout the entire year from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010. The discounts can be used as many times as you wish. We are hoping this will be a major fundraiser for our synagogue. Please ask your friends to purchase from you as well.

Once you receive a flyer, you may send a check made out to Congregation Ahavath Israel (tax deductible, of course!) for the cost of \$10.00 per card. Please indicate how many cards you will be purchasing. Once the cards are delivered, we can either mail them to you or you may pick them up at the synagogue. We will provide a form for you to indicate your preference.

We hope you will all participate in this inexpensive fund raising opportunity. Thank you!

*Rosh Chodesh Gathering  
by Gloria Sender*

On October 18, Sisterhood held its first Rosh Chodesh meeting of the New Year, celebrating Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan. The group was led by Marian Goldhammer, who introduced the group to the origins of Rosh Chodesh. She led us in blessings, singing and dancing. She discussed Regina Jonas' story of a German Jewish woman's ordination as a Rabbi in the early 1930's. Each participant introduced herself and gave a short remembrance of her mother, grandmother or an influential female family member.

Delicious refreshments were served. Lisa King Smith will chair the next meeting for Rosh Chodesh Kislev.

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*"Be Thankful for Daily Miracles"  
October 1, 2009 - Melissa*

Was going to blog about a million different things—the day trip we took today, the monkey that scratched me deep enough to draw some blood, the dollar banana-chocolate pancake I just ate as dessert to my pad thai dinner, but once I got to the Internet cafe, my fingers had a different idea. At dinner, a little girl came around to all of the tables at the open-air restaurant Jeanette and I settled down in. She was wearing a pink top with matching leggings, a flower necklace around her neck. She moved from table to table with an armful of roses, singing in hardly more than a whisper. At each table, she was waved on without so much as a second look. Right behind her was a man selling watercolor paintings; he carried a sign saying he was deaf and needed money. Again, a wave of the hand and on to the next table of tourists.

I'm not sure what surprised me about this. In the Philippines, the begging was everywhere — on the sides of the road, when tuk-tuks were stopped in traffic, anytime a foreigner was within earshot — done by dirty children in tattered clothes; here, the man and girl were clean and looked to be healthy (save for the man's deafness). Maybe that's the only difference between them, maybe not. In reality, I know nothing about the lives of the Thais, of the Filipinos. I know what it is to be a tourist in southeast Asia, to haggle over dresses and eat street food that costs as much as a pack of gum back home. I don't know what it is to serve drinks to foreigners sunbathing on the beach; I *am* the foreigner sipping cocktails in my lounge chair.

It's easy to feel like a millionaire here, where a meal costs only a couple dollars. But then you look up from your green curry and see the people who are here forever, people for whom this is not a vacation, but life. In a couple months, I'll be back in the States, driving my Subaru around and eating mac and cheese on my couch, flipping through hundreds of channels on TV as I text friends and futz around on my Macbook. The people I've met in Phuket will still be here, shouting their wares to every white person who walks down the street, offering a good deal or a new bargain if the foreigner would kindly come inside. I'm fortunate to have grown up in the west; we all are. We waste so much time complaining about the most trivial things, but we don't know how good we have it. None of us has had to beg his way through a restaurant. We haven't walked up and down a hot beach mid-day with a fake smile plastered on, trying to sell cobs of corn. We haven't spent our lives trying to eke out a living from the millions of people who leave our home just as soon as they came. It's important to keep that in mind as I make my way through this part of the world.

### *Torah Throw Price Reduced*

Torah Throws are still available and the price for each throw is now reduced to \$50.00. The Torah Throws make great Chanukkah, wedding, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, or graduation gifts. We have a limited supply so please call the office soon at 338-4409 to reserve your Torah Throw and to participate in this unique fundraiser.

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### *Jewish Senior Group*

Young at Heart Seniors will meet on Thursday, November 19 at 1:30 pm in the social hall of Temple Emanuel. This is the third Thursday in November. We are planning a Medicare program to be presented by Kari Hastings, HIICAP director. Refreshments will be served. This event is free. We look forward to greeting you.

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### *Ahavath Israel Chorale is Revived*

Congregation Ahavath Israel has once again been blessed with the fine sounds of our choir, now called "Shir Joy", thanks to the leadership of Susan Rafkind. Rehearsals have begun and will continue weekly. Our first outing was on Kol Nidre, when the Chorale sang two prayers during the service. In the future, we will include traditional prayers, prayers with new melodies, and modern Israeli songs. If you or someone you know in the congregation loves to sing, please contact director, Susan Rafkind.

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### *Rabbi's message continued from page 1*

The letters each plead their case trying to be named the letter that starts the Torah. Each letter is

rejected because it not only begins a great word but also begins a word that would be disaster for creation. For instance, “שׁ” is the beginning of one of the names of God but it is also the beginning of two separate words meaning “falsehood.” At last “ב” is chosen for two reasons. First “ב” begins the word “baruch” or blessed and is the foundation for our formal praise of God. The second reason is that the “baruch” places the focus not on the individual letter’s glory but rather on the glory of God. What we learn from this midrash is that ultimate lesson of creation is “prioritization.” We learn that what matters is how we set our priorities. The rabbis are telling us to spend our time focusing on God. More specifically, praising God. What could be a better model for life? When we focus our energies on praising God we are reminded that each of us is created in that amazing God’s image. We are reminded to have self-confidence and understanding. We are reminded that life holds opportunity. We are reminded that life has meaning.

Now, back to Thanksgiving. It is no accident that the American harvest holiday happens in the same season as we read Bereshit and that we have our own harvest holiday of Succot. The beginning of autumn and the conclusion of Harvest is the time to take a step back and look at what we’ve done. It is time to look where we are going. It is time to praise God for the fact that we have survived a year. It is time to praise God for this amazing harvest. As we approach Thanksgiving and we sit around our family tables and say what we are thankful for I encourage you to change your language slightly. Go around the table and have everyone share why they are blessed. When you do, remember that for two thousand years Jews have been asking the same question, and even according to the Midrash it has been the central question since the beginning of time.

Kol Tuv,  
Student Rabbi Jason Fruithandler

### *President’s message continued from page 1*

How does one sum up the last 2 ½ years? As the Grateful Dead sang, “*Lately it occurs to me: What a long, strange trip it's been.*” Yes friends, it truly has been a long, strange trip. It’s had its ups and downs, its joys and heartaches. While I did not accomplish everything I set out to do, I am secure in knowing that we are on firm financial ground, and that we have new, young leadership ready to lead our synagogue into the future.

There are so many people I would like to individually thank for their help and support these last few years that if I tried I know I would leave out a few, so therefore, I will not try. Besides, I have already thanked many of you in my last column and in my High Holiday speeches. I do, however, want to thank each and every one of you for allowing me to serve you as president. It has truly been an honor and a privilege.

Now, don’t think that when I step down, I will be disappearing from the scene. Unlike another former president, I will not be retiring to my ranch in Crawford, Texas, never to be heard from again. I intend to remain as active as ever. I will, along with my good friend, Jeremy Schiffres, be assuming the chairmanship of the Ritual Committee. And, no, we are not pushing Marsha aside. When I asked Marsha to take over ritual, she agreed to take the Chair on a temporary basis. Thank you Marsha for stepping up at the busiest time of the year, and doing a great job (OK, I lied, I did thank someone individually). In addition, I intend to finish something I started before I was asked to be president. Some of you may recall that I had set about to get a Men’s Club up and running. We had a few meetings and there seemed to be a good deal of interest. Unfortunately, when I was tapped to be president, I couldn’t do both, and at the time nobody stepped up to keep it going. I hope that we can pick up where we left off and once again have an active Men’s Club.

One more area where I intend to remain very active is in working with Sue Rafkind and the fundraising committee. As you know, this spring we will be honoring a very dear friend, Bob Gaus. Now that the holidays are (finally!) over, we can start planning the gala. This will take a lot of work, and I hope I can count on many of you to join me in putting on this wonderful event.

Well friends, now it's time to say goodbye. I wish I had some great, profound words of wisdom for you, but I don't. I do, however, have one thing to say to Rebecca and Rhona, "Take good care of our shul." Our future depends on it.

And finally, to borrow the words of Red Skelton, "Good night, and may G-d bless."

The Ahavath Israel Board would like to invite anyone with the skills to participate in services by leading, reading Torah, Haftorah or presenting a D'Var to contact the Synagogue office.

Sisterhood is looking for someone who loves to shop and has some free time to revitalize the Gift Shop. Call Chris Kowalenko at 338-8612.

NOVEMBER YAHRZEITS

“The Lord will guard your going out  
and your coming home, now and forever”

יהוה ישמר צאתך  
ובואך מעתה ועד עולם - Psalm 121

14 Cheshvan November 1	Evelyn Suckman Ida Powell	25 Cheshvan November 12	Harry Evans Meyer Shereshevsky Dr. Abraham Benjamin Rafkind
15 Cheshvan November 2	Solmon Gold Louis Singer Spencer Joseph Schweitzman	26 Cheshvan November 13	Harold Pinkus Louis Gruberg Morris Gordon Samuel Fein Benjamin Greenspan Sylvia Kroesen
16 Cheshvan November 3	George Figler Jack Zweber		
17 Cheshvan November 4	Isadore Daniels	27 Cheshvan November 14	Rose W. Salzman
18 Cheshvan November 5	Dora G. Kronick Gene Field Arthur Leichter	28 Cheshvan November 15	Grace Kirschner Sadie Gruberg Meyer Avis
20 Cheshvan November 7	Louis Levy Loretta Stanger Grace Black Kirschner	29 Cheshvan November 16	Sarah Finkelstein Aaron Klein Joseph Rosenthal Esther Murkoff
21 Cheshvan November 8	Nathan Richman Louis Stanger Zelda Camhi	30 Cheshvan November 17	Jeanette Adin Fischweicher Samuel Schwartzberg Cornelia Fodor Robert Shapiro
22 Cheshvan November 9	Yetta Kleinfeld Mary Fein		
23 Cheshvan November 10	Ruth Kessman Louis Vigden Alex Kanter Joseph Adin Fanny & Max Levy	2 Kislev November 19	Bessie Oberman Irwin Jacobs Augusta Petchenick Jacob Wieselthier
24 Cheshvan November 11	Tillie Reuben Lena Eisner Brett Sam Marcus Reuben Wissok	3 Kislev November 20	Ethel Levy Nathan Parnett Henry Gold Sylvia Black Gerald Steinhart

4 Kislev  
November 20

Mina Weiner  
Leopold Alexander  
Max Porcelain  
Jerry Spiesman

8 Kislev  
November 25

Abraham Fiedler  
Dr. Samuel Nussbaum  
David Levy  
George Jacobson

5 Kislev  
November 21

Harry Hyman Rubin  
Fannie Aaron  
Harry Isaacson  
Anita Halperin  
Gussie Ruchman

9 Kislev  
November 26

Zizi Eskenazi  
Schleuderer Lebrown  
Hortense Davis  
Frieda Wilner

6 Kislev  
November 23

Sylvia Lerner Lubash  
Alex Semilof  
Sarah Weis  
Frances Rose  
George Paige  
Ida Weisbrot

10 Kislev  
November 27

Helen Cohen  
Anna Leah Schiff  
Morris Brett  
Sam Gally

7 Kislev  
November 24

David Farber  
Fanny Posner  
Ethel Marcus Spinner  
Augusta Sherry  
Michael Starkman

11 Kislev  
November 28

Rea Broady  
Louis Greenspan

12 Kislev  
November 29

Philip Leeds  
Herman Rafalowsky

## NOVEMBER DONATIONS

### Ahavath Israel General Fund

In memory of:

**Mollie S. Turner**

From: David & Selma Turner

**Harriet Tannin**

From: Dr. & Mrs. Philip Eras

**Fannie Parnett**

From: Elynore Rubin

**Fern Arlene Anolick**

From: Mr. & Mrs. Seymour Feldman

**Dr. Norman Burg**

From: Bette & Stan Nitzky

Trudi Melamed-Turck

### Sylvia Starkman Fund

In memory of:

**Dr. Harry P. Sussin**

From: Sandra Breitenberger

### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In memory of:

**Alyson Cohen**

From: Arlene & Gary Cohen

### Building Fund

In memory of:

**Harriet Tannin**

From: Elaine & Hy Greenspan

### Break-The-Fast/Yom Kippur

Bette & Stan Nitzky

### Irving Reuben Memorial Plaque

In memory of:

**Irving Reuben**

Mr. & Mrs. Marc Reuben

### **Mitzvah Fund**

Ruth & Bob Siegal  
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Elaine & Hy Greenspan  
Jack Lifshin  
Nina Werbalowsky Shapiro  
Hugh Straus  
Chuck & Helene Fliegler

### **Kol Nidre Appeal**

Mr. & Mrs. Martin Fishman  
Mary V. Lessner  
Donald Cohen  
Milt Glassman  
Joel Goldman  
Gloria Sender  
Ann & Joe Horowitz  
Seth Fliegler  
Leone Straus  
Russ & Caryn Fliegler  
Victor & Ann Klein  
Herschel Weinstein  
Barry Lipshutz

**Shabbat Services**  
 Friday 7:30 pm  
 6:15 pm if dinner  
 Saturday 9:30 am

***Congregation Ahavath Israel***  
*November 2009*  
*14<sup>th</sup> Cheshvan-13th Kislev*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <b>Tikkun Torah</b> 14 Cheshvan	2  15 Cheshvan	3  16 Cheshvan	4  17 Cheshvan	5  18 Cheshvan	6 <b>4:27 candles</b>  19 Cheshvan	7 <b>5:29 Havdalah</b>  20 Cheshvan
8  21 Cheshvan	9  22 Cheshvan	10  23 Cheshvan	11  24 Cheshvan	12  25 Cheshvan	13 <b>4:20 candles</b>  <b>Services w/ Rabbi Fruithandler</b> 26 Cheshvan	14 <b>5:22 Havdalah</b>  27 Cheshvan
15 <b>Tikkun/Talmud Torah</b> 28 Cheshvan	16  29 Cheshvan	17 <b>Rosh Chodesh Kislev</b> 30 Cheshvan	18 <b>Rosh Chodesh Kislev</b> 1 Kislev	19 Board meeting 7:30 2 Kislev	20 <b>4:14 candles</b>  <b>Services w/ Rabbi Fruithandler</b> 3 Cheshvan	21 <b>5:16 Havdalah</b>  4 Kislev
22 <b>Tikkun/Talmud Torah</b> 5 Kislev	23  6 Kislev	24  7 Kislev	25  8 Kislev	26  <b>Thanksgiving</b> 9 Kislev	27 <b>4:10 candles</b>  10 Kislev	28 <b>5:12 Havdalah</b>  11 Kislev
29  12 Kislev	30  13 Kislev					