

Beth Am COMMENTATOR

MIAMI, FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 14, 1975

Purim Carnival Day Is Here

Sunday, February 16 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Clowns! Prizes! Games! Side Shows! Fun House!
Goldfish, Cake Walk, Movies, Costume Parade, Pony Rides

FOOD HOT DOGS BAR-B-Q BURGERS
COTTON CANDY

Boulevard Of Creative Arts And Crafts

Jewelry, Ceramics, Paintings and Prints, Leather and Macrame

USED BOOKS FOR SALE

Purim Costume Contest--Kindergarten to Third Grade

COME TO THE PURIM CARNIVAL

Gala Theatre Party March 12

Sisterhood co-chairmen Mrs. Robert (Rita) Widom and Mrs. David (Nan) Rich report that plans are complete for the gala religious school luncheon and theatre party. After a gourmet luncheon at the elegant Peacock Room of the Coconut Grove Theatre, the partygoers will be treated to a performance of "Purlie." The luncheon is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 12. Donations requested are: \$25 for Sponsors, \$35 for Patrons, and \$50 for Benefactors.

This will be one of the most festive benefits ever staged for our Religious School. It is the main fund raiser for the school during the year. Miami's own Patti Jo will be starring in the role she created and starred in on Broadway for two years. Patti also starred in the national touring company production of "Purlie."

Invitations have been sent through the mail. Please mail in your donation and seating card. For further information, call Sisterhood co-chairmen Mrs. Robert (Rita) Widom, 665-8694, or Mrs. David (Nan) Rich, 666-5397.

Remember, this is for the benefit of our children!

Purim Celebration Starts In Synagogue Monday, Feb. 24

The Hebrew word "Purim" means "lots." This festival is called by that name because on Purim the Persians had cast "lots" to destroy the Jews. Purim occurs this year on the evening of Monday, February 24, and continues to sundown, Tuesday, February 25. The Megillah (the scroll of the Book of Esther) will be read in the Temple on Monday, February 24, at 7:30 p.m.

The story of Purim which is told in the Book of Esther is supposedly in Persia in the 5th century B.C.E. (The Judeans were carried captive into Persia in the 6th century). There is good reason to believe, however, that the entire story is a parable with certain moral lessons.

Purim commemorates the day when the Jews of Persia were saved from death by the intervention of Mordecai and Queen Esther. The viceroy of King Ahasueris, Haman by name, talked the king into passing a law which required the destruction of the Jews. Haman was angry because Mordecai, the Jew, would not bow down to him. Haman plotted that Mordecai should be hanged, but Queen Esther exposed Haman at a banquet she had prepared for the king and Haman. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, and the law against the Jews was repealed.

The story illustrates, for one thing, that the fate of all Jews is bound together. Mordecai tells the reluctant Esther, "Think not that you shall escape the edict against the Jews because you are in the king's house." This is a message to all privileged Jews who drift away from their group or deliberately seek to sever their relationship with the Jewish community.

The story also tells us that while those with evil intentions may seem to triumph over short periods of time, in the long run, it is the good who triumph.

BOOK OF ESTHER

The Book of Esther is really a novel in the grand sense. It is great literature. Its characters are expertly formed, and its story simply and beautifully told.

In the synagogue, when the story of Esther is read, it is permitted to "beat down Haman" with groggers and stamping when his name is mentioned. Haman stands today as the symbol of all those who have sought to destroy the Jews, but in vain. Mordecai stands as the symbol of all those who have remained loyal to the Jewish people in spite of the dangers.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14
8:30 p.m.

B'NAI BRITH NIGHT

RELIGIOUS
SERVICES

Henry Le Clair
Cantorial Soloist

RABBI BAUMGARD

'Being Jewish And Being Universalistic
Are They Incompatible?'



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15
11:15 a.m.

TORAH SERVICE

Temple Seder Planned For Thursday, March 27



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Let's Study Torah

Note: This parasha was read in the synagogue last Saturday.
Read Exodus 21:1 - 25:2.)

Mishpatim, this parasha, includes a large body of civil law. For the ancient Hebrews, civil law was based on religious sanction; that is to say, it also was considered as having been derived from God. Another way of saying this is to say that the Jewish religion involved all events that encompass the process of living.

Included in these civil laws are those laws which would be called "torts" in American law. The law of negligence, prevailing in America today, prevailed in ancient Israel. The basic thrust of this law is that if a reasonable man ought to have anticipated a problem for a certain action, the person acting in a certain way is responsible for all of the damage caused by that action. For example, if an ox was not previously known to be a killer, and he kills a person, the owner of the ox is not liable for damages (21:28); but if the ox had a previous record of harming people, and its owner ought reasonably to have known that the ox was potentially harmful, and the owner did not take reasonable steps to contain the ox, the owner is responsible for the future damage that the ox causes (21:29). This principle is extended to the person who creates a danger by excavating a pit (21:33), or by causing a fire (22:5). These basic laws in the Torah are further developed in the Talmud, which is the main law book developed by the Jews over the centuries.

What happens if a person harms another physically? The Torah teaches, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (21:23-24). No law has been more misunderstood in modern times than this. Even in the Code of Hammurabi, dated about 1800 B.C.E., the expression, "an eye for an eye," means, except in the case of murder, the payment of money damages (i.e., the value of an eye in money). Since Moses lived around 1250 B.C.E., and the Hebraic law is generally more developed than that of the Hammurabi Code, we must assume that this law refers to money damages (the Talmud so interprets it). Even in the case of murder, degrees of responsibility and punishment are indicated. For example, if a person kills a thief when the latter is "breaking in," there is no punishment involved (22:1). If a man kills another by accident, and not by premeditation, he is not guilty of murder (21:13), but premeditated murder earns the death penalty (21:14), as does dealing in slave traffic (21:16). Laws concerning theft are also dealt with in this section (Ch. 22).

In addition to the specific law here, there are general proclamations, which we call apoditic law, which are not found in other law codes. For example, this section teaches: "A stranger thou shalt not wrong, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child . . . for if they cry unto Me, I will surely hear their cry . . ." (22:20-22). "If thou lend money to any of My people . . . thou shalt not be to him as a creditor, neither shall ye lay upon him interest" (22:24). "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil . . ." (23:2), etc.

There are laws here compelling a person to help the donkey or ox "of his enemy" (23:3), or requiring a person to help an animal oppressed by its burden, even if the animal belongs to one's enemy (23:5). There are injunctions against favoring the rich in court (23:6) or favoring the poor (23:3), for the court

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BAFTY Sponsors Shabbat Dinner February 28

BAFTY's first annual Shabbat Dinner will be held on February 28 at 6 p.m. in the Social Hall. A catered dinner combined with refreshing entertainment will provide an enjoyable evening for the entire family. Tickets are \$5.50 for adults and \$3.50 for children under 12. Reservations must be made by February 21.

Use the coupon below to make your reservations. Call Bruce Katzen, 665-4318, or Debbie Kaiser, 238-6188, if you have any questions.

BAFTY DINNER RESERVATION FORM

Mail to Temple office, 5950 N. Kendall Drive, Miami, Florida

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

I would like to make a reservation for BAFTY's Shabbat Dinner.

_____ Adults _____ Children

Check enclosed for \$ _____ Adults, \$5.50; Children (under 12), \$3.50

Youth Groupers Honored By National Academy


Rabbi Allan L. Smith, head of the Department of Camp and Youth Programming, has informed Beth Am that six of our young people have been certified and received credits at the National Academy, at Kamp Kutz, in Warwick, New York. Receiving credit are Eric Bender, Kim Feigenbaum, Bonnie Goldman, Sheryl Grossman, Mike Sacks, and Barry Rosenberg.

These young people have taken and received credit in diverse courses such as Survey of Jewish Literature, Advanced Folk Dance, Hasidism, Jewish/Christian Polemics, Group Dynamics, Jewish Survival in the Diaspora, Yiddish Literature in English Translation, and short stories of recent American Jewish fiction.


B'nai

Mitzvah

Saturday
February 15
11:15 a.m.



William, son of
Mrs. Arlette Glaser



Bennett, son of
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Radcliff

is the place for impartial justice for all. Bribery for a judge is considered a weighty sin (23:8).

The legal section then blends into the historic narrative. We are told that Moses was not the only one to meet with God on Mount Sinai. The "elders," the congress of ancient Israel, also were there (24:9-11). We must note here that several traditions are involved in this story. One has Moses meeting alone with God. The other involves a larger number of people. How to resolve these conflicting traditions? Place them alongside one another.