

Passover Service Schedule

Friday, April 22 Fast of the First Born
Morning Service, Siyyum and Breakfast 6:30 A.M.
Evening Service Welcoming Shabbat 6:30 P.M.

Saturday, April 23 First Day of Pesah
Morning Service 9:00 A.M.
Havurah Service 10:00 A.M.
Junior Congregation 10:30 A.M.
Toddler Service 11:00 A.M.
Sabbath Service Officers and Greeters: Miriam Kobliner,
Mojji Pourmoradi, Shahram Delafraz and Sima Taeid
Afternoon and Evening Festival Service 7:25 P.M.
Congregational Second Night Seder
Sponsored by the Men's Club 8:00 P.M.

Sunday, April 24 Second Day of Pesah
Morning Service 9:00 A.M.
Afternoon and Evening Service 7:40 P.M.

Monday, April 25 Hol Hamo'ed
Morning Service 6:45 A.M.
Evening Service 8:00 P.M.

Tuesday, April 26 Hol Hamo'ed
Morning Service 6:45 A.M.
Evening Service 8:00 P.M.

Wednesday, April 27 Hol Hamo'ed
Morning Service 6:45 A.M.
Evening Service 8:00 P.M.

Thursday, April 28 Hol Hamo'ed
Morning Service 6:45 A.M.
Holiday Evening Service 6:30 P.M.

Friday, April 29 Seventh Day of Pesah
Morning Service 9:00 A.M.
Waxman High School Students will lead the service
Evening Service Welcoming Shabbat 6:30 P.M.

Saturday, April 30 Eighth Day of Pesah
Morning Service 9:00 A.M.

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Dinner Dance Honoree Honoring Congregation With a Concert June 5th

*Cantor Frieder Presenting
'The Songs of My Life'*

By Marc Katz

In a twist on the traditional Temple Israel dinner dance format, this year the honoree will thank the congregation with a concert at the event.

Cantor Raphael Frieder was selected to be honored for his 25 years of service to the congregation, according to Sam Husney, the co-chair of the concert portion of the dinner dance, "and he decided to show his appreciation by inviting outstanding cantors from other congregations—his closest colleagues and friends—to join him in a concert not to be missed."

The concert, on Sunday, June 5, at 5:30 P.M.—after cocktails at 5 P.M. and before the dinner—will feature cantors Magda Fishman of Temple Beth El of Stamford, Connecticut; Dov Keren of New York's Sutton Place Synagogue; Henry Rosenblum of the Forest Hills Jewish Center in Queens; Elizabeth Shammash of Tiferet Bet Israel in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania; and Sol Zim of the Hollis Hills Jewish Center in Queens. "I chose these outstanding cantors because they are all great performers and they are all very good friends," Cantor Frieder said.

He said the concert would feature "important music in my life." Cantor Frieder said he selected the music based on items that have something to do with his history, music that has inspired him through the years and has had an impact on his career. He is planning the program to include a wide range of music including a combination of light chazanut, opera and Broadway music. Because the concert will be on Yom Yerushalayim, an Israeli holiday marking the reunification of Jerusalem, Israeli music will also be an important part of the program. The evening will also include a number of surprise musical performers.

Invitations are currently in the mail for the event. In addition, a journal is being published in coordination with the concert and dinner to give those touched by Cantor Frieder an opportunity to thank him in print. For further information, call 482-7800 or visit www.tign.org.

Honoring Cantor Frieder

A Voice Guest Column by Susan and Bob Lopatkin
and Rebecca Yousefzadeh Sassouni and Sassan Sassouni

EDITOR'S NOTE: The chairs of this year's Temple Israel Dinner Dance—which includes a concert by Cantor Frieder and his friends—invite you to enjoy the evening in this Voice Guest Column.

When we heard that the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees of the synagogue decided to celebrate Cantor Frieder's 25 years at Temple Israel by honoring him as this year's Journal Dinner Dance honoree, our respect and admiration for him carried us away and caused us to dive head first into yet another project.

So here we are, co-chairing a committee of over 50 dedicated congregants working in earnest together with the office staff to make this event meaningful, memorable and profitable for our synagogue. For each of us on the committee this is a labor of love. It is our sincere hope that the committee's sense of purpose and excitement will

be contagious: everyone reading this is cordially invited and encouraged to attend the special cantorial concert and dinner dance celebration on Sunday, June 5, as well as to purchase an advertisement in this year's Journal. This fundraiser is critical to maintaining our synagogue's viability for future generations.

This fundraiser is critical to maintaining our synagogue's viability for future generations.

Befitting the special stature of this year's nominee, this year's committee efforts and planning promise that the
---Continued on page 7

Keeping the Message In Sight

From the Rabbi by Rabbi Daniel Schweber

The Torah tells us that the Passover offering was to be offered annually for two reasons. First it was a way for all Israelites to identify with the nation. Virtually no one was exempt from eating the offering. Second, the offering was supposed to elicit questions from children and give an opportunity to tell the story of slavery and exodus.

Imagine if the world Jewish community got together and decided to rebuild a central shrine for animal and grain offerings. Since the shrine used to travel

...while the rituals are important, we cannot lose sight of the messages and values those rituals convey.

around, it is agreed that the shrine can be built somewhere else in Jerusalem besides the Temple Mount.

After the shrine is built, the Kohanim (priests) begin the to offer the animal and grain korbanot. I like to translate korban, which literally means bring close, as offering and not sacrifice.

How do you feel about these offerings as being the way we come close to God? Does the idea excite you because we can go back to the original intentions of the Torah? Or are you repelled by the thought of this kind of worship? What is with all of this blood and animal flesh?

My first reaction is that the offering is foreign to me. Like virtually all of us, I have never had to care for farm animals. I have never seen an animal slaughtered.

We are in good company if we feel that animal and grain offerings are no longer necessary to worship God. First the

---Continued on page 6

The 'Others'

From the President
by Rob Panzer

As Cantor Frieder is fond of saying, "we have services every day," three times a day.

We may be most familiar with Saturday morning Shaḥarit, Torah and Musaf services. Shabbat, as do weekdays, includes Minha and Ma'ariv services with a distinction: Se'udah Shelishit in-between, which is translated as a third meal (eaten before sunset). It's not so much a meal as a snack, coupled with a brief discussion and song.

Last week at Se'udah Shelishit, Rabbi Stecker focused on the role similarities found in the story of Purim and the story of Joseph reuniting with his brothers in Egypt. He pointed out that some of the wording in both texts is almost identical. (You'll have to ask him the term for this form of comparative study.) What was also interesting was the basis of each story. In each, Jews are the "other," the ones not living in their homeland. Although ultimately accepted—Esther as queen and Joseph as Pharaoh's right-hand man—one can see the conflict between being accepted and being an outsider, a foreigner.

I bring this up for these reasons: first, we do have services every day, and as a community we have a responsibility to ensure that there is a minyan at

...one can see the conflict between being accepted and being an outsider...

each one. Second, there are different opportunities to have meaningful discussions in our congregation. I have found these conversations to be thought provoking. Third, we have a responsibility to see to it that the "other" is treated respectfully, as we would wish to be, no matter where we live.

As always, I can be reached at robpanzer18@gmail.com.

In Memoriam

Temple Israel extends condolences to the families of:

SALIM MORAD

husband of Vahideh Morad
and father of Evelyn Peykar
and esteemed member of Temple Israel

SHIRLEY SUMMERS

mother of Rabbi Robert Summers

LAWRENCE WEITZMAN

brother of Hon. Howard Weitzman

May their memories be for a blessing.

Candle Lighting Times

Friday, April 1 7:01 P.M.

Friday, April 8 7:09 P.M.

Daily Minyan Times

Monday & Thursday

6:45 A.M. & 8:00 P.M.

Tuesday & Wednesday

7:00 A.M. & 8:00 P.M.

Friday

7:00 A.M. & 6:30 P.M.

Saturday, April 2

9:00 A.M. & 6:40 P.M.

Saturday, April 9

9:00 A.M. & 6:50 P.M.

Sunday

8:15 A.M. & 8:00 P.M.

Mazal Tov To...

Karen and Daniel Covitt

on the birth of their grandson,
Matthew Ian Covitt

Temple Lites...

• The villages of Great Neck recently held elections which saw a number of congregants reelected, including **Susan Lopatkin** as mayor and **Jeffrey Greener** as a trustee in Kensington, **Manny Alani** as a trustee in Saddle Rock, and **Howard Hershenhorn** and **Jeffrey Farkas** as trustees in Great Neck Estates.

• **Susan Lopatkin** was named to the Town of North Hempstead's May W. Newburger Women's Roll of Honor for her work as mayor of the Village of Kensington. A breakfast for her and the other honorees was held at Harbor Links, Port Washington.

Upcoming Events

April 3

Men's Club Yom HaShoah 10:00 A.M.
Candle Packing

April 9

Temple Israel Players Performance of
West Side Story 8:45 P.M.

April 10

TILL and TI Bonds
Parenting Seminar 9:45 A.M.
B'nei Mitzvah Family Workshop 10:30 A.M.
Temple Israel Players performance of
West Side Story 2:00 P.M.

April 11

Sisterhood Board Meeting 10:00 A.M.
TILL iEngage Israel Series Presents:
"Religious Pluralism and
Human Rights" 8:15 P.M.

April 12

Men's Club Scotch and Seder 7:00 P.M.

April 13

Are We Really Healthy? Series: "Being Healthy
Being Jewish" With guest speaker
Dr. Shmuel Shields Noon

April 14

Board of Trustees Meeting 8:15 P.M.

April 15

Waxman High School and Youth House
Family Friday Dinner 7:30 P.M.

April 17

B'nei Mitzvah Family Workshop 10:30 A.M.
Pesah University 11:00 A.M.
Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs Dinner at
Crest Hollow Country Club 4:30 P.M.

April 22

Erev Pesah
Fast of the First Born Service
and Siyyum Breakfast 6:30 A.M.

April 23 - 30

Pesah

April 23

Congregational Second Night Seder
Sponsored by the Men's Club 7:40 P.M.

May 1

TILL Film Series: "Gett" 7:00 P.M.

May 2

TILL program: "In Search of
Theological Modesty" 8:15 P.M.

May 5

Yom HaShoah
Yom HaShoah Service 7:00 P.M.
Canasta Class 7:00 P.M.

May 6

Men's Club Service and Dinner 6:30 P.M.

May 8

Men's Club Rabbinic Dialogue 9:15 AM

PARENTING WORKSHOP

Led By

Rabbi Howard Stecker
Sunday, April 10 • 9:45 A.M.

Between helicoptering
and letting them fly solo:
A frank discussion about
how much to intervene
in our children's lives.

Light refreshments will be served.

Questions? Contact

Veronica Lurvey at

Vlurvey@hotmail.com or

Judit Szigeti at

Szigeti.judit@gmail.com

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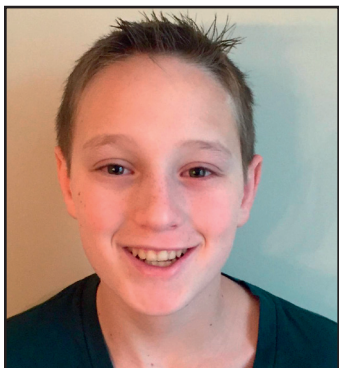
BEING OFFERED THIS SPRING

• Canasta on Thursdays,
• May 5, 12 & 19 at 7-9 P.M.

• Mah Jongg on Tuesdays,
• June 7, 14 & 21 7-9 P.M.

• Contact Jodi Engel
• at 482-7800, ext. 1102 or
• jengel@tign.org for details

B'nai/B'not Mitzvah in Our Temple Israel Family



Jack Nathan

Jack Nathan will be celebrating his Bar Mitzvah on April 9. He is the son of Sari and Rodney Nathan and has a sister, Kelsey, 16. Jack is a seventh grade student at Great Neck South Middle School. He enjoys a variety of sports, including soccer, basketball and tennis and is on his school teams. Jack also participates in the Great Neck Strikers travel soccer and basketball teams. He is currently attending the Waxman High School.



Isaac Turofsky

Isaac Rafael Turofsky will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on April 9. He is the son of Deborah and Benjamin Turofsky and has two brothers, Jacob, 11, and Lucas, 9, and a sister, Lilianna, 3. Isaac is a seventh grade student at Great Neck North Middle School. He enjoys playing soccer and skiing. Isaac is also the recipient of the Robotics County Award. He has visited Israel and is planning a return trip.



Eli Goodwin

Eli Reuben Goodwin will be celebrating his Bar Mitzvah on April 16. He is the son of Lisa and Jeff Goodwin and has two brothers, Charles, 15, and a twin brother, Benjamin, 12. Eli is a seventh grade student at Great Neck South Middle School. He was president of his fifth grade class. He is on the seventh grade honor roll. Eli plans on attending the Waxman High School next year and will be visiting Israel in August, where he will mark his Bar Mitzvah at the Kotel.



Benjamin Goodwin

Benjamin Tobey Goodwin will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on April 16. He is the son of Lisa and Jeff Goodwin and has two brothers, Charles, 15, and a twin brother, Eli, 12. Benjamin is a seventh grade student at Great Neck South Middle School. He enjoys playing basketball. Benjamin plans on attending the Waxman High School next year and will be visiting Israel in August, where he will be celebrating his Bar Mitzvah at the Kotel.

Beth HaGan Celebrates Purim In Style!

From The Beth HaGan Nursery School By Rachel Mathless

Beth HaGan's incredible Purim Gala 2016 was the best ever. Children dressed in costumes they created in school, proudly parading and displaying their dramatic holiday attire. Rabbi Howard Stecker read the Megillah and the children used their homemade groggers. They sang, danced and rejoiced with the seniors who meet at Temple Israel each week and delivered mishloach manot to them containing hamentaschen made by the children. The students enjoyed a delicious catered Purim seudah feast fit for Queen Esther!

On Friday of Shushan Purim the celebration continued with a special interactive show by the Yellow Sneaker Puppets entitled "Harry the Hamentasch Tells the Whole Megillah and Then Some."

"Everyone agreed that we had the best Purim ever," said school Director Rachel Mathless.



Beth HaGan at Purim

The Consumption Of Kitniyot On Passover: Rice, Corn and Legumes

EDITOR'S NOTE: Rabbi Stecker issued the following statement concerning the consumption of certain foods during Passover as a clarification of his views.

By Rabbi Howard Stecker

For a variety of reasons, chief among them the value of promoting unity among Jews, I have determined that all Jews, regardless of background, who consider me as their rabbinic authority should feel free to consume kitniyot (rice, corn and legumes) on Passover. For halakhic (legal) support I relied on a teshuva (rabbinic legal response) written by Rabbi Amy Levin and Rabbi Avrum Reisner that was approved nearly unanimously by the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards on December 24, 2015.

Below are the relevant details from the teshuva that apply to the purchase and consumption of kitniyot, including a provision for those who choose to maintain their custom of not eating kitniyot. For information on general Passover preparation, please check the synagogue's website, www.tign.org, for a link to the Rabbinical Assembly 5776 Passover Guide. The website will also contain a link to my recent sermon on this topic.

With the holiday fast approaching, my family and I want to wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy Pesah. May our celebration this year strengthen old ties and forge new ones.

Guidelines regarding the purchase and consumption of kitniyot:

- Fresh corn on the cob and fresh beans (like lima beans in their pods) may be purchased before and during Pesah, that is, treated like any other fresh vegetable.
- Dried kitniyot (legumes, rice and corn) can be purchased bagged or in boxes and then sifted or sorted before Pesah. These should ideally not be purchased in bulk from bins because of the concern that the bin might previously have been used for hametz, and a few grains of hametz might be mixed in. In any case, one should inspect these before Pesah and discard any pieces of hametz. If one did not inspect the rice or dried beans before Pesah, one should remove pieces of hametz found in the package on Pesah, discarding those, and the kitniyot themselves remain permissible.
- Kitniyot in cans may only be purchased with Pesah certification since the canning process has certain related hametz concerns, and may be purchased on Pesah.
- Frozen raw kitniyot (corn, edamame (soy beans), etc.): One may purchase bags of frozen nonhekhshered kitniyot before Pesah provided that one can either absolutely determine that no shared equipment was used or one is careful to inspect the contents before Pesah and discard any pieces of hametz. Even if one did not inspect the vegetables before Pesah, if one can remove pieces of hametz found in the package on Pesah, the vegetables themselves are permissible.
- Processed foods, including tofu, although containing no listed hametz, continue to require Pesah certification due to the possibility of admixtures of hametz during production.
- Even those who continue to observe the Ashkenazic custom of eschewing kitniyot during Pesah may eat from Pesah dishes, utensils and cooking vessels that have come into contact with kitniyot and may consume kitniyot derivatives like oil.

Passover Begins With Annual Siyyum, Breakfast and Service For the First Born on Friday, April 22

The Board of Trustees and officers express thanks once again to Mahin Shahnaz Ohebsion and Jack Sassouni for their generosity in sponsoring the annual siyyum and breakfast following the service for the first born on Friday, April 22, in loving memory of Eli Sassouni.

Because the first born Israelites were saved during the Tenth Plague, all first born men and women are required to fast on erev Pesah, until the seder. This fast is called Taanit Bechorot. However, the fast is not required when one performs a mitzvah such as a siyyum, the completion of a portion of study. It is then customary to celebrate with a seudat mitzvah, a meal that accompanies an important religious duty.

Rabbi Daniel Schweber will be leading the study session on that morning. He is currently studying Talmud Tractate Rosh Hashanah in preparation for the siyyum with the congregation.

The service, beginning at 6:30 A.M. in the Sanctuary, is, of course, not limited to first born males. All children are welcome, with or without their parents.

Passover Service Schedule Continued from front page

Saturday, April 30 Eighth Day of Pesah
Junior Congregation 10:30 A.M.
Toddler Service 11:00 A.M.

Yizkor Memorial Prayers
and Dedication of Memorial Plaques

Sabbath Service Officers and Greeters:
Madelyn Gould, Audrey Kent Itzkowitz,
Keyvan Frouzan and Mark Birnbaum
Afternoon and Evening Service 7:10 P.M.

From Generation to Generation

Temple Israel Gratefully Acknowledges The Following Contributions

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In honor of:

Cantor Frieder's special honor
Vivian and Yuval Brash

In memory of:

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Gertie Sherman
Peter Sherman

From the Rabbi: Keeping the Message In Sight

—Continued from page 2
prophets and then the rabbis pointed out that we don't need the korbanot to feel God's presence and share our feelings of thanksgiving, remorse, forgiveness etc... Instead we have the words and actions that were supposed to accompany the offerings.

If words were enough, why does the Torah spend so much time describing the ritual offerings? Were our ancient ancestors primitive in their thinking or did they see a greater value in the rituals that we fail to see now because our lives are so different.

On April 22 we will, God willing, sit down for the Passover seder. What do you remember from last year's seder? What do you remember about other sedarim from the past?

Based on my own memories, I would venture to guess that you remember where the seder was held, who was at the seder, and what food was served. Hopefully you also recall that after all

of the fuss beforehand, the seder was a positive and pleasant experience. Most of us probably do not remember what was discussed. We remember the physical more than the verbal.

Therefore, we have to conclude that there is value to physical rituals in physical places. Passover is about remembering we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. If we went with the straight verbal approach, all we would need to do is read the Exodus account and perhaps have a discussion about what freedom and slavery mean to us today. We would need no cleaning and no matzah!

However, a straight conversation would not be as memorable as serving symbolic food such as matzah, maror and charoset or even a family's traditional recipe for the meal. The message of freedom might be more important than whether we use romaine lettuce or horseradish for maror, but without the matzah and the maror, the holiday's message of freedom would not get across. The message is found in the details.

During Temple times, the Passover celebration was centered around the Passover offering. Alas, we have not had a Temple in 2,000 years. But we have established good substitutes with synagogues and the Passover seder.

The rabbis, in an act of brilliance, modeled the seder on the Greek symposium to achieve the true purpose of the Passover offering. We use physical actions and symbolic foods to teach and help us remember the Exodus. Vegetarians and all of us who don't slaughter animals can also participate!

Passover is about remembering our story. Remembering that we were once slaves in Egypt and that we must never oppress others. I am speaking to myself when I say let us not try not to panic too much as we clean, shop, cook and read the Haggadah before the seder. Let us try to remember that our rituals infuse and reinforce the values in our lives. At the same time, let us remember that while the rituals are important, we cannot lose sight of the messages and values those rituals convey.

Guest Column: Honoring Cantor Frieder

—Continued from page 2
 events will be unique. The theme of the events is "Shirateinu: Our Song." From the commemorative Journal, specially designed invitation, the lavish dinner reception, fun dance music, photomontage, décor, and gifts to the Cantor, no detail is too small.

As a special treat, the cantor has embarked on offering a musical concert to the congregation. He has invited several colleagues and musicians to accompany him for a concert performance that will lead in to the dinner reception. The concert will feature songs from the cantor's extensive repertoire, as a musical journey of his life, open to the entire congregation free of charge. This is possible due to the generosity of the family of Jacqueline and Hilbert Eshaghpour, who are underwriting the costs associated with the concert. Following the concert, those who have signed up for dinner will celebrate together in the Grand Ballroom with a lavish reception and dancing, and additional special music interludes and presentations.

Given his 25-year tenure at Temple Israel, there are undoubtedly thousands of

anecdotes from individuals and families touched by the cantor's tutelage and care. The Sassounis are deeply grateful that the cantor prepared their children, Sophia, Cyrus, Leila and Emma, to become confident and accomplished B'nai Mitzvah at Temple Israel and tefillah leaders in the Waxman Youth House, college Hillel and Chabad. In addition, the cantor taught Sassan to chant Torah as a member of the Adult B'Nai Mitzvah Class. The cantor taught Rebecca to lead tefillah, to improve her command of Torah trope cantillation, and even breathing to allow herself to broaden her vocal comfort range to hit high notes. The cantor is part of the family's memory of a 2009 Torah event, as he lent his voice to the festivities in the sanctuary. The entire family enjoys welcoming Shabbat together at the monthly N'ranenah Kabbalat Shabbat service led by the cantor. Rebecca and Susan are pleased to have co-conceived Shabbat Kol Ishah together with Cantor Frieder years ago. Happily, Kol Ishah has become an annual standing rotation of Shabbatot that the cantor instructs, including Shabbat HaGesher and Shabbat Koleinu.

The Lopatkin family has precious memories involving Cantor Frieder, too. He trained their daughters Allie and Stefanie for their B'not

Mitzvah. Susan and the cantor co-conceived the long-standing Tefillah Enrichment Program to teach students to lead Kabbalat Shabbat services. Now an adult, Allie acknowledges that even though she attended TEP under duress, she is grateful she can follow and participate in services anywhere she goes. Susan, who also trained with Cantor Frieder to become an adult Bat Mitzvah, credits the cantor for "unlocking the mystery of the Torah and haftarah trope, a life skill I will always cherish. As well, being able to lead parts of the service is something I am grateful that he helped me learn.

Bob's first encounter with learning tefillah was when Cantor Frieder started a class to learn how to daven. Bob was surprised to learn that the topic of the class was High Holiday Shacharit. Although he never learned that service, he went on to learn to lead the weekly services, something that would never have been accomplished without the confidence the cantor had in him.

Look for the invitation to the concert and Journal Dinner Dance, place an ad in the Journal, attend the concert, and reserve a seat to join us for dinner and dancing. Be a part of it! It is only "Our Song" because we are together!

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Sabbath Services

Friday, April 1

Shabbat HaMishpahah (Hay/Vav) 6:00 P.M.
Evening Service 6:30 P.M.

Saturday, April 2 *Shabbat Parah*

Morning Service 9:00 A.M.
Weekly Portion: Shemini
Leviticus 9:1-11:47; Numbers 19:1-22
Haftarah: Ezekiel 36:16-38
Sabbath Service Officers and Greeters:
Eleanor Askari, Jackie Astrof,
Edie Robbins, and Ofra Panzer

Bar Mitzvah: Matthew Bloom, son of
Ronda and Andrew Bloom

Bar Mitzvah: Jonathan Ajodan, son of
Regina and Shaun Ajodan

"Unlocking and Enriching
Jewish Prayer" 10:30 A.M.
Junior Congregation 10:30 A.M.
Toddler Service 11:00 A.M.
Minhah 6:40 P.M.
Ma'ariv 7:47 P.M.
Havdalah 8:02 P.M.

Friday, April 8

Rosh Hodesh Nisan/Shabbat HaHodesh
Evening Service 6:30 P.M.

Saturday, April 9

Morning Service 9:00 A.M.
Weekly Portion: Tzaria
Leviticus 12:1-13:59; Numbers 28:9-15;
Exodus 12:1-20
Haftarah: Ezekiel 45:16-46:18; Isaiah 66:1-23
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Havurah Service 10:00 A.M.
Junior Congregation 10:30 A.M.
Toddler Service 11:00 A.M.
Niggun Circle with Cantor Frieder
following Kiddush
Minhah 6:35 P.M.
Ma'ariv 7:40 P.M.
Havdalah 7:55 P.M.

Temple Israel of Great Neck

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D'var Torah

by Rabbi Marim D. Charry

Shemini Saturday, April 2

This portion opens with a description of proceedings through which the priests begin their duties in the sanctuary. In the midst of this, we find an account of two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, who take it upon themselves to bring some kind of unprescribed offering to the altar and are summarily struck down. Their death becomes the occasion for God to issue specific warnings to Aaron and all the priests to take special care in carrying out their duties. The remainder of the Book of Leviticus deals with laws of daily life and provides rules and regulations whose purpose is to raise every aspect of human life to the level of kedusha (holiness). The first matter to be dealt with is kashrut (the dietary laws). The reason given for these prescriptions is that kashrut serves to help make the basically animal function of eating, something uniquely human.

Tzaria Saturday, April 9

We find further details concerning the burnt offering, the meal offering, the guilt offering and the peace offering, as well as details of the thanks offering, in this portion. With the types of sacrifices fully described, we now move to a description of the institution of the service in the mishkan and the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. The ceremonies consist of dressing the priests in their special vestments, anointing the mishkan and all of its furnishings with oil, offering sacrifices and putting blood of the sacrifices upon the right ears, the right thumbs and the right toes of the priests. The aim of the entire proceedings was to highlight the special duties and responsibilities of the priests as representatives of the people before God. The pattern which is described here continued to be the manner of anointing the priests for over a thousand years.