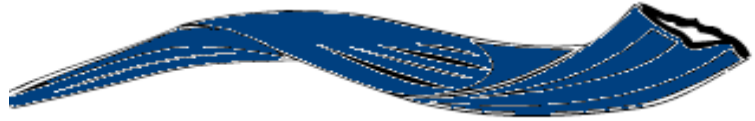


# SHOFAR



Monthly Newsletter of the Monterey Peninsula Jewish Community  
[www.carmelbethisrael.org](http://www.carmelbethisrael.org)

## CBI Religious School



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

What an amazing start to our Virtual School Year! **Mazel tov** to our Teachers, Madrichim Team and most importantly our Students and Families. Thanks to you we have laid an incredible foundation on which to continue to build upon this year. Don't worry...no need for FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Families are still enrolling and you can, too!

### SUNDAYS

**Kindergarten/Grade 1**

**Grade 2**

**Grades 3 & 4**

**Grade 5**

**Grades 6 & 7**

Bible Stories with Chinanit Kershner & Talia Elazar

Jewish Holidays with Grace Singer & Grace Dean

Jewish Life Cycles with Wendy Rosenthal & Matthew Pardue

Jews Around the World with Rena Feuerstein & Bari Tolliver

Meaning of Prayer with Dennis Niekro

### WEDNESDAYS

***Kitah Aleph***

***Kitah Bet***

***Kitah Gimmel***

***Kitah Dalet***

Grace Dean

Jane Bednar

Talia Elazar

Rabbi Bruce and me

***ALEYNU***

Social Justice and Loving Yourself

Art with Paul Richmond, Cooking with Paige Weisskirch & Music with me

Please feel free to email ([suzanneg@carmelbethisrael.org](mailto:suzanneg@carmelbethisrael.org)) or call me (831-624-2015 ext 16) with any questions. We would love for you to join us!



## From the Rabbi's Desk...

I was supposed to be preparing for our Israel trip right now. I was supposed to be reflecting on a relaxing summer vacation with Susan in Canada. Over the last few weeks, I was supposed to have seen most of you at our Holy Day services. I did not get to officiate at a few weddings. I even missed my newest grand-nephew's brit milah ceremony. And now I am supposed to celebrate Thanksgiving? Really?

So many of us are frustrated with the forced changes in our lives. For over 7 months now our lives have been altered, for some it has meant drastic changes in our day to day practices. Some of my friends even took an early retirement. Because of Covid-19 and its ongoing threat to our wellbeing, there is no immediate end in sight. We hope and pray for a successful vaccine to be developed and distributed, but that could be up to another year or even longer. Thanksgiving? Really?

It is so easy to fall into that trap of counting our curses. Maybe it is human nature. But I am reminded by our Jewish practices to count blessings every day. Now it is more important than ever to make 100 blessings of gratitude each day. I challenge each of you to say thank you 100 times today. Allow me to make a few suggestions that will make this uplifting task a little easier for you.

Remember each time you begin a meal (or even a snack) to be thankful for the sustenance you are consuming. I honestly don't think God cares if you recite a traditional blessing or say it in English. I am willing to bet that God understands your English and will be just as happy with "thanks for this apple" as "*borei pri ha'etz*." I also count seeing a deer and saying "wow, that doe is awesome" as a blessing. Also, saying "thank God the internet is up and running again," is another fine blessing. I even think the comment, "not shaving today because I don't need to," works as a blessing.

There are also some real benefits to this stay at home lifestyle. I now only wear a tie for services.

My dry-cleaning bills have dropped by about 90%. I now fill up my gas tank about once a month. One of our daughters has returned home and is doing the vast majority of the shopping for us. We now enjoy a game night together at least a couple of times a week.

Because of technology our service attendance has gone up. I don't know when this separation order will end, but my fear is the comfort and ease of staying home on Friday evenings wearing our sweat pants and pajamas will require us to continue zooming our services even after our sanctuary doors can open.

I have so much for which to be grateful. I have seen how we have cared for one another during these trying times. I watched and helped my Rotary club distribute \$25,000 in store gift cards to those who lost their homes in recent fires. I received my ballot in my mailbox and had plenty of time to consider the propositions and candidates and then voted without having to stand or wait in any lines. I've watched some great movies at home with Susan.

So come Thanksgiving Day, I will be ready to have a small, intimate dinner and offer my thanks. Blessed are you God, who has kept me alive, sustained me, and allowed me to reach this joyous occasion. Amen.





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

We have started implementing the enhancement of security at CBI, using the grant funds from the US Department of Homeland Security and the California Office of Emergency Services. I want to congratulate the Safety and Security Committee and the CBI administrative staff on the excellent news that the first contract, the one for doors and locks, has been successfully negotiated. I also have every hope that we will be able to sign the contract for cameras and access systems by the time you read this column.

We have observed the High Holy Days and Sukkot and Simchat Torah, and it's all (well, almost all), been done virtually and done well. Of course, there *will* be a post-COVID time, when the current lockdowns and shelters-in-place will be released. Like many things in life, we're sure these things will come to pass, even though we are not sure when. That raises the issue of what post-COVID religious services look like? Will we return exactly to where we were, comforted by what we grew up with and have learned to love? Or, do we stay with the distanced zoom-based environment? Is it possible to do a combination, selecting attractive aspects of one, while jettisoning unattractive aspects of the other? For example, there is a charm about not having to rush through dinners, or to drive to the synagogue, or arrange for a ride if you don't want to drive.

Geographic distances have been removed as a barrier to participation in services, although time-zones remain an obstacle. For example, if someone in, say, New Jersey, wants to tune in to CBI to listen to Suzanne (and who would not want to?), that's now quite possible. Or maybe we can have more guest speakers ZOOM-ed into Services or at other times. What do you think about these possibilities?

From a membership perspective, we have had several new families join CBI, and I extend a warm welcome to all of them. In addition, we want to try to reach out

to the unaffiliated Jewish population on the Monterey Peninsula. It is tempting to assume that if they wanted to join, they would have. However, it is also true that sometimes people have not affiliated just because they have not been approached and asked. We plan to try to reach out to some of these people. I, and others, will do that. I know that the success rate will be small, but I'm going to do it anyway. If you have the name of somebody you'd like us to call, please send it to me. Don't worry, I'll be very easy on them. I know how to accept "no, thanks" when it is proffered.

Ken Kroopf has, for personal and professional reasons, resigned his position as Vice President of the Board of Trustees. I want to thank Ken for his participation and for the heartfelt and helpful advice he gave me. Ken has agreed that I can continue to call him, as needed, to solicit his advice. Thank you, Ken, for your service.

Wishing that you and your loved ones all Stay Safe,

Dan Nussbaum  
(C) (831) 324-3228





## Lunch with the Rabbi

Join Rabbi Greenbaum on Zoom this month on **Thursday, November 12 at noon** as he leads a relaxing virtual gathering. Together we will discuss "Should We Cancel Thanksgiving this Year?" There are many reasons to

consider canceling our Thanksgiving holiday. We are not supposed to invite guests into our homes with Covid-19 still a threat. It is challenging and maybe not safe to travel. Is there a reason to be thankful this year? Your rabbi will offer reasons why we should keep this tradition alive and celebrate Thanksgiving this year. He will also offer ways you might approach the holiday a little differently this month. Have fun discussing while enjoying our lunch that we prepared for ourselves. No RSVP is needed. Just look for the link to this meeting which will be in the CBI Weekly eblast. Click on the link and join our Zoom discussion.



## Talent Show on Zoom

The last few years we shared an awesome talent show in our sanctuary. We've enjoyed singers and dancers and musicians and even the rabbi's humorous story telling. Should we try it on line? Later this year we will use a room in our home as our stage and perform before our cameras (computer or phone or?). Who wants to demonstrate their talent this year? We all know CBI members have talent. Call CBI board member Bob Fenton at 818-645-3972 if you want to put your name on the list of potential performers. The date will be determined when we gather on Zoom for this evening of talent!



Now more than ever, we need to do a great job of staying in touch with our community. **Can you help?** We are looking for a fabulous social media guru (s) interested in helping create posts for our social media platform and website. Anyone interested please contact Jillian Heisman ([jililanh@carmelbethisrael.org](mailto:jililanh@carmelbethisrael.org)) our Marketing and Communications Trustee.

## You in a Pew Fundraiser



Want to join Barbra Streisand, Albert Einstein, and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg at our Erev Shabbat Services? Here's your opportunity! You can keep Rabbi Bruce and Suzanne company in the sanctuary with this fun-raiser!

For a minimum of \$36 per photo and \$18 for kids, (your celebrity guest is free and all donations are welcome) you can have a photo of your face placed in the pews, along with some famous folks, like those mentioned above. Just send us a headshot and we'll do the rest. Who would want to miss the opportunity to rub elbows with the likes of Steven Spielberg, Golda Meir, and Sandy Koufax?

The pews will be shown during Erev Shabbat services, and of course, Rabbi and Suzanne will be looking into all your smiling faces getting support and good vibes throughout each evening.

We miss seeing your face around CBI! It's been an unprecedented year, so let's stay connected in this unconventional and fun way. Want to sit with a certain celeb? Let us know. Honoring your parents and grandparents? Send us their photos. Please send donations and photos of you, your loved ones, or anyone else that you would like to spend time with to [shalomcbi@aol.com](mailto:shalomcbi@aol.com). **If we receive your photos by November 30 we'll see you in the pews at services on December 4.**





Raya Hoskinson	1
Leslie Pressman	1
Susan Alnes	2
Stephen Harmer	3
Ruth Lyons	3
Ilana Entin	4
Sebastian Ramirez	4
Marcus Togneri	4
Lawson Garrett Marshall	7
Joel Weinstein	8
Celia K. Weiss	8
Leonard Chodosh	9
Ellen G. Krause	9
Joyce Kapp	11
Maya Felthoven	12
Susan Simon	12
Laurie Kleinman	13
Jay Pack	13
Debra Givner	14
Brynie Kaplan-Dau	14
Juliette Kosmont	15
Louise Riddell-Kaufman	17
Lyn Rosen	17
Arlin Wasserman	21
Eli Granbery	23
Chinanit Kershner	23
Renee Mayne	23
Taylor Togneri	23
Richard Rosen	24
Alex Bordetsky	27
Stuart Pressman	28
Joely Kaatz	30

### UJC Donations

David Sabih & Anna Swartley in honor of Astrid Holberg, Wendy Schmidt, Judy Masilyah, & Carla Heric  
Marvin Silverman

### Cantorial Restricted Fund

Diana Greenbaum in honor of Suzanne Guinane's beautiful music  
Michael & Debora Waxer in honor of Kira (Shira) Waxer's Aliyah to Efrat, Judea, Israel

### CBI Free Loan Program

David Sabih & Anna Swartley

### General Donations

Barry & Randi Brookstein in memory of Louis Brookstein  
Ellyn Gelson in honor of October birthdays & in welcoming Suzanne to the CBI Family  
Robert & Raya Hoskinson in memory of Hannah Dagley, Ruby Schnitzer Oliver, Morris Schitzer, & Martha Rae  
Michael & Constance Kean in loving memory of Lenora Gordon  
Thomas & Ellen G. Krause in memory of Tom's father & Thomas & Ellen's niece Sandi  
Victor & Sylvia Krimsley in loving memory of Lillian Weiner, Sylvia's mother  
Alan Lefkof & Ann Gordon  
Barbara Lipman thank you Lorraine & Hugh Gerstl, thank you Rosemary Lande, congratulations Dan Nussbaum, & Cara Lieb for a job very well done! Shana Tova to the entire CBI Family  
Clark Miller & Cara Lieb in honor of Rabbi's Birthday  
Stephen L. & Wendie A. Ryter in memory of Marian Ryter  
Matthew Schuss & Charlene Webber-Schuss in memory of Sylvia Schuss & in honor of all of the High Holy Day participants this year  
Susan Simon with appreciation for the CBI Family  
Lester Tockerman in appreciation for the CBI staff & in honor of Diana Greenbaum



When in person attendance to temple was suspended because of the COVID-19 virus, ideas began flowing about how to create High Holy Day services that connect with our congregation. The brain storming commenced. Rabbi Greenbaum and our guest cantorial soloist, Elizabeth Baseman, pursued the use of technology, pre-recordings, and ZOOM to present safe, yet personal, virtual services. The Worship Committee would like to praise their successful efforts. We would also like to say how beautifully Rabbi Greenbaum, Cantorial Soloist Elizabeth Baseman, and our new Cantorial Soloist, Suzanne Guinane, worked together to present us with a moving, soulful, spiritual experience.

The Worship Committee appreciates all of the congregants who participated in the services. We would like to thank:

Rabbi Greenbaum, whose excellent leadership steered us through these challenging times, gave meaning to our services, and is the force that propelled our virtual services. He inspired us to use our traditions and practices to connect with G-d, family, community and others in a proactive manner, despite obstacles and our closed doors. He reminded us to get centered and focus outward by performing acts of loving kindness, meditation, and prayer to comfort ourselves and others;

Cantorial Soloist Suzanne Guinane, a welcome addition to our congregation, whose rich, splendid voice and smooth competence gave a lovely flow to the services;

Cantorial Soloist Elizabeth Baseman, whose thrilling, powerful voice evoked such emotion in all of us. We were all so happy she could join us this year as our guest cantorial soloist. And it gave us such joy when Elizabeth and Suzanne so beautifully blended their voices;

Pauline Troia, for her musical accompaniment and Diana Rosenthal, Laura Arnow, Grace Dean, and Nina Harmer for their beautiful voices;

Beryl Levinger for leading the series of discussions from Selichot through Yom Kippur;

President Dan Nussbaum for his announcements and address;

Rich Ader for his appeal to support Congregation Beth Israel;

Ryan Knight for blowing the Shofar;

The Torah chanters for their dedication to learning and chanting the High Holy Day trope;

This year's chanters were: Cara Lieb, Victor Krimsley, Susan Newton, Ryan Knight, Ellen Saxby, Zia Shapiro, Rabbi Jeff Schulman, Lorraine Gerstl, Seth Pollack, Galena Bordestsky, David Awerbuck, Pauline Troia, Daniel Nussbaum, and Sylvia Krimsley.

The Haftorah readers and those who gave the Haftorah blessings;

This year's Haftorah readers and chanters were: Rosemary Lande, Rabbi Jeff Schulman, Julie and Makayla Schnitzer, and David Sabih. The Haftorah blessings were given by Dennis Niekro, Sylvia Krimsley, Victor Krimsley, and Jane Bednar.

The honorees who held the Torah aloft, recited the Aliyot blessings, lit the candles, led the V'ahavta, the Misheberach, the prayer for our country, and the Kiddush;

Julie Chase, Abby King, Bob Fenton, Ally Carroll and Ches Moore, for their supporting efforts.

Todah Rabah, thank you so much.



**The Holidays & Social Action!**

It’s difficult to imagine, especially in these summery days, that the holidays are approaching. Thanksgiving, Chanukah, New Year’s. Many of us will not have family nearby, and so we resort again to virtual presence. Comforting, but still “not enough.” So how may we feel more fulfilled? Why, helping and doing...service to the community with meals, clothing, toiletries and a few special gifts. So we’re recommending:

**CBI Celebrates the Holidays with Gifts & Giving!**

Last year we made gift bags for both the Men’s & Women’s I-HELP. Socks, gloves, hats, toiletries, pocket flashlights and treats.

This year let’s collect: 9 wool scarves for the Men; 7 for the Women. Packages of T-Shirts for the Men and underwear for the Women. Toothbrushes & Toothpaste; Men’s razor blades, and lip balm and lipstick for the women. If you have any toiletries to contribute, please leave them on the front bench outside CBI.

Please contact me for sizes and numbers needed for these items. And of course, please contribute any special gifts that an unsheltered person can easily handle. Thank you!

**I-HELP Updates**

I-HELP will participate in this year’s McGives Campaign, which runs November 12-December 31s. I-HELP requires funds for this ongoing 24/7 “residential program” for the Men & Women who remain sheltered at locations that can host them for a few months at a time. If you’d like to make a direct contribution, you can do so online: < montereycountygives.com/ihelp>

Nine men continue being sheltered at a Monterey Church. For our October Men’s I-HELP, Julie Chase cooked a pasta & meatballs dinner, Susan Schwartz generously provided lunch, and I organized the breakfast.

The Social Action Committee will organize the November 1<sup>st</sup> Men’s I-HELP. Matthew and Charlene Schuss will be cooking dinner, and I will organize the breakfast and lunch foods. If you’d like to help, (how about baking desserts!) we’d welcome your participation. The Lambourne

Institute for Life Mastery will provide dinner for the November 30<sup>th</sup> Women’s I-HELP.

We’d appreciate if more CBI members assisted with I-HELP for the Men and Women. There are ways for you to participate. Cooking is a great way to help—casseroles, cookies, desserts & cakes! We’d so appreciate your participation—please contact me.

**The Food Bank Barrels!**

We had many shopping bags loaded to the top! The barrels are full. Thanks to everyone who contributed foods. Much appreciated.

**Abraham’s Tent!**

Abraham’s Tent is up & running, and ready for a few volunteers to help prepare the Thursday night dinner which hosts about 100 unsheltered individuals. Please contact our Rabbi to learn how you may assist.

**Don’t Forget CBI’s New Loan Program!**

Thanks to David Sabih’s generosity, CBI offers members interest free loans up to \$500 for personal or business needs. Loans may be used to support rent, utilities, medical costs or other requirements that you or your business may have. Please contact Rabbi Bruce or me if you have questions, or if you would like to contribute to the fund, or need more information. Applications are available from CBI via Abby!

Arlene Krebs  
Social Action Trustee [arlenekrebs123@gmail.com](mailto:arlenekrebs123@gmail.com)

# Family News

Professor Alex Bordetsky has been promoted to Chair of the Information Services Department at the Navel Post Graduate School. Mazel Tov Alex!

Welcome new members Paul & Peggy Harmatz









Chad & Sara Hinds	9
Julie & Stuart Chase	12
Dan & Ellen Weiner	19
Lee & Sheree Goldman	25
Michael & Susan Newton	27



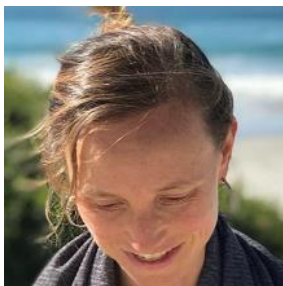
# Congregation Beth Israel

## November 2020

### Cheshvan ~ Kislev 5781

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 No Religious School</p> <p>All CBI services, programs, &amp; classes Accessible online or by phone. Look for links in the weekly edition of CBI this Week via email. Links for Religious School and Hebrew School provided by Teachers.</p> 	2	3	<p>4</p> <p>4:30 PM Hebrew School - Zoom</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Aleynu - Zoom</p>	5	<p>6</p>  <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings via Zoom</p>	<p>7</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study via Zoom</p>
<p>8 Religious School on Zoom</p>	9	<p>10</p> <p>6:30 PM Executive Committee</p>	<p>11 Veterans Day</p> <p>4:30 PM Hebrew School - Zoom</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>12:00 PM Lunch with Rabbi on Zoom</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services via Zoom</p>	<p>14</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Service &amp; Study with 6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup> grades joining us.</p>
<p>15 Religious School on Zoom</p>	16	<p>17</p> <p>7:15 PM CBI Board of Trustees</p>	<p>18</p> <p>4:30 Hebrew School - Zoom</p> <p>6:00 PM. Aleynu-Zoom</p>	19	<p>20</p>  <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services via Zoom</p>	<p>21</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study via Zoom</p>
<p>22 Religious School on Zoom</p>	23	24	<p>25 No Hebrew School</p>	<p>26 Thanksgiving</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Anniversary Blessings via Zoom</p>	<p>28</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study via Zoom</p>
<p>29 No Religious School</p>	30	1 December	<p>2</p> <p>4:30 Hebrew School - Zoom</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>12:00 PM Lunch with Rabbi</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings via Zoom</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study via Zoom</p>





## A message from your CBI Board - Youth Trustee

On behalf of the CBI Board of Trustees, I would like to thank and congratulate our Religious School community for a fantastic start to the 5781 school year.

To all the teachers and madrichim: the time and intention you put into preparing was truly apparent. We recognize that this school year brings special challenges! Yet, you warmly welcomed your students and found creative ways to connect with them even when we thought they couldn't handle yet another virtual class meeting.

To the parents: thank you for prioritizing your children's Jewish learning, even during this strange and uncertain time. Thank you for making the commitment to stay connected to CBI. Thank you for investing in our future by staying actively engaged today.

To Suzanne and Rabbi: we acknowledge your steady leadership in launching this school year, especially on the heels of the most unique high holy day season of your lifetime! The two of you are a silly, yet sacred team!

And to our students: you are the real heroes!! The world is asking a whole lot from you right now. Your sports and activities are on hold, your playdates are nil, and your whole life seems to take place through a little screen. But, we are so proud of you for spending your Sunday morning with your Jewish friends, and for taking responsibility for your Jewish education. Even when you feel like you're just one more little zoom window, know that you are the most essential part of our school. You are our future and we are SO glad you're here!

As we wrap up the high holy day season, during this time of contemplation and reflection, I couldn't be more impressed with our teams: the teacher teams, the leadership teams, the parent-student teams. This is just the beginning and we have an exciting year ahead to create, grow, learn, play, pray and celebrate!

With optimism,

Julie Schnitzer, Youth Trustee



## Torah Connections:

Vol. 150 November 2020, 5781

By Michael L. Waxer

### The Hate Monster

What is the difference between feeling strongly about your position on an issue, versus *hating* the other position, or a person who feels differently than you? ***What does Judaism have to say about hatred?***

We have previously discussed '*sinat chinam*', also known as '*baseless hatred*'. This has been described as perhaps the *greatest failing* of the Jewish people. The Talmud credits this as the main reason the Temple was allowed to be destroyed. Perhaps, though, the hatred is warranted, that our hatred is morally justified. **Is hatred sanctioned in Judaism?**

In fact, we are told '***Let those who love HaShem hate evil...***' from Psalms 97:10, and Proverbs 8:13, '***Fear of HaShem is to hate evil...***'. Later, in the Book of Amos 5:15 it says, '***Hate evil and love good...***'.

**So, in our tradition we now know it is incumbent on us to 'hate evil'. We also know that 'baseless hatred' is terribly wrong. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, are these current political differences in the realm of evil?**

When does an honest disagreement transform into a moral conflict of 'good vs. evil'? Is it evil to want one proposed policy over another... such as wanting to abolish nuclear power, or not? Such as wanting increased Government services provided to people, whether citizens or not? Are these differences, or any of the many, *many* others... **are we willing to say one opinion is evil?**

In the portion Nitzavim (Standing..) we are presented a choice. God says:

***"I call to bear witness against you today the heavens and the earth; life and death I have placed before you, the blessing and the curse; and you shall choose life, in order that you will live, you and your offspring"*** (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:19).

Continued on page 10

**It is in our tradition that HaShem set up a world with a vast number of choices for us, from extreme good to unbelievable evil.** Barely eighty years ago the world witnessed perhaps the greatest evil that ever occurred, the extermination, torture and murder of millions of Jews and other innocent people.

**What we see or hear or think, starts with how we choose to believe the information.** Isn't this one of the definitions of anti-semitism, that based on very little 'evidence' ***a person chooses to believe*** that all Jews are....(whatever)? ***Choices that we each make, many times every day, are one of the reasons we are here, from a spiritual perspective. Our soul 'develops' differently based on these choices which we make in this physical world.***

We find ourselves being bombarded by sensational news clips, narratives, and social media versions of a person, event, or position. For perhaps the first time in history ***the news we receive are results of choices we just made previously.*** In other words, the news we receive is tailored to the prior choices we made, which can, obviously, reinforce a position that we might have initially not have felt that strongly about. ***Our choices now actually determine what version of 'news' we receive.*** It doesn't take much time to realize that the size of the differences between the 'two sides' is actually a result of our choices. We are part of the problem.

**We are all being manipulated.** No matter how intellectual we are, we are all being manipulated. We each are choosing which 'facts' we want to 'believe' and we develop our narrative by a growing pool of 'evidence' that is being supplied to us. One choice we make then leads to us being fed supporting 'facts', reinforcing our opinion and manipulating us to develop stronger and stronger feelings. We add to this our intellectual 'knowledge' and pretty soon we have no patience for 'the other side', we can barely stand the presence of the '*neanderthal's*' who cannot see the obvious 'facts'. The hatred grows, and keeps getting reinforced. But it is each of us that ***chooses*** to believe it, and to dig ourselves further into this dark place.

The political differences, for the most part, **are not 'good vs. evil'**. It is okay to feel strongly about an issue, and one great part of our nation is that it has always grappled with big policy differences, allowing for debate and a respect for folks having and expressing honest differences... isn't

this part of what fundamentally makes America great? If we all had to think and speak the same, wouldn't we be, essentially, a puppet dictatorship where if you don't speak the proper lines you will be insulted, intimidated, harassed, and attacked? ***Aren't we seeing this now?***

On the spiritual level, we each have a ***neshamah***, the non-corporeal part of ourselves, which was made in the image of HaShem, and which survives the death of the body. Judaism connects all of our individual souls at the **4<sup>th</sup> level of soul**, called '***chayah***' (Judaism traditionally identifies a total of 5 levels of 'soul'). At this level it is clearer to us how we are connected to each other, and how totally inappropriate this '***sinat chinam***' really is. One analogy is to envision each of our 'souls' as a drop of water, where we have our own identity, yet we are part of a larger ocean.

Figuring out how to get along with others is part of what our journey is about. This great experiment of America is also about ***how differences can actually be a strength.*** The Torah speaks of this when describing the 70 archtypical nations. Each culture has its set of strengths, and presumable weaknesses, and if we can ***learn how to work together***, we can all prosper. Unfortunately, most of human history is filled with just the opposite, of one 'group' wanting to hate and to dominate or destroy other groups.

**Judaism says we should *hate evil*. But, for the most part, what is going on today in America is not evil. It is differences of opinion.**

Differences can be celebrated. These differences can help us come up with innovative solutions to our problems. It is okay to struggle with issues and ideas that are not our own. But, ***it is not okay to 'hate' ideas or people who are different.*** We just came out of our annual 'confessions' during the High Holidays and culminating on Yom Kippur. Let us be true to the words we just recited. ***For our own sake, and for this great nation, we need to choose to not hate. We should know better. Shame on us. We are better than this.***

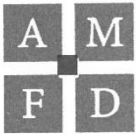
*This Torah Connection is the sole responsibility of the author and specifically does NOT necessarily reflect those of the Board of Trustees of CBI, CBI, its membership, Reform Judaism, or Judaism. Please send any comments to the author at: [mlwaxer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mlwaxer@sbcglobal.net).*

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

#### **Senior Staff**

Bruce Greenbaum - *Rabbi, D.D.*  
 Suzanne Guinane – *Cantorial Soloist &*  
*Director of Education*

Julie Chase- *Administrator*

Abby King- *Administrative Assistant/Facility Use*  
*Coordinator*

Ruby Cohan-*Bookkeeper*

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## **Parshiot**

**November 7, Vayera**

**T: Genesis 18:1-22:24**

**H: II Kings 4:1-37**

**November 14: Chaye Sarah**

**T: Genesis 23:1-25:18**

**H: I Kings 1:1-31**

**November 21, Toldot**

**T: Genesis 25:19-28:9**

**H: Malachi 1:1-2:7**

**November 28, Vayetze**

**T: Genesis 28:10-32:3**

**H: Hosea 12:13-14:10**