### **Congregation Beth Israel**

Tevet-Shevat 5783
January 2023

## **SHOFAR**



Monthly Newsletter of the Monterey Peninsula Jewish Community www.carmelbethisrael.org



## Linda Hirschhorn In Concert at CBI!

Supported by the Rachael Sammet Cantorial Music Fund, internationally renowned musical artist and composer, Cantor Linda Hirschhorn, will perform at Cong. Beth Israel on Saturday, January 21, 2023,

at 7:30 pm. Cantor Hirschhorn will also lead a vocal workshop at CBI that Saturday afternoon from 2:30-4 pm.

A vibrant and energetic performer, Linda Hirschhorn writes songs in Hebrew, Yiddish and English, adapting liturgy and poetry and creating folk songs and protest songs. As a lover of Talmud who majored in philosophy and a singer-songwriter who founded Vocolot, the first Jewish women's *a cappella* group, Hirschhorn's melodies evoke the diversity-withinunity found in our sacred texts and embody harmony and coexistence in action, so vital for our community.

We hope that all of you will join us for a wonderful musical evening with Linda Hirschhorn. For those of you who love to sing or aspire to sing but need a little nudge, don't miss Linda's workshop on Saturday afternoon.

Tickets are \$25.00 (no one turned away for lack of funds)—one ticket admits you to both the concert and the workshop. Contact Abby at CBI to purchase tickets: <a href="mailto:shalomcbi@aol.com">shalomcbi@aol.com</a> or 831-624-2015.

This concert is sponsored by the Rachael Sammet Cantorial Music Fund and your generous donations.



# "Finding a Spiritual Path" guided by Rabbi Jeff Schulman

Please hold the dates: Jan 18, 25 and Feb 1<sup>st</sup> from 7:00 pm to 8:15 pm with schmooze time

afterward for a class and a series of conversations on "Finding a Spiritual Path," guided by Rabbi Jeff Schulman.

I remember my teacher saying that a good question is worth more than a bunch of mediocre answers. I believe a spiritual path isn't about answers, it's about questions, questions that are roomy enough to live within. We're called to hold and love the questions. Find ways to be open to them. Understand how we're shaped by them. We come to know that they've become the underlying stories of our lives.

What kind of questions? For example, what gift is waiting for me? Does love ever end? What is the work I was born to do? We might believe these questions would be answered over time. Instead, we are continually being turned upside down. We're invited to look deeply into an ocean of ongoing meaning.

We'll be guided by what we hold within, what we believe, by our sacred texts and the modern commentaries of our lives. We'll bring our fullest selves, Torah and midrash, music, and silence into our conversations. No Hebrew knowledge is required.

Please join us on this journey.



# From the Rabbi's Desk...

Always at the start of the new secular year, just like on Rosh Hashanah, I reflect on how our congregation is evolving and consider what changes might

benefit Congregation Beth Israel. Overall, we are a healthy congregation but tweaking our programs and activities might serve us well.

With my mom's passing last month (may her memory always serve as a blessing) I have been hypersensitive to how we support each other during challenging times. I received dozens of cards and emails and phone calls offering condolences. So many of you made donations to CBI in mom's memory. Julie Chase even sent us a Junior's Cheesecake. Susan and I appreciated all of you who reached out to us, being supportive in our time of mourning.

Last month another long standing CBI member died. I watched as Bobbie Ehrenpreis was showered with care from her Chavurah and close friends. Again, she received cards and calls and visitors. Many brought food so that she would not have to worry about cooking for herself or having enough desserts for people attending the evening minyan services.

Well done CBI following my mother and David Ehrenpreis' passing. My concern though is for those people who are not so well connected to our congregation. Those not in a Chavurah or those who have not yet made many friends in our congregation who might not get the support that they need. I am thinking about people who may be struggling with health issues or a loss in their family. My fear is we are not ready to help those individuals or families to the best of our abilities.

Years ago, we had an established caring committee. When Covid first shut everything down we created a phone calling group that reached out to many of our members. We've always had a handful of individuals who offer to drive people to doctor's appointments or attend a shiva minyan following a death. But again, we can do better.

Maybe it is time to reestablish our caring committee. Maybe we can make sure that every CBI member is part of a Chavurah, or at least a group that will offer support in times of need. Already we are trying to strengthen our younger families by creating support groups within Hesed Academy, our religious school. A number of our members are already active in a CBI Chavurah. We have a couple of CBI book groups that meet monthly. Some of our members play in different Mahjong games weekly. Maybe it is time to create a knitting group, a bridge group, a Yiddish speaking group or...? Let me know your ideas and if you are ready to help create a new Chavurah or other activity group. It just takes one person to take a leadership role and invite a few friends to join them. Maybe we can host a bridge group or mahjong game or knitting group in what will soon be our member's lounge.

As your rabbi, I want to be as supportive as possible when one of our members is struggling. Please let me know when you need some assistance. Let me know when you or a family member is in the hospital. Let me know if you have suffered a loss. If you allow me and others to assist you, you allow us to perform a real Mitzvah. In so doing we become more than just members of a synagogue, we become a family.

This secular New Year, I hope and pray our congregation feels like an extended family to all our members. Please help me create the CBI family.





## Message From Cantor Alisa

Dear Congregants,
There is a beautiful Jewish teaching that the light of the human soul is the "Lamp of God." The message of the Hanukkah lights is to continue to keep that light burning through the

darkness of these winter nights, to remember that even when we don't feel it, that light exists within us, like a hidden flask of oil waiting to be discovered. It's the light of hope, of endurance, and freedom—a light that no one can take away. It's often that we most discover that quality of light in the darkest and most challenging of times. And it's how we know why we must never lose faith, never give up.

At CBI we kindle that light for each other. I experience its warmth in so many ways: at Shabbat services, Torah study, and lifecycle gatherings; among our amazing staff who make me feel blessed every day; at Hesed Academy when our K-1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> graders sing out in full voice and when students sound out their Hebrew letters and ask the most amazing questions; as we rebuild our B'nai Mitzvah Program as a family endeavor, creating a culture of support for our students within the classroom and a support network among their families; and when I witness the new found confidence among these students who emerged from the first of our three scheduled Shabbaton for the year feeling reassured, loved, and excited about their b'nai mitzvah journeys.

I watch our Aleynu teens exchange incredible kindness as they continue to bond and engage in thoughtful conversation, grounding in Jewish teachings in a forever changing world, opening my eyes, and igniting my hope each time we meet. I witness this light when congregants volunteer their skills and take the initiative to impact our community in positive ways. This light sustains and inspires me and why I feel grateful to be a part of this community.

And then there is light to look forward to. **On January 21**st, we welcome special guest, renowned composer and chorus director **Cantor Linda Hirschhorn**, who will give a singing workshop in the afternoon and perform in concert that evening at CBI. Linda in concert is a gift not to be missed. And on the evening of **Feb 4**th, you can join us for a mystical **Tu B'Shevat seder** as we celebrate the New Year of the Trees with **Rabbis Jeff Schulman and Leah Novick**.

One small light can dispel a room full of darkness. May we remember that each of us has the capacity to bring light to others. May we find ways to create the world we wish to live in here at CBI. These winter nights, may we keep faith and hope alive by reaching out to each other, remembering that we are never alone. May we walk through our doors at CBI and be met with kindness and a warm welcome, inviting individuals to join us if they are by themselves. May we find illumination in the darkness, discovering the hidden vial of oil within, and by the warmth of its light, may we feel compelled to share it with others.

With Blessings, Cantor Alisa



Cantor Alisa's poem, *If My Struggle Were an Angel*, has been published on the Ritualwell website.

Mazel tov, Alisa!

You can read this beautiful writing on page 10 or here:

https://ritualwell.org/ritual/if-my-struggle-were-an-angel/



### **Hesed Academy**

Are we already halfway through our Hesed Academy year? So many moments of learning have been shared along with fun cultural activities. Last month we even cooked

Latkes with Larry Solow as we learned about Chanukah treats.

This month our specialists will share another art project with the students, more value-based stories, and singing with Cantor Alisa. We will not hold classes on January 1 or January 15.

Some students are arriving late and some are leaving early. I know that our kids have busy schedules. Arriving a few minutes before our 9:30 start time allows students to enter their classroom without disrupting the start of the school morning. Please try to have the students come on time and not leave until the end of class at 12:30 whenever possible.

We continue to provide bagels and either apples or oranges for snack every week. Most of your kids also LOVE cream cheese! Some of our parents have been helping at drop off time to prepare the snacks. You are always welcome to join us in the kitchen to assist in snack preparation.

We are working on creating a member lounge. It will be a great place for parents to hang out, maybe enjoy some coffee, and just visit. This lounge will also be available to our students on weekdays when they are waiting to meet with Cantor Alisa for tutoring. Thank you to everyone who has made donations in memory of my mother that will support this project.

Starting this month, Services the first Friday of the month will begin at 6:00 PM. These services are family friendly, including a Moshe the Monkey story, birthday blessings, and more camp melodies. Please consider joining us for these Shabbat services.

As always, I welcome your calls. Let me know if you have any concerns or questions about what is happening in our classrooms. I am in the office Tuesday-Friday and happy to meet with you in person or talk over the phone. I hope everyone continues to remain healthy during the winter season when colds and flu seems to spread easily. Please keep your students home if they are not feeling well Sunday mornings.

Thank you for supporting all that we do at Hesed Academy.

Rabbi Bruce Greenbaum



# Adult Biblical Hebrew Class

If you have not yet joined us, you are missing a fun hour of learning on Wednesday afternoons from **4:00-5:00 pm**. Each week we read and translate a few verses from the book of Genesis. We are still studying the first chapter and learning a lot about the challenges of translating Hebrew. Each verse brings more understanding and light to our Torah. Call Rabbi Greenbaum to join this ongoing class. It is never too late to start learning! This month we will only be meeting on **January 4, 18, and 25.** 



### **Lunch with Our Clergy**

This month join Rabbi Greenbaum when he leads the discussion on **Thursday, January 5 at noon** at Baja Cantina, located about a mile east of CBI. This month the discussion will focus on "The challenge of dealing

with extremists." Liberals complain about the conservatives and conservatives complain about liberals. In reality, it is the "far left" and the "far right" that threatens all of us. Both groups have their share of Anti-Semites, once we accept that it is not the majority on either side of the aisle, but really the extremists that are a threat to Jews, Israel... how should we respond to the extremists? Come prepared to 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 \$20.

# SI-ABBAT

Starting on the first Friday this month, January 6, and the first Friday night of each month, the service we designate as "Family Shabbat" will include more children friendly songs, birthday blessings, and a Moshe the Monkey story in place of a sermon. Services will begin at 6:00 pm allowing more young families to join us. In the past many of our older members have found Family Shabbat to be their favorite service. We hope everyone will join us at 6:00 PM the first Friday each month for our uplifting Family Shabbat services. On the other Fridays of the month, the service starting time will be 7:30 PM.



### Se'udah Shelishit

Let's enjoy the wonderful tradition of gathering and enjoying a third meal (Se'udah Shelishit) on Sabbath afternoon, just before the end of Sabbath. Our immediate past president Dan Nussbaum would like to continue this tradition at **4:00 pm** on Saturdays, **January 7, 14 and 21**. Each afternoon will begin with a light nosh (bring something tasty to share with others) and socializing followed by some study (learning!) and ending with Havdalah.

We will meet at CBI in person and finish by 5:30. Each session we will study a business ethics case, each structured to generate shared conversations and opinions. Dan will post the cases prior to each meeting so that those participating can review and prepare for the session. Please join us for these Shabbat afternoon gatherings in our CBI social hall.



# BEST YEARS Tour of Don Ricketts Lab

Best Years will visit Doc

Ricketts Lab on **January 12 at 2 pm**. Managed by the City of Monterey, and better known as Pacific Biological Laboratories (PBL), a docent led tour is planned. The lab was originally owned and operated by marine biologist and pioneering ecologist Edward Flanders Robb Ricketts (1897-1948), the best friend and collaborator of writer John Steinbeck.

Ricketts provided the model for the several "Doc" characters in Steinbeck's fiction, including the novel *Cannery Row.* The Lab was where much of Ricketts' and Steinbeck's literary and philosophical vision germinated and grew.

Pacific Biological Laboratories (PBL) is located at 800 Cannery Row, just a block from the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Please call the CBI office to make a reservation. If you wish to carpool, we will meet at CBI at 1:30 to allow for time to park on Cannery Row. Cantor Alisa will be accompanying the group.



# Join Us For Community Shabbat Dinner!

Join us for 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 6:15 pm on Friday, January 27. 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 at 7:30 pm, if you wish to attend.

Call or email the office for reservations to enjoy our lovely community Shabbat meal. Cost is \$18.



CBI Book Club

Dear Jewish Book Clubbers,

IMPORTANT: You must be fully vaccinated and boosted against Covid-19 in order to attend Book Club.

Here are our next four dates and book selections:

\_\_\_\_\_

January 10, 1:30 pm, home of Suellen Rubin. Book -- PEOPLE LOVE DEAD JEWS by Dara Horn

February 14, 1:30 pm, home of Laela Leavy. Book -- MORE THAN I LOVE MY LIFE by David Grossman

March 14, 1:30 pm, home TO BE DETERMINED. Book -- ONE TWO THREE by Laurie Frankel

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Please join us on **Saturday February 4th at 5:00 pm** for a special community Seder and celebration of Tu b'Shvat (the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Shvat), the festival of the New Year of the Trees. Tradition teaches that every tree

celebrates its birthday on that day.

Tu b'Shvat renews our relationship with ancient and contemporary wisdom, the natural world, and the seasons. The day invites us to take more meaningful steps into a deepening relationship with spiritual ecology, and to explore what we can learn from the trees.

And it brings us into alignment with the mystical Tree of Life; the flow of Divine energy that is revealed in both the physical world and within our own lives. The Kabbalistic Seder will be co-led by Rabbis Leah Novick and Jeff Schulman, and Cantor Alisa Fineman.

## amazon.com

A simple way to support our synagogue and it doesn't cost a thing!

- In your internet browser enter amazonsmile.com
- Select CBI as your selected recipient
- Every purchase you make sends dollars to CBI



# Coming soon--the CBI Members' Lounge!

In memory of Diane Greenbaum, Rabbi Bruce's mother and a longtime supporter of Congregation. Beth Israel, we are excited to create a new members' lounge within CBI. It's a cozy, intimate space—a place to chat with a friend, relax while your kids are in religious school, enjoy a cup of coffee and a good book, do homework (or chill on your phone) while waiting for b'nai mitzvah tutoring, play mahjongg or bridge, meet up for a thought-provoking discussion—the possibilities are endless—it's up to you!

Send us your ideas and suggestions while we prepare the space for your use. We plan to repaint, decorate, and install an operable window for improved air flow. From day one, there will be a coffee maker, board and card games, and a free book exchange.

We hope you will join us in yet another step in making CBI a warm and welcoming space. Please contact us to share your thoughts: Susan Greenbaum, greenbaumcarmel@sbcglobal.net, and Charlotte Salomon, Dir., Membership Development and EngagementCharlotte@carmelbethisrael.org.

### Please Note Our New CBI Office Hours

Tuesday – Friday 9 AM – 5 PM and by appointment



Mark your calendars! CBI's Annual Talent Show returns on Saturday evening, March 18 for a terrific evening of entertainment, food, and fun for the entire family!

Calling all current and aspiring singers, dancers, comics, musicians, and performers of all stripes--let us know if you will join us on CBI's stage--all ages and talents welcome.

And, this year, for the first time, there will be prizes!

For more info and to sign up, contact Bob Fenton at <a href="mailto:lawbobman@aol.com">lawbobman@aol.com</a> or 818- 646-3972 or Charlotte Salomon, Dir. of Membership Development & Engagement, at <a href="mailto:charlotte@carmelbethisrael.org">charlotte@carmelbethisrael.org</a> or 925-519-4477.



# Thank You to Our Oneg Hosts for the Month of December

December 2nd - CBI

December 9th – Friends of Bobbie & David Ehrenpreis – In memory of David

December 16th – Bee Epstein-Shepherd in loving memory of her mother Milly Singer

December 23rd – Chanukah Party Dessert Potluck December 30<sup>th</sup> – CBI

Please consider hosting an Oneg. You may host in honor or memory of someone special to you or in gratitude or honor of a special occasion or life cycle event. It's easy, it's fun and very much appreciated. Call the CBI office to schedule your Oneg at 831-624-2015. Or call Lois Epel at 831-277-0083 January Dates available: January 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, & 27<sup>th</sup>.



### **CBI Interest Free Loan**

Because of the generosity of an anonymous donor CBI continues to offer interest free loans of 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.







### **Meet Sylvia and Vic Krimsley**

Sylvia was on the West Coast:

I grew up in San Francisco, and we belonged to Congregation Beth Israel, a Conservative synagogue. When I was a teen most days involved an activity at the temple. Mondays and Thursdays were Hebrew school. Wednesday night was junior choir practice. Friday night was Friday Night services. Saturday morning was Torah study and a service in the chapel for the students led by the junior rabbi, followed by joining the adults' service in the main sanctuary and singing in the choir. Saturday nights were often Bar or Bat Mitzvah dinner dances. Sunday was Sunday School.

As an older teen my first employment was working as a Sunday School aide. I attended Hebrew school run by the Jewish Bureau of Education of San Francisco. For two summers I was fortunate to receive a scholarship to Camp Ramah in Ojai. And then there was BBG and Young Judea. I always hoped to find a Jewish husband, who would join me in attending services.

Meanwhile, Vic was on the East Coast:

I was born in Brooklyn Jewish Hospital. From my early childhood I was encouraged to be proud to be a Jew, and my family had a very Jewish feel to it. While Chanukah didn't hold a prominent place until I was older, we always observed a very traditional Pesach, reading the Haggadah cover to cover. When I was eight years old I asked my parents if I could go to Sunday

School, like my older sister did. After we moved to Long Island we joined a Reform temple, where I attended Sunday School, weekly Hebrew School, learned about our history as a people and about the Jewish holidays and traditions, and our family attended High Holy Days services. My sister was in the synagogue's first confirmation class, and I became a bar mitzvah at age thirteen and was confirmed my junior year in high school.

Living in a largely Jewish community, most of my public-school classmates were Jewish. My parents taught me Jewish values, as exemplified by their support of civil rights, always stressing that we had been slaves in Egypt just as black people had been slaves in this country. Helping those less fortunate than ourselves was our duty as Jews. My parents instilled in me the directive to join a synagogue wherever I lived as an adult, as every community needs to know that there are Jews living in its midst, and the synagogue is the most visible symbol of our presence that non-Jews can see.

As I pursued my studies in Lewisburg, PA and Berkeley, CA, my goal was to marry a nice Jewish girl from New York! We met in Berkeley 53 years ago and immediately formed an unending loving bond. Our relationship was b'shert. The two of us have shared our love of Judaism and our love of observing the Jewish holidays and customs.

We moved to Pacific Grove in 1972. When Congregation Beth Israel procured a building as a house of worship and hired its first rabbi in 1979, we joined the temple. It has been our Jewish community ever since. Our children, David and Debbie, have attended religious school here. Vic has served on a number of important committees, including a rabbi selection committee. We have both been, and Sylvia continues to be, on the Worship Committee. We traveled to Israel with a group led by Rabbi and Susan Greenbaum. That led to our taking a b'nai mitzvah class so that Sylvia could finally become a bat mitzvah. (That's another whole story!) We have continued our study of Hebrew, Torah, and Torah chanting to this day, and delight in our beautiful services with Rabbi Greenbaum and Cantor Alisa Fineman. We have made many dear friends and belong to two chavurot. We are so grateful for all of the spiritual and social connections CBI has provided us.



### I-HELP Hosting & A 31st Year

In December, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Hesed Academy children and parents provided breakfast foods and dinner, which included hamburgers on buns, salad, French fries and an array of fruits and desserts. Special thanks to Byrnie Kaplan-Dau, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade lead parent, Julie Schnitzer and family, Jillian and Asher Heisman, Tybe Franklin, Robin Pelc and Alison Hanks-Sloan and family, especially Salvador Sloan who prepared 32 hard-boiled eggs for the breakfast bags.

The Aleynu teens, now experienced "bagel shmearers, sandwich makers, and breakfast and lunch baggers" assisted the 5<sup>th</sup> grade children with these tasks. The kitchen was buzzing with activity, as well as the social hall, where the children marked B for Breakfast, L for Lunch on the bags, and then filled each with the drinks, fruits, eggs, bagels, Danish, napkins, sandwiches, waters, cookies, etc. for the men. We prepared 16 breakfast and 16 lunch "to-go" bags.

Andrew Sisolak has generously provided large boxes of nutrition bars, cookies, chips, nuts and more that the children include in the to-go bags. Thank you so much Andrew!

Barry Rund, a dedicated member of our Social Action Team, offered a lesson on homelessness to the 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Their teacher, Gabriel Lipow-Khalav participated in the dinner service and then joined the men for dinner and conversation.

When the I-HELP men arrived, we formed our greeting circle. After this, we distributed the Holiday Bags of clothing that the men had requested. What a joyful event that was to see their smiles and receive their warm appreciation.

Lorraine and Hugo Gerstel, Barry, Gabriel, the Sloan family, and Carol and Joe Mironov helped "with everything."

It was a wonderful, inclusive I-HELP we hosted that evening!



5<sup>th</sup> Grade and Aleynu Prepare for I-Help

**31 years!** Next Up for CBI hosting is New Year's Day! The Social Action Team will host the men for dinner, breakfast, and lunch. This will mark the 31<sup>st</sup> year that CBI has consistently provided shelter and meals. A great Mitzvah for sure!

We hope that your holidays were healthy, joyous and full of light. We welcome New Year's contributions to our Social Action Fund!

Arlene Krebs, Social Action Trustee <arlenekrebs123@gmail.com>

#### Mark your calendars for CBI's showing of ONLY IN THEATERS on Sunday, February 26



ONLY IN THEATERS, a new film by actor/director Raphael Sbarge, is an intimate and compelling journey taken with the Laemmle family, spanning their challenges, losses, and personal triumphs over four generations. A documentary about indie films and the legendary Los Angeles Laemmle Theater chain is both a cautionary tale about the possible end of an era and a hopeful reminder that the death of movie theaters may have been greatly exaggerated. Cong. Beth Israel is very excited to share this film with our community—details to follow in January!

### If My Struggle Were an Angel

(Inspired by Jacob's Dream)



If my struggle were an angel
I would not think of giving up
I would lean into the darkness
Not lash out as fiercely
Wrestle more gently
Be a little more careful not
to injure its wings
I would lean into its warm-winged breath
Explore more the creature it is
Consider its magnificence— my own struggle an angel!

If my struggle were an angel
I would shift my stance
From gripping to embrace
From resisting to welcome
From running to standing face-to-face
Inviting battle once and for all
Energized, open, persisting
Insisting on knowing its name
Wrestle it to the ground, and keep wrestling until I did
Even until morning

And if my struggle were an angel
That would mean there must be a blessing
I hope I would rally less
Humble myself more
And see God more quickly— that I'm not separate
Not alone, let go of the smaller me
For something much greater
So that along with travail
Sense that love, beauty, and goodness also prevail
And in our tumbling dance, receive
The blessing I need most

--Alisa Fineman 12/6/2022

# Have You Joined Bayachad?

This fall, new CBI members Danny Bernstein and Leslie Steinway started Monterey Bayachad to help our Jewish community connect virtually, in real time, across the county. They chose WhatsApp because it helps bridge iOS and Android users and is a fully encrypted service. Bayachad is a play on the Hebrew word BeYachad which means together. The group already has 30+ participants, including Rabbi Bruce, Cantor Alisa, Binie from Chabad, and many CBI congregants. The group has helped coordinate event participation, rugelach baking and delivery, round challah for Rosh Hashanah, lulav and etrog orders, and more. It's been called a "lifeline" for last-minute requests and problem solving.

We encourage you to scan the QR code with your phone camera or follow this link, <a href="https://chat.whatsapp.com/J924M70NjAkBM5aQFM7">https://chat.whatsapp.com/J924M70NjAkBM5aQFM7</a> wfT and join the group. If you already have WhatsApp on your phone, joining the group is very simple. If you do not, you will be prompted to download the app and can use your phone number to log in. The goal is 100+ members in 2023!





Marce Humphrey-Grossman	12/20
David Benjamin	3
Susan Greenbaum	3
David Kleinman	4
David Rosenberg	4
Maezy Browning	5
Anya Griesser	5
Julianne Leavy	6
Peter Stern	7
Jude Olin Sun-Suslow	7
Mike Vitiello	7
Louis Kaplan	8
Illia Thompson	8
Cheryl Crose	17
Rabbi Leah Novick	21
Sunny Sun-Suslow	21
Andrew Dicus	22
Dan Granoff	22
Catherine Winter	22
Steven J. Packer	25
Christian Katzenberg	26
Eileen Schneider	26
Stanley Semmel	27
Tally Helfont	28
Darcie Kroll	29
Rena Feuerstein	30
Steven River Gurtin	30
Richard Harrit	



Leonard & Sheri Chodosh	20
James & Jill Gabbe	22
Norman & Diana Jacobson	29



### Family News

We mourn the passing of longtime member David Ehrenpreis. May his memory be for a blessing.

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.



Ann Jacobson Joshua Ridless



### Congregation Beth Israel January 2023 Tevet ~ Shevat

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Happy New Year No Hesed Academy 4:30 pm I-Help Men	2	3	4:00 pm Adult Ed. Biblical Hebrew	5 12:00 pm Lunch with Our Clergy @ Baja Cantina - Cantor Alisa	6:00 pm Erev Family Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings also on	10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study Also ZZOOM on 4:00 pm Se'udah Shelishit led by Dan Nussbaum
8 9:30 am Hesed Academy 12:30 pm Aleynu	9	6:30 pm CBI Executive Committee Meets	No Adult Ed, Biblical Hebrew	Best Years 2:00 pm Visit Doc Ricketts Lab – Cannery Row with Cantor Alisa	7:30 pm Erev Shabbat Services also on 2200m	14 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study Also on ZZOOM 4:00 pm Se'udah Shelishit led by Dan Nussbaum
No Hesed Academy	16	7:00 pm CBI Board of Trustees Meets	4:00 pm Adult Ed. Biblical Hebrew 7:00 pm Part 1 "Finding a Spiritual Path" Class & Discussion with Rabbi Schulman	19	7:30 pm Erev Shabbat Services also on OZOOM	21 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study Also on
9:30 am Hesed Academy 12:30 PM Aleynu	23	24	4:00 pm Adult Ed. Biblical Hebrew 7:00 pm Part 2 "Finding a Spiritual Path" Class & Discussion with Rabbi Schulman	26	6:15 pm Community Shabbat Dinner 7:30 pm Erev Shabbat Services with Anniversary Blessings also on	28 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study Also on Zoom
9:30 am Hesed Academy 12:30-5:00 pm Board Retreat	4:00 pm I-Help Women	31	1 4:00 pm Adult Ed. Biblical Hebrew 7:00 pm Part 3 "Finding a Spiritual Path"Class & Discussion with Rabbi Schulman	2	6:00 pm Family Erev Shabbat Services with Birthday blessings also on 2200m	4 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study Also on ZOOM 5:00 pm Tu b'Shvat Community Seder

### **TODAH RABBAH!**

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

#### **UJC Donations**

Dr. Alex & Galena Bordetsky Esther Burshtein Bee Epstein-Shepherd James & Jill Gabbe

Bruce & Susan Greenbaum

Norman & Diana B. Jacobson

Michael & Constance Kean

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### **Torah Connections:**

*Vol. 176 January 2023, 5783*By Michael L. Waxer

#### Miracles

"A Jew who does not believe in miracles is not a realist" (David Ben-Gurion)

Visiting our children in Israel, it becomes easier to see the connection between us and our ancestors. Our three children, all born and raised in the CBI community, chose to make Aliyah, find their mates and to get married, and start their families in Israel. Now, all of our grandchildren, Baruch HaShem, are Sabras, i.e. native born Israeli's. After I don't know how many generations of exile, these new generations have returned to our native homeland.

I often wonder how my grandparents and their parents and grandparents would view this 'return', since they all came over from shtetl's in the Kiev area, near Berditchev in the Ukraine... very similar to 'Fiddler on the Roof', when the authorities decided they needed to harass and get rid of 'their Jews'. As was true for many families, those who came over were very religious, but their children (my parents) struggled with their Judaism, being teenagers during WWII, and needing to reconcile the antisemitism of the Nazis, and the millions who were willing to adopt this frightening mentality.

Like prior generations of Jews, the sense of needing to conceal one's Judaism, yet knowing that one is Jewish, was a constant contrast as my siblings and I grew up. To say we all grew up a bit 'confused' would be an under-statement. Somehow a miracle happened, and our family once again has a foothold in the Holy land.

The Torah gives insight to this concept of 'miracles', and my favorite one is the miracle needed for the young Israelite nation to escape from Egypt. When they left Egypt after the tenth plague, after a short time they became trapped by a body of water. HaShem changed, or allowed Pharoah to change, his heart and to pursue the Israelites to massacre them. So here you have chariots and horses and a powerful army running toward you... and you can see the cloud of dust in the distance, moving toward you, knowing you have only a short time to live.

In a panic the people cry out, and HaShem answers them! That HaShem answers is not the surprising part, because during this leaving of Egypt, HaShem is physically with them, as a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day, so they see God's presence physically move from leading them in front, to moving to the rear, to show He is there to protect them. Yet, the Egyptian army pursuing them still causes the people to panic, and they cry out. Here is HaShem's answer, perhaps the most surprising verse in all of Torah...

"...Why are you crying out to <u>Me</u>?...." (Exodus [Shemot] 14:15, partial, emphasized)

We would expect HaShem to say, 'I hear you, stand back and behold', or something to that effect. Of course the Israelites would cry out to HaShem... they just witnessed the ten plagues, they survived the tenth plague by putting blood on their doorposts as directed, and they are actually seeing HaShem's presence constantly as they are leaving Egypt. Yet, HaShem says, 'Why are you crying out to Me'... who else would they cry out to?

The Kabbalists (Jewish mystics) have interpreted this verse as a key insight: HaShem is telling us in this verse that 'miracles', at least to some extent, have been transferred into the human realm. In other words, we have the ability to invoke certain miracles.

In the Talmud there is further insight, that an individual by the name of Nachshon, takes matters into his own hands and starts to walk into the water. Somehow he 'knows' that something must happen, and so he enters the water. As he walks in, deeper and deeper, once the water is above his nostrils the water splits, dry land appears, and this miraculous escape route opens up. There are even more mystical thoughts that are provided for us to consider....

Our Sages indicate that one possibility is that HaShem coded into each thing He created an ability to expand upon its own 'rules of existence', which He then gave to humans to invoke at necessary times. So, waters can part, earthquakes can occur, mountains can appear... and these unique occurrences can be triggered by us, when they 'must' occur.

Back to the present, Israel is a land of incredible contrasts. A leader in innovation and technology, yet the United Nations (UN) will convene a special session of the Security Council if Israel wants to build a new apartment building in its capital city, Jerusalem. Our historical lands, particularly Judea and Shomron (a.k.a. the West Bank) are thriving with both ancient and new Jewish communities.

Since the failed 'Gaza' experiment, where land was given to a "Palestinian" entity to have a certain amount of autonomy, in the hope that it will lead to a peaceful neighbor, there are now hundreds of rockets fired at innocent Israelis, eco-terrorism and torching of agricultural fields, and encouragement of violence against Jews. It is understandable that there seem to be very few Israelis who continue to believe in the (so called) 'Two-State Solution'.

The bottom line is that most Israeli's do not know what miracle will happen, directly by HaShem, or triggered by one or more people, like the ancient Nachshon, or a combination of both. But they are confident that <a href="when an answer is needed">when an answer is needed</a>, it will be provided, because it 'must' be provided. We are living in the age of miracles, and the evidence is that Israel today is a reality, and there are people from all over the planet who are returning home.

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: <a href="mailto:mlwarer@sbcqlobal.net">mlwarer@sbcqlobal.net</a>.

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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 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. We operate our own school on weekend mornings and we also maintain a Judaic library.

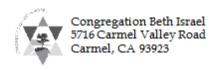
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### **Parshiot**

January 7, Vayechi

T: Genesis 47:28-50:26

H: I Kings 2:1-12

January 14, Shemot

T: Exodus 1:1-6:1

H: Isaiah 27:6-28:13

January 21, Va'era

T: Exodus 6:2-9:35

H: Jeremiah 46:13-28

January 28, Bo

T: Exodus 10:1-13:16

H: Ezekiel 28:25-29:21