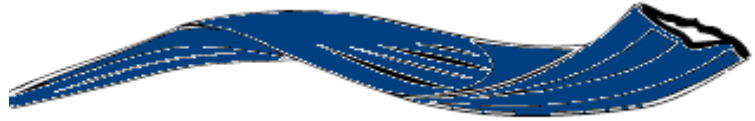


SHOFAR



Monthly Newsletter of the Monterey Peninsula Jewish Community

www.carmelbethisrael.org



Virtual Second Night Community Passover Seder

Our congregation's Community Passover Seder will be held online the second night of Passover, **Sunday, April 16, beginning at 6:00 PM**. This fun, family style Zoom Seder will be led by Rabbi Bruce Greenbaum and Cantorial Soloist Suzanne Guinane. Because we will be doing this on Zoom, there are some special considerations as we prepare for our second night Seder. The Haggadah we will use will be presented on your computer screens through a series of beautifully created slides. We will take turns unmuting and reading different parts of the Seder. Please call Rabbi Greenbaum if you want to volunteer to read one of the English readings that will appear on your screen. Suzanne will sing many of the songs we have enjoyed in the past and one lucky family with children will lead the singing of the 4 questions (Ma Nishtanah).

There is no cost to participate because you will be providing the food you eat at home. You are encouraged to prepare your own Seder plate complete with a roasted egg, a shank bone, some parsley, some bitter herb (horseradish) and Charoset. Also please have some matzah for your Seder table as well! To assist you in your Passover celebration, CBI volunteers will prepare Charoset

that we will give to each CBI household. Plan on picking up your own CBI homemade Charoset on **Thursday or Friday, April 14 or 15** from the CBI office (times for pick up will be announced).

This online interactive Seder will include our taking turns reading with lots of singing as well. After 2 cups of wine/grape juice, blessings over the various foods, and sharing the Seder story we will take a 20-minute break from our Seder to enjoy our dinner. Then we will continue with the hunt for the Afikomen. Those with children at home are encouraged to play a hide and seek game using a piece of Matzah. If possible, have a little reward for the child who finds the hidden matzah. After dinner it will take another 15-20 minutes as we finish the second part of the Seder including blessings after the meal, two more cups of wine/grape juice and welcoming Elijah to our Seder tables.

Please call or email the CBI office or sign up online to participate in this year's free Seder. Don't forget to call Rabbi Greenbaum to volunteer for a reading part. Finally, remember to write in your calendar to swing by the CBI office to pick up your own homemade tasty Charoset.

Please Note Our New CBI Office Hours

**Tuesday – Friday
9 AM – 5 PM
and by appointment**



From the Rabbi's Desk...

As I write this message Russia is starting its third week of invading Ukraine. Already over 2 million Ukrainian refugees have left their homes in search of safety.

Estimates suggest 1 million of these refugees are children. These refugees are struggling to cross borders, find housing, or even feed themselves. Most left with the clothes on their backs and maybe one bag. We have all seen pictures of the children clutching stuffed animals or a favorite blanket, sitting on the ground looking scared.

Allow me to share a few observations as we witness another human crisis unfolding. While I am grateful for the concern so many of us are expressing for these Ukrainian refugees, I have to question why the same concern was not expressed by so many when over a million refugees poured out of Syria. Why has the majority within our country remained silent while millions of refugees seek shelter from attacking armies in African regions? It reminds me of the silent response the world had to Jews during the time of the holocaust. I pray our reaction to this crisis is because we are learning to care about all human beings, and not just those who look like us. I fear our reaction is as much a negative response to Russia as it is a positive concern for Ukrainians.

I remain proud of Israel's response whenever a human crisis demands a response. Although a traditional Jew, Prime Minister of Israel Bennet flew to Moscow on Shabbat in the middle of last month to speak with Putin about Russia's attack of Ukraine. While a challenging discussion because of Russia's influence on Iran and Syria, two of Israel's greatest threats today, Bennet voiced his concern about the threat against the Jews in Ukraine and all Ukrainian citizens. Based in Israel, IsraAID is an international non-governmental humanitarian aid organization. Since they were founded in 2001, their teams have worked in emergency and long-term development settings in more than 50 countries around the world. Thousands of Ukrainians are currently seeking refuge in Moldova. IsraAID is providing psychological first aid

and distributing essential relief supplies. This is just one of many examples of Israelis and Israeli organizations doing what they can to help those in need.

Our congregation is also actively raising funds for the emergency relief program established by the Jewish Federations of North America. This parent organization to the Israel Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee in two weeks raised just over 18 million dollars to assist the Jewish community in Ukraine and help over 15,000 Jewish Ukrainians escape to Israel. They are using funds to help the 5 Jewish day schools in the Ukraine with security and communications, and aiding fleeing Ukrainian Jews struggling to cross the borders. They are also aiding Ukrainian Jews who are moving to the USA as well.

I was so happy to have one of our CBI families call me and offer space in their home for a Ukrainian refugee family. While we have yet to have any Ukrainian refugees arrive to the Monterey Peninsula, I am certain we would welcome them with open hearts and much generosity. This is the time to show our compassion to those who need our support. Through our prayers, through our donations, and by voicing our concern for justice for Ukraine, we will be following our Jewish commandment of seeking justice.

Please join me as we pray for an end to this war, and for peace and well-being for all of God's creation, all of the human race. Amen.





From our President *Dan Nussbaum, President Board of Trustees*

Life is returning to normal in many ways, and so are activities at CBI. Here is a list of some of the activities, past and planned, that make this point. More information on these activities is available in other parts of this Shofar, on our website calendar, and by calling the office (831.624.2015). As we move back to normalcy, I encourage you to tell me what you miss among CBI 's activities and how you envision our restarting them.

Pesach—Even with the on again-off again COVID rules, we will do a virtual ,2nd night, community Passover Seder on April 16th. You can see the details on page 1 of the shofar. Next year, it is my bet that we will be back in our social hall, in person for our traditional 2nd Seder.

Shabbat dinners will restart. Once again, Malina Malina and her fabulous kitchen crew will apply their magical cooking skills to allow us to come together before Friday night services. The first date is Friday, April 29th. Check the calendar for details

Paradigm Services, which provides adult day services, has returned to using our facilities, and our support to I-Help continues (kudos to Arlene Krebs).

Suzanne led our students in a School **Purim** Celebration on Sunday, March 29th, complete with a lunch including pizza , juice, and hamantaschen.

New members continue to join, and they are welcomed on the Shofar in our Family News.

Carmel Jewish Film Festival—Well done and thank you to Susan Greenbaum and Marsha Kelly, as well as to all those who helped them put together this great effort. Once again, you have done a wonderful job and done great service to CBI. We had a fabulous opening night, with reception and film, and an equally wonderful closing evening, also with a reception and film. The CJFF is not only a cultural icon in the community but is a strong fund raiser.

We plan to **honor Suzanne Guinane** with a Celebration of Service on Friday night, June 3. Suzanne has graced CBI's bimah with her beautiful voice, and with her love of Judaism. Moreover, her leadership of the religious and Hebrew school has given our youngest congregants the opportunity to explore and experience Jewish rituals and values. As I learned from one of our congregants— and I am in complete agreement with this— there is more loving kindness in the world today because of what our students have learned from Suzanne. I hope you all come to this celebration.

My thanks to all those who have generously supported Ukraine relief efforts. Let us hope that the world is up to the tasks in front of us, for the need is indeed great.

I wish everyone a sweet Pesach

Dan

Dan Nussbaum

(C) (831) 324-3228



Looks like this team was successful putting the King to sleep with their story of his kingdom and beautiful wife Queen Esther:



Turn the page for more Purim fun.....

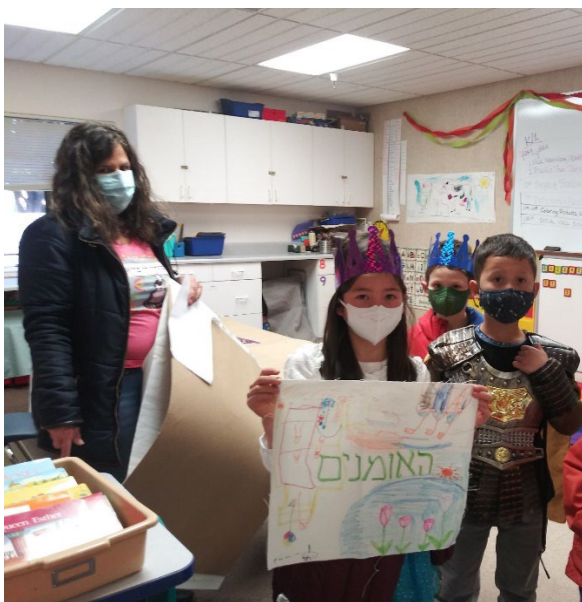


**From Our
Cantorial Soloist
and Director of
Education
Suzanne Guinane**



We had so much fun at our Sunday School *Purim* Celebration on Sunday! It was wonderful seeing everyone's Jewish Super Power Costumes. Having parents join us for pizza, juice and hamantaschen at 12 noon, singing *Motzi* and watching everyone enjoy being together safely on the deck, basketball court, playground and Social Hall – Priceless! *Todah rabbah* to our Teachers, *Madrichim* Team, *Aleynu*, parents and students for all your help. Here's a few pictures to enjoy:

Best Team Banner – Thee Artists



Wow! Look at the Tower. No way Haman (Boo!) could see over that!



Winners of the Talent Show with their own Rap and Choreography of *Megillat Esther*.





Lunch with the Rabbi

Please join Rabbi Greenbaum this month on **Wednesday, April 6 at noon**, hopefully at an outdoor table on the patio of Baja Cantina, located about a mile east of CBI. This month the Rabbi will lead a discussion on "Angels" Are they

messengers of God? Are they just extensions of God that appear on earth? Are they God's servants doing God's bidding? Was Satan, found in the book of Job, an Angel gone bad? Come prepared to question and offer your thoughts. Call the CBI office at 624-2015 to RSVP. We will order off their regular menu so expect lunch to cost approximately \$15-\$20.

BEST YEARS

Best Years Passover Celebration



Let's party on the 5th day of Passover, **Wednesday, April 20**. Passover is a celebration of freedom, our Exodus from Egypt. Following that theme, let's use our freedom to celebrate together in our CBI social Hall starting at **2:00 PM**. We will provide some delicious Kosher for Passover hors d'oeuvres and some tasty beverages as well. If you want, bring your favorite Kosher for Passover treat to share. To RSVP for this Pesach party call the CBI office at 624-2015. Remember, this event is free. Please let us know if you need a ride to this event. Masks are now only required for those who are not fully vaccinated.



CBI Book Club

Dear Jewish Book Clubbers,

IMPORTANT: You must be fully vaccinated and boosted against Covid-19 in order to attend Book Club. Also, you cannot come to Book Club:

- if you are not feeling well;
- if you learn, during the five-day period leading up to the Book Club meeting, that you have been exposed to someone with Covid-19;
- if you have been involved in activities with a higher risk of Covid exposure, such as indoor restaurant dining or indoor groups of ten people or more, such as gyms.

We plan to continue to try to meet in person, but we will be watchful regarding the ever-changing status of the pandemic.

Here are our next two dates and book selections.

April 12, 1:30 PM, home of Suellen Rubin. Book—The Netanyahu: An Account of a Minor and Ultimately Even Negligible Episode in the History of a Very Famous Family by Joshua Cohen. "Absorbing, delightful, hilarious, breathtaking" (*New York Times*). New York Times Notable Book, Jewish Book Award winner

May 10, 1:30 PM, host home TBA. Book—How Sweet It Is by Thane Rosenbaum.

Our warmest thank-you to Suellen for her continuing hospitality in hosting Book Club. Please RSVP to Suellen (suellenrubin@hotmail.com / 915-4107) for directions or if you need to cancel.



Yom HaShoah Observance April 28

Join us at **10:00 Thursday morning, April 28** in our sanctuary or on zoom for a special observance of Yom

HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day. The program will start at 10:00 AM as we join with an Israeli who will share his or her views as a survivor who currently lives in Israel. Our Yom HaShoah observance will include the lighting of 6 candles in memory of the 6 million and a recitation of the Kaddish.

CBI has been selected by the Jewish Agency for Israel to strengthen our ties with our Jewish homeland. They have assigned Galit Mimran as our special Israeli messenger. Galit is creating a meaningful Yom Ha Shoah observance and will also assist us with future Israel based programs in the months ahead.



Community Shabbat Dinner is Back!

We are so excited to resume our monthly tradition of Shabbat dinners, prepared by Malina Breaux and her entourage of

assistants. Savor a sense of community and food worthy of celebration at **6:30 PM on Friday, April 29.**

Join us as we offer blessings for the bread and wine and sing traditional music to begin our gatherings. **For now, dinner will be limited to 40 guests, all fully vaccinated.** Evening services follow, if you wish to attend.

Call or email the CBI office for reservations to enjoy our lovely community Shabbat meals. Members \$12 non-members \$20



CBI's Community Garden

What started as a hope and a dream over two years ago is now a reality. Because of the generosity of Rabbi Greenbaum's former

neighbors, Bruce and Anne Bloxom, both of blessed memory, and the hard work of our small community garden committee led by Jane Bednar, our garden is now ready to be planted! Located in the northeast corner next to our upper parking lot, we have 8 large redwood raised garden boxes filled with rich soil and attached to a new watering system.

Potrero preschool has volunteered to plant and care for two of the boxes. Our religious school could be responsible for planting and caring for some of the garden boxes. Does your Havurah, or do you want to participate in this community garden? Please contact the CBI office. We hope to raise a variety of vegetables that can be used for IHELP dinners and enjoyed by those who like fresh, right out of the ground produce! In the coming months a few fruit trees will be planted as well. Congratulations and thank you to all those who have helped create our community garden.



CBI Interest-Free Loan

Because of the generosity of an anonymous donor, CBI continues to offer interest-free loans up to \$500 for CBI members. So far, only a handful of people have borrowed these funds. Please contact our Administrative Assistant Abby King or Rabbi Greenbaum at 831-624-2015 and ask for the simple one-page loan application. Loans will be made for both personal and professional needs. All requests will be kept confidential. Our congregation is here to support those in need during these challenging financial times.



Join Congregation Beth Israel on a TOUR TO ISRAEL September 7–19, 2022

Traveling in Israel is an opportunity to encounter the wonders of this ancient land. We'll grow through our shared experiences, from the fun and adventurous, to the historical and spiritual, as we explore Israel together! FIND OUT MORE! Email Bobbie Ehrenpreis at Bobbie@carmelrealtycompany.com for more details.

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- Select CBI as your selected recipient
- Every purchase you make sends dollars to CBI



CJFF 2022 Opening Night

It was a momentous Opening Night on March 12 when we gathered exactly two years from the date the 2020 CJFF was closed down due to Covid. There was a food, wine, and dessert reception followed by the film, *The Automat*. Several people shared their memories following the film. It was wonderful to have an in-person social event.

Thank you to all our Sponsors who so generously contributed this year to this fundraiser. The CJFF sincerely appreciates your loyalty and generosity.

Benefactors

Blackthorne Pools & Spas, Inc, Malina Breaux
Astrid Holberg & David Awerbuck
Natalie & James Sammet
Honest Engine Films, Joanne Storkan

Event Underwriters

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TODAH RABBAH!

Thank you to those who have recently given generously to
Congregation Beth Israel

Religious School Scholarship Fund

Dennis & Gail Bates: in memory of Bari Tolliver

Carmel Jewish Film Festival Sponsors

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College Scholarship

John & Patty Harp: in memory of Judy Masliyah

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

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Bill Pardue & Barbara Mitchell: in memory of Darryl Davis

General Donations

Anita Artstein-Dunsay: in memory of Derek Dunsay
Anita Artstein-Dunsay: in memory of Isabel Artstein
Nancy Callahan: in honor of Robert Taylor Fletcher
Naomi Zipursky
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Ellyn Gelson: March Birthdays and Anniversaries
Melvin F. & Susan N. Gorelick: in memory of Ben Gorelick
Thomas & Ellen G. Krause: in memory of Tom's mother Claire Krause
Victor & Sylvia Krimsley: In loving memory of Mildred Weiner, Sylvia's beloved aunt.
Victor & Sylvia Krimsley: in memory of Yvonne Eames
Barbara Lipman: thank you to the Platts, Gerstles, Susan Greenbaum, Rosemary Lande, & Marsha Kelly, for every kindness
Stephen L. & Wendie A. Ryter: in memory of Mary Marcus and Nettie Morgan
Sarita Chavez Silverman: in memory of Joseph Silverman
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Herbert Stern: in memory of Samuel Stern
Herbert Stern: in memory of Stanley Stern & Marco Berro
Michael & Debora Waxer: in memory of Les Bard and Zad Leavy

I-Help

David Sabih & Anna Swartley: in memory of Johnathan Sabih



COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Attention All High School Seniors and Parents of Seniors! If you are interested in applying for a CBI Merit

College Scholarship, now is the time to get started. Applications are available in your high school career center, at the CBI office, or on the CBI website at <https://carmelbethisrael.org/learning/college-2/>

The College Fund was born through the efforts of Judy Masliyah z"l to give back to the students of our local community, and to recognize their achievement and involvement in Jewish Life. It has been and remains a way to honor students who consistently show outstanding academic work, leadership, community dedication and values of Jewish life with a financial reward and community recognition.

We have awarded over 90 scholarships since 1993 when we first started this worthwhile endeavor. The committee is grateful to the wonderful contributors who have helped establish and have sustained this fund since its inception.

The CBI College Scholarship recognizes worthy Jewish students on the Monterey Peninsula who have been admitted to a four-year college. Awards will be made in May and, if possible, presented at the student's high school awards ceremony and are recognized at the Senior Shabbat. We want to acknowledge your accomplishments and contributions to our community. We hope you will apply for the CBI Merit College Scholarship!

Be sure to read the criteria for selection carefully. The deadline for submitting your completed application is Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 4:00 p.m. Please email your application to Debbie Winick at winick.debbie@gmail.com

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Nancy@cpabythesea.com



Funfetti Matzah Toffee Recipe for Passover

Because sprinkles make everything better

Matzah toffee is a staple of American Jewish households for Passover for so many reasons: It's easy to make, the ingredients aren't fancy, and it's legitimately delicious with a satisfying sweet-salty candy crunch.

A cousin to "Christmas crack," or saltine toffee, to me this dessert is as American as apple pie. And covering it with copious amounts of colored sprinkles takes it up one more notch.

No sprinkles available? You can make [the classic version](#) with chopped pecans, walnuts, almonds, shredded coconut, dried fruit, or just a hefty sprinkle of thick sea salt.

Ingredients

- 5 matzah sheets
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter (can substitute non-dairy margarine)
- 1 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup white chocolate chips
- 1/2 Tbsp vegetable oil (can substitute coconut oil)
- 1 cup multi-colored sprinkles

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or tin foil.
2. Arrange matzah in one layer. Break smaller pieces to fill the pan completely.
3. In a saucepan, melt the butter and brown sugar over medium heat, stirring constantly. Once this mixture reaches a boil, cook for a few more minutes, until the mixture thickens and starts to pull away from the sides of the pan. Remove from heat.
4. Pour the butter and sugar mixture over the matzah, gently spreading it with a spatula to cover it with an even layer.
5. Put matzah in the oven and bake for 15 minutes, checking every so often to make sure it doesn't burn. Turn heat down to 325 if it looks like it's burning.
6. After 15 minutes, the butter and sugar mixture will have bubbled up and turned golden brown. Remove from the oven. Sprinkle matzah immediately with the semisweet chocolate chips. Let sit for 5 minutes to melt.
7. After the chocolate chips have melted, spread them evenly over the toffee.
8. Microwave the white chocolate chips and oil in a bowl for 30 seconds. Remove and stir with a fork. Microwave for another 30 seconds and stir again, until the mixture is smooth and thoroughly melted.
9. With a fork, drizzle the white chocolate over the matzah. Then top with lots and lots of colored sprinkles. Allow to cool and harden. Break into pieces and enjoy.



Congregation Beth Israel

Adar II ~ Nisan 5782

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			30 4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class	31	1  6:00 PM Family Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings. At CBI & On 	2 10:30 Shabbat Torah Study In person & on 
3 9:00 AM Religious School 5:00 PM I-Help Men	4	5	6 12:00 Lunch with the Rabbi @Baja Cantina 4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class 7:00 PM JFF committee meets 	7	8 7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with guest speaker Beryl Levinger At CBI & on 	9 10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study In person & on 
10 9:00 AM Religious School 1:00 PM Aleynu	11	12 7:00 PM CBI Executive Committee Meets	13 4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class	14	15 1st Seder  No Erev Shabbat Service	16 Passover 10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study In person & on  6:00 PM Passover Community Seder Online
17 Passover No Religious School	18	19 7:00 PM CBI Board of Trustees Meets	20 2:00 PM Best Years Passover Party 4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class	21	22 7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services at CBI & on 	23 Passover Yizkor 10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study In Person & on 
24 9:00 AM Religious School 1:00 PM Aleynu	25	26	27	28 Yom Hashoah 10:00 Observance In person & on   HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY	29 6:30 Community Shabbat Dinner 7:30 PM Shabbat Services With Anniversary Blessings At CBI & on 	30 10:30 Shabbat Torah Study In Person & on 

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Gabriela Lipsky	1
Jana Stiebel	4
Jill Gabbe	5
Bill Pardue	5
Michael Leavy	9
Julie Chase	11
Myles Eliote Dau	11
Poppy Esther Dau	11
Paul Harmatz	11
Kimberly Weiner	11
Robert Kershner	12
Marshal Blatt	13
David Ortiz-Suslow	13
Larry Solow	13
Abra Teitler	14
Vivi Fenwick	15
Barry Rund	16
Elizabeth Grogin	17
Richard Kreitman	17
Michael Newton	17
Arina Ganeles	21
Pauline Troia	21
Robert L. Fenton	22
Ruthie Pack	22
Rizal Sidney Baguio	23
Elizabeth Heff	23
Rory Lakind	23
Mitchel Winick	23
Gary Simon	24
Steven Goldberg	26
Daniel Robbins	26
David Schnitzer	26
Brian Ellinoy	27
Makayla Schnitzer	28
Susan Shapiro-Rosen	29
Alison Baguio	30

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Mitchel & Deborah Winick	1
David & Andrea Rosenberg	2
Hersh & Lizbeth Davis	7
Thomas & Ellen G. Krause	11
Bill Pardue & Barbara Mitchell	13
Matthew Schuss & Charlene Webber-Schuss	18
Robert & Chinanit Kershner	26
Senen & Alison Baguio	30
Daniel & Louise Riddell-Kaufman	30



Family News

Our Congregation strives to offer love and support to fellow congregants in times of joy and celebration, as well as in times of trouble and sorrow. One of the ways we do this is to let the congregation know your news. Please let us know if there is a simcha you wish to share (or know someone else's that they are willing to share), or a wish of encouragement or condolence that can be shared. You can send this information to shalomcbi@aol.com to be included in the Shofar.



Heartbreak, Help & Hope

Our focus over these past weeks are the Ukrainian people, the War, and how we may help. Every day brings heartbreaking, horrendous news and images of the elderly, the children, the newborns, the refugees, and the dead. 55 children an hour become Ukrainian refugees.

A measure of hope and help for the brave resistance of the Ukrainians. Rabbi Leah has been diligent in documenting and distributing information about on the ground organizations and sources for us to contribute our funds. So if you haven't yet seen any of these, here's a brief re-cap from her and other sources.

IsraAID-More than 270,000 have entered Moldova, a country of 2.6 million people. 89% are women and children. IsraAID's team has opened shelters in the country's capital and on the border, supporting women and children with blankets, hats, and socks, children's activities, resilience kits, and specialist post-trauma support. It also launched Mobile Medical Clinics.

https://secure.givelively.org/donate/israaid-us-global-humanitarian-assistance-inc/emergency-support-for-ukrainian-refugees?utm_source=moldovaupdate5

Forward Jewish Newspaper Lists many varied organizations with different focus and geographic areas to make a donation.

<https://forward.com/fast-forward/483037/how-to-help-ukraine-jewish-community-odessa-dnipro/>

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society/HIAS-Welcome the Stranger, Protect the Refugee

HIAS helps facilitate the application process for the most vulnerable refugees who can resettle in countries around the world. In the U.S., it works with local social service organizations to welcome refugees and help them integrate into their communities and build new lives. <https://act.hias.org/page/6048/donate/1>

Razom-Means "together" in Ukrainian. It offers Medical Supplies and Relief for Ukrainians. <https://fazomforukraine.org>

Global Giving- connects nonprofits, donors, and companies in nearly every country in the world. Donations support the most vulnerable Ukrainians, especially children.

<https://Globalgiving.org>

Center for Disaster Philanthropy-
Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Recovery Fund
<http://disasterphilanthropy.org>

UNHCR-The United Nations Refugee Committee-over 3 million Ukrainians have now fled. UNHCR is on the ground in Ukraine and neighboring countries to protect and assist people forced to flee.

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/ukraine-emergency.html>

I-HELP

We hosted 15 men on Sunday, March 6, with a Chinese dinner provided by the Lambourne Institute for Life Mastery. Lorraine and Hugo Gerstl and Judy Levin bagged the breakfast items provided by the Religious School in our kitchen. Charlene and Matthew Schuss prepared the lunch at their home. Nancy and Barry Rund helped set up, serve, and get the ovens going! Thank you Social Action Team!

Arlene Krebs, Social Action Trustee
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Mark Your Calendars for this Virtual Conference, April 11-13th, just before Passover! Some of the sessions align with our discussions at the "White Supremacy Here & Abroad" event that we recently hosted. You can participate via interactive sessions, focusing on Justice and Equity • Democracy and Voting Rights • Antisemitism and Hate • Racial Justice • Civil Discourse • Criminal Justice Reform • Israel and World Affairs • Civic Engagement

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Torah Connections:

Vol. 167 April 2022, 5782

By Michael L. Waxer

Interesting Question

Recently I was asked by a Christian friend, if it doesn't make more sense to atone for one's sins by believing in a Messiah, whom you can just incorporate into yourself, versus the Jewish sacrificial laws, where you bring a ram or a bull and burn it on the altar. Essentially this question asks, aren't many of the Jewish laws outdated, and isn't the Christian ideology superior?

This question brought so many thoughts into my head, for I suppose I never equated those two 'choices'. I did not answer that question, but I did ask (in the traditional Jewish response of answering a question with a question), ***'What do you believe is the Jewish mission in this world?'***

My understanding of the Jewish mission, is that we are partners with HaShem (God) in 'tikkun olam', often translated as 'repairing the world', or 'completing creation'. More specifically, ***thru the mitzvot we are able to elevate ordinary things and actions, making them holy.*** In this way we become closer to HaShem, and fulfill this directive:

"You shall be holy to Me because I, HaShem, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be My own." (Leviticus [Vayikra] 20:26)

Going back to the sacrificial laws, an important fact to be aware of is that the Hebrew word for these, ***corban***, means ***'to draw closer'***. Further, these laws were transmitted to the Israelites shortly after both the Exodus from Egypt and the incident of the golden calf. Both of those events involved some aspect of this human weakness, of worshipping animals. Remember, the ten plagues were designed to clearly break down the hierarchy of Egyptian 'gods', one by one, to teach humanity that ***we are not to worship animals.***

The laws of ***corban***, offering animals, was partly to address this weakness of humanity, that not only are animals not to be worshipped but that they are one of many things that can be elevated to draw closer to God (HaShem). Our Sages teach us that if it were not for the incident of the 'golden calf' then there may not have been these laws to sacrifice animals, as the people would have been able to maintain their higher spiritual state.

Perhaps more pertinent, however, is that the sacrificial laws can be seen as a methodology to have gratitude, where you are required to give up something of yours... a possession, time, thought... that can reconnect us to those things that are beyond the physical. Our soul (***neshama***) is beyond the

physical, as is its connection to ***every other neshama***, and its connection to HaShem. The ***'shma'***, 'Hear Israel, HaShem is God, HaShem is one', gives us clarity of the connectedness of things.

Today, since the first and second temples were destroyed, prayer has taken the place of the animal sacrifices. An observant Jew will dedicate regular time each day to say prayers, and make blessings. ***These moments in time, making a blessing before an ordinary physical act (eating, waking up in the morning, etc.), connect us to HaShem in a strangely profound way.***

The concept of Shabbat, the one day a week set aside from the others, is a gift from HaShem that teaches us that ***'time' can be made Holy***. Similarly, ***when we take a moment to bless something, we have elevated that thing, or that action, and added holiness to it.***

This is the job of the Jewish people, to elevate the physical world, to make it holy. When HaShem disbursed people after the building of the Tower of Babel (discussed last month), we learned that HaShem created seventy archetypical nations. Each nation has its mission, its strengths and its weaknesses.

Christianity, which has been successful in introducing the Jewish God, the God of Abraham, to virtually all cultures on every continent, presumably has its 'mission', as one or more of the seventy nations. Think of the 70 nations like a body, and in this metaphor the Hebrew nation is ***the heart***. Some would place Christianity as the right arm, with traits of strength and order.

Jews, perhaps 1/3 of 1% of the world's population, or 0.3%, have a unique mission, given to them by HaShem, and it is covenantal. The Torah instructs us on what that mission is: ***Thru the mitzvot, HaShem has given us the tools to elevate the physical world and to make it holy, and HaShem wants us to be holy.***

One last comment on this word ***'holy'***, since it may conjure up in your mind that it means to discard the physical, that holiness is achieved thru deprivation. That could not be further from the truth! HaShem created this physical world for us to be in it, and He wants us to elevate the items in it; ***things, actions, and time itself.***

Judaism teaches us that we achieve holiness thru participating fully in the physical world. The physical and the holy are connected, and it is how we interface with it that makes the difference. It is this elevation of the ordinary that lifts us up, as well as our communities, and ultimately all of creation.

This Torah Connection is the sole responsibility of the author and specifically does NOT necessarily reflect those of the Board of Trustees of CBI, CBI, its membership, Reform Judaism, or Judaism. Please send any comments to the author at: mlwaxer@sbcglobal.net.

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Chartered in 1954 as the Jewish Community of the Monterey Peninsula, Congregation Beth Israel today serves the spiritual, educational, and social needs of Jews on the Peninsula. We derive programming and administrative strength from our affiliation with the Union for Reform Judaism and offer traditional programming to meet the needs of most Jews on the Monterey Peninsula. The Congregation sponsors weekly worship services on Shabbat evening and Shabbat morning; observances of all holidays and festivals; and formal educational programs from toddler through adult. We operate our own school on weekend mornings and midweek afternoons, and we also maintain a Judaic library.

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Parshiot

April 2, Tazria
T: Leviticus 12:1-13:59
H: II Kings 4:42 – 5:19

April 9, Metzora
T: Leviticus 14:1-15:33
H: II Kings 7:3-20

April 16, Passover Shabbat
T: Exodus 33:12-34:26
H: Ezekiel 36:37-37:14

April 23, Passover Yizkor
T: Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17
H: Isaiah 10:32-12:6

April 30, Achrei Mot
T: Leviticus 16:1-18:30
H: Ezekiel 22:1-19