



## Passover, A Reflection

Despite the fact that the Pew Research Study of Religion in America completed in 2012 demonstrated a decrease in the participation of Jews in formal “synagogue” Judaism, what was made perfectly clear was that of all the holidays in the Jewish calendar, the High Holy Days (*Yom Kippur* in particular) and Passover, are the two holidays that Jews, even the non-practicing Jews, observe the most frequently and consistently. So the question is why? I think the attraction of *Yom Kippur* speaks for itself – how many of us are without sin or transgressions and how many of us wish to chance the possibility of not seeking atonement when we have the opportunity to do so?

So what is the attraction of Passover – why do we Jews, even those who describe themselves as non-traditional or non-observant, cling so fervently to the celebration of Passover? Perhaps the answer to this question (might this be the fifth question?) lies in the symbolism and the ancient yet modern message that is embodied in the festival. If there is one word to describe the holiday of Passover, I would respectfully submit that Passover is a holiday of hope – the hope of the Children of Israel as they embarked upon their flight for freedom, their liberation and hope for the rebirth and reawakening of the natural beauty and abundance as the new agricultural cycle begins.

Truth be told, perhaps the real unspoken attraction of Passover is the memories it triggers - of our past, when we sat around the *seder* table with our grandparents, parents, siblings and friends to celebrate the holiday according to our own traditions. Perhaps it was grandma's gefilte fish, the Manischewitz wine, the *matzot*, the macaroons or grandpa's leadership of the seder. Maybe for the kids it was the search for the *afikomen*, the recitation of the four questions or some other distraction that might have made the seemingly *arduous* seder itself more bearable. Perhaps for the young teens it was the ritually-sanctioned partaking in the four cups of wine. Anyone who has ever sat around the *seder* table, no matter what their age, takes away some message that will reappear at some time in the future when, we as adults, parents or grandparents retell the story of the Passover to our families. Some of those memories will make us happy, some will make us sad, some will make us smile while others will cause our eyes to water with tears.

Passover for the Benn family has always been a very personal and special time during which we blend the traditions of our grandparents and the relevancy of the times in which we live. With *haggadot*, song sheets and table props (plastic frogs, toy animals and the like) in hand we gather, sometimes for one night, sometimes for two nights, with family and friends, Jews and non-Jews, to retell the ancient, yet modern story of liberation. We remind ourselves that the story of liberation, while traditionally the story of the liberation of the Children of Israel from Pharaoh's Egypt is equally applicable to the liberation of others who are victims of oppression - be it religious, racial, intellectual, social or personal subjugation.

Now, as the master of ceremony at the Benn family *seder*, I walk in the footsteps of those who came before me, to embrace all who are seated around our *seder* table - family and friends, young and not-so-young - to retell the story of liberation and of hope such that everyone comes away with the sense that they themselves experienced our historic, Jewish Exodus and our own personal Exodus from the shackles of whatever imprisons us.

As you find yourselves seated at your *seder* tables, may you all be blessed with a happy and joyous Passover, 2015.

Steve Benn



## Services and Events

### Calendar for Services and Events

#### April

April 3 - Passover Seder, 6:00 pm,  
Adoba Hotel

April 17 - Shabbat Services, 7:30 pm,  
Synagogue of the Hills

April 18 - Torah Study, 10:00 am, Synagogue

April 18 - Adult Education, 1:30 pm, Synagogue

May 15 - Shabbat Services, 7:30 pm,  
Synagogue of the Hills

May 16 - Torah Study, 10:00 am, Synagogue

May 16 - Adult Education, 1:30 pm, Synagogue

\*Check your email for upcoming  
services and events



*Kindle the taper like the steadfast star  
Ablaze on evening's forehead o'er the earth,  
And add each night a lustre till afar  
An eightfold splendor shine above thy hearth.*

*Emma Lazarus  
The Feast of Lights.*

*The Shofar* is how the members of the Synagogue of the Hills communicate with each other. That is, *The Shofar* is a monthly forum for matters of interest that is a bit more formal than a remark over a cup of coffee, but a bit less formal than a written statement to the Board of Directors. It could be a birth announcement, a press release, a photograph, a public service blurb, a letter to the editor (that's me, Leonard Running), a joke, a cartoon, an opinion, anything that YOU think might be important or entertaining to our family.

Your contributions are welcome . . . no, critical to the well-being of the synagogue.

You can send emails to [bhshul1@gmail.com](mailto:bhshul1@gmail.com) or anything in paper form to the address on page 1.

Let *The Shofar* be heard!



## The Rabbi's Corner



### Greetings from Rabbi Sara Eiser

Spring has sprung! Amidst the frenzy of Passover preparation and scheduling, test-taking, taxes, and spring cleaning, we all need to take a moment to appreciate this beautiful transition that life goes through each year. We begin to open the windows and let the air in a bit more frequently, we change over wardrobes, clean out pantries, plant gardens, hope for rain, and plan vacations for summer. This is a season in which preparation becomes an art form, and everyone, Jew and non-Jew alike, starts to look longingly towards a future of freedom. All of us experience a kind of longing for freedom at this time of year; freedom from the grind of the school year, freedom from having to do taxes for another year, the freedom of spirit that comes from leaving your windows open to hear the birds in the morning.

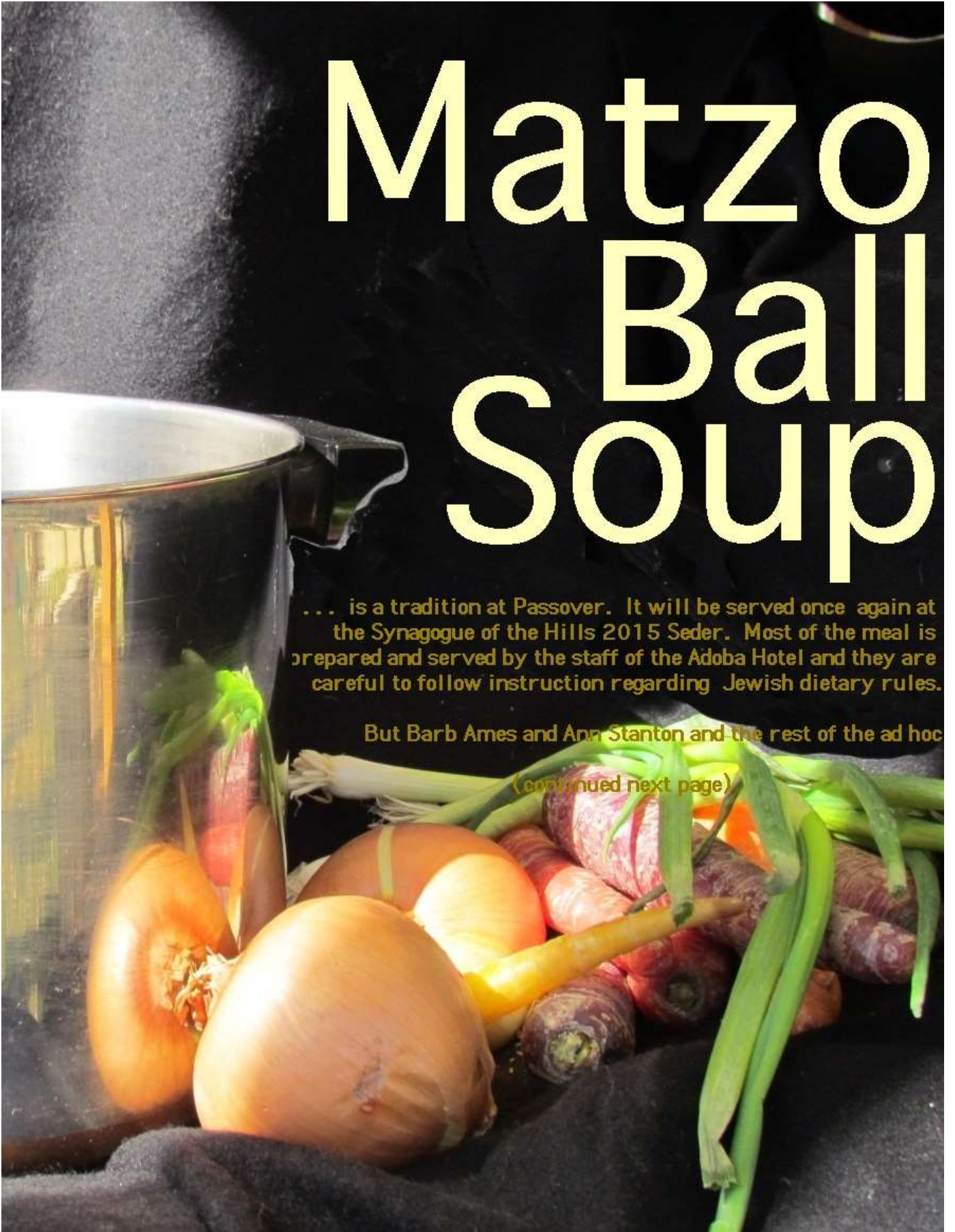
By the next time I see you, we will be adding in our prayer for the dew instead of the prayer for the rainy season in the land of Israel. We will have escaped from Egypt, our bellies full of *matzah*. We will have commemorated *Yom HaShoah*, Holocaust Memorial Day, only one day before. Right after I leave you, we will be observing the "Israeli High Holy Days" of *Yom HaZikaron* (Israeli Memorial Day) and *Yom HaAtzmaut* (Israeli Independence Day). Liturgically, we will be marching steadily again through the liminal space of the desert towards Shavuot and our acceptance of Torah at Mt. Sinai. Our ritual is tied in with the seasons because we are inextricably bound up with the land upon which our ancestors lived and wandered, and even though our seasons may not match up perfectly with those in Israel, we can see evidence of a divine wisdom in these cycles.

So clean up, clean out the clutter spiritually and physically, and prepare yourself for the radical nourishment of spring and the growth and freedom of the summer ahead.

*L'shalom,*

Sara Eiser





# Matzo Ball Soup

... is a tradition at Passover. It will be served once again at the Synagogue of the Hills 2015 Seder. Most of the meal is prepared and served by the staff of the Adoba Hotel and they are careful to follow instruction regarding Jewish dietary rules.

But Barb Ames and Ann Stanton and the rest of the ad hoc

(continued next page)



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But Ann Stanton and Barb Ames and the rest of the *ad hoc* group called the Hospitality Committee will be preparing their ancient (eight-year-old) traditional recipe for matzo ball soup that is totally kosher.

Ann says that making the soup part is harder and is glad to have Barb do that. For her part, Barb thinks that making the matzo balls is the hard part and is glad to be making the broth. Neither are shy about using a few well-established short cuts – for example, powdered commercial soup base is used for stock making sure to use the vegetarian (non-chicken) kind for flavoring. Ann adds that there is no way to improve on the old Manichewitz matzo ball mix in a box.

They start with the recipe passed along from another member all those years ago, Georgette Ohayon:

- 12 cups water
- 3 teaspoons vegetarian (non-chicken) soup base
- ½ medium onion
- 2 carrots
- ½ stalk celery
- bouquet garni* (huh?)

Scrambling to consult Google I find that *bouquet garni* is a combination of herbs and spices that includes thyme, basil, chervil, rosemary and tarragon. It can be purchased as a mixture in the spice section at Safeway, but the classical concept of *bouquet garni* is to tie all of these individual spices in a cheesecloth bag and suspend it in the broth as it is being brought to high heat.


Barb does use the commercial combination and then ties it in a cheesecloth bag along with bay leaves, peppercorns and a sprinkling of turmeric. She also bundles fresh parsley with string and suspends that in the same way. How much *bouquet garni*? Barb looks at me like any good cook as if to say, “Why do you suppose spoons were invented?”

How much, indeed! This recipe is for twelve cups of water. More than 30 people are expected for the Seder. Barb has prepared 15 quarts of broth in two stew pots. The broth is cooked when the vegetables are tender (about an hour.) Then it is cooled overnight, the veggies and spices extracted, then strained and frozen until it is heated at the restaurant. That's 60 cups of water, 15 teaspoons soup base, 2 ½ onions and stalks of celery, a whole bunch of carrots . . . don't worry about salt: there's enough in the bouillion, but if you do need salt, add kosher salt. And don't forget the *bouquet garni*!

Holy cow! (probably a bad choice of words) . . . but what about the matzo balls?

Meanwhile, Ann will wait till a little nearer to mealtime to better determine how much to cook. Then, with the right multiple of eggs, vegetable oil and matzo ball mix, she will mix the dough and refrigerate it.

When the time is right, Ann and perhaps another member of the Hospitality Committee will get their hands wet (always use wet hands to handle the dough; it is really sticky) and, taking a walnut-sized lump, roll a ball to the perfect size and texture. The balls are kept cool and will be added to the broth in the hotel kitchen and cooked about 20 minutes before serving.

Making matzo ball soup is not complex – it is indeed simple and as old as time. It is, however, a relatively long process, tended with love and care; meant to nourish the Jewish family and celebrate the culture and holy ways from which it comes. 

# Pot Luck



## ...more news

I've chosen to share a smile from me to you.

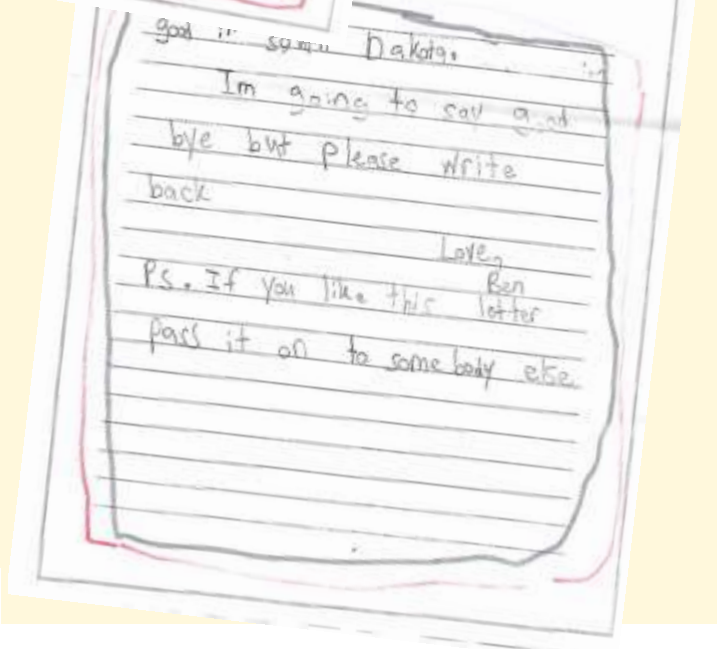
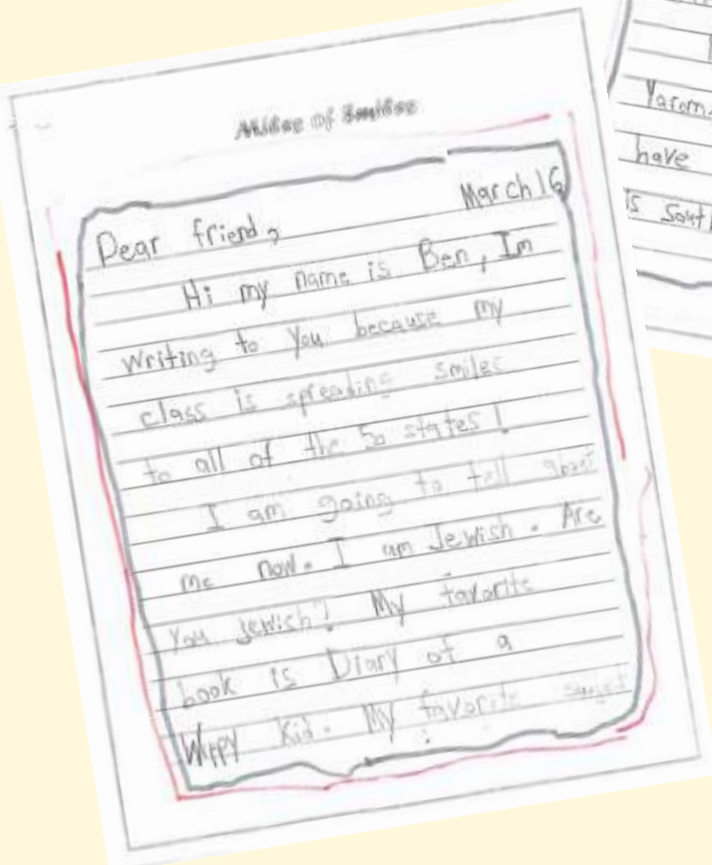
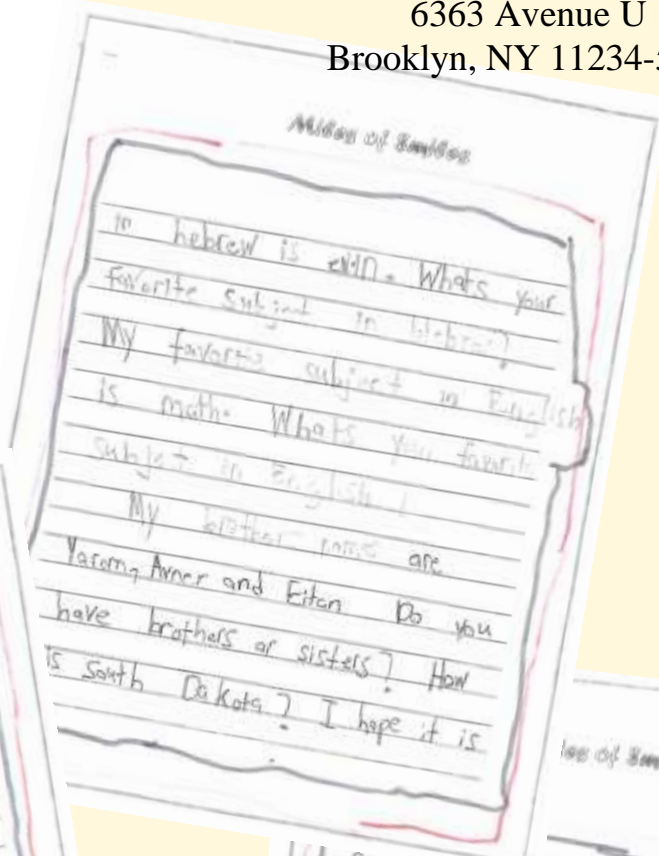
Feel free to pass one on, or even a few.



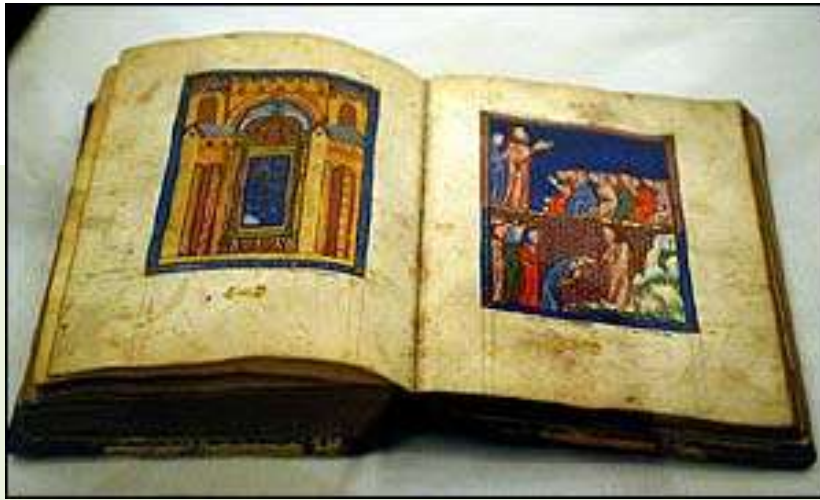
Today I smiled,  
and someone saw my grin.  
When he smiled back,  
I knew I passed it on to him.  
I thought about that smile,  
and realized its worth.  
One smile - just like mine -  
Could travel round the earth!

The SOH was sent the lovely letter and Smiley! From Ben, a 3rd grader at Yeshiva Talmud Torah of Crown Heights in Brooklyn, NY. If you would like to write back send your correspondence to:

Yeshiva Talmud Torah of Crown Heights  
Attn. Ben- 3rd Grade  
In Mil Basin  
6363 Avenue U  
Brooklyn, NY 11234-5930



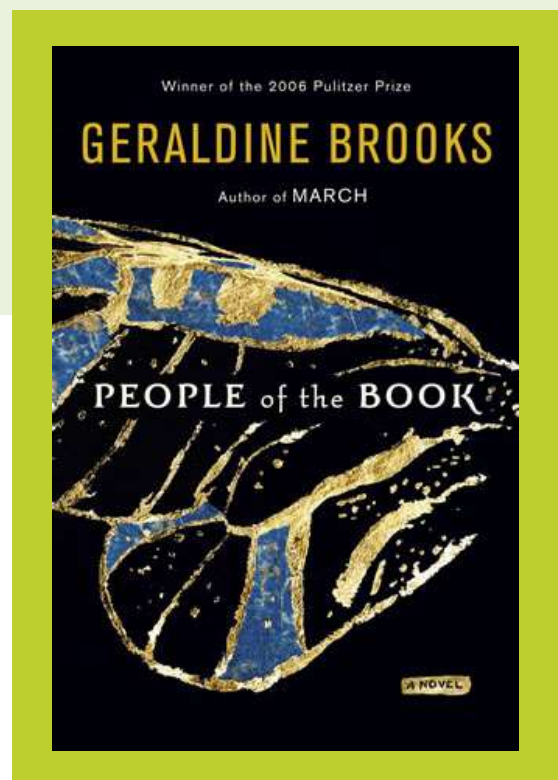




Mitzi's Books in Rapid City will be reading *People of the Book* for their Book Club selection in April. You can visit their website or store to find out the date.

I read this book a few years ago and am rereading it for the club, and find it as interesting and inspiring as the first time.

If you are not familiar with the story it is a fictional account of the real world **Sarajevo Haggadah**; a unique illuminated manuscript from 14th century Spain. This little book somehow survived numerous Jewish expulsions, book burnings, and wars.



“A religious man is a person who holds God and man in one thought at one time, at all times, who suffers harm done to others, whose greatest passion is compassion, whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair.”

— Abraham Joshua Heschel



**Pomegranate blossom- Green Valley, Arizona**

...Even in the desert beauty and new life can be found.



## Gift Shop

Autographed copies of *Jewish Pioneers of the Black Hills Gold Rush* written by our talented member, Ann Stanton, are on sale for \$21.20, which includes tax. Part of your purchase is *tzedakah* - \$5.00 from each copy will go to the Synagogue. You are welcome to shop anytime you are in the building. Please remember to add 6% sales tax to your total (there is a tax chart on the wall in the gift shop). Payments may be left in the black payment box on the desk. Thank you!

# Yahrzeits

“to remember is to keep alive”

The following *yahrzeits* will be observed:  
Attendance at services is encouraged so *Kaddish* may be recited.

## In Memoriam:

Ruth Oretskin, mother of Gail Bober  
passed away Tuesday, March 17th / 26th Adar 5775, at her home in Binghamton, NY

Helene M. Fish, mother of Irwin Fish  
passed away Friday, March 27th / 7th Nisan 5775, at her home in Green Valley, Arizona

Cecelia Haber 19 Shevat 5745  
Mother of Ann Stanton

Freeman Gilbert February 15  
Father of Wayne Gilbert

Jim Gilbert February 18  
Brother of Wayne Gilbert

Jerry Gilbert February 28  
Brother of Wayne Gilbert

Bernice Hedden March 2  
Mother of Ken Hedden

Doiny Benesty 6 Adar, 5761  
Mother of Georgette Ohayon

Estelle Jacobson-Morris 7 Adar, 5768  
Mother of Ruth Thomas

Aaron Oretskin 14 Adar  
Father of Gail Bober

Katie Velline March 20  
Cousin of Barb Ames

Death is merely moving from one home to another. The wise man will spend his main efforts in trying to make his future home the more beautiful one.”

-Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern of Tomashov (the Kotzker Rebbe)





## Remember:

### Challah and the Oneg

The Colonial House has challah available on any Friday after 12:00 noon. It is very helpful for someone to volunteer to pick up the challah and prepare the oneg after services.

If you want to help out by picking up the two loaves and set up the oneg in our synagogue kitchen please notify Leonard at 348-0805. You could even bring your own homemade challah or specially purchased oneg snacks.

If you have something special to celebrate, commemorate, or just want to bring something for the joy of it, there is an oneg sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, or you can call or email by Wednesday, noon, of the week for which you wish to volunteer.

**THANK YOU!**



### TREE OF LIFE DONATIONS

You may purchase a leaf in honor of, or in memory of a loved one or special occasion. Leaves cost \$100.00, each. Please provide the wording you would like inscribed on the leaf (29 characters and 4 lines maximum).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please send acknowledgment to \_\_\_\_\_

All donations are tax deductible; please consult your tax expert for details.

**Your continued support of Synagogue of the Hills is greatly appreciated!**

I would like to make the following donation to Synagogue of the Hills:

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_ In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

**anniversary ~ birth ~ graduation ~ appreciation ~ birthday ~ marriage ~ bar or bat mitzvah**

Donation amount \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to: Synagogue of the Hills and mail to 417 N 40<sup>th</sup> St, Rapid City, SD 57702

The following is a list of funds to which the donations can be made; Please circle your choice.

**Building Fund ~ General Fund ~ High Holy Days Flower Fund ~ Oneg Fund ~**

**Endowment Fund ~ Tzedakah Fund ~ Other \_\_\_\_\_**