



THE SHOFAR
שׁוֹפָר

United Synagogue of Hoboken

NISSAN – IYAR – SIVAN – TAMMUZ 5780

April, May, June 2020

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 2020

July 8 Prayer's You Thought You Knew
July 15 Prayer's You Thought You Knew
July 21 Women's Torah Study Group
July 29-30 Tisha B'Av

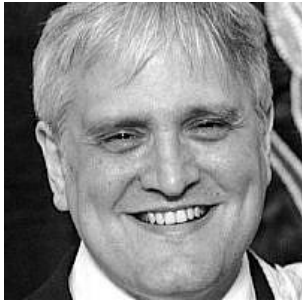
August 2020

Aug 14 Women's Torah Study Group

Shabbat services are now being livestreamed at

www.hobokensynagogue.org, Zoom and/or Facebook Live. Please see inside for the entire schedule.

See www.hobokensynagogue.org and the **USH Facebook page** for more info on these and other upcoming events!



STUMBLING BLOCKS

Rabbi Rob Scheinberg

My family and I have had a long-time Shabbat afternoon ritual: reading the Ethicist column in the New York Times Magazine, in which people pose their ethical quandaries to the columnist (now NYU Professor Kwame Anthony Appiah, but we have been doing this for at least the last four columnists for this column). We read the questions and discuss them, then we read the answers and decide whether or not we agree. (By the way, we are big fans of Professor Appiah.)

Contemplating ethical dilemmas doesn't necessarily make someone more ethical. But I do believe that the more someone wrestles with hard ethical issues, the better one gets at the kind of ethical analysis at which one weighs between two competing values.

(Almost) everyone knows the difference between right and wrong. But ethical dilemmas are not usually about determining the difference between right and wrong, but weighing between right and right - trying to solve a problem in which all the sides have some appropriate argument to make in their favor.

Our current moment includes such a dilemma: When and how should businesses and schools and institutions reopen? What should be opened, what should stay closed, what safety procedures should be imposed? These are wrenching decisions - or they're wrenching decisions to those who are considering these questions thoughtfully. (If you think these are easy questions, I fear you are oversimplifying.)

On the one side, we know that the virus isn't magically going away, we don't have adequate treatments, we don't have adequate testing, and there's a well founded concern that the infections and the deaths are going to bounce right back up in the absence of the kind of social distancing that is currently taking place (as of early May).

And on the other side: it's not like the status quo does not have dangers of its own, and even a death toll of its own. The effects of long term lockdown are unknown, but we know they are not good for individual physical and mental health, and they are disastrous for the economic well-being of so many, and especially those who were already in the most challenged part of the socioeconomic spectrum.

We'd like to do what we can to avoid a forced choice between these two values. Hopefully there's a way to open up in a way that is gradual and safe. But truly, no one knows if there is.

The Torah portion of Kedoshim (Leviticus 19-20), which was read at the end of April, includes some of the classic foundational statements of Jewish ethics. For example, "Love your neighbor as yourself," which indicates that the behavior that we appreciate when it is shown to us should be the basis for the behavior that we show to others. This verse has tremendous relevance when we think about the level of consideration we would like to be shown to us to help us to be and remain healthy. This should, of course, be the same kind of consideration we show to others -- manifest, for example, in our decisions about wearing masks, or how conscientious we are about social distancing, both of which are less effective as means of reducing our own risk, but more effective as means of reducing the risk of others with whom we come in contact.

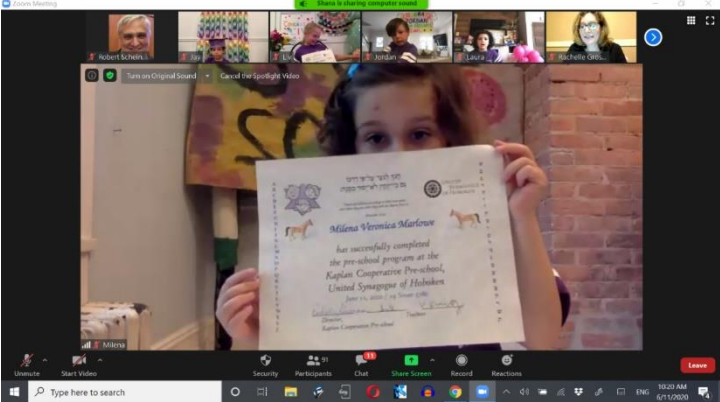
(Continued on page 2)

Also in Leviticus Chapter 19, we read another verse of significant relevance to the current moment: “Don’t curse deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind.” Our sages have noted the almost absurd cruelty that this verse references; there are, indeed, very few people in the world who would actually, literally, put a stumbling block before the blind. For this reason, the verse is primarily understood figuratively: Don’t take advantage of someone. Don’t put someone in a position where they are likely to stumble because of their own weaknesses of which they are not conscious. In the Talmud, for example, this verse is interpreted to mean that one should not offer to sell or buy something when the other person is at a clear disadvantage. Or: if you meet a Nazirite (someone who has, among other things, taken a vow not to drink wine), don’t offer them some wine. Obviously, it’s the Nazirite’s own decision whether or not to drink - but if the Nazirite drinks wine that you have offered, you would be guilty of placing a stumbling-block before the blind.

I’m thinking of this principle with regard to religious gatherings, including for times of sadness such as funerals. My sense is that there are some kinds of gatherings that simply cannot happen with appropriate social distancing, and to offer the opportunity for such gatherings, with the hope that appropriate social distancing would be maintained, would be putting a stumbling block before the blind (and a sad kind of wishful thinking). Similarly, leaving sensible safety procedures like mask-wearing up to the individual, with the hope that individuals will make sensible choices, may also come close to a violation of the prohibition of putting a stumbling block before the blind.

There are some ethical systems that focus more on liberties and freedoms than on responsibilities and obligations; some ethical systems assert that people have the freedom to make their own decisions and they should appropriately suffer the consequences of their own mistakes. My understanding of Jewish ethics is different from this: the community actually has a responsibility to do what it can to keep people from stumbling. Each of us as individuals has responsibilities not only to protect ourselves, but also to build a safe society. And each of us has a fate connected to the fate of every other person, each one created in the image of God and a mirror image of ourselves. ☆

USH PRESCHOOL GRADUATION





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Chesed (caring) Committee

Would you like to support and grow your community? Would you like to be a part of a force that mobilizes into action when a member of our community has a great need? If yes, consider being a volunteer for the Chesed Committee!

Whether your schedule is predictable or unpredictable, the Chesed committee has a place for any USH member who is willing to be called upon when life happens. We need people who can, for example: assist with shiva arrangements, visit the sick, drive or prepare meals for those who are dealing with stressful circumstances, or offer respite to a family with a challenging situation.

If you would like to contribute in any of these situations, or would like to discuss ways in which we can extend our outreach, please contact Elisabeth at chesedcommitteeush@gmail.com.

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USH RESPONDS TO COVID-19: Volunteer opportunities

Please see <https://conta.cc/2IK9oEE> and <https://conta.cc/33s90o1> for previous updates that have been sent to the community.

Response Team: We are grateful for the more than 40 volunteers who have been calling our members and offering errands and other assistance.

We could use your help in one of our 3 subcommittees: (a) Phone contact with all people in the synagogue community; (b) Sharing expertise / being willing to be consulted by someone with a question; and (c) Errands / Shopping / Deliveries, especially to seniors and to people in quarantine.

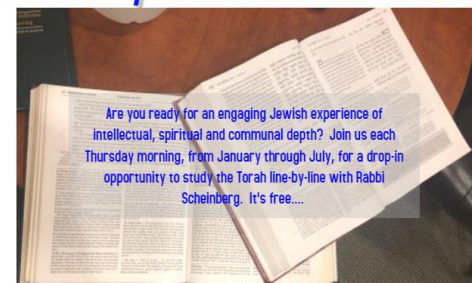
If you want to volunteer, send a note to chesed@hobokensynagogue.org. And if you or someone you know has a need that the synagogue community might be able to help with, send an email to chesed@hobokensynagogue.org.

If you have an idea for a livestreamed event for our community, contact rabbi@hobokensynagogue.org and/or Adam Laden at adam@ebecsearch.com.

THURSDAY MORNING TORAH STUDY... EVERY THURS 9.30-11AM -- NOW ONLINE!

Rabbi Scheinberg's torah study class has resumed... we meet each Thursday 9.30am-11am for study and discussion, focusing now on themes in the book of Deuteronomy... free and open to all; Join us online at <https://zoom.us/j/855709621>, or call in at one of these #s (646 876 9923, 669 900 6833, or 408 638 0968) and enter Meeting ID 855 709 621.

Thursday mornings, 9.30-11am Torah Study with Rabbi Scheinberg



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DAILY MORNING MINYAN ON ZOOM

We have added a daily morning prayer service to our calendar, at least for the duration of this crisis. It will meet each weekday morning at 8am, and Sunday morning at 9am. We will recite the daily Shaharit service, including music. Most days, the service duration will be about 30 minutes. People are welcome to join us for as much or as little as they wish. You can access it at <https://bit.ly/USHWeekdayMorningMinyan> or <https://zoom.us/j/777191497>.

Per new guidelines of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, assuming we have ten people logged in to Zoom who can see and hear each other, we will be reciting the Mourner's Kaddish in its standard form (though we will not be doing other prayers that require a minyan).

Helpful hint about Zoom: If you ever want to join a Zoom session but only have a phone audio connection, you can call in as follows: call in at one of these #'s (646 876 9923, 669 900 6833, or 408 638 0968) and enter the Meeting ID (which is the 9 or 10 digit number at the end of the Zoom internet address for the meeting. For example, Daily Shaharit's Meeting ID is 777191497.)

To download prayerbook pages for all services, go to <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/form-download-e-siddur-0>. Shabbat evening and morning use Siddur Lev Shalem; weekday morning services use Siddur Sim Shalom for Weekdays.

Tisha B'Av

the Jewish fast day commemorating the destructions of the city of Jerusalem in 586 BCE and 70 CE, as well as other tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people over the centuries. This year on Zoom.

Evening service on Zoom:

Wed July 29

7:30pm: Study and discussion, followed by the service and reading of the Book of Eich (Lamentations) at 8pm

Morning service: Thurs July 30:

Service 8am; discussion and study on themes of the day 9:30-11am

(The fast day of Tisha B'Av continues until nightfall on Thurs. July 30)

RSVP for Zoom link



115 Park Avenue

More info -- (201) 659-4000,

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SHABBAT SERVICES ARE NOW BEING LIVESTREAMED AT www.hobokensynagogue.org. Some services are also available on Zoom and Facebook Live. Please see below for the entire schedule.

Friday night:

Join us for Kabbalat Shabbat songs with Adam Laden and Rabbi Scheinberg, , 6:30pm, followed by Kabbalat Shabbat service at 6:50pm (including Mourners Kaddish about 7:15pm).

You can access these on livestream at <https://bit.ly/USHLivestream2020>, and/or on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/KabbalatShabbatUSH2020>, and at the USH Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/HobokenSynagogue/>).

The Zoom link will be open from 6:30pm until sunset. To see Adam, and to join in for the Mourner's Kaddish, you can access the Zoom meeting at <https://bit.ly/KabbalatShabbatUSH2020> or the Facebook Live event. You can access the Zoom meeting and the livestream at the same time if you wish. Services will then continue on the Livestream.)

Saturday morning services:

Shabbat morning services take place on livestream at 10:00am, led by Rabbi Scheinberg. You can join services by livestream this Shabbat at <https://bit.ly/USHLivestream2020>.

To download prayerbook pages for all services, go to <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/form-download-e-siddur-0>. Shabbat evening and morning use Siddur Lev Shalem; weekday morning services use Siddur Sim Shalom for Weekdays.

Online Kiddush:

Immediately at the conclusion of the Shabbat morning livestream, you are welcome to go to bit.ly/USHKiddush for a Zoom opportunity to spend time with others in our community.

USH STAFF DISTRIBUTING PASSOVER FOOD

See more photos
at <https://www.nj.com/galleries/UJREGI5JXRFQPKOUFTDPODBOIQ/>

Many thanks to Louise Kurtz, and our staff members Sue Cordeiro, Ruthy Tyroler, Mike Alexis, Frank Donovan, Christian Gonzalez and Sabrina Meijas for making Passover at USH as successful as it could be, with livestreamed services and seder and deliveries of Passover food.



TODAH RABAH TO ALL OF OUR DONORS

SECURITY FUND

- Susan Klein & Martin Cohen, in honor of Louise Kurtz

GENERAL FUND

- Jonathan Zaid
- Rafael & Adele Ribas, in memory of Ruth Weis
- Anthony Romano
- Kitty Bateman, in honor of Louise Kurtz
- Lianna Cospito
- Bob & Jeanne Becker, for expanded Zoom capacity
- Russell & Marni Kreigel, in honor of Harriet Taub
- Razel Solow & Joel Trugman

REFUGEE FUND

- Todd Clear and Dina Rose, in memory of Ben Zablocki
- Janet Miller

USY/ISRAEL SCHOLARSHIP

- Benson Stone, in honor of Rabbi Scheinberg

MEISTRICH CULTURE SERIES

- Benn Meistrich

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

- Ceil Chait
- Jordan Firestein & Sarah Rosenblum, in memory of Howard Firestein
- Ken Howitt
- Gordon & Monique Haas, in honor of Rabbi Scheinberg
- Daniel & Ellen Hockley Harrison
- Lisa Quint
- Jane Barr, in honor of Samantha Glass and Drew Nathanson for Passover delivery

FUND

- Mira Abrahamsom, in honor of Rabbi Scheinberg's inspiring Zoom services on Pesach
- Todd Clear & Dina Rose, in honor of Rabbi Scheinberg
- Assaf & Shadmit Prussak
- Hal & Roberta Scheinberg, in honor of Rabbi Scheinberg
- Drew & Liana Moss, in honor of Alan Victor
- Gabriel & Tammi Fox, in honor of Rabbi Scheinberg
- Aris Victor, in honor of her husband Alan Victor
- Rachel & Jonathan Katell, in honor of everyone on the front lines
- Mitchell & Laura Firestein, in honor of Dorothy Firestein

THANK YOU TO:

- Our congregation for hanging tough during this confusing time!
- Rabbi Scheinberg for being so generous with his time, talent and dedication!
- Ruthy Tyroler for coming up with some cool ideas for alternative meals during Passover and continuing on Shabbat!
- Adam Laden for innovative ideas for Sunday brunch and fun programs!
- Mike Alexis and his team for making the synagogue and school look clean and new!
- ALL first responders, EMTs, doctors and nurses for giving of themselves and sacrificing family time to take care of others!
- USH member Paul Fried, owner of Maid in Hoboken, for donating disinfectant fogging of the entire USH building!
- Doug Heyman for setting up all of the audio visual equipment in the Sanctuary

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- Eve Merrill and Adam Bloom on the birth of their son, Nathan Ellis, and to Nathan's brother Ezra

CONDOLENCES TO:

- Myrna Rosenblum on the loss of her brother Alfred Schwartz, and to her husband Robert Rosenblum, and their children and grandchildren
- David Kalmus on the loss of his mother Carlene Kalmus, and to his wife Abbie Jacobs and to their daughters Elena and Danielle and to David's brothers Edward, Jack and Mitchel
- Lisa Zablocki on the loss of her husband Ben, and to her sons Abraham, Daniel and Matthew, and to her daughters-in-law Rachel and Shannon, and to her grandchildren
- Amy Porter on the loss of her mother Ruth Cohen Weis and to Amy's husband Kevin and their children, Ian and Annie
- Tracey Schnabel on the loss of her father Paul Munson and to her husband Martin and to their son Jacob
- Laura Hollenberg on the loss of her mother Judith Hollenberg and to Laura's father Jack and to Laura's siblings
- Paul Glicksberg on the loss of his sister Stephanie Neuman and to his wife Helene and their children Ben and Rachel.
- Sheera Glass on the loss of her mother Dorothy Firestein and to Sheera's husband Mark and to USH members Jordan Firestein and Samantha Glass (Dorothy's grandchildren)
- Gayle Weisman Goldner on the loss of her mother Janice Weisman and to Gayle's husband Andy
- Drew Moss on the loss of his uncle Alan Victor and to Drew's wife, Liana and their children Hannah and Elle
- Todd Hyman on the loss of his father Rabbi Dr. Arthur Laifer and to Todd's children Noah and Sienna and to Todd's fiancée Heather Cohen and to Todd's mother Shelley Laifer and his nieces Hannah and Natalie
- Jeff Coran on the loss of his sister Rabbi Sigman Faye Coran and to his wife Kim and to their children Susan and Jonna and to Rabbi Coran's husband Rabbi Matthew Krause and their children Jacob, Shira, Micah and Eden

Dear friends, Sadly, for many of us, this country's recent events fill us with a dramatic sense of this country's brokenness. The killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police is simply one of the latest demonstrations that law enforcement does not consistently take place in an equitable manner in this country. That the officer who was principally involved has now been charged with murder and has been taken into custody, provides some sense of relief that police misconduct will be taken seriously, but that it took several days for this to happen is troubling to so many Americans who see this incident as a tragic recurring pattern, in which people of color are not given the same law enforcement protections as other Americans. I join with those who see this as a lingering effect of the racism and white supremacy that has been ever-present in this part of the world since colonial days -- a demon that, even 150 years after the Civil War and 50 years after the triumphs of the Civil Rights Movement, and nearly 12 years after the election of an African-American man as president of the United States, has not yet been exorcised.

My heart goes out at this time especially to those in our congregational family who are people of color, who are far too often subject to de facto discrimination and unsafe conditions in this land whose freedoms we cherish. Friends who are people of color -- whether you're members of our synagogue, relatives of members, employees, or supporters of our community in other ways -- we pledge not to rest and not to be content until this country truly embraces the Torah's injunction, "משפט אחד יהיה לכם, You shall have one single standard of justice." (Leviticus 24:22).

Not surprisingly, this week has brought vigorous protests to almost every American city. I pray that these protests will help to move this country in the direction of greater equality and justice. At this time of health crisis, I also pray that those who are protesting take the appropriate steps to guard the health and safety of all.

That some of these protests have been marred by violence is indefensible -- but I am hoping that we can stay as focused as possible on the grievances, and on the overwhelming majority of protesters who are practicing non-violence. Earlier this year I spent some time studying about the final days of Martin Luther King, and I learned about one of the final disappointments of his life, a march in Memphis on March 28, 1968 in support of striking sanitation workers that was marred by violence and had to be halted several minutes after it began. Though those who engaged in violence and vandalism were the tiniest percentage of those involved in the protest, the news story of the day became the violence and vandalism, and King was furious at the ways that the march was thereby a gift for the enemies of civil rights and a tragic setback for those he was trying to support. (Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-1968*, p. 730-734). King knew that support for civil rights in 1968 was precarious enough that a single misstep would cause that support to dissipate. Today, we pray, support for equal rights in our country is more robust and should not depend on the utter perfection of all who gather to protest. Those who engage in violence should be held accountable, but our focus at this time should be on how we can address the historic and lingering inequities in our country.

A great blessing for me is the opportunity to come together with interfaith clergy in our region to work together, to pray together, and to learn from each other. A recent weekly Hudson County Brotherhood/Sisterhood Association interfaith gathering (all of which are available for viewing at <http://facebook.com/HudsonCountyNJInterfaith/>) was particularly notable, as we gathered together online with religious leaders representing Christian/Muslim/Jewish/Baha'i/Sikh communities. All of us condemned the racism and hatred that lingers in this country, using the distinctive language of all our religious traditions. A Muslim representative read the passage from the Qur'an that says that one who causes the loss of any human life is considered as one who destroyed the entire world, and one who saves any human life is considered as one who saved the entire world. (Remarkably, there is a parallel passage from the Talmud that says exactly the same thing; a musical setting of the Talmud's version is [here](https://www.facebook.com/rob.scheinberg/posts/10164234155015179)).

We heard the prayer of an early Baha'i leader who prayed that someday the United States should be able to overcome its legacy of slavery and racism. We heard a Sikh man describe the racist violent attacks that he and his family endured in India and also in the United States. USH member Joel Freiser chanted in Hebrew the 'dry bones' passage from Ezekiel 37, which reminds us that even that which appears to be broken and hopelessly beyond repair can be reconstituted and renewed. We all prayed for the memory of George Floyd and all those whose lives ended in violence because of the legacy of inequality in our country.

At a time when - like the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision - we are tempted to say 'avdah tikvateinu', 'our hope is lost,' we strive to maintain our hope. We pray that we may help our country to learn how to connect bone to bone, to build a system of equal justice that befits the magnificently diverse population of our country and fulfills the promises made to all of its citizens.

Daily in the Amidah prayer we pray for God's assistance in creating a just society:

הַשִּׁיבָה שׁוֹפְטֵינוּ כְּבָרָאשׁוֹנָה וְיִוְעֲצֵינוּ כְּבִתְחִלָּה. וְהִסֵּר מִמֶּנּוּ יְגוֹן וְאַנְחָה. וּמִלֶּךְ עָלֵינוּ אֶתְהָה' לְבִדָּךְ בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים. וְצִדְקָנוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מֶלֶךְ אוֹהֵב צִדְקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט::

"Restore our judges and advisors as per the original ideal. Remove from us sorrow and suffering. God, may You alone reign over us in kindness and compassion, and help us to embody true justice. Blessed are You, Adonai, the Sovereign who loves justice."

- יְהִי רָצוֹן - so may it be God's will.

Rabbi Rob Scheinberg

Statements by some of our partner organizations:

Rabbinical Assembly: <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/story/conservativemasorti-rabbis-respond-murder-george-floyd-pattern-racism-police-brutality>

New Jersey Interfaith Coalition: <https://www.njifc.org/nj-interfaith-coalition-strongly-condemns-the-murder-of-george-floyd-by-minneapolis-police.html>

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