Congregation Beth Israel Nisan- Iyyar, 5782

May 2022

SHOFAR



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



Chavurah or Havurah, It's all about Friendship!

Our Adult Education Board trustee Bobbie Ehrenpreis is

organizing a September congregational trip to trip to Israel (it will be a meaningful and joyful trip that you should try and join it!) and in the process running into CBI members old and new who are reaching out to meet others. There exist many synagogue events to share in community life. Covid restrictions have eased — and people want to get together. Bobbie has suggested another way to interact with our CBI family — joining one of our many Chavurot or helping CBI start a new one!

A Chavurah (plural is Chavurot) is a group that meets to share love and joy in Jewish life. Most Chavurot meet once a month, often including food (of course!). A common practice is to take turns meeting at members' houses, the beach, a restaurant, or wherever the group decides. Often that month's host or a selected Chavurah member picks a topic - and there are endless topics including Torah study, discussions of the meaning of Jewish life and prayer, Jewish history, movie or book reviews, guest speakers, childcare issues, holiday parties, singing parties... There is interesting information about the history of the Chavurah movement on the internet. Chavurot form smaller congregations within our larger congregation to promote fellowship and individual participation. It is a place to strongly connect with other members of our community.

(continued on page 6)



The Spirituality of the Sea

We all love the water. Whether it's the water of Monterey Bay, the crystal-clear waters of a tropical reef, the brisk water of a mountain lake or the rolling water of a winding river...we are drawn to the water. Like the call of the Sirens, the water beckons us. What is it about this, the most common substance on earth that has no color, no flavor, no smell, no form, that mesmerizes us so?

Join Rabbi Ed Rosenthal, Founder of Tikkun HaYam, for an interactive, virtual exploration about the "Spirituality of the Sea" on **Wednesday evening**, **May 25 at 7:00 PM** in our CBI social hall.

We learn about the science of the Ocean, and talk about the conservation of the Sea, but rarely (if ever) do we discuss the spiritual essence of this most mysterious of realms. Based on teachings and texts from the Jewish tradition, we will discuss things you never learned in Hebrew School. Join us for this fascinating experience where we will discuss the deepest essence of the Deep.

You can learn more about this important work here: https://www.repairthesea.org



From the Rabbi's Desk...

When was the last time you were overwhelmed with work or responsibilities or the news or...? If you are like me, lately it has been too often. We are being pulled in

too many directions at once. There are family members to worry about; deadlines at the office; and turning on the news reminds us of the problems in the world around us. The war in Ukraine, threats to our climate, inflation and gas prices all are major issues that eat away at us. The stress level seems to be hitting new highs.

Thank God for Shabbat. God knows we need it. Our tradition teaches us each week to take the Sabbath and literally stop all our work. In modern times, for me, this means setting aside all that is causing me stress. In place of watching the news and dealing with synagogue business, I spend time reading and doing a little teaching and praying. I try to have positive interactions with my family that might include phone calls, walks, or even some game playing!

Years ago in a sermon I shared the idea of arriving home just before Shabbat dinner. I talked about taking all the stress and challenges that afflicted me and mentally hanging them on the tree outside my home. I suggested it is best to leave all the problems from work and all the business that tends to run us ragged hanging on the branches on the tree. Someone voiced a concern that ignoring the problems doesn't help. My response was quick and simple. The problems don't go away, but we can keep them from stressing us out during our Sabbath. We need that break from some of those daily pressures that tend to eat away at us. None of us can deal with those constant challenges without a break. That is what Shabbat can be for us, a break from our daily stress.

Something else that I have discovered is that some of the problems seem to have lost their significance following a 24 hour break. Yes, global warming is still there, but maybe I have a little more energy to think about what I can do to make a small change in my behaviors. Maybe I can help others take steps to make a difference. With renewed energy I am

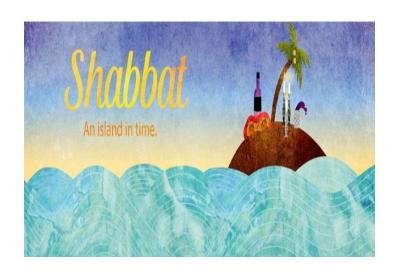
better prepared to take on those challenges still hanging on the tree outside my front door.

I remember as a child in junior high and high school, how much I looked forward to weekends; It meant a break from classes and time to play with my friends. Weekends in college meant less structured time so that we could do whatever activities we chose. Weekends back then were for parties and movies and playing in a pickup football or basketball game. It was a time for outdoor fun or watching movies when it was too cold to be outdoors.

As a Rabbi, I don't get free weekends but I do try to take full advantage of God's gift of Shabbat. I don't do meetings and business calls or sit and work at my office desk. Like Tevye from Fiddler on the Roof, I relish my Shabbat evenings with our Shabbat dinner. I celebrate the chance to "stop and smell the roses." I take a little time to pray and study and enjoy our rich Jewish teachings.

I encourage you to try and make Shabbat your 24 hour break from stress. With all the worries in our lives, you might discover it is worth the energy of making a 'Shabbat break' a central part of your weekly schedule. It might just help lower your level of stress, improve your blood pressure, and be the perfect gift to yourself and your loved ones. Join me in keeping the Sabbath, and letting the Sabbath keep us sane!

Shabbat Shalom.





From our President Dan Nussbaum, President Board of Trustees

I trust everyone had a sweet Pesach. Now we get to count the 50 days until

Shavuot, representing what can only be described as an incredible and fabulous passage from slavery to freedom to receiving the Torah at Sinai. Quite a journey!

Cara Lieb and her Nominating Committee have been developing a slate for elections for next year's Board members. My thanks to Cara and her NomCom team.

Please hold Friday night, June 3rd, open, when we will be honoring Suzanne Guinane, our Cantorial Soloist, and her many accomplishments at our regular Friday night Service. 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. Please plan to attend so that we can be together for this wonderful celebration.

Bev and I have been home for three months, after a medical emergency that had kept us in Rochester from Thanksgiving to late January. One of the things that kept our spirits high in Rochester was the good wishes of our CBI friends and family. Since we have been back, your good wishes and your tangible support have continued to support us, and Bev and I want to take this opportunity to say thank you. We indeed have a remarkable community, and I am grateful for it and for all of you.

I continue to be delighted by the fact that new members continue to join us at CBI. We have at least two welcoming traditions for new members: They are welcomed in writing, in the Shofar in Family News; and Susan Platt brings them a welcoming basket containing Richard Platt's homemade challah, a bottle of wine, the CBI cookbook, Shabbat candles, and depending on the time of year other treats. For example, around the High Holidays, there are apples and honey, while at Hanukkah, there are candles and coins for the children. We also used to include a free voucher to Shabbat dinners, and we will re-start that

tradition. These baskets have been extremely well received and the new members have enjoyed a personal greeting. My personal thanks to Susan for keeping up this tradition and to Richard for his Challah! However, I think there are at least two pieces missing that would make CBI a more "radically welcoming" place. I list these below, but the truth is that <u>I am</u> asking for your ideas on this topic.

- Fostering conversations between Board of Trustee members and CBI members, so that Board members "get to know more about our congregants", thereby, and this is the hopedfor result, bringing us closer together as a community. We are working on a plan to make this happen, and I expect we will be able to roll it out within the next 1-2 months. Please do not hesitate to give me your ideas.
- We also need to provide everyone a chance to join a Chavurah. A bit of background - a Chavurah is a small group of synagogue members, perhaps 8-15 individuals, who meet throughout the year to socialize, to celebrate Jewish life and holidays, to work on volunteer or social action projects, to hold discussions, and so forth. From all that I have heard, those in a CBI Chavurah are very happy with their groups, but we are neither keeping track of who is in which Chavurah, nor have we been forming new ones. I'd like to start repairing this shortfall. So here are three actions I'd like you to take: 1) If you are in a Chavurah, tell Gary Simon (gsimon@stern.nyu.edu) and me (dnussbaum1@gmail.com) that you are; 2) If you are in a havura, and your haverim are willing, tell us who the other members of your havura are; and 3)If you're not in a havura, and are interested in joining one, please let Gary and me know that.

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 May all our efforts to improve security and return to normal interpersonal activities bring us peace

Dan
Dan Nussbaum
(C) (831) 324-3228



From Our
Cantorial Soloist
and Director of
Education
Suzanne Guinane

It was the Passover Palooza!!



The Plague of Darkness



4 Cups of Wine



Relay Race



Nina Harmer





Lunch with the Rabbi

Please join Rabbi Greenbaum this month on Wednesday, May 18 at noon, hopefully at an outdoor table on the patio of Baja Cantina, located about a mile east of CBI. This month the Rabbi invites you to bring your favorite questions for

the annual "Ask the Rabbi Lunch." What are the best ways to support Israel? Is counting the Omer important? When are we going to have more outdoor services? Who is his favorite Patriarch or Matriarch in the Bible? Come prepared with questions and watch the rabbi struggle to answer them. 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 Israel Independence Day Party

Let's party on Israel Independence Day, **Thursday, May 5**. Israel is celebrating its 74th Day of Independence. Let's celebrate together in our CBI social Hall starting at **4:00 PM**. We will enjoy some tasty Israeli treats and thirst quenching beverages as well. Israeli music will add to our gathering as we visit together. While I doubt Israeli folk dancing will break out, one never knows! To RSVP for this Yom HaAtzmaut 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.

Please Note Our New CBI Office Hours

Tuesday – Friday 9 AM – 5 PM and by appointment



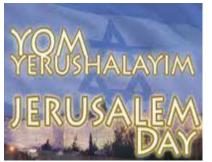
Community Shabbat Dinner is Back!

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, May 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, if you wish to attend.

Call or email the CBI office for reservations to enjoy our lovely community Shabbat meals. \$18 for members and guests and \$10 for children under 13.



Yom Yerushalayim Celebration May 29th

Join us at 10:00

Sunday morning, May 29th in our social hall or on zoom for a special observance of Yom Yerushalayim, celebrating Jerusalem's anniversary. With Galit Mimran, our Israeli guide joining us from her home in Israel, we will enjoy an episode from an Israeli television series (with English subtitles) and then enjoy a discussion led by Galit. We will even have some pita and hummus to enjoy during this 90 minute event. Please RSVP to the CBI office at 624-2015 if you plan to join us as we celebrate Jerusalem.



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 will oversee planting and caring for two more of the garden boxes. Does your Chavurah, or do you want to participate in this community garden? We hope to raise a variety of vegetables and herbs that can be used for IHELP dinners, Abraham's Tent Soup kitchen, our Friday night dinners, and enjoyed by those who like fresh, right out of the ground produce! Two fruit trees have been planted as well. Congratulations and thank you to all those who have helped create our community garden.



CBI Book Club

Dear Jewish Book Clubbers,

IMPORTANT: You must be fully vaccinated and boostered 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.

May 10, 1:30 PM, home of Suellen Rubin Book—*How Sweet It Is* by Thane Rosenbaum.

June 14, 1:30 PM, home of Suellen Rubin. Book—The Magician by Colm Toíbín. Here are the paperback ISBN numbers for ordering:

- ISBN-10: 024197058X

- ISBN-13: 978-0241970584

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.

Chavurah (continued from page 1)

CBI's leadership strongly encourages members to make better connections. It would be great to have some families with children of similar ages to gather – at some events include the children. We already have and can form more groups for the retired folks. While some of the groups stopped meeting because of Covid, now is the time to start up again. Those who form a Chavurah discover they have created a new family, and we all need family

Bobbie has graciously volunteered to serve as our Chavurah coordinator. If you are already in an active Chavurah, please contact Bobbie and make sure she knows about your Chavurah and all your members. Also let Bobbie know if your Chavurah would like more members to join you. If you want to join a Chavurah or help start a new one, let Bobbie know. She will assist you.

CBI member Gary Simon has volunteered to be our record keeper of all our Chavurot and all their members. We look forward to assisting as our members strengthen their ties to one another. Let us help you get more involved and create a CBI support group. Just call the CBI office at 831-624-2015 and leave the information about your Chavurah or your desire to join a Chavurah. Bobbie will be calling you back with her cheery disposition and desire to assist you.



CBI Interest-Free Loan

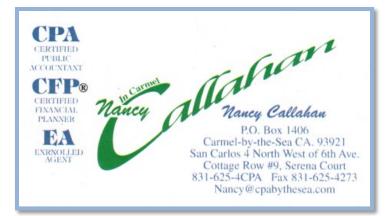
Because of the generosity of an anonymous donor, CBI continues to offer interest-free loans up to \$500 for CBI members. So far, only a handful of people have borrowed Please contact our Administrative

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.





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

SAMSUNG UN85HU8550 - 85" 4K ULTRA HD LED TV



A generous CBI member has given us this almost new, All the bells and whistles, TV as a fundraiser. The original price was \$10,000 (yes we have the paperwork!). Make an offer and this could be yours.

Judaism Classes

Learn about Jewish spirituality, ethics, practice, and community through engaging classes offered online by the Union for Reform Judaism

Here is a sampling of classes and more are available at

https://reformjudaism.org/learning/judaism -classes



A Taste of Judaism "

Curious About Judaism? You are invited to join us for three free sessions exploring a modern Jewish take on spirituality, values, and community. Individuals from all backgrounds are welcome.

LEARN MORE



Introduction to Judaism

Learn the fundamentals of Jewish thought and practice sessions. This multisession course is designed for interfaith couples, individuals considering conversion, and Jews looking for an adult-level introduction.

LEARN MORE



Learn Hebrew

Familiarity with Hebrew reading and common Hebrew words can be a key to feeling comfortable in Jewish community and congregational life. Find a Hebrew course offered by a congregation near you or register for Learn to Read Hebrew for Adults, our online course.

VIEW HEBREW CLASSES



Congregation Beth Israel Nisan ~ Iyar ~ Sivan 5782 May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9:00 AM Religious School 5:00 PM I-Help			4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class	4:00 PM Best Years	6:00 PM Family Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings	10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study In person & ©ZOOM
Men				Yom Ha'atsmaut Party	at CBI & OZOOM	
8 HAPPY	9	10	11	12	13	14
Mo Religious School			4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class		7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services at CBI & 0200000	10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study In person & COZOOM
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9:00 AM Religious School 1:00 PM Aleynu		7:00 PM CBI Executive Committee Meets	12:00 PM Lunch with the Rabbi @Baja Cantina 4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class	Lag Ba'omer	7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Beryl Levinger at CBI & IZOOM	10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study In person & COCOM
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Mazel Tov
9:00 AM Religious School 1:00 PM Aleynu		7:00 PM CBI Board of Trustees Meets	4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class 7:00 PM Spirituality of the Sea		6:30 PM Community Shabbat Dinner 7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Anniversary Blessings at CBI &	10:30 AM Morning Service when Lola Tacket becomes a Bat Mitzvah
29	30 Memorial Day	31	1	2	3	4
10:00 AM Yom Yerushalyim Program	memoriai Day		4:00 PM Hebrew Liturgy Class	10:00 AM Shavuot Cooking Class	6:00 PM Family Shabbat Services With Birthday Blessings at CBI & on	10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study In Person & 120000



THEATRE CO.

PRESENTS

HENRY (ABRIDGED)

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SUNDAY, MAY 15

6:00 PM

PEARL HOUR 214 LIGHTHOUSE AVE. MONTEREY. CA 93940

IN A BAR!



\$10 COVER ALL DOOR PROCEEDS GO TO HEART TO HEART INTERNATIONAL AND SAVE THE CHILDREN FOR UKRAINE RELIEF.

ACTORS, A GLASSIC. LIBATIONS, CHARITY, WHAT COULD GO WRONG?



WWW.NEWCANONTHEATRE.ORG

TODAH RABBAH!

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

UJC Donations for Ukraine

Terry Neben
Hugo N. & Lorraine Gerstl
Aline Harris: in honor of Karen Mignano
Judy Levin
Jim & Natalie Sammet
Stanley Semmel
Jim & Jill Sleeper: in honor of David Sabih
Jim & Jill Sleeper: in honor of our beautiful
friend Anna Swartley
George & Lily Waissbluth

LeRoy Kohn Adult Education Fund

Michael & Debora Waxer: in memory of Uncle Ben Free, the mensch

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Monica Browning: in honor of Ruby & Maezy's B'not Mitzvah
Barry R. Harrow

Carmel Jewish Film Festival

Mrs. Imogene Speiser

Cantorial Fund

Monica Browning: in honor of Ruby & Maezy's B'not Mitzvah

General Donations

Susan Pernick

Anita Artstein-Dunsay: in memory of
Richard Dunsay
William & Myrna Brandwein: in memory of
Lillian Kessler
Maureen Chodosh: in memory of Norman
Chodesh

Hana Schein and Greg Mercer: In honor of Dr. Alan Rosen for helping in our son Caleb's Bris

Victor & Sylvia Krimsley: In loving memory of Malcolm Krimsley, Vic's father Rosemary Lande: in memory of Jesse Garfield and Harry Garfield Clark Miller & Cara Lieb: in honor of

Clark Miller & Cara Lieb: in honor of Suzanne Guinane

Keziah Nduro

honor of Rabbi Leah

Steven & Barbara Neil: in memory of Barbara's father Joel Levy Steven & Barbara Neil: in memory of

Barbara's mother Harriet Levy
Rabbi Jeffrey Schulman & Susan Alnes: In

Martin & Karen Wiskoff: In memory of Richard Prupes



Lew Bauman	1
Glen Grossman	i
Ralph Senensky	1
Hersh Davis	2
Ellyn Gelson	2
	2
Eric Lang	
Andrea Carr	4
Laurel Mello	4
Harlan Grogin	7
Michael Waxer	7
Julienne Geisler	9
Shelley Kroopf	9
Sandra Leader	9
Eden Chambers	11
Irene Krasner	11
Estella Leavy	11
Tracy Richards	12
Benjamin Tackett	15
Loretta Tackett	15
Jose Kofman	16
Lawrence Rosen	16
Robert Hoskinson	17
Naomi Pollack	18
Marvin Silverman	18
Rabbi Jeffrey Schulman	19
Marc Lieberman	21
Mark Kriger	22
Myrna Brandwein	23
Deborah Winick	23
Sharon Hoffman	24
Eli Popky	24
William Brandwein	25
Ava Martin	25
Sara Martin	25
Lori Silver	25
Claire Blatt	26
Shayna Blatt	26
Jenifer Block	26
Carol Ader	27
Ann Jory	27
Jim Sleeper	27
Mona Zander	28
Marc Baseman	29
Ida Holber	29
Jennifer Prager	29
Daniel Riddell-Kaufman	29
Andrew Schmidt	29
Paul Fenwick	30
David. Cohen	31
Todd Hornik	31

HÄPPY ÄNNIVERSÄRY

Dan Granoff & Marjory Kaplan	1
Bruce Neben & Susan Krome Neben	3
Rabbi Jeff Schulman & Susan Alnes	8
Steven & Ann Packer	11
William & Myrna Brandwein	18
Clark Miller & Cara Lieb	23
Adina Abeles & Brian Granbery	24
Samuel & Gabriela Lipsky	30



Family News

It is with much sadness that we share with our CBI family that Nick Harris,

beloved husband of Aline Harris and longtime member of CBI died Sunday, April 17th.

We offer our condolences to Aline, the extended family, and friends of Nick. May his memory be a blessing to all who knew him.

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.



Prayers & Social Action

Passover led us to deeper reflections as we considered the status of people around the world who are fleeing (their Exodus) from persecution, authoritarianism and war. The crisis in Ukraine is especially forefront, as the media continue extensive coverage with commentary and images of destruction, death and refugees.

For Passover, *The Washington Post* interviewed Rabbi Julie Schoenfeld, who wrote

a new Jewish Prayer for recitation at our recent Seders. I read this at my family's Liberation Seder, and all acknowledged its impact. It is so meaningful that it bears consideration not only for Passover, but also to be embedded in our hearts and minds.

Each year at our Seders, we remember the four children: The Wise Child, the Rebellious Child, the Simple Child, and the Child Who Does Not Know How to Ask. This year, as multiple refugee crises intensify, we can also invite into our Seder the voice of

The Fifth Child: The Refugee Child

The Refugee Child asks, "Who will keep me safe and when can I go home?"

The Refugee Child, one of the world's most vulnerable people, has no home to shelter them, no society to protect them, and in some cases, no family to love them. In 2020, over 33 million children around the world (including, in addition to others, up to 4.5 million Ukrainian children in just the past several weeks) were forcibly displaced by conflict, famine, and disaster.

The Passover Haggadah traces the Israelites' enslavement in Egypt back to Joseph and his brothers, whose desperation caused them to journey there because "the famine was severe in the land of Canaan." This eternal story describes the risks faced by displaced

people, especially children, who are vulnerable to human trafficking, a modern word for enslavement.

By reading the Haggadah at the Passover Seder, we acknowledge that the Exodus is not only a story *from ancient times* but a story *for all times*. The Haggadah instructs that "in every generation we must see ourselves as if we personally left Egypt" and "in every generation tyrants will rise up against us to destroy us."

While the Haggadah attributes the triumphant outcome of the Exodus story to miracles, the Torah clearly demonstrates that it was only through human beings acting on behalf of an unaccompanied child--the remarkable courage of Moses's mother, Yocheved, and sister, Miriam, and the empathy of Pharaoh's daughter-that the journey from slavery to freedom could be set in motion.

Not merely in every generation, but every year, new tyrants arise against people around the world, and more innocent children become refugees. This Passover, we must not stop at seeing ourselves as the children of Israel who were slaves in Egypt. This year, we must act with the courage of Yocheved and Miriam and the caring of Pharaoh's daughter to raise our voices, devote our resources, and advocate passionately for concrete steps to bring the world's refugee children to safety.

©Rabbi Julie Schonfeld 2022, The Washington Post, April 14, 2022

I-HELP

Thanks to the support of the Que Syrah Chavurah, led by Jennifer Stone and Lew Bauman, the 16 I-HELP men enjoyed a wonderful Indian food dinner, including Tikka Masala, rice, chicken, naan, salad, & roasted vegetables, strawberries and cake.

Breakfast and Lunch bags were brimming with foods. Thanks so much to the entire Chavurah for its generous support, and especially to Bill Lutz, David Awerback, Jennifer, Lew, Lorraine and Hugo Gerstl for their oversight.

I received a text from one of the men: "Dinner was awesome!"

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

Torah Connections:



Wol. 168 May 2022, 5782 By Michael L. Waxer

Is there a Difference?

What do you believe is the Jewish mission in this world? Do all cultures, do all nations... do they have the same purpose, the same mission?

Perhaps the clearest instruction in the Torah that gives the Jewish people the answer:

"HaShem spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: Holy shall you be for holy am I, HaShem, your God." (Leviticus [Vayikra] 19:1-2)

"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)

As you can see, this instruction to the Jewish people is given more than one time, so we should ask ourselves *what is holiness*? The word root, *kodesh*, connotes *separation*. What exactly are we to separate, so that we can be Holy?

Since we are told that God is Holy, let's view some things that God separated so we can 'emulate HaShem'. The first separation was the waters, with the waters below, *mayim*, being separated from the waters above, *shamayim*. We define '*shamayim*' as '*heaven*'. So, *what is heaven*?

There is this beautiful verse in the creation story:

"So God created the Man, in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them." (Genesis [Beresheet] 2:3).

Although this verse is interpreted by some cultures to mean that God looks like a human, Judaism interprets this verse that *God imbued each human with a non-physical soul*. As a unique creation with this inherent duality, humans alone can achieve holiness because we possess this aspect of God, a part of us that can unite with HaShem. One can think of this *human soul* as able to exist in the 'shamayim', the waters above, heaven.

Another *separation* was the seventh day from the first six days:

"God blessed the seventh day and He sanctified it (vayikadesh) because on it He abstained (shavat) from all His work which God created to make." (Genesis [Beresheet] 2:3).

The English word, *sanctify*, is the same root as holy, *kadesh*. In other words, God made the Shabbat *holy*, and, by emulating this we can be holy. It also introduces the idea that 'time' can be made *holy*.

Often times this mission that HaShem selected the Jewish people for, *to be holy*, gets described as making Jews the 'Chosen People'. Here is one of the key verses about this:

"For a people that is holy are you to HaShem, your God; HaShem your God has chosen you to be for Him a people that is treasured from all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth." (Deuteronomy [Devarim] 7:6)

So now we see that we have a mission, *to be holy*, and *we were specifically chosen* for this mission. Even though holiness separates, it is important to understand that the physical world and the 'spiritual' world are connected. One can think of it as holiness is the thing that connects the two, and so it is how we interface with *everything* that makes the difference.

Holiness is achieved by the elevation of the ordinary, just like the observance of the weekly Shabbat makes that one day a week *holy*, **both in time and space**. A regular day, once a week, gets elevated from the ordinary to the holy by the separation of that day from the other six days of the week (separation by time). And, the separation by actions, as we emulate the cessation (*shevat*, *i.e. shabbat*) of creating and forming things, which God set the example for us to follow.

HaShem designed the world for us to fully participate in the physical world, while seizing each opportunity to *elevate* everyday actions. Some describe this as gathering 'the sparks', the fundamental parts of creation, also known as 'the light'. Each of us is a vehicle that can transform the physical, and to imbue it with holiness.

The non-corporeal part of us, our soul (neshama), is that part of ourselves that is created in the image of God. Holiness, elevating everyday things and actions, can transform these physical things and actions to this higher, *spiritual state*. The mitzvot can be understood as spiritual exercises that help in this elevation; learning and observing the mitzvot is a pathway, given to us by HaShem, to help us to 'be holy', to draw closer to HaShem.

We can think of this 'holiness pathway' as a way to harness 'spiritual energy'. This transformation of the ordinary to the holy not only helps to elevate each of us, but this 'energy' serves to elevate our communities and, believe it or not, the entire world.

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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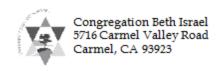
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Parshiot

May 7, Kedoshim

T: Leviticus 19:1-20:27

H: Amos 9:7-15

May 14, Emor

T: Leviticus 21:1-24:23

H: Ezekiel 44:15-31

May 21, Behar

T: Leviticus 25:1-26:2

H: Jeremiah 32:6-27

May 28, Bechukotai

T: Leviticus 26:3-27:34

H: Jeremiah 16:19-17:14