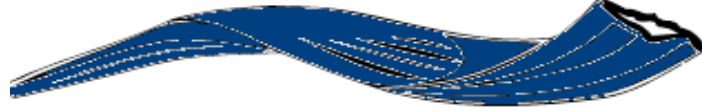


SHOFAR



Monthly Newsletter of the Monterey Peninsula Jewish Community

www.carmelbethisrael.org



Some Outdoor Services Starting this Month

It is with much excitement that we look forward to praying together in person both on **Friday evening, June 4** and on **Saturday morning, June 26**. On **June 4** we will gather at

6:00 PM on the blacktop area below CBI. That evening we will honor our high school Juniors and Seniors as well as our Religious School teachers. While we will preset some chairs creating social distancing spaces, you can also bring your own chairs if you wish. Please register in advance by calling the CBI office at 624-2015 so we know how many people will be joining us. If possible, bring your own copy of Mishkan T'filah, our prayer book. Copies of our prayer book (one per household) can be borrowed from the office in advance of the service. We will also have a few copies available that evening for those who do not yet have a prayer book. Dress warmly or in layers as the evenings can get cold! Because of our covid protocols we will enjoy a kiddish and motzi but no other foods at the end of our services.

On **Saturday morning, June 26** we will enjoy a Shabbat morning service including both reading from the Torah and some Torah study. We will gather at **10:30 AM** on the blacktop area. If you want to participate in assisting leading the service

or chant a few lines of Torah, please call the rabbi to volunteer. Bring your own tallit if you want to wear one as none will be provided by the synagogue due to our covid protocols. Look for future announcements about more upcoming services in person in our CBI backyard.

Please review our latest reopening protocols at <https://carmelbethisrael.org/welcome-back-to-cbi/>



Praying for a Lasting Peace

Dear CBI Members,
As I write this Israel and Hamas-led Gaza continue

to fight. I hope by the time you read this message a true cease fire will have ended the ongoing barrage of rockets fired from Gaza and Israel's powerful response. Only when Hamas decides it is more important to enhance Palestinian lives than attack Israeli civilians will a lasting peace ensue. When challenged about a disproportionate response I remind people that Israel does everything it can to protect their citizens, unlike Hamas leadership who too often used civilians as human shields. It truly saddens me that there are some who will only be satisfied if the same number of Israelis are killed in the ongoing struggle. I also remind people that Israel is the only country I know that uses intelligence to pinpoint enemy targets like missile launchers and Hamas tunnels and then informs their enemy when and where they are going to strike. Israel's goal is to stop the rocket launchers and future attacks by Hamas. The last thing Israel wants to do is harm or kill any (*continued on page 2*)



From the Rabbi's Desk...

Feeling a little down? Dressed in sweats or the same clothes you wore yesterday? Watching too much bad television? Worrying about the extra few pounds you have gained while not getting enough exercise? Wondering what to do to help lift you out of this slump? Have I got some ideas for you!

Now that most of us are vaccinated it's time, not just to get out of the house, but to do something meaningful. The best way to help yourself is by helping others. It feels great to offer a little aide to another person who needs a little assistance. I find myself rejuvenated every Thursday as I end my evening at Abraham's Tent, serving meals to those who might otherwise be missing a hot dinner. Taking just a few hours each week, this simple act simply brings me a sense of contentment and fulfilment. I know I am making a difference in an important way. With the support of a handful of others, we are positively impacting on the lives of dozens of people in Marina every week.

You too can participate in this effort and discover that it benefits yourself more than it helps others. While you are welcome to assist us in preparing the meals, or packaging the meals, or handing out the meals (ask me for the sign-up link) we can also expand the support we offer. While we hand out meals from 4:30-5:30 maybe we can also offer to play music for our guests? Can you volunteer to cut or trim someone's hair? Maybe you can assist someone by helping tune or repair their bike (used by many who live outdoors). If you have a few dozen books already read, perhaps you can create a mini book loan program using the trunk of your car as a mini library? What special talents or gifts might you share with those who are struggling just to survive? Call me and we can brainstorm some ideas.

Is gardening your thing? After this one-year hiatus we are once again working on creating a community garden at CBI. Working together we can grow fruits and vegetables that can be enjoyed by all in need. Once the garden has been built, we will need

volunteers to weed and water regularly. If you have a green thumb or just want to help, give me a call.

Opportunities to volunteer are all around us. I can help you find a once-a-week activity, a monthly gig, or even a one-time program. CBI will certainly need a variety of volunteers for our all-new Jewish Food Festival. Soon you will see announcements about baking as we begin to prepare for our next JFF. The week before and the day of the festival will require dozens of people to help with traffic flow, food runners, and people running the takeout booths.

Whatever you choose to do, helping others, volunteering, and giving of your time will bring a sense of satisfaction and self-worth that we all need. I pray you join me as we cook, teach, garden, perform, aide and assist others and make our hearts and spirits soar. Amen.



Praying for a Lasting Peace

(continued from page 1)

civilians. Meanwhile Hamas has fired thousands of rockets with their sole purpose of killing Israeli civilians. Thankfully, the Iron Dome system created by Israel and the U.S. manages to stop approximately 90% of the rockets aimed at Israeli targets.

Let us continue to support Israel's efforts for a secure and lasting peace. All CBI donations to the Jewish Federations of North America's emergency relief fund will be matched by one of our members. Now is the time to support the JFNA who is striving to assist victims in this latest conflict. Of course, donations to the Magen David Adom or other Israel agencies are also appreciated.

Join me in prayers for peace for everyone in Israel and Gaza.

Rabbi Bruce Greenbaum



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

We are moving in the right direction so that congregational life can return

to some sense of normalcy, after a very stressful past year under the COVID-19 lockdown regime. I want to offer my personal thanks to Sandy Leader and her reopening committee for their thoughtful work in fashioning post Covid rules for inside meetings and for outside meetings. Also, the Rabbi and I sent everybody a note a few weeks ago, and it is worth repeating the main points:

Our approach has been to take a middle path, neither too cautious nor too optimistic, knowing that over time we will see changing norms because the outside world is changing. For now, whenever there is a choice between leaning to caution and leaning to aggressiveness, we have chosen the more cautious path. Our primary concern remains keeping our members healthy. We know that we are in a dynamic environment and that things change on a weekly basis, as the state and county change their rules, and as the CDC changes its guidance. So far, all changes have been in the direction of progressive openness, and I expect that trajectory to continue. We have already had in-person and multi-access events (study groups, concerts, executive board meeting,...), we will have an outdoor, Friday night service on June 4th, and we will increase the pace as we move forward. We are taking the lessons-learned from these experiments and applying them to other CBI reopenings. These will form an important part of how we move forward on other post-COVID protocols.

A wonderful example of our multi-access events was the beautiful Shavuot concert by our Cantorial soloist, Suzanne Guinane, and her accompanist, Pauline Troia. Thank you to you both.

Our Religious School finished a creative year, a year under very challenging circumstances, with an in-person last day event, attended by students, teachers, and parents. Kol Hakavod (well done!) to our Religious School Director, Suzanne Guinane, all the teachers, all the parents, and our students.

I am actively seeking everybody's input and questions on this reopening matter. While we are "tightening our doors" for security reasons, our doors always remain open to your thoughts, ideas, concerns and suggestions. Please reach out to me or to the Rabbi with your thoughts.

Cara Lieb, our Immediate Past President, is chairing the Board of Trustees nomination committee. If you are interested in serving our congregation and the larger Jewish community, please let her know of your interest. I can assure you that serving on the board is always a rewarding experience.

We have made great strides in enhancing the security of our building and congregation. Julie Chase, our executive director, along with the members of the security and safety committee, and our Administrative Assistant, Abby, have completed all but one of the planned projects, and they have accomplished this with professionalism, grace, and frugality. Look at the front door, which has not only been refinished and more beautiful than ever, but now has built-in (and not easy to see) security enhancements. We have two more physical projects, namely the placement of sturdy, beautiful planters in front of the entrance, and new outdoor lighting, that are underway. Well done to all!

Wishing that you and your loved ones all Stay Safe, and looking forward to seeing you in-person in the near future.

Dan

Dan Nussbaum

(C) (831) 324-3228



From Our Cantorial Soloist and Director of Education....

Our School Year in Review

In some ways it's hard to believe our Virtual School Year is over. At the same time, it feels like we began learning together, virtually, 500 years ago in COVID time.

We embraced our Virtual Learning Pods, made friends with technology to enhance our teaching and engagement of our students and families with Power Point lessons, adapted books to on-line learning, reinforced learning with virtual games, *aleph bet* yoga, cooked and ate together, prayed, sang, giggled, laughed, supported each other and most importantly built Sacred Community with our families. We purchased, cooked and delivered dinner and breakfast to I-HELP for 4 months and celebrated *Chanukah* and *Purim* with Drive Through Events and Dr. Seuss ZoomShpiel.

Our students in K/1 studied Bible Stories, Gr 2 studied Jewish Holidays, Gr 3/4 Studied Life Cycles and Gr 5 studied Jews Around the World. Our students in Gr 6/7 studied the Meaning of Prayer, demonstrated their understanding of *Keva* and *Kavannah* by writing their own for *Yotzeir Or* and *Ahavah Rabbah* and leading us beautifully in our Virtual *Shabbat* morning services on 5/1; continued to learn with our Twin School *Neve Amram* in Dimona, Israel and wrote the following verse to *Am I Awake/Bar'chu* by Noah Aronson:

We are thankful for our ancestors
Who allow us to be here today,
We stand in strength, love and hope,
Helping each other through hard times.

This year our students in Gr 3 began their formal Hebrew education and our students in grades 4-8

continued in *Kitah Bet* through *Kitah Dalet*. We began Virtual *T'filah* each week with Hebrew Through Movement and ended our day with prayer and song. Our Hebrew students wrote the following verse for *Am I Awake/Bar'chu* by Noah Aronson:

I know you're watching and listening
I know you're there helping me
We would like for COVID to go away
So we can live safely together someday

Our *Aleynu* Students explored Social Justice, Loving and Nurturing Ourselves through Virtual Art with Paul Richmond and participated in [#getwellworld](#) drawing pictures that were uploaded to a website to support patients and their families with COVID and our front line workers, Virtual Cooking with Paige Weisskirch, provided dinner and breakfast to I-HELP one month, journeyed through the holidays designing our own *Seder Plate*, discussed our harvest for *Shavout* and what the 10 Commandments might look like today.

We have learned a lot from this year and are looking forward to incorporating many of the positive things we have learned and experienced into our planning for next year. I am very excited about our many opportunities and looking forward to sharing them with our families.

Our first Drive Through Event: [#chanukahgiftbagsandgelt](#)



See more highlights of our Religious School year on page 12.



Lunch with the Rabbi

Let's continue meeting in person for our Lunch with the Rabbi in CBI's back yard! Hopefully, enough of us have been vaccinated, that we can meet outside safely in person by safe distancing on the blacktop area below our CBI building. If you are healthy, please join us on **Wednesday, June 2 at noon**. Bring your lunch and join Rabbi Greenbaum for a one hour discussion on "Fair Fighting." When we disagree, how can we do so in a respectful fashion? Why have Jews historically been great debaters? Why is questioning and challenging encouraged in our tradition? How can we help teach others to argue and disagree without coming to blows? Come prepared to discuss and debate! If it is raining, those who are vaccinated are invited to social distance in our social hall with the doors open. Please call the CBI office at 831-624-2015 to RSVP.



GREAT NEWS! The Jewish Food Festival is Back!

Our famous Jewish Food Festival will return for 2021. We were beaten down by the Covid pandemic, but we are coming back! We welcome the excitement and the enthusiasm. And we'll also need the help of our wonderful congregation members, sponsors, and volunteers.

The 2021 Food Festival will, out of necessity, be different from our previous events. We're hoping this will be a transition to return to our full, open, raucous, happy Food Festival for 2022. Mark the date. It's **Sunday, August 22, 2021, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

We will be doing this in the parking area in front of the synagogue building. A clever layout, for which we must thank River Gurtin, will have cars coming down our driveway and circulating counterclockwise

to pass food stations. Our patrons will not have to leave their cars.

Our traditional organization of food booths will, out of necessity, be modified, but your favorites will be there.

Yes, volunteers will be needed. We'll need

- * help with setup tasks.
- * help with running the event from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- * help with traffic management.
- * help with take-down tasks at the conclusion.

We will need bakers! We can't do bake-at-home this year, but we have other days set for baking at CBI. We have limited space and everyone baking must be vaccinated. If you want to volunteer for baking days, contact [Malina at foodfestival.cbi@gmail.com](mailto:Malina@foodfestival.cbi@gmail.com)

Please know that all bakers will need to show proof of a Covid vaccination.

Your help would be most welcome. Interested in volunteering? Please contact Gary Simon GarySimonMonterey@gmail.com or Susan Greenbaum GreenbaumCarmel@sbcglobal.net. Baking? Please contact Malina Breau foodfestival.cbi@gmail.com. Become a sponsor by contacting Abra Teitler AETJN@aol.com

We're back!



CBI Interest-Free Loan

Because of the generosity of an anonymous donor, CBI is now offering interest-free loans up to \$500 for CBI members. 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.



Quietly, Cautiously Re-Opening

Are you feeling safer and are now going “out & about” more easily, with more confidence? Trust so. That is the major reason we’ve decided to re-schedule **“White Supremacy Here and Abroad.”**

Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, November 6th- 5:00-7:00pm in our CBI Social Hall!**



We’re organizing a special in-person discussion with representatives of minority communities and groups which have experienced racial hatred and the impacts of white supremacy. These speakers will join MIIS Professor Jason Blazakis, on exploring far-right extremism and the various white

supremacist movements including the threats of domestic terrorism in our nation.

We’ll serve “heavy” Hors D’oeuvres and wine as we greet and mix with fellow CBI and community members. We are grateful for our_sponsors: Beth Cort, Marlene & Gadi Maier

Look for more information about our speakers and registration in the upcoming CBI news! For now, please mark your calendars!

I-HELP Updates!

Thanks to Malina Breaux and the Board of Trustee members who donated funds to support May’s I-HELP. Malina prepared a great dinner—meatloaf, potatoes, cabbage, salad and dessert—for the 9 Men and 2 monitors in early May. I was there when the food arrived, and the men quickly gathered around the table as enticing aromas filled the kitchen.

And Thanks to our ever-resourceful Sandy Leader, who provided the men’s breakfast of eggs, bagels, juices, coffee, milk and more! The Women’s I-HELP is on pause! The women face many personal issues, and some have found it difficult to shelter in place. The I-HELP Board of Directors determined to suspend the

women’s support services until our county fully re-opens, and the pre-pandemic schedule of rotating churches and food providers can resume.

Some congregations are now, like CBI, slowly re-opening, and I-HELP is working to resume the rotation. For now, the men remain at one nearby Church. All of the men are vaccinated. They would welcome visitors to “break bread” with them at their evening meals.

Our next Men’s Dinner, Breakfast & Lunch support is on Sunday, June 6th. Great thanks to the Carmel Valley Rotary Club for sponsoring this month’s I-Help. Going forward, *Our congregation’s participation is so important and necessary*, so if you can help by cooking a dinner, making a salad, baking some desserts, shopping for breakfast and lunch items, we would all be so grateful. We can reimburse costs-no problems! There are so many ways for you to contribute. Please contact me and we’ll make the arrangements and plan the dates that work best for you.

Arlene Krebs, Social Action Trustee

arlenekrebs123@gmail.com



CBI’s Back Yard

With more people getting vaccinated and with safe distancing and mask wearing, we can now safely gather behind

our CBI building with friends. Invite your Chavurah, or a couple friends to a picnic using our backyard. Many groups have discovered that setting up chairs in a large circle (safe distancing) on our blacktop below our building is a great way to safely visit with one another. There are already some tables and chairs just waiting for you. Some have brought lunches or wine and snacks to enjoy while visiting.

If you choose to use our backyard, please be extra careful in maintaining at least 6 feet from others and wear your masks! Our lower lot is also pet friendly (leashes suggested and please pick up after your dogs) and open every day. Call the rabbi if you want him to stop in for a short visit as well. He’ll even help lead a Chavurah discussion. You are welcome to take advantage of this prime meeting space that allows for safe distancing in a responsible fashion.

Volunteers Needed

CBI needs you!

It is time to think about next year's Board of Trustees. Approximately half of the positions come up for election/reelection at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, August 15 to serve for a 2-year term (2021-2023). CBI needs volunteers to participate in one of the following ways:

Serve on the Nominating Committee

This committee will meet virtually for an hour or two max. The bulk of the commitment is to think about and contact potential Board Members. The slate of officers is due to the Board of Trustees by June 16.

Serve on the Board of Trustees

The Board meets once a month for about 2 hours, in addition to any other duties that are part of each specific position. The following positions are up for election/reelection this year:

Secretary, Social Action, Youth Activities, Interfaith, Membership, At Large, and First Vice President/President Elect (this is a 1-year term, as it is presumed they will take the Presidency in 2022).

If you have any questions about what these roles entail, and/or you are interested in serving on one or both of these committees, please contact Cara Lieb at caralieb@sbcglobal.net or via text at 831-915-3017. Thank you.

Thanks to Suzanne and Pauline for a Great Concert!



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compassionate care with exceptional medicine.**

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Stop by and say hello!

BOARDING

831-318-0306 | 1023 Austin Avenue, Pacific Grove, CA 93950
www.pacificgroveanimalhospital.com



Jewish Food Festival 2021



The Jewish Food Festival has been the signature event for Congregation Beth Israel. No other event or set of events has done more to open the temple to the citizens of Monterey County – Jews and non-Jews alike.

The Jewish Food Festival is also a major fund-raiser that is crucial to maintaining the financial health of the synagogue and its ability to provide support and services throughout the year.

2021 still brings a level of uncertainty to the Food Festival. With the months of planning that are involved in creating the event and no one really knowing what the future holds, the Food Festival Planning Committee has made the hard decision to have a “drive thru” Festival. It is our hope that 2022 we will be able to bring the Food Festival back in its full glory. We hope that as in the past, you will continue to support this amazing event, even in its new form.

Sponsor Benefits	Gourmet \$5000 +	Connoisseur \$2500 +	Foodie \$1000 +	Epicure \$500 +	Chef \$300 +	Sous Chef \$150 +
Booth Sponsorship	*	*				
Logo with Link on JFF Web Page	*	*				
Personalized Sponsor Sign at JFF	*	*	*			
Recognition on Festival Facebook	*	*	*			
Recognition on JFF Web Page	*	*	*	*		
Recognition on Sponsor Poster	*	*	*	*	*	*
Recognition on Festival Order Sheet	*	*	*	*	*	*

Email foodfestival.cbi@gmail.com or Call Malina 831.601.5791 or Abra 831.601.5773 with questions.

I wish to become a sponsor of the 2021 Jewish Food Festival at the level indicated below:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gourmet | <input type="checkbox"/> Epicure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connoisseur | <input type="checkbox"/> Chef |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foodie | <input type="checkbox"/> Sous Chef |

Business/organization for website link: _____

Print Name (Individual or Company)

Signature

Please make your check payable to: Congregation Beth Israel and return with this completed form to Congregation Beth Israel, 5716 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel, CA 93923. Or call the temple office (831-624-2015) if you wish to pay by credit card.

NOTE: Congregation Beth Israel is a 501.c.3. Your sponsorship may be deductible for tax purposes. Check with your accountant.

Jewish Food Festival
Congregation Beth Israel
5716 Carmel Valley Road,
Carmel, CA 93923
831.624.2015



UJC Donations

Rosemary Lande: JFNA
 Barbara Lipman: UJC Donation
 David Sabih & Anna Swartley: In honor of Steve Haas
 David Sabih & Anna Swartley: UJC donation in honor of Dr. Steve & Ann Packer

Cantorial Restricted

Michael & Debora Waxer: in honor of Nina and Grace

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Rosemary Lande: in memory of Harry and Jesse Garfield
 Barry & Nancy Rund:

Carmel Jewish Film Festival Donation

Lester Tockerman

General Donations

Anita Artstein-Dunsay: In memory of Richard Dunsay
 Nancy Callahan: in honor of Robert Taylor Fletcher
 Ellyn Gelson: Birthdays & Anniversaries May 2021
 Victor & Sylvia Krimsley: in loving memory of Evelyn Krimsley, Vic's mother
 Victor & Sylvia Krimsley: in loving memory of Malcom Krimsley, Victor's father
 Keziah Nduro
 Rabbi Leah Novick: in gratitude for filming in the CBI

Sanctuary

Steven & Jennifer Prager: in memory of Marvin Prager
 Andrew Sisolak: in memory of Dr. Marian Lowe
 Andrew Sisolak: in memory of John Randazzo
 Herbert Stern: in memory of Stanley Stern & Marco Berro
 Lester Tockerman: in memory of Golda Rasha & Vicki Tockerman
 Joel & Bonni Weinstein

LeRoy Kohn Adult Education Fund

Michael Drunkman: in memory of Adeline Lieberman Kohn

PJ Library

Hornik Family Foundation: PJ Library program grant



SAVE THE DATE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 2021
The Jewish Food Festival is Back!!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Lori Simon	1	Kirsten Nicholls-Marshall	13
Robert Felthoven	2	Quinn Johnson	14
Steven Neil	2	Andrea Rosenberg	14
Ellen Saxby	5	Lester Tockerman	15
Susan Newton	6	Cade Beitscher	16
Raphael Nissim	6	Lorraine Gerstl	17
Dylan Hinds	8	Nina Grace Harmer	19
Zachary Hinds	8	River Mello	20
Ila Kleinman	8	Megan Felthoven	21
Karen Wiskoff	8	Natalie Sammet	25
Brian Granbery	9	Susan Schwartz	25
Norman Jacobson	12	Cary Stiebel	28
Rachelle Sue Lackman	12	Laurie Benjamin	29
Alan Rosen	12	Lily Goldberg	29
Imogene Speiser	12	Matthew Schuss	29

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Christopher & DeeDee Chambers	1	Richard Gerber & Laurie Kleinman	21
Wendy & Andrew Schmidt	1	Amanda & Joe Mello	21
Peter & Judith Levin	3	Dennis Niekro & Paul Richmond	21
Marc & Shelagh Baseman	5	Paul & Peggy Harmatz	23
Lew Bauman & Jennifer Stone	9	Mira & Shai Nissim	23
Stanton & Joan Schiffer	9	Brian Ellinoy & Rachelle Lackman	24
David Ortiz-Suslow & Sunny Suslow	15	Victor & Rena Feuerstein	25
Samuel & Beryl Levinger	17	Jay & Ruthie Pack	26
Stuart & Leslie Pressman	18	Stephen & Wendie Ryter	27
Rory & Toni Lakind	19	Hugo & Lorraine Gerstl	29
Alan Lefkof & Ann Gordon	20	David & Ila Kleinman	30
David & Gale Feuer Barish	21	Cary & Jana Stiebel	30
Wendy & David Fried	21		



Congregation Beth Israel
June 2021
Sivan ~ Tamuz 5781

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>All CBI services, programs, & classes Accessible online or by phone. Look for links in the weekly edition of CBI this Week via email.</p> 	31 Memorial Day	1	 <p>12:00 PM Lunch with Rabbi in person outdoors</p>	3	<p>4</p> <p>6:00 PM Family Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings – Outdoor In Person Service</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Service on Zoom - Sara & Ava Martin become B'nai Mitzvah</p> 
6	7	8	9	10	<p>11</p> <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services via Zoom</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study - on Zoom</p>
13	14	<p>15</p> <p>7:00 PM CBI Executive Committee Meets</p>	16	17	<p>18</p> <p>7:30 p.m. Erev Shabbat Services Via Zoom</p>	<p>19</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study – on Zoom</p>
20 Father's Day	21	<p>22</p> <p>7:00 PM CBI Board of Trustees Meets</p>	23	24	 <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Anniversary Blessings via Zoom</p>	<p>26</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Service & Torah Study - In Person & on Zoom</p>
27	28	<p>29</p> <p>7:00 PM Worship Committee Meets</p>	30	1 July	<p>2</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Erev Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings Outdoor – In Person</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study – In Person & on Zoom</p>

CBI Religious School

Purim CARnival: Winners of Rabbi's Candy Jar Game



Virtual Musical Passover Seder

All-Star Musical Passover Seder

NEFESH MOUNTAIN RICK RECHT ELLEN ALLARD RABBI JOSH WARSHAWSKY
JOANIE LEEDS SHIRA KLINE ELANA JAGODA ELIANA LIGHT

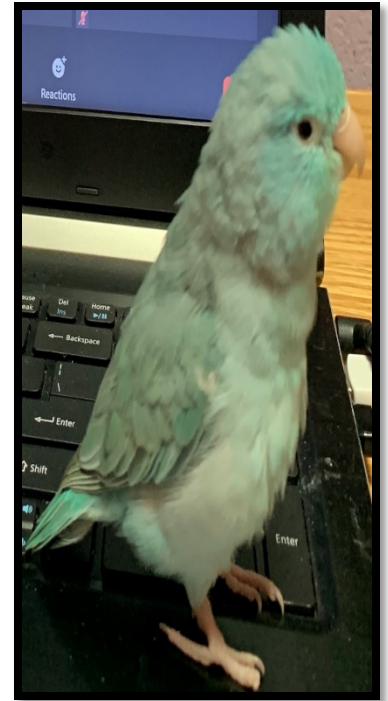
Art With Paul Richmond



#Get Well World Challenge



Our Aleynu Mascot



Finally! Together at Last





Torah Connections:

Vol. 157 June 2021, 5781

By Michael L. Waxer

Two different approaches

Perhaps one of the most mysterious sections of Torah is in the section of Chukat, in the fourth book of the Torah, Numbers, also known as Bamidbar. The idea of 'chukat', which gets entirely lost in an English translation, gets defined as 'decree', yet in the Hebrew understanding it is so much deeper.

You might recall that the 'commandments' in the Torah, which traditionally are counted as 613 total, are divided into 3 general categories. The first category are those laws which our Sages describe that human civilization would have developed on their own, such as the commandment 'to not murder'.

The second group are those statutes which would likely not have developed naturally, but are recognized as **things that make sense**. The typical representative idea here is that of 'observing the weekly Shabbat', wherein people should not work every day, but rather have a weekly cycle of work and rest, of the mundane and the elevated (holy), of the physical and the spiritual.

The last category is the 'chok', a decree that seems to ignore or defy human reason. In our American society we are trained, so to speak, to rebel against ordinances which go beyond normative reason. A classic 'chok' is that decree called '*shatnes*', which forbids linen and wool being worn in the same garment. Although we can ascribe reasons for this, we are instructed to do this because HaShem asks us to, whether we 'agree' with it or not.

Interestingly, the laws of 'kashrut', which are fundamental to Jewish communities as defining which foods can be eaten, and in what combinations... this is also in this category of 'chok', that we are to follow because God asks us to. We may find that science determines it is also good for human health, or it might determine the opposite... it doesn't matter. Observant Jews follow these laws because God tells us to observe them, it is that simple.

In this Torah portion we also find the mystical incident of the poisonous snake bites, which occurred after the people spoke out against HaShem and Moses (yet again). When the people wanted to repent, they went to Moses who then went to HaShem, and he told Moses to fashion the figure of a snake and to mount it on a pole. Those who were bitten and repented were instructed to stare at the snake and they would be healed. Wow, so many questions....

First, why make an image, which could be taken as an idol, since the Torah makes it clear that we are not to have idols of any kind. The Talmud, the Oral Torah, makes it clear this copper snake on a pole had no power of its own,

rather it was HaShem Himself who did the healing. However, we can still wonder why the physical image at all... why the possible confusion?

One answer is that HaShem fashioned a world where humans are partners in creation. As partners, we are to develop tools which can help us to elevate the world. These tools include things such as science. **The purpose, ultimately, of these tools is to help elevate people spiritually**, which includes tools that help us to identify our poor behavior, as well as tools that help us repent. In this story HaShem felt that having the image of the snakes was the proper 'tool' to help people earnestly repent. Through that process, they can advance spiritually.

In Numbers [Bamidbar] 21:9, we get this verse:

"Moses made a serpent of copper and placed it on the pole so it would be that if the serpent bit a man and he would then look upon the serpent of copper, he would live."

The Hebrew words give us additional insight. Moses used copper (*nechoshet*) to make the snake (*nachash*). This leads to a *Midrash* that HaShem cures through a process of '**like cures like**', whereas humans tend to heal using **opposites**. Extinguishing a fire with water is an example of opposites. The process of vaccination uses the HaShem method to cure, where a weakened version of a disease creates the cure, by triggering the production of antibodies.

Further, the pole that Moses mounted the copper snake onto is a '*nes*'. This word means both 'pole', and '**miracle**' (it is what the 'nun' stands for on every dreidel). The medical field of homeopathy is based on this principle of like cures like. In fact, the medical profession in the Western world has adopted this emblem of the snake on the staff to represent the profession.

When we step back and see the big picture it becomes evident that the Torah is filled with specific and general directives that are designed to enable us to **advance spiritually**, and in the process **we elevate this physical world**. This Torah portion of 'Chukat' is filled with ideas that provide insights for us still today. Perhaps the key starting point is to humbly recognize that it is okay to receive information, to embrace and follow it, even though we can't make full sense of it. This insight is one portal toward **spiritual development**.

Life is filled with uncertainty and paradox. We can let this create in us discomfort and stress. Or, we can choose to approach life with a sense of wonder and gratitude. This choice we make, of how to receive information, is one reason we are here.

This Torah Connection was inspired by Rabbi Trugman's 'Orchard of Delights', but 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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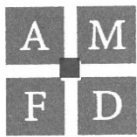
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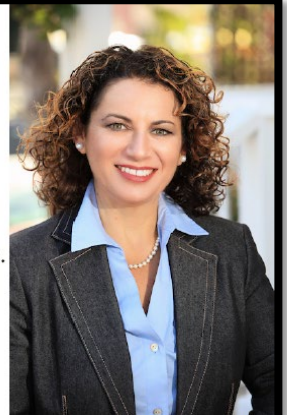
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Parshiot

June 5, Shelach
T: Numbers 13:1-15:41
H: Joshua 2:1-24

June 12, Korach
T: Numbers 16:1-18:32
H: 1 Samuel 11:14-12:22

June 19, Chukat
T: Numbers 19:1-22:1
H: Judges 11:1-33

June 26, Balak
T: Numbers 22:1-25:9
H: Micah 5:6-6:8