

July/August 2024  
Sivan/Tammuz/Av 5784

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## THE SCHRIER

**THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF WEST PASCO**  
**Home of Congregation Beth Tefillah**

### Take Me Out To The Ballgame

Please join us for the  
**2024 JEWISH COMMUNITY DAY WITH THE RAYS.**  
The Rays will battle the Baltimore Orioles on  
August 11, 2024. Gates open at 12:40 pm.  
Start time is 1:40 pm.

There is a giveaway for kids 14 and under.  
Kids can run the bases after the game.  
Included is a custom Jewish Community Day hat!

Lower level tickets are only \$40.00

Get your reservations and  
money to Marie in the office by 7/22/24.

We must have a minimum of 10 attendees.  
If we do not make this minimum, your  
money will be refunded to you.

Carpooling instructions will be emailed to  
all attendees well in advance of 8/11/2024.

### JULY/AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

- \* Thursday, 7/4  
Independence Day
- \* Saturday/Sunday,  
7/6-7/7 Rosh  
Chodesh
- \* Monday, 7/8 7pm  
JCC Board Meeting
- \* Tuesday, 7/23 Fast  
of 17th of Tammuz
- \* Monday, 8/5 Rosh  
Chodesh
- \* Monday, 8/12 7pm  
JCC Board Meeting
- \* Tuesday, 8/13 Tish-  
'a B'Av

**Shabbat Services**  
**CONDUCTED BY RON BECKER, PERRY WERBEL**  
**and ELLIOT SHAPIRO**  
EVERY FRIDAY EVENING AT 7:30 PM  
EVERY SATURDAY MORNING AT 9:30 AM

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** - by Eileen Hochstadt

From my go-to source, I read today in [AISH.COM](http://AISH.COM) a piece by Rabbi Noah Weinberg, the founder of AISH, G-d rest his soul.

He says that Torah is not an arcane text of the ancient world. It is the essence of Judaism, which is the essence of ourselves.

The Jewish people have a set of "written instructions for living" – the Bible, and also "oral instructions for living" – the Talmud. Jewish wisdom is incomprehensible unless both parts are working together.

The Bible has three parts, totaling 24 books:

1. **Torah** – The Five Books of Moses, revealed to the Jewish people by G-d at Mount Sinai – G-d spoke to various prophets (e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) who transmitted messages strengthening the Jewish commitment to Torah.
2. **Prophets**- G-d spoke to various prophets ( Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel) who transmitted messages strengthening the Jewish Commitment to Torah.
3. **Writings** – The Writings (e.g. Proverbs, Psalms, Esther) emphasize G-d's message in a poetic style. The Bible is the all-time bestseller and has made an enormous impact on Western civilization. Everyone should study the Bible at least once in a lifetime. "All men have an inalienable right" – straight from the Bible. "Love your neighbor" – the Bible. Isaiah's vision of peace adorns the United Nations. The biblical sanction to "proclaim freedom throughout the land" is engraved on the Liberty Bell. You don't need to accept the existence of G-d to learn these basic lessons. Whether interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, community relations, or environmental concerns – Torah is the ultimate "owner's manual. "On a deeper level, Jewish tradition says that Torah is the "blueprint for creation." Everything in life can be found in Torah... if you ask the right questions, and possess the right set of tools.

### **Intergalactic Communication**

Imagine you received a message from outer space. You might not fully understand its meaning, but you are fascinated. You will study every word and try to decode it. Torah is the word of G-d, communicated to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. If a piece of Torah doesn't seem to make sense, don't pass it off as irrelevant. Keep asking, searching, delving. Look deeper into what each piece of Torah is telling you. All the stories and commandments are really philosophical messages waiting to be revealed by the intellectually active mind. The Flood, the Tower of Babel, the splitting of the Red Sea – all contain the deepest wisdom for living. Even dates, names, numbers, events and lineage all teach us something. The message is often between the lines. And when the message seems obvious, there's more below the surface.

Let's take an example. In Genesis chapter 18, Abraham is in the middle of conversing with G-d. Then three strangers pass by and Abraham immediately runs to serve them. At this point the alert reader should question: Why would Abraham stop talking to G-d in order to help strangers? It doesn't make sense. Even an atheist would admit that talking to G-d is the ultimate experience! From here we learn a profound spiritual lesson: Even more important than talking to G-d, is to be like G-d.

### **What does it mean to "be like Him"?**

G-d created the world for our pleasure. Everything He placed here – fruit, hands, love – are manifestations of His kindness. This world is one big hospitality inn. So when you take the role of host, of serving your fellow man, you are like G-d. Abraham was wealthy and famous, yet it was not beneath him to serve strangers. He understood the lesson. Read the Bible intelligently. It is the guiding force of Jewish achievement, as fresh today as it was 3,500 years ago. Don't discount its value without first making an effort to study it. Respect the Bible. It is a hidden treasure, a special message from G-d.

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## A Message From Ron Becker

Dear friends, it's hard to believe that summer is once again upon us as time seems to fly by more quickly every year. Looking back, it has been a year of much activity and growing connections with the interfaith communities in our region and service to those who need us. We have some wonderful new member families and as we reflected in our Yizkor memorial service on Shavuot, we have lost old friends such as Rabbi Al and Sandy Goldberg and Sid Gordon. We were horrified by the events of October 7th and remain concerned for all who are suffering in its aftermath and for the rising anti-Semitism that we are witnessing in many parts of the world including here in the US. But we are heartened by the support we have been receiving in our region through the Nature Coast Interfaith Coalition, Lifeline University, and through the good wishes and actions of our brethren of all faiths. What a joy it was to host the Bahai new year celebration this year and how moving an experience to have the Yom HaShoah proclamation read by New Port Richey's mayor. I am also privileged to speak to comparative religion classes at Pasco Hernando College to convey our Jewish heritage and dispel any misconceptions that the students have acquired from social media and other questionable sources. And what a satisfying experience to participate in the work of Metropolitan Ministries along side others from many faith traditions sharing this important mitzvot of alleviating hunger and homelessness in our community.

So now we enter the summer months sometimes referred to as the "dog days" for the continuous hot and humid weather. We can use these months to relax and recharge our batteries for the coming fall High Holy Day season, for the new school year, and all the new activities, adventures, and challenges that await us. If we are fortunate as Chris and I are, we might get away for an annual summer vacation. In July, we will once again travel to the pine forest near the ocean in Delaware to enjoy the company of our families and those of the college classmates that will be joining us. Remarkably, this will be the 54th consecutive year that we have met there!

However, summer does not mean abandoning our synagogue, congregation, and community. We continue to have Shabbat services in-person and virtually on Zoom every Friday evening and Saturday morning. In July and August, we will be reading from the Books of Bamidbar and Devorim (Deuteronomy) and continuing our prayer and study without skipping a beat! We will also continue our monthly volunteering at Metropolitan Ministries and encourage more to join us in prayer, study, and community service. On Tuesday, August 13th at 9:30 am, we will gather at the synagogue to read the Prophet Jeremiah's Book of Lamentations in observance of Tisha B'Av where we remember what has befallen us and how we can use memory to help build a better world in our time.

Then as quickly as it came upon us, the summer will be over and we will be planning our High Holy Days and fall activities. Chris and I wish you all a happy and safe summer season and hope to see you often throughout these "dog day" months!

Ron Becker, Spiritual Leader

## DATES TO REMEMBER

<p>7/1 Bingo 11 am                  7/4 Independence Day                  7/5 Religious Services 7:30 pm                  7/6 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm                  7/7 Bingo 1:30 pm                  7/8 Bingo 11 am                  7/8 JCC Board Meeting 7 pm                  7/12 Religious Services 7:30 pm                  7/13 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm                  7/14 Bingo 1:30 pm                  7/15 Bingo 11 am                  7/19 Religious Services 7:30 pm                  7/20 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm                  7/21 Bingo 1:30 pm                  7/22 Bingo 11 am                  7/23 Fast of the 17th of Tammuz                  7/26 Religious Services 7:30 pm                  7/27 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm                  7/28 Bingo 1:30 pm                  7/29 Bingo 11 am                  8/2 Religious Services 7:30 pm</p>	<p>8/3 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm                  8/4 Bingo 1:30 pm                  8/5 Bingo 11 am                  8/9 Religious Services 7:30 pm                  8/10 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm                  8/11 Bingo 1:30 pm                  8/11 Rays vs Orioles baseball game                  8/12 JCC Board Meeting 7 pm                  8/12 Bingo 11 am                  8/13 Tish'a B'Av Services 9:30 am                  8/16 Religious Services 7:30 pm                  8/17 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm                  8/18 Bingo 1:30 pm                  8/19 Bingo 11 am                  8/23 Religious Services 7:30 pm                  8/24 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm                  8/25 Bingo 1:30 pm                  8/26 Bingo 11 am                  8/30 Religious Services 7:30 pm                  8/31 Religious Services 9:30 am                  Bingo 5 pm</p>	
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## Candle Lighting Times



<b>July 5</b>	<b>8:14 pm</b>
<b>July 12</b>	<b>8:12 pm</b>
<b>July 19</b>	<b>8:10 pm</b>
<b>July 26</b>	<b>8:06 pm</b>
<b>August 2</b>	<b>8:02 pm</b>
<b>August 9</b>	<b>7:56 pm</b>
<b>August 16</b>	<b>7:50 pm</b>
<b>August 23</b>	<b>7:43 pm</b>
<b>August 30</b>	<b>7:35 pm</b>

## Yom HaShoah

Below are the remarks made by Ron Becker at the City of New Port Richey's Yom HaShoah proclamation ceremony.

Today, we remember the horrific tragedy and profound intergenerational loss experienced in the Holocaust and its aftermath. It is a testament to how we can recover from such a disaster that the City of New Port Richey is issuing this proclamation this day not only to remember what happened not so long ago, but to ensure that love and respect will conquer evil so prevalent in today's world.

We in the Jewish community are well aware that we must strive to protect the gains we have made during better times in our history while we try to repair the world and make those gains available to all. Even though we entered the Promised Land immediately after Moses's death, we were exiled from that land by foreign conquerors and have endured over 2,000 years of subjugation and anti-Semitism culminating in the Holocaust of which my own father was a survivor. Thus, it is not enough to gain freedom initially, but we must hold on to that freedom not only for ourselves but for all on earth.

We appreciate the opportunities and ideals embedded in our American society. However, we are living in a period where the discourse in our nation has descended into one that gives a platform for those who would divide us: citizen against immigrant, straight against gay, white against color, nationalism against globalism, religious beliefs pitted against each other and so forth. Wars, poverty, and climatic devastation abound throughout the globe. We can't solve all of these tragedies on a global scale, but we can and will continue to set an example of tolerance, friendship, and sharing our cultural and religious heritages. It is incredible how our similarities far outweigh our differences and just by talking to one another and lending a listening ear, we take the first steps. On this Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) we must recommit ourselves to standing up to injustices whenever and wherever we see them and to practice the Hebrew concept of Tikkun Olam, the repair of the world so that generations of all faiths and nationalities can reach their own promised land. We must agree to disagree and fight the ideologies of bigotry and injustice rather than attacking those who hold differing views. All people on this earth deserve peace, love, safety, and respect. For the sake of all those who suffered and perished during the Holocaust and other holocausts as we speak, let their memories be an inspiration for all that we do during our own brief times on this good earth. Again, thanks to the City of New Port Richey for recognizing this important day.

You can see the official, framed Yom HaShoah Proclamation at the JCC

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued from page 2

### The Original

If you want to understand the Bible, you need to learn Hebrew. There's no way to get the full meaning in translation. For example, the Torah uses 10 different names for G-d. Each "name" refers to an aspect of G-d's essence: all-knowing, all-powerful, prime mover, merciful, etc. But in English, these names are all translated the same, and much of the depth is lost. Worse yet, biblical translation promotes misconceptions. For example, you'll read a translation and come across the word "sin." Uh-oh. Sin, evil, punishment. But the Hebrew word *Chet* does not mean sin at all. *Chet* appears in the Bible in reference to an arrow which missed the target. There is nothing inherently "bad" about the arrow (or the archer). Rather, a mistake was made – due to a lack of focus, concentration or skill. From here we learn that human beings are essentially good. Nobody wants to sin. We may occasionally make a mistake, lose focus, and miss the target. But in essence we want to do good. This is a great lesson in self-esteem. Simply adjust your aim and try again! In translation, the message is lost. In fact, entire religions have arose based on mistranslations. So get it straight. Learn Hebrew.

### Preconceived Notions

I once came across a magazine profiling a group of hippies who spent the day reading the biblical "Song of Songs." "Song of Songs" is written in the form of a poem, a love song between a man and a woman, symbolizing the relationship between the Almighty and humanity. The message is so deep and beautiful that the Jewish people call this book the "holy of holies." "On the commune, they had an experience where the men recited the man's lines, and the women recited the woman's lines. The magazine reports that they read through "Song of Songs" and had a fantastic experience. Afterward, the women proclaimed that they finally found a portion of the Bible written by a woman, because no man could ever understand a woman's feelings so deeply and state them so powerfully.

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“...And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying: It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.”

## PASSOVER 5784



Photos by:

**Barbara D. Johnson  
and  
Danielle Merkel**

Many people spent *many, many* hours so that we could enjoy our first community Seder in five years. They organized, shopped, decorated, set-up, cooked, served, cleaned up and sweated all of the details. Our heartfelt thanks to (in no particular order):

Wendy Seldin, Laura Bernas, Eileen Hochstadt, Barbara D. Johnson, Danielle Merkel, Marie Abrams, Natalie Cohen, Jerry Landsberg, Jeff Hochstadt, Rachel Shea, Megan and Adam Hochstadt, Arlene and Chuck Corby, Andy Alvarez, Lulu Montez, Chris and Aaron and Devin. And last, but certainly not least, thank you to Ron Becker who led us in prayer recalling this momentous chapter in our people's history.

Thank you to one and all!



In other words, they concluded that only a hermaphrodite could have edited the Bible. But G-d? No, that's inconceivable. Unfortunately, Bible critics usually come from a preconceived position, and when the Bible doesn't fit those parameters, they are forced to make far-fetched conclusions. They don't seriously consider the idea of Torah's divine authorship, of "national revelation." Yet it is an unbroken Jewish tradition that 3 million men, women and children stood at Mount Sinai and heard the Torah directly from G-d. And in the 3,300 years since, no other religion has ever made such a claim – because it is impossible to fabricate.

### **Nature & Miracles**

Some critics have trouble accepting the idea of divine intervention. For them, all the biblical phenomenon need to be explained in terms of nature. A book called "World in Collision," for example, explains the splitting of the Red Sea like this: A tremendous comet approached earth at the time the Egyptians were chasing the Jews. At that precise moment, the comet was in position to tear the Red Sea apart by the force of gravity, leaving dry land between two walls of the sea. The Jews entered the sea, and sure enough, the Egyptians followed. Luckily, the Jews came out the other side just as the comet passed, and the water returned, drowning the Egyptians. Simple, right? You don't need G-d. How does this book explain the manna bread that the Jews collected every morning for 40 years in the desert? After the comet passed, particles of petroleum remained in the higher atmosphere. It eventually burned off and mixed with the dew. The falling dew combined with a particular micro-bacteria that digests petroleum products and converts it into protein. Thus explains how every morning, for 40 years, a nation of Jews picked up manna bread – "dew containing predigested protein." On Fridays, there was a double portion, but he doesn't explain that... These explanations are missing the point. Torah isn't a history book, a physics book or a storybook. Rather, it is *Torit Chaim* – literally "instructions for living." Every word, every phrase contains a message how to maximize pleasure in life. Look for the deeper message – the wisdom within – and you will reap immense rewards.

### **The Time Is Now**

The first sentence a Jewish child is taught is "*Torah tzav lane Moshe, Morace kehilat Yaakov*" – "*Torah was commanded to us through Moses and is the inheritance of every Jew.*" Torah was meant for everybody. It is not the exclusive domain of some priestly class. Rather, it is a living, breathing document – the lifeblood of our Jewish nation. We are required at all times to involve ourselves in its study and practice. As it says, "*You shall think about it day and night*" (Joshua 1:8). Your academic education may have ended, and there may come a point where you are as good a "professional" as you need to be. But learning Torah starts at a young age and continues for a lifetime. As you mature and your awareness of reality increases, so will your understanding of concepts you thought you once knew well. Every Jew is supposed to review the weekly Torah portion three times, and then hear it again in the synagogue on Shabbat. We review, ask questions, discuss the topics. "What did you see, what was difficult, what didn't you understand?" "After learning a piece of Torah, organize it so it's at your fingertips. For example, the Five Books of Moses are organized into 54 weekly portions and 674 chapters. After learning one chapter, pause and assign a code word or phrase to the chapter. You'll have a handy device to recall the wisdom it contains. Some people use the excuse, "I'm too old to begin learning." But the Talmudic scholar Rebbe Akiva didn't even learn the Aleph-Bet until he was age 40. This is the same Rebbe Akiva who became the greatest sage of his generation with 24,000 students! Some people are hesitant to learn Torah because they can't imagine ever becoming a scholar, so therefore "why even get started?" This is faulty thinking. Every drop of Torah study is precious and eternal.

### **Tree of Life**

There are two ways to acquire wisdom: through life experience, or through learning Torah. Judaism says it's better to get wisdom through Torah. Why? Because even though you can learn from experience, there's a negative residual effect. True, a woman who goes through a series of failed relationships will eventually learn what's important in a husband. But if she'd first studied wisdom, she'd have saved a lot of needless headache. We learn this lesson from the Garden of Eden. Here is a story that sounds like a real fairytale: two trees in the middle of the garden, and G-d instructs Adam that the Tree of Life (symbolizing the attainment of wisdom through Torah) is made to be eaten, whereas the Tree of Knowledge (symbolizing wisdom through experience) is better avoided. Adam's mistake? He eats from the Tree of Knowledge. We don't have the patience to get to know ourselves and we want to learn from experience. Many people say: "After I make money, when my business is self-sustaining, then I'll take time out to learn Torah. But I need to experience life a little first. "Three divorces later...Do not say: "When I have free time, I will study," for perhaps you will never have time. Realistically, once you're promoted to VP of the firm, do you expect to have more free time, or less free time?

The Torah is a "tree of life" for those who grasp it. When we study Torah, we are not studying an abstract and arcane text of the ancient world. We are in fact discovering the essence of ourselves.

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### Why is "Written Instructions" a Way to Wisdom?

- Read the Bible from beginning to end. If you haven't yet learned Hebrew, buy an authentic Jewish translation. (Recommended: Art Scroll's "Stone Chumash")
  - Learn Torah. Discover G-d's instructions for living. Don't wait until your life is almost over.
  - Understand Torah. It's the book that changed the world. Ask questions until you know the message in detail.
  - Correlate any differences and resolve them. There are no "unintentional" discrepancies in Torah. Look in the book and you will find it.
  - Organize it. Wisdom is only useful when it's at your fingertips. Torah should be your encyclopedia, almanac and index to living.
  - Review Torah, in order to remember. You wouldn't head out on the open road without a map. When going through life, don't leave the Torah behind.
  - Integrate Torah. Make the ideas part of your reality. Rebbe Akiva said that a Jew without Torah is like a fish without water.
  - Update it. Renew Torah wisdom as your life situation changes. Don't "honor your parents" at age 25 the same way you did at age five.
- Upgrade it. The first paragraph of the "Shema" contains 48 words, corresponding to the 48 Ways. Torah wisdom is infinitely vast. Always delve one level deeper.

Respectfully submitted by Eileen M Hochstadt

Is an argument between two vegetarians still called a 'beef'?

Information about the High Holy Day services will be available in the next issue of *The Schrier*.

Please visit the JCC's web page at:

**[jccwestpasco.com](http://jccwestpasco.com)**

(our easy-to-remember site!)

Find us on Facebook, too  
(and don't forget to 'like us').

Visit Our  
Website




# JULY 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 BINGO 11 am	2	3	4  Independence Day	5 88 8:14 pm Religious Services 7:30 pm	6 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Korah</i> Rosh Chodesh 1 Bingo 5 pm
7 Show Me the \$\$\$ Bingo 1:30 pm  Rosh Chodesh 2	8 BINGO 11 am JCC Board Meeting 7 pm	9	10	11 	12 88 8:12 pm Religious Services 7:30 pm	13 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Hukkat</i>  Bingo 5 pm
14 Show Me the \$\$\$ Bingo 1:30 pm	15 BINGO 11 am	16	17	18	19 88 8:10 pm Religious Services 7:30 pm	20 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Balak</i>  Bingo 5 pm
21 Show Me the \$\$\$ Bingo 1:30 pm	22 BINGO 11 am	23  Fast of the 17th of Tammuz	24	25	26 88 8:06 pm Religious Services 7:30 pm	27 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Pi-nehas</i>  Bingo 5 pm
28 Show Me the \$\$\$ Bingo 1:30 pm	29 BINGO 11 am	30	31			



# AUGUST 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 	2 88 Religious Services 7:30 pm 	3 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Mattot + Mas'ey</i> Bingo 5 pm
4 Show Me the \$\$\$ Bingo 1:30 pm	5 BINGO 11 am  Rosh Chodesh	6	7	8	9 88 Religious Services 7:30 pm	10 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Devarim</i>  Bingo 5 pm
11 Show Me the \$\$\$ Bingo 1:30 pm	12 BINGO 11 am JCC Board Meeting 7 pm Fast of the 9th of Av	13 Tish'a B'Av Services 9:30 am	14	15	16 88 Religious Services 7:30 pm	17 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Va'et hannan</i> Bingo 5 pm
18 Show Me the \$\$\$ Bingo 1:30 pm	19 BINGO 11 am	20	21	22	23 88 Religious Services 7:30 pm	24 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Ekev</i> Bingo 5 pm
25 Show Me the \$\$\$ Bingo 1:30 pm	26 BINGO 11 am	27	28	29	30 88 Religious Services 7:30 pm	31 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Re'eh</i> Bingo 5 pm