

THE PULSE AT ASBI

Keep your finger on it...

Volume 10
Summer 2010

SUMMER WISDOM & BALANCE FROM THE GREAT RABBI HILLEL

RABBI ASHER LOPATIN

As we begin another glorious summer in Chicago, we continue to learn Pirkei Avot every week – notice it in your siddur at the end of mincha (afternoon service) for Shabbat. Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik used to say it was instituted in the summer months, following Shavuot, in order to keep our exuberance in check.

No better advice for summer balance than Rabbi Hillel: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me – so I need to look out for my own needs and those of my family – but if I am only all about myself, or those around me that I love, then who am I?"

We need to make sure that in providing a good time for those in our immediate circle – including ourselves – we are still dedicated to the needs of the entire community, the entire Jewish people and our State of Israel. In fact, we have

to make sure that while we're having a great time this summer, we are taking care of the world around us in a way that is consistent with our Jewish values.

Hillel is telling us, have fun! But make sure that the fun is balanced with a responsible attitude that never lets up. We need to enjoy the world that God has set around us, but we also need to remember that Jewish soldiers are fighting day and night in Israel to keep our people safe, and that American soldiers – many of them Jewish as well – are fighting all over the world to keep it safe for us. Enjoy, but remember that not everyone is having a blast this summer.

Yet, Hillel concludes: If not now, when? In such a confusing world, when there is so much beauty and opportunity for fun and pleasure, there is so much pain and need and sadness.

(Continued on Page 2)

SACRED SPACE, SACRED EXPERIENCES

RACHEL KOHL FINEGOLD

The arrival of summer means visits to the beach, picnics in the park, and perhaps an exotic vacation. For the Adam R. Straus Memorial Mikvah, summer means bride season!

Our Mikvah serves not only our shul, but much of the metropolitan Chicago area. Many of our users are not members of Anshe Sholom, but come because they have heard about the welcoming atmosphere of the Mikvah, or appreciate its proximity to

downtown. Especially brides who live in the city, will call to arrange an appointment before their weddings, even if they have no previous connection to Anshe Sholom.

The primary mission of our Mikvah is to ensure that every user feels comfortable and welcome, while maintaining the highest standards of halacha. When someone calls for an appointment, we do not ask any personal questions about their

Niddah practice; we do not ask whether this might be their first time at a Mikvah or if they are a seasoned user; while at the Mikvah, we do not check any part of a user's body unless she specifically requests it.

Our Mikvah attendants are trained to read the subtle cues of every user, to help ensure a positive immersion experience.

(Continued on Page 3)

Inside this issue:

Summer Wisdom & Balance	1&2
Sacred Space, Experiences	1&3
Rabbi Search Committee	2
Note from the President	2
A Straw Hat History	3
Tisha B'Av: Days of Mourning	4

Note From the Editors:

Summer is here! Grab some lemonade and read this issue outside!

Happy reading....

Jillian Zaff

Stacy Derby

RABBI SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE RUTH LIPMAN

As you recently read in President David Harris's letter to the congregation, the Search Committee for our new rabbi has been formed. I wanted to take a few lines to update everyone on where we are and how we see this progressing. The detailed process of identifying the next rabbi has begun: a little more than half of the originally scheduled parlor meetings have taken place, and the ASBI Rabbi Search Committee has held its first of many meetings.

While we are a committee of only eleven members, the committee's role is to act as agent for the wider congregation. We will be relying on the themes arising from the parlor meetings and input from individual congregants to educate us about your thoughts and concerns.

We are modeling our process on a document compiled jointly by RIETS/YU, the Orthodox Union (OU), and the RCA entitled, "Guidelines, Recommendations and Observations for Engaging in A Serious, Professional Rabbinic Search". We are working on means of communicating clearly and regularly with the congregation and the board of directors. It has been agreed that every committee member will read each application to ensure consistent treatment for all candidates.

Future communications from the committee will include a summary of parlor meeting themes, a job description, outreach to candidates and insight on the progress of the search. While there are specific aspects of a job search such as this that need to be confidential, our goal is to be as transparent about the process as possible.



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT DAVID HARRIS

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has joined, or is about to join in one of the parlor meetings and for participating in a very meaningful way. By the time the meetings are complete, we will have had 10 meetings with almost 120 members attending. The learnings and feedback have been extraordinary and will go a long way in helping the search committee and the entire congregation make this process more successful.

Please stay tuned for a parlor meeting theme document, summarizing all of the major thoughts and ideas from the meetings, which will be sent to the community within a few weeks after all of the meetings have been concluded. I want to wish everyone a wonderful summer full of great weather and lots of Shabbat picnic lunches.

SUMMER WISDOM & BALANCE FROM THE GREAT RABBI HILLEL

RABBI ASHER LOPATIN

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We need to always remember and balance the duality, but we only have this life to both enjoy our world and work for its betterment.

So don't slow down! Travel, go on walks and picnics, learn Torah, volunteer for Uptown Café, come to minyan, defend our Jewish State, and spend time with

those you love and need – do it all, and make it a summer that recharges your body, your spirit and your relationship with God, Torah and the Jewish people.

Kayitz tov (Have a great summer!)

A STRAW HAT HISTORY STACY DERBY

Many of us are familiar with the fashion statement that launched our shul in 1870. (For those not versed in Straw Hat History, refer to the "About Us" page on our website at www.asbi.org.) As a testament to the strength, warmth, and acceptance of our community, 1870 was the first and last time our shul membership divided.

Under the dynamic religious leadership of only five major rabbis since 1894, Anshe Sholom has embodied its self-confident Modern Orthodoxy with openness and commitment to education.

In the mid-1940s, the congregation began raising money to convert the residential greystone at 540 W. Melrose into a more suitable synagogue, but Rabbi Herman Davis zt'l personally persuaded each donor to commit to building the school first. Anshe Sholom ran its own Hebrew School until it later merged into the predecessor of Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School, now in Skokie. The school's original building was purchased in 1983 by the Florence Heller JCC which still occupies the space today.

Education has been and continues to be a focal point of our community; the current congregation holds an average of two university degrees per adult member. Even the design of the synagogue has been analyzed to match the community's goals. During Rabbi Davis's tenure (1945-1975), the congregation was split over the use of a mekhitza. Relying on his unwavering fidelity to halacha while seeking a balance with the benefits of modernity, Rabbi Davis expertly guided the conflict toward a solution that met the needs of his diverse membership: a new mekhitza was designed to be modest, with a low profile, while still adhering to halachic standards. When Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt'l approved the new design, the matter was settled.

SACRED SPACE, SACRED EXPERIENCES RACHEL KOHL FINEGOLD

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

It is particularly the brides who often need some extra attention. I recently gave a tour of our Mikvah to a young woman a few weeks before her wedding. She had made an appointment to immerse a couple of days before the big day, but I offered her a chance to see the facility and learn a bit about the Mikvah in advance.

As she stepped inside, I could see her relax, as she was enveloped by the calm and soothing atmosphere. She walked through the Mikvah, excited to see that our baths are equipped with rain shower heads and water jets. As she stepped into the Mikvah room, taking in the curved walls, Jerusalem stone and white candles, she said "This is exactly what I had been hoping for."

For me, our Mikvah fills me with a sense of pride in our community. What is most unique is the group of women who serve as our Mikvah attendants. These twenty women

Similarly, a congregational debate surrounded the use of a microphone in the sanctuary. In order to obviate any need for a microphone, the current sanctuary was designed with state-of-the-art acoustics to amplify sound naturally to the back of the room.

Following Rabbi Davis' inspired leadership, Rabbi Joseph Deitcher zt'l continued his progressive approach to engaging with the modern world. During Rabbi Deitcher's tenure (1976-1994), the community was graced with another powerful intellectual force; Rabbi Deitcher was dedicated to expressing his Orthodox philosophy through its compatibility with the modern world. Exemplifying the very roots of Judaic tradition, in 1965 while in his twenties, the Rabbi joined the march in Selma, Alabama to participate in the historic Civil Rights demonstrations.

Advancing the traditions of his predecessors, Rabbi Asher Lopatin has furthered ASBI's role in progressive Modern Orthodoxy since he joined ASBI in 1995. Rabbi Lopatin has engaged diverse religious communities in Chicago, and his commitment to education is evidenced by his role in the founding of the Chicago Jewish Day School.

A community is only as successful as its leaders. Fortunately for ASBI, the shul has a rich history of religious leaders who have encouraged members' exploration of both secular and spiritual advancement. This summer, around the time straw hats will be back in seasonal fashion, ASBI will celebrate its 140th year.

The Pulse would like to tip its straw hat to fourth-generation member David Passman for his commitment to sharing his first-hand knowledge of ASBI history.

volunteer 1-3 evenings per month to facilitate the immersions of our users. When Rachel Lopatin and I recently trained three new attendants, they told us how excited they were to begin contributing to the community in such an intimate and fulfilling way. Even some users who were a bit skeptical about encountering a Mikvah attendant they may have seen in shul, have been pleasantly surprised by their comfort with the attendants.

If you have not made a visit to our Mikvah, you are always welcome. [Women's hours are in the evenings and men's hours are Friday mornings.]

To make an appointment please call or email at least 48 hours in advance, 773-935-1689 or mikvah@asbi.org. The summer is not just for brides.

Happy Summer!

ANSHE SHOLOM B'NAI ISRAEL CONGREGATION

540 West Melrose
Chicago, Illinois 60657

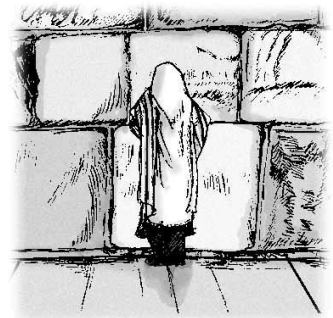
Phone: 773-248-9200
Fax: 773-248-5001
E-mail: shul@asbi.org

Tisha B'Av: Days of Mourning

Tisha B'Av primarily commemorates the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, destroyed first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. and again by the Romans in 70 C.E., according to Jewish tradition.

But other calamities have continued to fall upon the Jewish people on the Ninth of Av:

- In 135 C.E., the Bar Kochba Revolt was crushed by the Romans who killed more than 100,000 Jewish fighters.
- In 1492, all Jews were expelled from Spain at the start of the Inquisition.
- In 1914, Tisha B'Av coincided with the start of World War I when Germany declared war on Russia. Germany's defeat set the stage for WWII.
- In 1942, the Germans began the final liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka and other camps.



This year, the fast of Tisha B'Av is observed starting at sundown on Monday July 19.