

# THE SHOFAR

## April 2024

### Congregation B'nai Israel

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### **FROM THE DESK OF RABBI PEARL**

Approximately 140 generations ago, the Israelites emerged from bitter slavery in ancient Egypt and impressed upon their children the importance of conveying their experiences to all subsequent generations. That chain of communication remains unbroken to this day and the Passover celebrations, in which we recount the Exodus with readings, songs and special foods, are not merely a time to recall history. They teach three essential and timeless messages: the centrality of family, the value of education and an understanding that freedom must always be accompanied by responsibility. It is no wonder that Passover remains more widely observed than the Jewish New Year, Chanukah or any other of our festivals. We believe that that connection with our past makes us who we are.

The Talmud tells a story of a man who was travelling to a town he had never visited before. Arriving at a major crossroads, he discovered that the wind had blown down the only signpost. With no-one to turn to, he sat down to bemoan his fate. But then, it occurred to him that he was actually familiar with one of the directions, for he knew where he was coming from. He excitedly jumped up and repositioned the signpost accordingly. Now, he could also see the correct direction to his destination. From here our Sages teach: you can only know where you are going to if you know where you are coming from.

Or as Winston Churchill put it, "The further back you can look, the further forward you are likely to see."

*Rabbi Pinchas Pearl*

#### **SALE OF CHOMETZ**

Please complete and return the form with any donation page 7 before the start of Passover.

**FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES – 8 PM**

**SATURDAY MORNING SERVICES – 9:30 AM**

#### **FRIDAY & HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING:**

Friday, April 5	7:08 PM
Friday, April 12	7:15 PM
Friday, April 19	7:23 PM
Monday, April 22	7:26 PM*
Tuesday, April 23	8:29 PM*
Friday, April 26	7:30 PM
Sunday, April 28	7:32 PM*
Monday, April 29	8:36 PM*

\*Passover candle lighting

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

April this year is the month of Passover. It's a time for family and remembering our exodus from Egypt and the miracles that were performed for us. It's a time for celebration, feasting, remembering, and being thankful.

I have to thank the parents and Regina Perel and the Hebrew school children for the fun of making our delicious hamantaschen and the play they put on at Purim. All the Sisterhood, under Sandy Levy's leadership, and the others who gathered and distributed the goodie bags for Purim also need my/our heartfelt appreciation.

The congregational Passover seder will surely be a huge success on the second night. If you don't have other family obligations then, don't miss it. The rabbi does a wonderful job leading it every year.

We are in the early stages of planning another anniversary dinner for the congregation. I hope that you will be involved and attend. More information will be forthcoming.

Let me know your thoughts and concerns. I hope to hear from you, and to see you soon at the synagogue.

Have a Sweet Passover.

*Marty Eisenberg, CBI President*

### **UPCOMING EVENTS - Mark your calendar!**

**Monday, April 8 at 8 PM** – Sisterhood meeting

**Tuesday, April 23 at 8:30 PM** – CBI Passover Seder (services at 8 PM) (see flyer at end of Shofar for reservation form)

**Ongoing (listen to weekly announcements):**

**Sundays at 10 AM** – Rabbi's class – Adult Bat Mitzvah

**Sundays at 11:30 AM** – Men's Club meeting

### **SISTERHOOD UPDATE**

As you all know, preparing, collating, and delivering the Purim Bags (Shalach Manot) is our significant fundraiser for this time of year. That's why we send out letters requesting your participation, hoping it will be a success.

At this time, I'd like to especially thank the following people who came forward, in addition to participating, to provide the goodies for the bags.

Our sincere thanks for donating the food goes to: Harris Schwartz, Janice Rappaport, Laurie and David Raps, Rita Hauser, Rita and Marty Eisenberg, Susan and Richie Finkelstein, Michelle and Kevin Brosnick, Lillian Brosnick, Judy Weisberg, Iris and Shelly Cohen, and Sandy Levy. A special shout-out to Trader Joe's for generously donating those fruit breakfast bars.

To the people who delivered on Saturday night and Sunday morning, we sure appreciate you: Abidor family, Kevin and Lee Brosnick, Susan and Richie Finkelstein, Janice Rappaport, Laurie and David Raps, Leigh Patterson, and Bette Goldstein.

Finally, there are two people who must be singled out for the extra time and work they put in for this effort: Bette Goldstein, who does each individual letter that goes into each bag; and Susan Finkelstein, who keeps track of everything. Thank you for all of your help.

To all of you who gave so generously, we sincerely thank you! Our efforts, together with your help, made this Purim effort a success!

*Sandy Levy, President*

## CBI Celebrates Purim

Purim may have been “late” this year, but that didn’t stop CBI members and friends from enjoying the holiday. After hearing the reading of the Megillah by Rabbi Pearl, the Hebrew school students with teacher Regina Perel put on a lovely play, after which we enjoyed hamantaschen and other refreshments. Thank you to everyone who made this a success!



### **Thank You for Your Generous Donation**

Marvin Cooper in memory of Abraham L. Cooper

Ana Cramer in memory of Aaron Feldman

Marty Eisenberg for sponsoring our Hebrew School’s hamantaschen baking class

Anita Gordon in memory of Shirley Berman

Regina and Sam Perel for sponsoring a kiddush

Laurie and David Raps for sponsoring a kiddush in honor of their Wedding Anniversary

Melinda Sims and Joel Bloom in memory of Gertrude Bloom

The United Staten Island Veterans Organization Inc.

Andrea and Lee Weiser in memory of Lawrence Pearlberg

*Steven Skybell's exclusive reminiscences of playing "Tevye" in the all-Yiddish production of "Fiddler on the Roof."*

## **The Kvells Keep Ringing for Steven Skybell's Tevye in All-Yiddish "Fiddler"**

By Joel H. Cohen

"Dress British, Think Yiddish" is an unknown philosopher's formula for success.

I didn't ask actor Steven Skybell his favorite clothing style, but I'm absolutely sure of his smashing success in the lead role of Tevye in the all-Yiddish Broadway production of "Fiddler on the Roof."

When first approached with the idea, most of us would respond: "*Bist meshugah?*" "Are you insane?" But Skybell had already played Tevye twice, first at age 17 at music camp, and then at 22 at Yale, and wanted to play him again as an adult. Knowing that Joel Grey was directing the Yiddish production made the prospect even more enticing.

Skybell grew up in Lubbock, Texas, a town with about one hundred Jewish families. Like many others, his grandparents spoke Yiddish only when they didn't want the kids to understand what they were saying.

When he first got the part in the Yiddish "Fiddler," Skybell had studied Yiddish but he "certainly wasn't fluent." And at the start, only three of the 26 members of the cast spoke Yiddish. So getting ready for the show was a mammoth task, with most of the actors learning the language phonetically from tapes.

But opening night in 2018 was "electric," he said, with the audience deeply and immediately in love with the show. The production was extended numerous times from its original six-week run at the Museum of Jewish Heritage and moved to different venues, including Off-Broadway, into 2023.

The show and individual cast members have won numerous awards, including the Drama Desk award for Outstanding Revival of a Musical, and Skybell received the Lucille Lortel award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical.

Plans to bring the production to China and Australia had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Skybell believes the international popularity of "Fiddler" is due in part to the fact that its theme is not only Tradition, but Love. He thinks many plays would lend themselves to being performed in languages other than English.

Of all the actors he's seen perform the role of Tevye, Skybell's favorite is the late Topol, who played the lead in the movie, which he saw as a child. "I was very impressed and moved and encouraged by it. And as an 11-year-old boy who was hoping to be an actor, to see a movie that had a Jewish protagonist was very empowering for me," Skybell recalled.

Playing Tevye brought emotional rewards, as well. Already a proud Jew, “the play made me feel even prouder, and I’m much more sympathetic to the plight of immigrants,” he said. “And today, when we want authenticity in casting in movies and TV and film, I’m delighted to be recognized and to be utilized as a Jewish actor.”

Skybell said performances with immigrants, refugees, and Holocaust survivors in attendance have been particularly meaningful for him. He recalled a conversation after the show with a survivor who asked him whether he thought the ending was positive or negative. Skybell answered that “the last gesture of Tevye to the fiddler, saying ‘come with us, we’re not going to leave you behind,’ is a very positive gesture. I felt it was a positive ending in that we may be getting thrown out of Anatevka because of our Jewishness, but we’re going to take our Jewishness with us.”

His favorite “Fiddler” moments are when Tevye’s wife, Golde, tells him that her responding to his needs over the years is evidence of her love...and then at the train station, where he is saying a sad goodbye to his daughter Hodel.

Skybell is currently in rehearsals for the Broadway production of “Cabaret.” He’ll be playing “the Jewish role of Herr Schultz, and I’m very much excited about that.”

Skybell made his Broadway debut in two Eugene O’Neill plays in 1988, shortly after graduating from the Yale School of Drama. He’s also appeared in the Broadway productions of “Love, Valor, Compassion,” “The Full Monty,” “Pal Joey,” and the most recent Broadway version of “Fiddler.” It was while performing in “Wicked” that he used his time between scenes to learn how to quilt from a production crew member, and it remains his favorite hobby.

If asked for an autograph, does he sign in English or Yiddish?

“I usually have written transliterated Yiddish “mazel tov” or “dank” but my name in Yiddish would be something fun to do as well,” he said.

Why not, like Skybell and Tevye, do it in both?

*Thanks to Fay Schiff for her part in arranging this interview.*

**Yahrzeits for April 2024**

Yahrzeits begin on the evening before the given date. If you need to say Kaddish for a Yahrzeit, please call the office two weeks before and we will try to have a Minyan. It would be helpful if you could have a few family members or friends attend the services to make sure there is a Minyan. For additions or corrections to this list, please contact Laurie Raps at (718) 967-4975 or [spar1012@aim.com](mailto:spar1012@aim.com).

Hebrew Date	Yahrzeit Of	Relationship	Relative	Date in 2024
28 Adar II	Irene Goldberg	Mother	Alice Frey	April 7
28 Adar II	Joseph Cohen	Brother	Al Cohen	April 7
3 Nissan	Abraham Fruchter	Father	Anita Sini	April 11
3 Nissan	Marlene Rhian	Friend	Ana Cramer	April 11
3 Nissan	Richard Goretsky	Brother	Jay Goretsky	April 11
9 Nissan	Prof Richard Jensen	Husband	Dr. Betty Jensen	April 17
11 Nissan	Mordechai ben Meir	Father	Miron Berenshteyn	April 19
16 Nissan	Dora Perl	Mother-In-Law	Marvin Cooper	April 24
17 Nissan	Anna Fox	Mother	Melvin Fox	April 25
18 Nissan	Danielle Goldberg	Daughter	Marian and Arthur Goldberg	April 26
18 Nissan	Danielle Goldberg	Sister	Beth Marin	April 26
19 Nissan	Raya Shoikhetbrod	Mother-In-Law	Gretta Kovler	April 27
20 Nissan	Sydney Kettner	Mother	Bette Goldstein	April 28
20 Nissan	Abraham Ganzman	Father	Joel Ganzman	April 28

## PASSOVER SCHEDULE

**Monday, April 22:**

Candle lighting 7:26 PM

**Tuesday April 23**

Services 9:30 AM

Mincha/Maariv - 8 PM

Candle lighting: 8:28 PM

Seder - 8:30 PM

**Wednesday, April 24th**

Services 9:30 AM

Yontiff ends: 8:29 PM

**Friday, April 26th**

Candle lighting 7:30 PM

Friday evening services - 8 PM

**Shabbes, April 27<sup>th</sup>**

Services 9:30 AM

Shabbes ends: 8:33 PM

**Sunday night April 28<sup>th</sup>**

Candle lighting 7:32 PM

**Monday April 29th**

Services 9:30 AM

Candle lighting: 8:35 PM

**Tuesday April 30th**

Services 9:30 AM

Yizkor - 11 AM

Yontiff ends: 8:37 PM

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Please return the following form to Rabbi Pearl, to authorize the sale of chometz. All donations for the sale of chometz are given to help those in need to purchase food for the holiday.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize Rabbi Pearl to sell all chometz in my name prior to the commencement of Passover.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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