

Where is my light? My light is in me. Where is my hope? My hope is in me. Where is my strength? My strength is in me. And in you. - Rabbi Sherwin Wine

Rabbi Ben Biber at Or Emet March 18-20

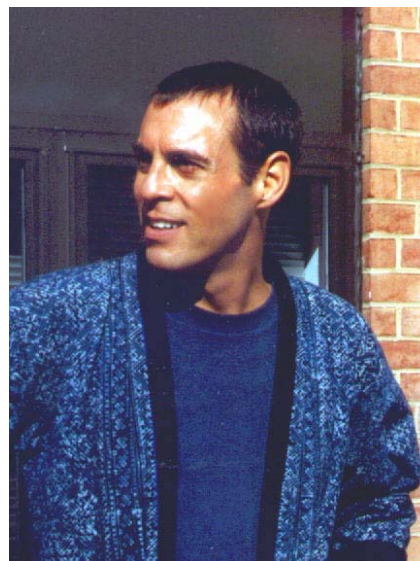
Rabbi Binyamin Biber of Machar congregation in Washington, D.C. will visit Or Emet on the week-end of March 18-20. Rabbi Ben is a native of Des Moines, a graduate of the University of Iowa, and holds an M.S.W. degree from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. His activities as an organizer and leader of Jewish and popular alliances in the causes of justice, equality and opportunity have brought him into both political and street level engagement with housing, gender, employment and health care issues. The constant in his advocacy has been the moral values component of democratic citizenship, as deriving from a secular humanistic view of life.

Rabbi Ben will lead our Shabbat service at the Sabes J.C.C. on Friday evening (7:30 pm.) and speak on "Peace between Israel and Palestine: The Approaches of Secular Humanistic Jews." Come find out how Secular Humanistic Jews are promoting progressive policy change in Israel and in the U.S. to help bring about a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on mutual recognition of legitimate rights to national self-determination and security for both peoples, on ending Israel's occupation and removing settlers, on improving the quality of life for Palestinians and Israeli Arabs, and on helping the majorities of Israelis and Palestinians to stop those on both sides who promote hatred and engage in violence. Rabbi Ben will also address the roles of U.S. Jews and U.S. foreign policy regarding this particular conflict, as well as how key Jewish and secular humanist values are put into action by the movement for Humanistic Judaism (also called "Secular" or "Cultural" Judaism) to address the root causes of inter-group hostility and violence around the world, a more equitable distribution of resources, and how to produce universal social progress through democratic pluralism, and human empowerment.

On Saturday morning (10 am.) Rabbi Ben will present "Humanistic Judaism, Humanistic Psychology, and the Quest for Spirituality and Transcendence in This World" at the Golden Valley Library (See Schedule), followed by a facilitated discussion to explore how Humanistic Jews actively incorporate into personal, family, and congregational life key concepts from Humanistic psychology related to what are widely referred to as "spirituality" and "transcendence" to promote personal growth, responsibility, and fulfillment as well as social cohesion and progress by

helping members to become empowered, by fostering in us a sense of being connected and part of larger wholes (family, congregation, community, progressive movements, the Jewish people, humanity), and by challenging us to take action and risks for the greater good.

On Saturday evening we will combine a pot-luck dinner and Havdalah service at the Department of Indian Works in St. Paul with a discussion with Rabbi Ben on Jewish social action, facilitated by Laura Melnick. Or Emet's Jewish Cultural School will host Rabbi Ben in a free-for-all Q and A session at Hillel House on Sunday morning (10 am.). Adults will have him for a discussion of multi-cultural parenting focusing on transmitting Humanistic Jewish values to children.



My Days at Or Emet, by Naomi Klaila, age 7

The last time I went to Or Emet, we were talking about harvesting fruits and vegetables. They dressed me up as a tree, and one kid put a banana on one of the strings with a leaf on it. It looked really silly on me.

Today we did our nametags. We got to decorate them with crayons or colored pencils. We had lots of fun. We even had our snack there. We made three lists: one of how many sisters and brothers we have, one of how many pets we have, and one of our favorite foods. We had another chart of what we wanted to do today. I wanted to learn new songs, and we learned lots of them. Then we made scrolls of funny names: Amos, Elijah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Zachariah, Micah, Malachi.

At the bottom we talked about what we would do to make the world a better place. I said not to use lots of gas.

Or Emet Spring 2005 Schedule

	Time	Location	Event
March			
Tuesday 1	6:30 pm.	3131 – 19 th Av. S.	Adult Education: History and Biography – Albert Einstein
Tuesday 8	6:30 pm.	3131 – 19 th Av. S	Adult Education: History and Biography – Emma Goldman
Friday 18	7:30 pm.	Sabes (Mpls.) JCC	Shabbat Service and Program with Rabbi Ben Biber of Machar SHJ Congregation: "Peace between Israel and Palestine: The Approaches of Secular Humanistic Jews"
Saturday 19	10 am.	Golden Valley Library	Rabbi Ben Biber Seminar for Members and Friends: "Humanistic Judaism, Humanistic Psychology, and the Quest for Spirituality and Transcendence in This World"
Saturday 19	6 pm.	Department of Indian Works	Pot Luck with Rabbi Ben Biber and Social Action Discussion
Sunday 20	10 am.	Hillel House	Adult Program: "Humanistic Principles and Values - How to Teach Them" by Rabbi Ben Biber
April			
Sunday 10	10 am.	Hillel House	Cultural School and Adult program: Political Asylum in the U.S. after 9/11, with Attorney Sally Silk.
Friday 15	7:30 pm.	Sabes (Mpls.) JCC	Adult Program: "Simon Wiesenthal: The Man and His Work," with Mona Fenichel
Friday 29		Department of Indian Works	Congregation Seder
May			
Sunday 8	10 am.	Hillel House	Cultural School and Adult program (t/b/a)
Thursday 12	5-7 pm.	Second Harvest Heartland	Pack Supplemental Nutritional Boxes for Low-Income Seniors and Mothers of Children Under 6 (see flyer)
Friday 20	7:30 pm.	Sabes (Mpls.) JCC	Shabbat Service and Program: "1654-2004, 350 Years of Jewish American Communities," with Linda Schloff, Jewish Historical Society of Minnesota
June			
Sunday 5	10 am.	Hillel House	Cultural School and Annual Membership Meeting
Friday 10	6 pm.	t/b/a	Or Emet Summer Picnic

Minneapolis Sabes JCC is located at 4330 Cedar Lake Rd. in St. Louis Park.

Hillel House is located at 1521 University Avenue S.E. on the University of Minnesota Campus.

Department of Indian Works is located at 1671 Summit Ave. in St. Paul.

South High School is located at 3131 – 19th Ave. S. in Minneapolis.

Golden Valley Library is located at on Winnetka Ave., 2 blocks north of Hwy. 55, next door to McDonald's.

All Or Emet Programs are free and open to the public. A humanistic service precedes Fri. nite events. Refreshments.

Or Emet Membership Committee Update

Membership and visitor issues are receiving increased emphasis and attention. *Or Emet's* informational brochure is undergoing revision and will be available soon. Our goal is to have a packet of materials available to help orient visitors to Humanistic Judaism and our congregation. For special outreach to visitors and interested persons, services will have "greeters" with follow-up to answer questions and create a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Additionally, a membership/visitor's table will highlight materials about the Humanistic branch of Judaism and *Or Emet* to further help visitors and new members become acquainted and feel at home.

Treasurer's Report

Thank you to all who have paid your dues. Sincere gratitude and appreciation to those who have given donations to Or Emet. While expenses are on budget, we are slightly behind budget in the area of total dues collected and significantly in donations. Our goal for 2005 was to raise our treasury balance to allow us to expand our programs, at this time we are not achieving that goal.

-- Steve Oremland, Treasurer

Donations

We want to encourage donations – money or in-kind. Donations are a budgeted item and for some reason we are falling short for 2004-5. Any little bit would help and it is all **tax deductible!** Generally, donations have come from the same few members. Let's broaden support! (Our policy is to publish good wishes, either in the name of the donor or anonymously, as requested.)

Remembering the Holocaust

What is more important than remembering the Holocaust for those of us old enough to have experienced World War II, or those who learned of it back in the days when schools taught meaningful courses in History, is the need to impart the memory of that terrible time to today's younger generations. Memories fade, and survivors become less numerous with the passage of years, as we look back to the terror of the Third Reich from 1933-1945, and realize that World War II ended 60 years ago.

There has been a flood of recent historical publicity – the U.N. actually passed a Holocaust Memorial resolution, survivors returned to Auschwitz to mark the 60th anniversary of its liberation on January 27th, World leaders visited to express the sentiments of their nations in a formal way (except perhaps the U.S. which sent Dick Cheney, who showed up in parka, ski cap and boots), but the problem is that fewer people read the papers, or get only snippets and sound bites. Even the January PBS six-hour Auschwitz memorial program was competing with reality shows, sports events and other insignificant trivia.

What can we do to keep the memories alive? To remember that half of Europe's Jews were wiped out in a heinous extermination, along with millions of others? It's something which has been troubling me for several

years, and so I created a course which I proposed to two MNSCU colleges - "Films of the Holocaust" - which was readily accepted by Inver Hills Community College. It commenced this semester as a three-credit Humanities course. To my great surprise and excitement, it over-subscribed almost immediately, and with a combination of meaningful films and some exciting speakers - survivors, assistance from the Center of Holocaust and Genocide at the University of Minnesota, a woman who worked with the late Simon Wiesenthal, it has become an immediate success and has already been renewed for the Spring of 2006.

Most important, the students, who are primarily non-Jewish and who come from several continents, are intense, interested, and strive to know how this horror happened - and what people of conscience can do to stop the senseless killing and genocide which continues to this day. People are generally decent, but governments lead them into reprehensible behavior. Our job is education, and stimulation of the conscience.

NEVER AGAIN!

- Alan Miller

Congratulations to Deidre Greene and Morley Friedman on the birth of daughter **Lilith Max Greene-Friedman** on November 6!

Thank you to **Kojo Amegashie** for his in-kind donation.

Southern Trees Bear a Strange Fruit

***Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
Blood at the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body hanging from the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees...***

We gathered on Jan. 29 in a beautiful chapel at the Department of Indian Works in St. Paul to honor Martin Luther King, and present the documentary film *Strange Fruit*. Benjamin Mchie, founder of the African American Registry, introduced the film saying that on April 24, 2004, an African American man was found hanged from a tree with a hood over his head in Mississippi. "Racism is still with us...The song "Strange Fruit" and this film are our legacy."

The film documents the writing of the protest song "Strange Fruit" by Abel Meeropol, a Jewish poet and activist from the Bronx, in response to the widespread lynching of African Americans in the South. It contains archival footage of lynchings, and of the singing of Billie Holliday and others who made the song famous. It features the testimony of progressive Jews who worked alongside Blacks to end discrimination, and highlights the role of protest music in the Civil Rights Movement.

Following the film, Louisa Hext of Jewish Community Action led a panel discussion featuring Ben Mchie, Mattie Little, daughter of the former head of the Minneapolis branch of the NAACP, and Lionel Davis of Congregation *Or Emet*, and a spirited discussion followed. One Black audience member recalled growing up in Minneapolis in a time when Jews and Blacks worked together to end injustice. Then, he said, Jews moved to the suburbs and for the most part, this partnership ended. He asked us to get active and rejoin Blacks in the struggle against racism.

I had seen the film on video, but I found it much more powerful when projected onto the wide screen - the images are graphic, and haunting. The film reminds us that we are living in a time when not only Blacks, but Jews, Moslems and Gays have been targets, and the denial of civil rights impacts on all of us. -- Jane Katz

JCS

Education Committee

The April meeting of the Education Committee will be April 5 at 7:00pm, place to be decided. The meeting will involve preparation for the Annual Meeting. We need your input in helping direct the future of the Jewish Cultural School. Parents, if you cannot offer to join the committee, come to this meeting anyway and add your voice to our process.

March at the JCS

Rabbi Ben Biber will visit with JCS on March 20. Rabbi Ben will meet with the adults first. After the break, students and teachers will be invited to **"Ask the Rabbi."** Questions prepared in advance would be very helpful. Parents: help your children formulate good questions, and email them to Nancy Holden ASAP, who will forward them to Rabbi Ben. We plan

to have a **mini-Purim** that on March 20 as well. Kids, come prepared to have fun!

Staffing Changes

This year we have had the services of excellent teachers, but it has been a hard year for Middle Class teacher Carla Vogel. Illness, travel, and a death in the family kept her away from many school sessions. Carla decided that the lack of continuity is not good for students, and therefore gave her resignation to the education committee. Carla can be reached at carlachai@yahoo.com if you would like to chat with her. The loss of Carla was difficult. Help arrived as Linda Crawford offered to take over this class. Middles greeted their new teacher at the Feb. session, getting off to a terrific start, and we hope everyone will soon get to know Linda well. She is a professional educator and Grandma to three of our students (Sylvia, Phoebe, and Tuli). Welcome aboard, Linda!

Israel's War for Independence and the New Historians

Israel's government opened its official archives, including much of the archives of the Israel Defence Force (IDF), to general research in the early 1980's. Until then, histories of the 1947-1948 war had been in the nature of personal reminiscences and official reports. The story of Israel's victory and the failure of the peace negotiations that followed generally was as follows: The birth of Israel was the result of pressure and persecution; that the Zionists intended no harm to the Arabs living in Palestine; that Jewish settlement alongside but not among Arabs did not necessitate displacement or conflict; that Jewish efforts at compromise were rejected; and that the Palestinians and neighboring Arab states attacked the Jewish settlement in 1947-48 for entirely selfish reasons and out of racial hatred. The Arabs, according to the old history, were far stronger politically and militarily, but nonetheless lost the war. The vast majority of Palestinian Arabs living in Jewish areas, so the story goes, left their homes and possessions, becoming refugees, because they were ordered to do so by their leaders on radio broadcasts. Finally, the old history has it that Israel desperately tried to make peace once hostilities ended, but the Arabs turned down their overtures.

This story of triumph against the odds against multiple and stronger enemies resonated perhaps strongest in the Diaspora. It was the core story for fund-raising in Israel's formative period and sustained support during the 1967 and 1973 wars. Most American Jews know no other story, which is yet being invoked in one form or another in the undeclared war with the Palestinians since the first Intifada.

Histories now based on archival research began appearing in the late 1980's. Historians Benny Morris, Tom Segev, and Simcha Flapan - calling themselves "New Historians" - wrote studies of the critical periods of the Mandate, the Independence War, and the early years of the State. Others including scholars outside of Israel have followed. These books suggest that the story has in fact been a useful national myth. They further suggest that the Independence War was similar to other late 19th Century and 20th Century wars of nationhood that were at their core ethnic conflicts - e.g., South Africa, Turkey (vs. Greece), Cyprus, and the countries of the former Yugoslavia. The new story goes something like this: The Jewish immigrant community intentionally organized itself as a separate enclave alongside native Palestinian Arabs. Advantaged by British policy and by superior organizational skill, the Jews created a vibrant industrial-based economy, administered their own Hebrew-speaking school system, and ran a social and health system that resulted in a death rate one-half that of the Arab population. Contrastingly, the British refused to allow the Arabs to administer similar Arab-only institutions. The Jews also formed an efficient military force, despite British limitations, that gained valuable experience during the Arab Revolt (1936-39) and in WWII. The Arabs, both Palestinian and in the neighboring Arab states, refused to accept a two-state solution, much less one that apportioned 49% of the land to

the Jewish 31% of the population. The Arab armies which invaded in 1948 were less numerous in their aggregate numbers than the IDF, in addition to being (with the exception of the Jordanian Arab Legion) vastly inferior to the Jewish military forces in organization and purpose. The IDF was materially disadvantaged in armaments in the three weeks between May 15, when the Arabs invaded, and the first U.N. truce beginning on June 11. The Jews were in danger of being overwhelmed in that critical do-or-die period. The IDF used the truce to acquire arms of all kinds, including tanks and aircraft, and raised the level of fighting forces from 35,000 to 65,000. From the end of the truce on July 11, the IDF fought as the clearly superior force. The Arab armies had no coordinated command, were severely handicapped by the British arms embargo and unsustainable long lines of supply, and for the most part took defensive positions after their early penetrations. That of TransJordan transparently concerned itself with annexing to itself the areas allocated to the Palestinians by the U.N. partition plan (UNSCOP), and those of Syria, Iraq and Lebanon concerned themselves with ensuring the TransJordanian army allocated to itself no more than that.

The most controversial archival discoveries concern the Palestinian Arab refugees. It is now accepted that the IDF expelled the populations of the large Arab towns of Lydda (Lod) and Ramle, located within 15 miles of Tel Aviv and next to the only civilian airport in Palestine, and that similar expulsions probably occurred during IDF offensives in the western Galilee and the Negev. No evidence exists in army intelligence archives of any radio broadcasts of "orders" for the 600,000 to 760,000 refugees to leave their homes en masse. Further IDF archives also reveal Israeli war atrocities in addition to the previously known massacre at Deir Yassin perpetrated by the Irgun on April 9. The New Historians argue that no single event or factor motivated the Arab exodus; but that a mixture of group panic and expulsion probably led to so many abandoning their homes. The archives also indicate that the Israeli government prevented refugees from returning to their homes after the end of hostilities and in some case actually re-expelled them.

Reaction to the New Historians has understandably been extreme, both in Israel and in the U.S. Jewish community. Even so, Israelis now accept that a mixture of expulsion and "voluntary" flight led to the Arabs leaving Jewish territories in the war. The "radio broadcasts" story has been relegated to myth, though it persists for some reason in the U.S.

Some of the more important books of the New Historians include: Benny Morris, "1948 and After," "Righteous Victims," "Israel's Border Wars;" Samih Farsoun and Christina Zacharia, "Palestine and Palestinians;" Avi Shlaim and Eugene Rogan, ed., "The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948;" Tom Segev, "1949," "The Seventh Million;" Simcha Flapan, "The Birth of Israel."



Humanistic Jews of Minnesota

C/O Mike Persellin
Box 22513
Robbinsdale, MN 55422

Or Emet to Participate in Humanistic Judaism Community Service Month

Wouldn't it be a kick if Humanistic Jews across North America worked together as a movement to exemplify our commitment to our ideals? As Jews we believe in making the world a better place, and as humanists we believe it is up to us -- we have the power and responsibility.

- Dr. Phillip Gould, President of SHJ

The Society for Humanistic Judaism has set May 2005 as Humanistic Judaism Community Service Month. Each SHJ congregation is encouraged to participate and to plan community service in May.

Or Emet Congregation will be helping out at **Second Harvest Heartland** on Thursday, May 12, by packing supplemental nutritional boxes for low-income seniors and mothers with children under age 6. We can bring 25 people including children; so put it on your calendars.

We have not decided whether the Second Harvest or some additional project will be our contribution to SHJ Community Service Month. We may do two! Stay posted.

Simon Wiesenthal: The Man and His Work on April 15

Mona Fenichel, who emigrated to Minneapolis last fall from Vienna, will share some of her rich experience with *Or Emet* at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, April 15 at the Minneapolis Sabes Jewish Community Center. The holder of a PHD in Jewish Studies and Theater, Mona is a woman of many talents. On this occasion, she will speak about "Simon Wiesenthal: The Man and His Work." Says Ms. Fenichel: "I worked with Simon Wiesenthal for 4 years in Vienna, and had a very personal insight into his character and motives. Wiesenthal turned 96 on December 31. He is certainly one of the leading figures in bringing about justice to the victims of the Holocaust. He gave a decisive lead to the drive to find Adolph Eichmann, and he found the man who arrested Anne Frank." A brief secular service will precede talk and an Oneg Shabbat will follow.

Or Emet Seder

Friday, April 29

6 pm.

Department of Indian Affairs

1671 Summit Ave. in St. Paul

OR EMET VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

SECOND HARVEST HEARTLAND

when: **Thursday, May 12, 2005**
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

where: **1140 Gervais Ave.,**
Maplewood

what: We'll be putting together supplemental nutrition boxes for distribution to low-income seniors and mothers with children under 6. Work will be done in assembly-line fashion, with up to 25 volunteers. Kids can come too, unless very young.

directions:

From the West	From the East
35W north to Hwy. 36 E. (toward Stillwater)	Hwy. 36 W. (toward Mpls)
Go to English St. (1st stoplight)	Get off on English St. (½ mile E. of Hwy. 61)
Turn left (north) to Gervais Ave.	Turn right (north) to Gervais Ave.
Turn left (west) on Gervais.	Turn left (west) on Gervais.
Bldg. is last bldg. on left.	Bldg. is last bldg. on left.
1140 Gervais Ave. - enter SIDE door after 4:30 p.m.	1140 Gervais Ave. - enter SIDE door after 4:30 p.m.

wear: **comfortable clothes**

questions? Call Laura Melnick, w. 651-222-5863, x 241; h. 651-646-7268