



Black History Month and the Jews



These days the relationship between the Black and Jewish communities is complicated, characterized by cooperation and conflict. New interest arose this fall when some of us became aware of the "Black Hebrew Israelites" for the first time.

Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West, caused a commotion when he tweeted that he would go "death-con 3" on Jewish people. Ye defended himself by citing the Black Hebrew Israelite contention that he could not be antisemitic because "black people are actually Jew." (sic) The Black Hebrew Israelites (BHI) allege that people of color are the TRUE descendants of the Biblical Israelites, not Ashkenazi or Sephardic Jews.

Then NBA star Kyrie Irving tweeted a link to the movie "Hebrew to Negroes: Wake Up Black America," which includes antisemitic tropes about Jews and power in the financial system and Hollywood, and Jewish conspiracies for world domination. When Irving returned from his resultant suspension, hundreds of Black Hebrew Israelites demonstrated outside the Barclay Center chanting, "We are the real Jews."

The BHI movement was initially founded in the late 19th century by William Saunders Crowdy, an escaped slave who claimed he had visions in which God told him that African



Americans were descendants of the Hebrews in the Bible. In 1896, Crowdy established the first congregation of the movement based on aspects of both Christianity and Judaism. They believe that Jesus was a person of color and that Black Americans are God's chosen people. Some churches, like Crowdy's, supported unity among races and genders, but other sects evolved into extremism.

Radical Black Hebrew Israelites refer to European Jewish people as the "synagogue of Satan," arguing that they are "devilish imposters" responsible for the slave trade and plotting world domination. On the contrary, the kidnapped enslaved Africans were the actual descendants of the exiled Israelites of biblical times.

Thankfully, not all sects of the BHI movement are extremist or antisemitic. For example, Rabbi Capers Funnye is a prominent Black Israelite clergyman in

the United States. He is the chief rabbi of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis and the clergy leader of a Chicago synagogue with a mixed membership of Jews and Black Israelites. His congregation follows the Torah and supports the state of Israel.

Funnye distinguishes his congregation from the Black Hebrew Israelites. Funnye condemns the antisemitism of the radical Israelite sects, stating, "God is never about divisiveness. God is never about hatred. God is never about, 'You ain't.' I don't have to say what you aren't to make me who I am."

May this month – and every month of the year – serve as sacred inspiration for Jewish and African American leaders to raise such voices of moderation, fellowship, and respect, and to drown out social media's din of divisiveness, anger, and acrimony.

Shalom,

Rabbi Judy Chessin

We Couldn't Do It Without You!

Temple Beth Or could not accomplish anything without teamwork. Thanks to every contribution of prayer, time and funds, we can fulfill our mission of being a warm, welcoming place for ALL.

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Temple's many funds provide a meaningful way to mark the life cycle events we all experience. From a birth to a graduation, from the recovery from an illness to a promotion or marriage, we all experience joy and sadness throughout our lives. To express your caring and concern, please send your tribute card and minimum \$10 donation to the Temple office. All donations are tax deductible.

What is So Jewish about Valentine's Day?



Valentine's Day is not a Jewish Holiday is a song written by Rabbi Joe Black, a musician and rabbi in Colorado. Every once in a while, depending on what CD was in the car, the song would come over the speakers. It always made me smile.

It is true – Valentine's Day is innately a holiday that is not Jewish; after all, it is named after Saint Valentine of Rome, who lived over 2000 years ago. Valentine was known as a man who would often guide couples through the engagement period until he would officiate their marriage.

There are conflicting stories about who Valentine was, possibly the Bishop of Terni, why exactly he was killed, or what he did to deserve being sentenced. In fact, there are many different Valentines, so it can be hard to distinguish who this holiday is named after.

Nonetheless, the origin of Valentine's Day may be traced back to an English Poet who often conflates history with people when he combined them in his works. In the 14th century, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote "Parliament of Foules," connecting a feast in honor of Saint Valentine with the ideas of courtship and love.

And so eventually, Mr. Chaucer convinced those in his circle to re-enact such a feast, leading hundreds of years later to what we now know as Valentine's Day.

What is so Jewish (or not Jewish) about Valentine's Day?

First, there is a Jewish holiday of love. *Tu B'Av* (the

15th Day of the Hebrew month of *Av*), celebrated this year on August 2, 2023, is known as *Hag HaAhavah* – the holiday of love. The holiday stems from the beginning of the grape harvest season, which, in the time of the Temple, was marked by women dancing in white dresses in the vineyards in celebration. Following the women, men would also dance in the groves. Maybe a similarity already between such dancing and the courtship that Poet Chaucer talked about in his work.

Should we celebrate *Tu B'Av* instead of Valentine's Day?

Well, instead of...how about both, if it suits you. Rabbi Moshe Isserles of Poland, in the 16th century, once wrote of the importance of observing secular traditions if the holidays are rooted in secularism, consistent with Jewish tradition, and not against any moral holdings. There is nothing inherently Christian about today's Valentine's Day. There is nothing wrong with sending flowers, cards, or candy; in fact, offering gifts and showing love is appreciated in our Jewish tradition (*mishloch manot* at Purim, for example)!

Valentine's Day is not a Jewish holiday, but it isn't a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or any other religion's holiday. So this year, when February 14th rolls around, we can celebrate love just like Jews have been doing for thousands of years.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Ben Azriel



TUESDAY MARCH 14, 2023 11:00AM TO 1:30PM

KEEP CALM AND EAT LUNCH



And not just any lunch—**THE Jewish Sandwich—Carnegie Deli Corned Beef** stacked on rye, with fresh Cole Slaw, homemade Brownie, Beverage...and a snappy Dill Pickle. What, no cheesecake?? Relax, Bubbe, we've got that too! Plus, a plant-based alternative, Mrs. Goldfarb's Unreal Corned Beef, also is available.

Still craving more? Order Corned Beef by the Pound: Carnegie Deli or Mrs. Goldfarb's Unreal Corned Beef.

\$18 per meal

\$20 per pound

\$5 per slice of Carnegie Deli Cheesecake

PRE-ORDER NOW @ [TEMPLEBETHOR.COM/CORNED-BEEF](https://www.templebethor.com/corned-beef)

Delivery Available!

Order TEN (10) or more lunches for yourself or your office and we'll deliver your order from 10am - 2pm for \$10.00 per local address (limited delivery area).

Dinner plans? Pick up a *Pack 'n Go* box for dinner from 5:00-7:00pm on prepaid and reserved orders. *No muss, No fuss, No cooking!*

Temple Beth Or "Mensch-ins" Sponsor Recognition

You or your company's name will be recognized! Support this event, Temple Beth Or's biggest fundraiser, by becoming a sponsor. Different financial support levels are available. Be an **Honorable Menschin Sponsor** and get four consecutive weeks (February 17 to March 10) in weekly emails, as well as in-person announcements during *Shabbat* services. Call Donna at **937-435-3400** for more information.

Pre-Orders are Open:

<https://www.templebethor.com/corned-beef>

Adult Education

Chai Mitzvah February 9th 7:00 p.m. on Zoom (Designed to “grow your Judaism”)



Due to generous financial underwriting from Rabbi Chessin, Adult Education at Temple Beth Or has been able to host *Chai Mitzvah* for a couple of years. Starting in October (or *Tishrei*, the first month of the religious year), and continuing for 12 months, Adult Education is pleased to offer a new *Chai Mitzvah* program that honors and celebrates each month of the year, as well as a woman of the Bible, whose life illustrates that month's focus. The heart of all *Chai Mitzvah* programming is respectful, honest discussion that values diverse viewpoints.

You are encouraged to register for as many monthly discussions as you can make time for. Let's talk together to grow our Judaism individually. To register, call 937-435-3400, or visit:

<https://templebethor.com/adult-education>

An Exploration of the Jewish Short Story February 15th



Please join the Zoom discussion, on February 15th from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Each month's discussion will center on one short story that has Jewish content or is written by a Jewish author. We intend to have fun and learn from each other's understanding of the stories. You are encouraged to register for one session or as many monthly discussions as you would like. To register, call 937-435-3400 or visit: <https://templebethor.com/adult-education>

Friends & Family CPR/First Aid and Stop the Bleed Courses

Temple Beth Or's Adult Education Committee is offering the Friends and Family CPR/First Aid and Stop the Bleed Courses on Sunday, February 19, 2023 from 10 am – 1 pm in Café Or. The courses will be taught by Scott Henry, Washington Township's Fire Department Public Information Officer and CPR/First Aid/Stop the Bleed Instructor. There is NO CHARGE to participants for these courses. You may register for one or both courses.

Course 1 – Friends and Family CPR/First Aid: 10 am – 12 noon

The American Heart Association's Family & Friends CPR Course teaches the lifesaving skills of Adult Hands-Only CPR, Adult CPR with breaths, Child CPR, Adult and Child AED use, Infant CPR and choking relief for Adults, Children, and Infants. This course is for people who want to learn CPR & First Aid, but who DO NOT need a Certification card for their jobs. This course is ideal for teachers and students, parents, grandparents, babysitters and others, who are interested in learning how to save a life. At the course completion, participants will receive a Certificate of Attendance. The course lasts approximately two hours.

Register Online:

<https://templebethor.com/adult-education>

Course 2 – Stop the Bleed: 12 -1 pm

Stop the Bleed encourages bystanders to become trained, equipped, and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives. No matter how fast professional emergency responders arrive, bystanders will always be first on the scene. Participants will learn multiple ways to control bleeding in an emergency, including applying direct pressure, packing the wound with bleeding control gauze, and applying a tourniquet. This course lasts approximately one hour.

Each course is limited to 15 participants. The next 2023 course will be offered in August (date TBD). Light refreshments will be available at each course. Contact Karen Granby, Adult Education member for questions @ craceby@aol.com or (937) 286-6902.

February Chai-Lights

Friday, February 3, 6:30 p.m. In Person & Streaming
"Rock of Ages" *Shabbat*: Marc Rossio rocks the house as he and Rabbi Chessin lead a creative and musical *Shabbat* service.

Saturday, February 4, 10:00 a.m. In Person & Zoom
Apocryphal Study: Join Rabbi Chessin and our study group at Temple Beth Or. Bring a pot-luck breakfast item to share. We are studying the first book of Maccabees and exploring the "real" Hanukkah story

Thursday, February 9, 7:00 p.m. on Zoom
Chai Mitzvah: You are encouraged to register for as many monthly discussions as you can make time for. Let's talk together to grow our Judaism individually. Please see page 6 for details.

Friday, February 10, 6:30 p.m. In Person
Souper-Bowl *Shabbat*: Bring your best soup for all to taste. A *Kabbalat Shabbat* Service led by Rabbis Azriel and Chessin will be followed by a spirited play off for Temple Beth Or's Souper Bowl Champion. Wear your favorite NFL team jersey (or team colors) and come pick our Souper-Bowl LVII champion!

Saturday, February 11, 10:00 a.m. In Person & Streaming
Torah Live!: Join Rabbi Azriel in the sanctuary for services and *Torah* study.

Wednesday, February 15, 7:00 p.m. On Zoom
An Exploration of the Jewish Short Story: Please see page 6 for details.

Friday, February 17, 6:30 p.m. In Person & Streaming
Musical *Shabbat*: oin Rabbi Azriel and the choir under the direction of Mary 'Mahira' Rogers for a musical *Shabbat*.

Saturday, February 18, 10:00 a.m. On Zoom
Join Rabbi Chessin and our study group as we continue to explore the Book of I Maccabees

Sunday, February 19, 10:00 a.m. In Person
Friends & Family CPR/First Aid and Stop the Bleed Courses: Temple Beth Or's Adult Education Committee is offering the Friends and Family CPR/First Aid and Stop the Bleed Courses. Please see page 6 for details.

Friday, February 24, 6:30 p.m. Streaming Online
Zoomagogue: Celebrate *Shabbat* in the comfort of your own home.

Saturday, February 25, 10:00 a.m. Streaming Online
Musical *Shabbat*: Join Mary 'Mahira' Rogers and Renee Perry online for a musical walk through a *Shabbat* Morning Service.



Join us for Souper-Bowl *Shabbat*

Let's kick off Super Bowl *Shabbat* with a souper competition. Bring your best soup recipe for all to taste. A theme *Kabbalat Shabbat* Service led by Rabbis Azriel and Chessin will be followed by a spirited play off for Temple Beth Or's Souper bowl champion. Wear your favorite NFL team jersey (or team colors) and vote for our Temple Beth Or Souper Bowl LVII champion!

When: Friday, February 10, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Temple Beth Or



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Keep Calm, and Eat Lunch



Sponsorship Opportunity

It's on again -- Temple Beth Or's largest fundraiser, "Keep Calm, and Eat Lunch" Sale on March 14, 2023! We need your help. Be an Event Sponsor. Multiple levels of event sponsorship available, join us at the \$100, \$250, \$500 and \$1,000 levels. All levels include sandwiches, your name or your company's name included in marketing, etc. For more information please call Donna at 937-435-3400.

You or your company's name will be recognized, four consecutive weeks (February 17 to March 10) in weekly *Shabbat* pre-program emails as well as in-person announcements during *Shabbat* Services as a **Honorable Menschin (\$1,000) or Mile High (\$500) Sponsor.**