



From the
Beit Midrash of
Rav Julius



Accessing Jewish Web Sites

While Beth Jacob's communications with its membership has largely been electronic over the years, there are still a few of you who receive our messages the 20th century way: snail mail. But most of you are now receiving the VOICE and other matters from us electronically. While some of you

have come kicking and screaming into the 21st century, most have now arrived, and it has made our job so much easier. There are still concerns about technology and the dangers posed by such advancements, but by and large proper use of technology does a world of good.

I remember some twenty-five years ago being on a Synagogue Board and telling my Synagogue president that we should give the rabbi a 'perk' and gift him with a portable phone. I recall the questionable stares I received from fellow Board members, asking me why I wanted to reward our rabbi at that time? I pointed out that the rabbi would soon learn what all of us in the professional world had learned: portable phones were not so much a 'perk,' but rather a 'lasso' in which the individual so gifted now had a yoke around his or her neck. Now, no matter where the rabbi was, he could be reached by those who were authorized to have the number -- and as Ritual Director, I was part of the 'we.' Thus explained, the motion received a unanimous response of approval.

But all kidding aside about the downsides of technology, there is so much about technology that expedites the work I do. For example, it takes me a fraction of the time to find the sources I am looking for, as compared to when I first set out on my journey. And each year, it is getting easier. That is time I can spend pushing myself deeper into the messages I share.

There is so much good that can be found. There are so many applications and websites that can enhance our Jewish lives. But the fact of the matter is that there are many websites that have expressions of Judaism which quite simply are questionable or downright WRONG. As many of you know from your experience on the internet, we often mistake the appearance of information on the internet as being historically and factually correct -- whereas, in fact, virtually everything on the internet is human driven, accompanied by all the errors that humans are well known for. (And I will save for a future column, the abyss of AI.)

That is where I, your rabbi, come in. I am your Jewish website 'Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval' when it comes to whether you can 'trust' a particular Jewish-oriented website and the information that it provides.

Here I share just a few. Disclaimer: I know there are people who make a living from reviewing technology, so I am not try-

ing to put anyone out of business, nor do I receive any compensation for recommending any of these sites, but here are just a few:

1. Sefaria.org -- Sefaria is home to more than 3,000 years of Jewish texts, with new texts being added weekly. It offers free access to texts, translations, and commentaries so that everyone (especially if you can understand Hebrew) can participate in the ongoing process of studying, interpreting, and creating Torah, without having to acquire a single volume for your home library.
2. Myjewishlearning.com -- My Jewish Learning offers thousands of articles, videos, and other resources to help you navigate all aspects of Judaism and Jewish life — from food to

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President's Box

Pay Using Appreciated Stocks

The Synagogue now has a process to accept stock transfers as contributions/dues payments. (Call the office for the instructions prior to calling your broker/investment house.)

By using appreciated stock, **you avoid the Capital Gains tax on the appreciation, while the Synagogue gets the entire current market value.**

For example, perhaps you have some Apple (AAPL) shares for which you paid \$95.00/share some time ago. These shares are now worth \$200.00/share (*not quite...but just saying, for example.*) You want to gift or pay \$1,000 to the Synagogue. So, you would get the instructions from the office, then call your broker/investment house, and instruct them to transfer **5 shares of AAPL** to the Synagogue's Wells Fargo account per the appropriate numbers received from the office.

Result: The Synagogue gets the 5 shares of Apple, sells them for \$195.00/ea. (the price has slightly slipped in the meantime.) **The Synagogue receives \$975.00 and credits you with for your \$1,000 gift/dues.**

Now you have avoided selling the shares yourself, which would have resulted in a taxable Capital Gain of $(\$195 - \$95 \text{ [your cost]} \times 5) = \500.00 , on which **YOUR** investment house would report to the IRS and you as a Capital Gain.

This is the basic procedure and works well. At the end of the year, you'll get notice of a contribution of \$975 to deduct on your tax return. For IRS purposes, only the exact amount that the Synagogue receives is the tax-deductible contribution.

Try this!

Sometimes it's less painful to pay this way, and each of us gets to reap a benefit.

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history to beliefs and practices. The site is geared toward all backgrounds and levels of knowledge. So, whether you are seeking a refresher on how to light the Hanukiah or a newcomer contemplating converting to Judaism -- there is something here for you.

3. TheTorah.com -- This is a super serious website that makes academic biblical scholarship accessible and engaging to readers from all backgrounds. They solicit original essays on the Torah portion and holidays from academic scholars whose expertise covers many Jewish subjects including history, archaeology, textual criticism, and literary approaches.

4. Meltonschool.org -- This website engages adult learners in the study of Jewish texts and ideas that nurtures and deepens Jewish community worldwide. Through classes (both in-person and online), Melton learners find Jewish texts and ideas accessible and relevant to their lives. They become part of a worldwide movement of committed learners who are empowered to enrich Jewish life. Melton is the largest pluralistic adult Jewish education network in the world, with 50 Melton communities throughout the world. More than 50,000 learners have experienced Melton's professionally developed curriculum and lively interactive classes.

Surely, the best way to experience Judaism is live and in person. However, this is just not possible for all of you, all the time. Some of you cannot participate in person because you are distant from the source or cannot drive at night or drive long distances. I am hopeful that you can take advantage of the various Jewish resources in any way you can. Thus, these suggestions should be seen as enhancements for your Jewish life, not replace coming to the synagogue or whatever else you are doing to participate in Jewish life, life at Beth Jacob or elsewhere in Eastern CT.

And just know that as our people once were transformed from idol worship to worship of a single god; and then transformed from a people who made sacrificial offerings to the One God to a people who extended prayers and other verbal offerings to that One God, so, too, can we transform our connections with Judaism so as to add an electronic component to the experience for a more blended and varied experience.

B'Shalom,
Rav Julius

Donations

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions to Beth Jacob Synagogue's Special Funds.

Building Fund

In Memory of Joel Etra

Irene Scheinberg

In Memory of Tom Pedersen

Irene Schienberg

In Memory of My Beloved Wife, Joan Segal

Howard Segel

In Memory of my Father, Louis Snitkin

Francine Gorin

In Memory of Sophie Ruditzky

Al Ruditzky

In Memory of Louis Taylor

Lois Taylor

Harry Bokoff Ritual Fund

In Memory of Myer Bokoff

Marc & Roslyn Bokoff

Four Chaplains Ceremony, Sunday, February 4th

Rav Julius will be a keynote speaker at the annual "Four Chaplains Ceremony", accompanied by three other area-clergy, to be held on February 4, at 2:00 pm, at the American Legion Peter Gallan Post 104, Taftville, Ct. (And as in past years, is scheduled to end at 3:00 pm).

This annual ceremony honors four chaplains who died on February 2, 1943, aboard the U.S. troopship, the *Dorchester*, after it was torpedoed by a German submarine. Several of the lifeboats had been damaged and the four chaplains began to organize frightened soldiers. They distributed life jackets from a locker; when the supply of life jackets ran out, each of the chaplains gave his to other soldiers. When the last lifeboats were away, the chaplains prayed with those unable to escape the sinking ship. The last anyone saw of the four chaplains, they were standing on the deck, arms linked and praying together.

One of the four chaplains, Rabbi Alexander David Goode, was a Lieutenant in the United States Army.

Norwich Fuel Oil Fund

As we enter the beginnings of a cold winter, we also need to be mindful that there are others who need your help to stay warm.

As you know, the Norwich Area Interfaith Association operates a fund dedicated to those needing heating assistance that live in the Norwich community. Prospective beneficiaries are first counseled to ensure that they have exhausted all other state resources before they need to take advantage of their last opportunity for help. And to help ensure that these possible last-stop resources are available to as many people as possible, the maximum contribution that the fund can make to any individual is \$200.00 per family household.

The need at this time is extremely great. Much of the time, we are simply trying to locate and pay for 'warming centers' where people can spend the evening in whatever accommodations might be found, such as a sleeping bag on a floor, or in an upholstered chair in an office space -- but in a heated building.

Thus, for those of you reading this in the warmth of your homes or offices, consider the nameless person that you don't know who may be huddling in their apartment under a stack of blankets; and seriously consider opening up your checkbook at this time and make a donation to this fuel fund, payable to the Norwich Area Interfaith Association and mark it as for the "Fuel Oil Fund", and drop it off at the Synagogue, or mail it to our treasurer: Jillian Corbin, executive director of St. Vincent de Paul Place, 120 Cliff Street, Norwich CT 06360.

February Birthdays

February 2 Manuel Kadish

February 4 Olivia Mendlinger

Steve Bokoff

February 8 Lorraine Biber

February 17 Cathy Bokoff

Hazel Brown

February 19 Gabe Stern

February 24 Michael Seroussi

February Anniversaries

February 14 Seymour & Linda Adelman



FEBRUARY 2024 YAHRZEITS

February 1 22 Shevat

Leo Scharfman —
Father of Renee Kohanski
Julius Deutsch
Michael Slosberg
Herbert Pearson
Fannie Korman Luckman
Olga Gendler —
Mother of Maria Balaban

February 2 23 Shevat

Harold Zierler
Sarah Markoff
Anita Meyer

February 3 24 Shevat

Louis Goldberg —
*Father of Joe Goldberg
and Lois Taylor*
Irwin Kaplan —
Father of Arlene Dressler
Diana Weiner

February 4 25 Shevat

Janice Brauman —
Mother of Stacy Gould
Frank Sykes

February 5 26 Shevat

Jacob Goldblatt
Hannah Friedman —
Mother of Hazel Brown
Regina Piotrkowski

February 6 27 Shevat

Bessie Berkman
Sara Siegel

February 7 28 Shevat

Michael Mindel
Max Sears
Esther Stern

February 8 29 Shevat

Morris Adelman —
Father of Seymour Adelman

February 9 30 Shevat

David Wilner
Ruth Goldblatt — *Aunt of Michael
Goldblatt and Ellen DeLeon*
Dr. Lewis Sears
Jennie Atkind
Oscar Pevner

February 10 1 Adar 1

Abe Cohn

February 12 3 Adar 1

David Bokoff

February 13 4 Adar 1

Zev Goldabeter
Lazar Rabinowitz —
Father of Julius Rabinowitz

14 February 5 Adar 1

Annie Kirstein
Louis Green

February 15 6 Adar 1

Louis Sadinsky
Rachel Sears
Charles Kalnitsky
Elizabeth Abraham
Sidney Littman —
Grandfather of Marc Bokoff
Morris Guss

February 16 7 Adar 1

George Gootman
Sara Miriam Helkin
Harold Basson
Leo Winakor —
Father of Dr. Eugene Winakor

February 17 8 Adar 1

Harry Weishaus
Joseph Cooper
Israel Kenig

February 18 9 Adar 1

John Sears
Isaac Sciammas —
Father of Sara Haroun

February 19 10 Adar 1

Celia Fishbone
Michael Perlman —
Uncle of Gabe Stern

Aaron Gorfain
Ellen Blinderman

Rose Mandell
Bessie Lipman

February 20 11 Adar 1

Gail Piotrkowski —
Sister of Marc Wolf
Harry Pearson

February 22 13 Adar 1

Max Steinlieb
Mildred Botwick
Esther Pollock
Ada Labb — *Mother of Robert Labb*

Marcus Engel

Robert Foster

February 23 14 Adar 1

Jacob Strom

Fred Herman

February 24 15 Adar 1

Fred Rutitzky —
Father of Alan Ruditzky

Louis Berkowitz

Arthur Mansky —
Father of Kay Winakor

Leo Gerechter

Julius Berk

Muriel Jacobson

February 25 16 Adar 1

Marcia Goldberg —
Wife of Joe Goldberg

February 26 17 Adar 1

Theodore Guss
Emanuel Stern
Ida Pearson

February 27 18 Adar 1

Jacob Harris
Edward Lazaroff —
Grandfather of Stacy Gould

February 28 19 Adar 1

Elaine Bowman —
Sister of Marvin Weber
Alec Rabinovitch

February 29 20 Adar 1

Molli Hyman
Jacob Stern

Mishebeirach

Beth Camassar	Matthew Young
Betsy Wilson	Michael Clancy
Billy Maynard	Pamela Magliano
Emma Fries	Cannata
Emma Clancy	Tate Campbell
Janet Clancy	Tiffany Gravel
Janet Rasin	Wayne Rosenfield
Jenn Rockwell	

Candle Light Times

February

February 2	4:48 pm
February 9	4:57 pm
February 16	5:06 pm
February 23	5:15pm

**Ba-ruk'h atah A-do-nai, e-lo-hay-
nu-me-lekh ha-olam, a-sher kid-
sha-nu-bemitz-vo-tav ve-tzi-vanu
Le-had-lik ner shel Shabbat.**

**Blessed are you, Lord our God,
Sovereign of the Universe, who
has sanctified us by Your com-
mandments and has commanded
us to kindle the Shabbat lights.**



*Beth Jacob Synagogue
extends their condolences to*

Roz Etra

*On the death of her mother-in-law
Syliva Etra*

