

L'Chaim

לחיים

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Join us on Zoom
Monday May 25th at 11am
Ohev Shalom
Meeting ID: 253-838-2425
Email: office@ohav.net for the Password



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Rabbi's Message – If We Can't Take It Away... What is the Takeaway?



This coronavirus pandemic, which we're all collectively enduring right now, feels very Biblical. Plagues, economic crisis, upending social order; usually we turn to the Torah for stories like these! And you'd think that if ANYONE was ready for world-wide reckoning and forced-self-reflection-on-a-

GLOBAL-scale, it would be the clergy folks. You know... me. But I was just as surprised by this whole crisis as everyone else! Even as I see signs ALL AROUND about how enormous and, well, Biblical the proportions are of this ordeal, I am struggling to figure out how to interpret what is happening. Or how to respond.

Obviously, one option is to shout "God told you so!!" on a daily basis, but that doesn't seem very pastoral, and I imagine that would get awfully annoying and self-righteous pretty quick. And while there are some incredible lessons and signs that I DO believe we all need to acknowledge, it is also true that people are dying - every day - on a massive scale; the joblessness is terrifying; and the economic impact that we'll be feeling for years is daunting. Noticing the "silver linings" and the important "take-aways" that we, as a human race, are perhaps meant to learn from this isn't about sugar-coating our pain. It isn't about ignoring the devastating toll we're all paying for these lessons. It is, however, crucial to acknowledge - now more than ever - that the most important insights we ever learn as human beings are essentially ALWAYS painful. And this, without question, is hurting.

Focusing on the take-aways isn't about trying to be upbeat or cheery, it's about making sure

these deaths and this pain haven't been for nothing. We cannot allow ourselves to suffer so enormously... and then learn absolutely NOTHING on the other end. No, let's stop and be mindful for a moment (or A LOT longer...) and notice some incredible things that are happening right now:

- Pollution is down globally on an unprecedented level. Read stories about India, Brazil, China, and the other places around the globe where people can breathe - and actually SEE without smog covering their eyes! - for the first time in decades!
- Animals are coming out of hiding. Their habitats are normally shoved aside by human growth and expansion. All of a sudden, lions are sprawled on roads in Africa, mountain goats saunter through Welsh towns, and bird song can be heard in city centers where it was NEVER silent enough for such things before.
- But also other puzzling consequences, like prisons having to reexamine who should (still) be incarcerated, and what might it mean to ACTUALLY try and reduce the prison population?
- And perhaps one of the most important realizations for us as a civilization; who is an "essential worker"? Before COVID-19, the "essential" people in our lives were athletes, movie stars, politicians, financial managers and lawyers (and I don't mean to offend any Ohevites here...). Now, doctors and nurses are still essential; perhaps more than ever! But we've also discovered that the people who are REALLY vital to basic human existence are also the grocery store workers, trash collectors (maybe more than anyone else!), pharmacy workers, mail carriers,



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Rabbi's Message – (Continued)

and those who work in ANY aspect of the food industry. So why are they paid minimum wage? Why are so many without benefits? How is any of this acceptable? Perhaps these are jobs that don't require a lot of education or specialized skill... but I don't see most of us lining up to be trash or recycling collectors. So the people who ARE willing to do those jobs, shouldn't we be more grateful to them and pay them for their incredible service to EVERYONE ELSE in society??

I'm sure you've had other insights of your own as well. Or heard others on the news. Focusing on these stories is about learning something from this, and striving to make our world better as a result. Otherwise, if all we do is demand that things go back to "normal" and we try to forget this ever happened as soon as possible; it will all have been absolutely and utterly in vain. I don't know where the coronavirus

came from, why it is here, or how long it will be a fixture in our lives. But RIGHT NOW is the time to utilize this pandemic to improve human (and animal, and plant, and air...) quality of life.

So often we ask God for signs. We ask for some signal to come and tell us what it means to be a human being, why we are here, what we're supposed to do with our lives, and what the meaning of it all really is. Maybe the sign has come. It's scary, it's overwhelming, it comes wearing a facemask and gloves, and it involves spending A LOT of time quarantined indoors. But it IS a sign. Of BIBLICAL proportions! Let's listen and learn and internalize... and change.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Gerber



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President's Message

I woke up this morning and tried desperately to remember what day it was. Sunday? Monday? Tuesday? As a child of someone who had dementia, this would normally be very disconcerting to me. But we are not in "normal" times. In minyan one morning, Rabbi Gerber joked that he looks forward to the Psalm for the day of the week because it helps him remember what day it is. So, I'm not alone. Finally, I remembered – I'd had my weekly phone meeting with my boss yesterday. That meeting is on Monday. So today must be Tuesday (which means it must be Belgium? A joke for those of us over a certain age). And, it's the last day of the month, which means that my (next to last!) newsletter article is due.

As I sometimes do, I looked back to see what I had written for this month's column a year ago. I'd written about our annual Memorial Day service. From today's vantage point, it's impossible to know whether that service will take place this year. But one sentence stood out to me. In speaking about the number of soldiers killed in the wars this country has seen, I noted that "The numbers are unfathomable." That truly hit home as we fight a different kind of war right now. Without a crystal ball, I can only pray that by the time you read this, stay-at-home measures have made a difference and the spread of COVID-19 has slowed.

We made the decision to postpone events we've been anticipating – the Lostice Shabbat, the Hall of Fame induction, and even though it wasn't scheduled until June – the culminating Centennial weekend. That was the most difficult decision of all, but we felt that we could not continue to plan for an event that would bring potentially two hundred people together in early June. Our plan is to reschedule all of these events, although they may look different than originally planned.

In the meantime, I want to again express my awe and gratitude to this community. Here are

just some of the things that have happened: Rabbi Gerber set up a Community Board on Facebook, and has been holding virtual Bible class, B'not mitzvah class, and Lunch n' Learn; Paula Cherner and her army of volunteers worked on calling every person in the congregation; Karen Stesis and Andy Szabo both helped arrange Kosher meat delivery so that several of our congregants could have it in time for Passover; we had a "matzah swap" - those who had an extra box of matzah could leave one and those who needed one could take one (there's a great children's story like that, by the way); Rabbis Gerber and Miller shifted second Seder to a virtual format and continue to lead wonderful services; 16-25 people have been attending morning minyan almost every day; families have participated in virtual *Havdalah*; and the kids have been engaging with Rabbi Miller for Sunday morning *tefillah*. And this month, we will have our first virtual B'nai Mitzvah. Such an amazingly active community considering that we are "closed!"



To Rabbi Gerber, Rabbi Miller, and Missy who have gone above and beyond to keep Ohev Shalom running through such a chaotic time, to all of the congregants who have stepped up to help, and to those who have participated in any of the services and/or programming, I am eternally grateful. Again and again, you inspire me and keep me going with your spirit and dedication.

With love and gratitude,
Amy

Sisterhood Scoop



It's hard to believe that we are almost at the end of another year. This is certainly not how we hoped our tenure as Co-Presidents would end. We had plans for several events where we would be together a few last times before we parted ways for the summer. The universe has different plans for us. Our face-to-face gatherings have been replaced by online events where we still have an opportunity to come together and connect. We can't tell you how happy we are to see everyone participating in all the online activities that have been scheduled. It's times like these that help

us all remember what makes Ohev so special. We want to sincerely thank our Ohev leadership, clergy and office staff for all they are doing to help our Community during this unprecedented time.

For now, we're holding off planning our end of the year event. Our hope is that the current situation will improve and we will have an opportunity to schedule something, even if it's last minute or over the summer. We miss you all!

Be well,
Bonnie & Taryn

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March Tributes

Ada & Jay Young Jewish Cultural Fund

- To Judy Young: Wishing you a speedy recovery from Brenda and Arnold Steinman
- To Judy Young: Wishing you better days ahead from Paula Cherner and Lisa Karlin

Adult Enrichment

- To Karen Ernest: Speedy recovery to you with warmest wishes for a full recovery from Leslie Weiss and Neil Bunis
- To Amy, Andy and family in memory of Amy's father Richard "Dick" Wissoker from Leslie Weiss and Neil Bunis

Daily Minyan Account

- In memory of my beloved mother, Florence Grumet, from Ann Grumet Littman
- To Bernie and Moe Chazin and the Kroungold and Laster families in memory of brother and uncle Harry Chazin from Al Chazin
- To Amy Graham in loving memory of your father from Lynn Cashell

Debby Silver Camp Fund

- To Jerry Berstein and family in memory of Joan Berstein from Audrey and Dan Parlin
- To Jerry Berstein and family in memory of Joan Berstein with much love to you and the family from Shellie and Bernie Missan

Donald & Ruth Levinstein Education Fund

- To Eddie Engel in loving memory of dear friend, Harriett Engel from Jodi Leshner and Steve Levinstein. Wherever you are Harriett, I hope you can get a corned beef sandwich delivered from Hymies!

Floral/Landscape Account

- To Karen and Louis Stesis: Mazal Tov on the marriage of your daughter and new son-in-law, Sara and Manish. May they always know happiness throughout their lives together from Karen and Brad Ernest and family

Joseph & Edith Godick Jewish History Lecture Fund

- To Amy Graham in memory of Richard Wissoker from Donna and Cliff Cohen

Eli and Sissy Lax Sukkah Terrace Fund

- To Susan Frutkin in loving memory of Carolyn Goldman from Marci and Russ Bakke

Legacy Society Fund

- In memory of Helen Levinstein from Jodi Leshner and Steven Levinstein

Mispallelim Scholarship Account

- To Karen Ernest: Wishing you a speedy recovery from Brenda and Arnold Steinman
- In memory of Paula's loving mother, Zelda Cherner. We miss you every day from Paula Cherner and Lisa Karlin

Netzach Fund

- To Susan Frutkin in memory of Carolyn Goldman from Amy and David Pollack
- To Jerry Berstein and family in memory of Joan Berstein from Amy and David Pollack
- To Shellie and Bernie Missan: Mazal tov on the marriage of their grandson, Sam, to Sarah Rosenberg on Saturday, February 22nd from Amy and David Pollack

Rabbi's Discretionary Account

- In memory of Claire Freidus Britt (Feigenbaum) from Lauren Katz
- Mazal Tov to Hope and Gordon Brown on the birth of granddaughter Orli from Tammy J. Finsterbusch
- In loving memory of my dad, Samuel Deal. We miss you from Shana Deal and Kevin, Hailey and Isabella Bittman
- To Linda Hayes and Len Hayes in loving memory of your beloved Uncle Doug from Myra Balin

Rose Isaacson Library Account

- To Amy Graham in memory of Richard Wissoker from Brenda and Arnold Steinman
- To Amy Graham in memory of your father, Richard Wissoker from Carole and Bruce Bogdanoff

School Tribute Account

- To Karen and Louis Stesis: Mazal tov on Sara's wedding to Manish Singla from Paula Cherner and Lisa Karlin
- To Jennifer Jablonski and family in memory of your beloved mother and grandmother, Joan Berstein. May she Rest in Peace from Karen and Brad Ernest, and Norma Wolf

Simon Levin Torah Restoration Fund

- To Amy Graham in memory of Richard Wissoker, beloved husband, father, grandfather and friend from Elaine Hanno. May God grant you peace.
- To Jerry Berstein and family in memory of Joan Berstein with sincere condolences from Lyna Zommick
- In memory of my parents Edith and Joe Sosonkin from Reisha Freedman

Synagogue General Account

- To Jerry Berstein and family in memory of Joan Berstein from Gary, Neil, Jay, Jeff and David Lazaroff
- In memory of Helen Levinstein from Jodi Leshner and Steven Levinstein

May Save The Date

Recurring Events

Minyan
 9:00 a.m. Sunday
 :00 a.m. Monday – Friday
 Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Wednesday
 Shabbat Services
 6:00 p.m. Friday
 (unless otherwise noted)
 :00 a.m. Saturday Shabbat

All activities via remote conferencing

May 2, 2020

9:00a.m. Shabbat Services with Adult
 B'Not Mitzvah

May 3, 2020

Talitot Making - 6th grade

9:00 a.m. Mispallelim Religious School

May 4, 2020

6:00 p.m. Calendar Planning 2020-2021

May 6, 2020

9:30 a.m. Bible Study
 4:15p.m. Torah Story Time

May 7, 2020

12:00 p.m. Lunch n' Learn

May 8, 2020

6:00 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat with **Robert Nichols Award**

May 9, 2020

10:00 a.m. Shabbat Services with Bar
 Mitzvah of Shane Green

May 10, 2020

9:00a **NO** Mispallelim Religious School

May 11, 2020

7:30 p.m. School Committee Meeting

May 12, 2020

7:00 p.m. Budget and Audit Meeting

May 13, 2020

9:30 a.m. Bible Study
 4:15p.m. Torah Story Time

May 16, 2020

10:00 a.m. Shabbat Services with Bat
 Mitzvah of Abigail Rappaport

May 17, 2020

9:00 a.m. Mispallelim Religious School

May 20, 2020

9:30 a.m. Bible Study
 4:15p.m. Torah Story Time

May 21, 2020

7:00 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting

May 23, 2020

9:00 a.m. Shabbat Services - **Mosaics**

May 24, 2020

9:00a **NO** Mispallelim Religious School

May 25, 2020

Memorial Day
 11:00 a.m. **Memorial Day Service**

May 27, 2020

9:30 a.m. Bible Study
 4:15p.m. Torah Story Time
 7:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

May 30, 2020

Shavuot
 10:30am Yiskor

May 31, 2020

9:00 a.m. Mispallelim Religious School

March Tributes (Cont'd.)

Yahrzeit/Yizkor Account

- In memory of father, Herman Waldman, from Harriet and Robert Madison
- In memory of Aunt Esther Milstein from Harriet and Robert Madison
- In memory of Selma Rentz and Joseph Rentz from Randi Rentz

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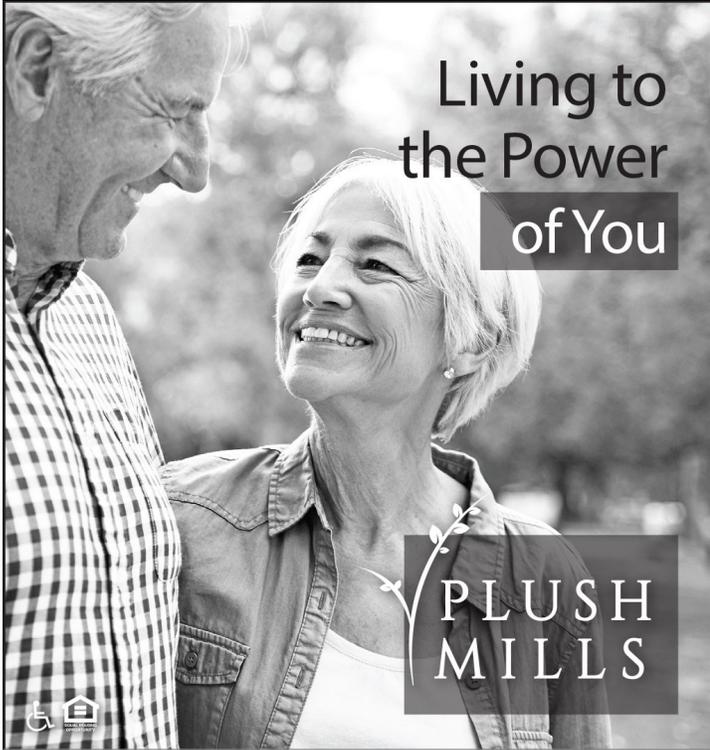
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