

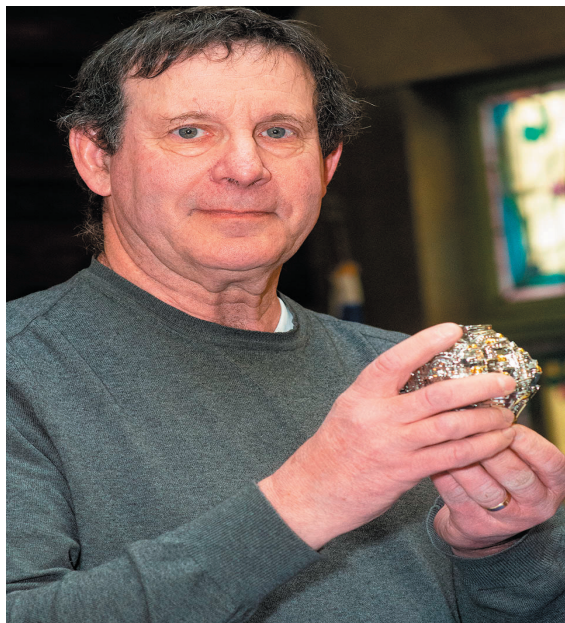


CAS Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah Class comes to an End

The adult Bar Mitzvah / Bat Mitzvah date is here. The class has been working ceaselessly, preparing for this day. Some joined the class because they missed their Bar Mitzvahs in the past, others to strengthen their connection with Judaism, and still others wanted to acquire a deeper understanding of the liturgy and Shabbat services. Whatever the reason, the classes are over now, and the day we've all anticipated has arrived. This day may come and go; but this experience will remain with me, for the rest of my life. Just as the close ties the class has developed will remain strong over the many years yet to come. I would like to thank Joan Podnos for pursuing this class project and Congregation Ahavas Sholom president, Eric Freedman, for seeing it to fruition; but mostly we (the entire Bar



Mitzvah/ Bat Mitzvah class of 2019) thank Rabbi Simon Rosenbach for dedicating so much time and effort to helping us achieve our dreams. The class may have come to an end; but our search for understanding continues unabated. The class presented the Rabbi with a token of our appreciation last week; but that's all it was, a token, because what he gave us can't be repaid. It can only be appreciated, shared, and passed on. ★



Simon Says

Weekly insights from Rabbi Simon Rosebach



Rabbi Simon Rosenbach



We are starting the Book of Vayikra this week, and the beginning of this Book of the Torah is the most appropriate reading for the adult Bat and Bar Mitzvah this coming week. This Parashah, Vayikra, is all about the sacrifices that the Israelites were commanded to offer. There was the olah, which was the offering of an animal (bull, or a sheep, or a goat, or a turtledove or a pigeon) which was wholly (other than the hide) consumed by the fire; none of it was eaten. There was the minchah, which was a meal offering partially burned and partially eaten. There was sh'lammim, the sacrifice of well-being, which was an animal that was partially burned, and partially eaten. There was the Chatat, the so-called sin offering, which was an animal that was partially burned and partially eaten. And there was the Asham, the sin-offering, which was an animal partially burned and partially eaten.


The Torah describes the sacrifices in great detail: what part of the animal that would be burned, and what part would be eaten. The place of the sacrifice was specified (outside of the Tent of the Mishkan). The rituals were specified: where the priests put the blood, or what foods were prohibited, and the insistence on frankincense (which must have been extremely expensive) and pure oil. The use of blood is most interesting, because the Israelites were commanded not to eat blood in any form (that's why Kosher meat tastes drier than non-Kosher meat), but blood was sprinkled before the curtain that separated the holiest place in the Mishkan from the less-holy places, blood was put on the horns of the altar, and blood was put on the High Priest's right earlobe and his right, big toe. But this is not the time and the place to discuss the use of the blood, interesting as the use of blood is. I said at the top of the page that Vayikra was the most appropriate Parashah for the adult Bat and Bar Mitzvah class, and I want to discuss why.

The English word "sacrifice" derives from the Latin word meaning "sacred," but it has attained the meaning of "giving up something valuable" toward a greater goal. The greater goal could be appeasing the pagan gods centuries ago: when human sacrifice was done, one human life (or ten human lives, for that matter) was a small price to pay to insure the safety and well-being of hundreds or thousands of citizens of the village, or town, or city. One human life (or ten human lives, for that matter) was a small price to pay so that earthquakes wouldn't destroy a city, or a volcano wouldn't destroy a city, or a hurricane wouldn't

destroy a city. So we appeased the gods (sacred offering) to achieve a greater goal.


When we outgrew human sacrifice and substituted animals, the idea was that the gods appreciated how much the animal meant to its owner. If you offered, for example, a cat, or a dog, the god would know that you were a cheap, and the god would not honor your offering. Only if you sacrificed, meaning only if your offering hurt in you in your pocketbook, the god would appreciate your offering and heed your request.

Something of that thinking is involved in the Israelite sacrifices: the pain of economic loss equals sincerity. Not everybody could afford livestock, that is why some of the offerings were satisfied by grain, fruit, or a bird. But, the generic Hebrew word for offerings was “korban,” which is derived from the Hebrew word for “near.” The essence of the Israelite sacrifice was not the value of the thing offered and it was not the concept of appeasing God so that the earthquake, volcano, or the hurricane would not happen. The essence of the Israelite sacrifice was to be nearer to God. You offered an animal, or meal, or fruits, and that act brought you nearer to God.

On Shabbat, the eight participants in the adult Bat and Bar Mitzvah class each in his or her own way will have better appreciation of Judaism on the whole. They will have a better appreciation of the liturgy. They will have a better appreciation of the meaning of the service; what we are hoping to achieve in this sanctuary on Shabbat and the holidays. They will, each in his or her own way, get nearer to God. And I thank them, because by sharing their simchah, they bring us to closer to God as well. 

Women's History Month

March is Women's History Month. The Torah is dominated by strong men; but the women have always held their own. We acknowledge them three times a day when reciting the Amidah blessing, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah. On Purim, we recall the story of Ester, and on Shavuot we read the book of Ruth.

Jewish women have always held a special position; not only in the Torah; but in life as well. Throughout the month, we will remember the lives and accomplishments of several 20th century Jewish women. First I must apologize for not being ahead of this topic; but, the newsletter itself is just getting back on its feet. This week I we will start by looking at a couple of female Jewish intellectuals Susan Sontag and Hedy Lamarr. If you have someone you would like to see featured send me an email at leadtracphotography@gmail.com 

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”
Anne Frank

Susan Sontag: a Woman of Thoughts, a Woman of Words



Susan Sontag

Susan Sontag was an American intellectual. Best known for her essays, she was also a novelist, film maker, and political activist. Susan, the older of two girls, was born in New York City to Jack Rosenblatt, a fur trader, and his wife, Nee Jacobson on January 16, 1933. Since her parents spent a great deal of time traveling on business, Susan and her sister spent most of their time with an assortment of relatives. Her father died in China, when she was just five years old; it took nearly a year for her mother to tell her the truth about his passing. In 1945 Susan Rosenblatt became Susan Sontag when her mother married U.S. Air force captain Nathan (Nat) Sontag. Though he did not officially adopt them, they took his last

name. Her step-father once warned that she shouldn't read so much, "You don't want to be too smart, you'll never get married," he said. Susan thought his concerns humorous because, in her words, "it never occurred to me that I would want to marry someone who didn't like someone who read a lot," yet in future years he would take great pride in her writing success. Ironically, Sontag never visited a real bookstore until her parents relocated to California, in 1946. At 15, Sontag would graduate North Hollywood High

School. She enrolled at University of California, Berkeley; but, later transferred to the University of Chicago. In 1950, after a whirlwind, ten-day courtship, Sontag married Philip Rieff a University of Chicago professor; she was only 17 at the time. She gave birth to her only son, David Rieff, in 1952. She would go on to earn a B.A. at the University of Chicago and pursue graduate courses at Harvard, where she earned a master's degree in philosophy. Awarded an American Association of University Women's fellowship in 1957, Susan left her five year old son in the care of her in-laws and took off for Oxford. Not particularly happy, she transferred to the University of Paris where she really started to flourish. She was no longer just an intellectual; she had grown into a modern, cosmopolitan women and independent thinker. After a year abroad, Susan, having no intention of returning to what she had come to see as a stifling marriage, asked her husband for a divorce.

By 1959, Sontag was living the life she envisioned as a child; she was living in Paris, writing for the magazine, *Commentary*, and had temporary custody of her son. Her work began to garner recognition with her essay *Notes on Camp* (1964) followed by *Against Interpretation* (1966) and *Styles of radical Will* (1969.) By the mid-sixties Susan Sontag was not only a literary star; but a social icon. Later works including, *On Photography* (1977) and *Illness as a Metaphor* (1978) and *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003) cemented her position among the top echelon of 20th century literary non-fiction writers. Sontag would even use her own battles with cancer as inspiration for her work. In addition to her essays, she wrote several stage plays, a screenplay, and multiple novels; including *In America*, for which she won a national book award for fiction. Having survived one bout with cancer she would succumb to leukemia in December 2004. ★

Hedy Lamarr:the Power of Wonder



Hedy Lamarr

At first glance it might seem strange or perhaps inappropriate that I would include Hedy Lamarr in an article on female Jewish intellectuals. Hedy Lamarr, who might have been one of the most beautiful women to ever grace the silver screen; but... an intellectual?

Most people who know anything about classic Hollywood, knows Hedy Lamarr was a beautiful woman and an actress who starred in many wonderful films during her career; but, how many know she was also a scientist and inventor? Though her Hollywood career is noteworthy, it is her intelligence, curiosity and creativity that

warrant her being on this list. From the time of her early childhood, Hedy Lamarr loved to tinker and make things. Born, Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler, on November 9, 1914, in Vienna Austria/Hungry (now Austria) to Emil Kiesler, a banker and Gertrud Lichwitz; Hedy led a loving insulated life. Her parents were educated, cultured, secular Jews. She attended private school and was interested in how things worked early in life. In an interview conducted later in her life, Lamarr said, “inventions are easy for me.”

Fortunately, she had a supportive father who doted on her; answered her many questions and explained how machines worked. She was also bitten by the acting bug early in life. Despite her intelligence and potential, Lamarr dropped out of school at 16 to pursue a career in cinema. She was featured in several forgettable films, and then, in 1933, she starred in *Ecstasy*, as Hedy Kiesler. The film was a sensation, mainly because she appeared nude; it also made her a star in the Venetian cinema circle.

Shortly thereafter, she married Fritz Mandl, an Austrofascist manufacturer of munitions, who, despite being married to a Jew, did business with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Her husband attempted to purchase all of the available copies of *Ecstasy*; but, to no avail. Masndl, an arrogant and obsessive man made Hedy's life miserable. Always jealous of his wife, Mandl kept her under constant observation. One night, she escaped, disguised as the maid and fled for London. There she met Louis B. Mayer who offered her a movie contract with MGM Studios. She declined; but, met Mayer again on the ship back to America and came to terms with him. While she made films throughout the 30's and 40's she never stopped being curious, questioning, or inventing. She spent many an evening working in her home workshop. With the advent of World War Two, Germany was marching through Europe and German U boats were decimating the English fleet. The Germans were able to jam the radio frequency of the English torpedoes, making them ineffective or at least, unreliable. Hedy, with the help of musician, George Antheil created a process of frequency hopping, or direct spread spectrum, that would nullify the German's ability to jam radio frequencies, by running them through multiple channels. Lamarr and Antheil patented the process in 1941 and offered it to the U.S. Navy. The Navy rejected the process, telling Lamarr (after all beauty and brains are mutually exclusive) if she wanted to support the war effort she should sell bonds. Hedy Lamarr, though not yet an American citizen did just that; loving her adopted country, she criss-crossed America, eventually selling more than 25 million in bonds, she also spent a great deal of time entertaining the troops. The following year the government labeled her process the property of an enemy alien and seized it, without paying her a dime. To put her process into perspective think Wi-Fi and cell phones, decades before either of these technologies were even dreamed of. Wi-Fi, cell phones, and Bluetooth technology, all use some form of Lamarr's innovation. ☆

Kiddush Sponsorship

Last week Kiddush was sponsored by April Modlinger. This week's Kiddush will be sponsored by the entire Bat/Bar Mitzvah class of 2019. The cost of sponsoring Kiddush is \$150, which barely covers the cost of the lunch. Our goal is to have every Kiddush sponsored. To sponsor a Kiddush, email Rabbi Rosenbach or contact Alla Eicheldinger at Alla7815@yahoo.com. You can also help us by shopping, which doesn't cost any money, just a little time. We'll give you a list of items, you shop and we'll reimburse you. ☆



Shabbat Services

Join us this Saturday for Shabbat services. Strangers, visitors, friends, old and new; our doors are open to you. Looking for a new home? New members are always welcome at Congregation Ahavas Sholom. Services start at 9:00AM. Our congregation is open and welcoming, so feel free to pay us a visit. ☆

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