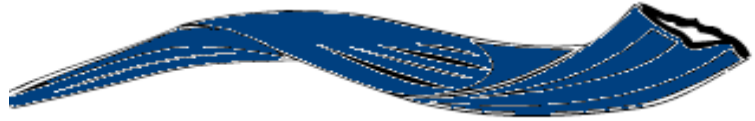


# SHOFAR



Monthly Newsletter of the Monterey Peninsula Jewish Community

[www.carmelbethisrael.org](http://www.carmelbethisrael.org)



## Chanukah Zoom Night 2020!

Join us as on a special Zoom event **Friday, December 11 at**

**5:30 PM** as we gather together for a safe social distancing Chanukah celebration. We will begin with Cantorial Soloist Suzanne leading us in some Chanukah songs. Then each household will light their Chanukah menorah as we sing the candle blessings. We will take a moment to enjoy all the Chanukah lights that should be placed in our Zoom windows! Remember that Friday is our second night of Chanukah. Following the Chanukah Menorah lighting the rabbi will lead us on an exciting Chanukah scavenger hunt. Then we will enjoy a short debate on the best topping for our homemade latkes. Is it sour cream, applesauce or both? After Rabbi Greenbaum reminds us how to play the dreidel game and a couple more songs with Suzanne we will take a break to enjoy our Chanukah dinners. Then our Chanukah and Shabbat observance will continue with our service that starts at 7:30 PM. May our burning candles remind each of us to celebrate our religious freedom today.

## History: The Chanukah Story

Although according to Jewish custom Chanukah is considered a "minor" Jewish festival, today it ranks—along with Passover and Purim—as one of the most beloved Jewish holidays, full of light and joy and family celebration.

Unlike many Jewish holidays, Chanukah (also known as the Festival of Lights) is not mentioned in the Bible. The historical events upon which the celebration is based are recorded in Maccabees I and II, two books contained within a later collection of writings known as the Apocrypha.

In the year 168 B.C.E., the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes sent his soldiers to Jerusalem. The Syrians desecrated the Temple, the holiest place for Jews at that time. Antiochus also abolished Judaism, outlawing the observance of Shabbat and the Festivals, as well as circumcision. Altars and idols were set up for the worship of Greek gods, and he offered Jews two options: conversion or death.

On the 25th day of the Hebrew month of *Kislev* in 168 B.C.E., the Temple was renamed for the Greek god Zeus. A Jewish resistance movement—led by a priestly family known as the Hasmoneans, or Maccabees—developed against the cruelty of Antiochus. The head of the family was Mattathias, an elderly man. His son, Judah, became the chief strategist and military leader of the resistance. Though outnumbered, Judah Maccabee and his fighters miraculously won two major battles, routing the Syrians decisively.

*Continued on page 10*





## From the Rabbi's Desk...

As I write this message, Thanksgiving is just a couple of weeks away. I've been asked how we can celebrate Thanksgiving when there is so little for which to be thankful. I disagree. We should be celebrating right now. Let me offer what we might celebrate.

We just completed a very difficult election season. Our country and our congregation members did not all agree who to support. Obviously, there were strong feelings about who to support and why. From CBI members I heard suggestions about who I should support because of positions on Israel, on anti-Semitism, on finances, and a variety of other topics. I heard various statements that at times included anger, disgust and frustration directed at both presidential candidates. But I am celebrating because approximately 150 million people did vote and did so without any violence across our country. Our democratic process carried the day. With thousands of poll workers and poll watchers making sure everything went smoothly, the election process itself was maybe the strongest winner.

Now it is time to heal some of the ill will created over the election period. Over the years I have been accused of both being too liberal and too conservative when it comes to Israel. More recently some have complained that our congregation is overly political. Please rest assured that I want our congregation to be a home to all the Jews on the Monterey Peninsula whether Democrat or Republican. I want CBI to be a place where you can pray, socialize, and learn without feeling your political position is being challenged.

After all, we have much in common. While our political positions might differ, our values are based on the Torah and Talmud. We all want a society where Jews (and others) can join together safely in prayer. We might define it differently, but we all want to pursue justice (Deuteronomy 16:20). Each of us hopes to do justice, love goodness and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Our struggle comes in how we interpret our biblical and rabbinic teachings.

Now is the time to support one another, not tear ourselves apart. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on our ability to socialize. We are forced to physical distance ourselves and to meet online or over the phone. Friendships have been tested. While we might not be able to physically stand side by side, let us find pathways to connect.

I pray that together we follow CBI's mission to be welcoming and inclusive. We join in CBI's vision, observing our prayers and engaging in study as a community, united in our Jewish values and ethics. I pray that our core values guide us to nurture one another, even in our struggles and wrestling with our modern-day challenges. May we form mighty bonds as we work together on Tikkun Olam, making God's creation a healthy place for all life.

Only when we can follow these practices will our CBI family again become its true self, whole and holy. Let us be strong and let us strengthen one another. Amen.





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

One day, God willing, we will transition between two periods: the current, constrained, COVID Flare-Up period and a post COVID Flare-Up period in which we have resumed some normalcy in our lives, but in which it is still true that COVID can flare up again, before we have vaccines and other tools to deal with it.

What are the procedures and protocols that accompany this transition? It is a difficult question. Fortunately, there is lots of external guidance from Union for Reform Judaism, as well as from state, local, federal and international sources. Much of the guidance is of the “be careful”, pekuach nefesh (to save a life), and “thou shall not” categories.

To guide CBI through this, I’ve asked Scott Lyons, our vice president, to work with a team to help us sort out the possibilities and methods of implementing them. When and under what circumstances does all this take place? Scott and his team, including Bee Epstein-Shepherd, Ida Holber, Scott Helfont, Miriam Lyons, with the Rabbi as an ex-officio member, are now working diligently on this, and I’m thankful for their thoughtful and hard work.

This year, within the context of the unfolding realities of COVID, we developed a very tight budget, being very conservative about our revenues, such as the preschool, and very strict with our expenses, such as salaries. To complement these actions, we have also embarked on fundraising efforts, headed by Malina Breaux. Malina has always given unstintingly of her time in support of CBI, and she’s doing it once again. It’s my hope that when you’re asked to give an extra margin of support to CBI you will understand that we are in very strange times which negatively impact our budget, and we need your support so that we can continue to fulfill our mission to be a welcoming and inclusive center for Jewish life in the Monterey Peninsula area.

I think an emerging theme in this Covid/post Covid period is what some have called *à la carte Judaism*, because it is now possible for each of us to use different venues to meet our different spiritual needs, such as socializing, music, sermons, and adult education. It used to be convenient to find all of these at a one stop shop, namely our local synagogue. Now, it is just as easy to practice *à la carte Judaism* on the web.

I propose that one practical response to this challenge is to enable a robust series of mini courses within the synagogue. For example, somebody has already asked me if we could run a class on Hebrew grammar. Someone else wants to know more about the life, and times, and teaching of the recently deceased Rabbi Lord Jonathon Sacks z”l. And so on. So to kick this off, I’m going to propose that I put together a class (ZOOM, of course) of several sessions in which we watch a video and then discuss the life and times and teachings of Rabbi Sacks. I propose to do this on **Saturday afternoons, from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, starting December 5 and continuing on the 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>.** Since Shabbat ends early at this time of year, we can end the study session with Havdalah, the traditional, 10 minute, service that concludes Shabbat. Watch for a note about this in CBI’s e-blast.

What else would you like to see CBI do? Do you have a skill you wish to share? I would be glad to make sure that appropriate matches between skills providers and learners are made.

Wishing you and your loved ones are staying safe,

Dan Nussbaum  
(C) (831) 324-3228







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

*Chag urim sameach!* This month we celebrate *Chanukah*. *Chanukah* begins at sundown on the 25<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev* (which usually falls in December) and is

celebrated for eight nights. *Kislev* is always close to the winter solstice so *Chanukah* takes us into, through and out of the darkest night of the year. For eight nights we watch the light increase as we light our *chanukiah*. I love lighting the candles on my *chanukiah* and watching the light increase each night as I add another candle. We light the *shamash* first and use it to light the other candles in our *chanukiah*. A *chanukiah* has how many candles? Yes, 9 candles. One candle for each night (8) and the *shamash*. The *shamash* is the helper candle. We light it first and use it to light the rest of our candles in our *chanukiah*. The light reminds us of *neis gadol hayam sham* (a great miracle happened there) when the Maccabees could only find one cruse (small vessel) of pure oil to burn the Eternal Flame (*Ner Tamid*) for one night and the oil lasted for eight nights.

#betheshamash How can you be the helper candle? How can you bring light to other people and the world? That's right – by doing *mitzvot*. *Tikkun olam* – repairing the world and *hiddur mitzvah* – adding beauty to/elevating observances and celebrations within Jewish tradition, to name a couple.

I have a few *shamashim* (plural of *shamash*) in my life. Two are right here at Congregation Beth Israel (CBI) – our own Grace + Nina (Grace Dean and Nina Harmer). It is hard to believe they have only known each other since February 2019. They met at CBI's Talent Show and were not singing together! What a joy and honor to share the virtual *bimah* with them for *erev shabbat* services. We all benefit greatly from the beauty and light they bring to all of us and add to our services.



I'm thrilled to share that Grace + Nina will be participating in the virtual Jewish Star Academy! They will join a cohort of their peers to hone their songleading, singing and songwriting skills with some of my friends and colleagues – Rick Recht, Eliana Light, Chava Mirel, Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, Naomi Less and Joe Buchanan.

Looking forward to our 12/11/202 *erev shabbat* services when we'll light our *chanukiah* together. I can't wait to see the light pass from one zoom room to the next as we continue to bring light into the world. #bethelight #betheshamash #dontletthelightgoout





## Lunch with the Rabbi

Join Rabbi Greenbaum this month on **Thursday, December 3 at noon** online as he leads a virtual gathering discussion on "A Variety of Ways to Find Shalom." Most of us were taught Shalom means hello, goodbye and peace. But how can we use Shalom to help us and others? How do we create Shalom inside ourselves? How do we build Shalom in our neighborhoods? How do we teach our non-Jewish friends the real meaning of Shalom? How is it a verb and how is it a noun? Let's enjoy learning and sharing while we enjoy our own lunch that we prepared for ourself. 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.



## Se'udah Shelishit

A wonderful tradition is to enjoy a third meal (Se'udah Shelishit) on Sabbath afternoon, just before the end of Sabbath. Our CBI President Dan Nussbaum would like to explore re-establishing that custom for our community. While traditionally this was a light meal shared at the synagogue before evening services, our approach will be on joining together for a little shared learning before ending the Sabbath with a Havdalah service. Please join us on our service zoom link **December 5, 12 and 19 from 4:00-5:00**. Dan is organizing these first 3 sessions on teachings by Rabbi Jonathan Sachs of blessed memory. Each gathering will end with a celebration of Havdalah. Not required but recommended, have a little nosh to enjoy during the learning session. We hope you will join us.



## Family Chanukah Bags Pick-up

We are putting together Chanukah bags with candles, gelt, blessing sheets and even a dreidel for all our younger family members. If you have children living with you, even those who are old enough to be Madrichim (teacher's aides) in our religious school, we hope you will pick up

one of these Chanukah bags. Rabbi Bruce Greenbaum and Cantorial Soloist Suzanne Guinane will be outside our CBI front doors ready to give you your Chanukah treats **on Sunday, December 6 from 12:00-2:00, on Tuesday December 8 from 3:00-5:00 and on Thursday, December 10 from 10:00-noon**. If you cannot pick up your bag one of those times, please arrange to collect your Chanukah gifts by calling Abby in our office at 624-2015. Happy Chanukah everyone!



## Don't Just Do Something, Sit There! Meditation: A Proven Antidote to Stress

What if there were a simple and affordable something that could calm your anxieties, boost your immune system, stabilize your mood, restore your brain functioning, renew your energy, impart a sense of tranquility and peace of mind and bring you closer to G-d?

There is, and it couldn't be more accessible. It's called meditation, and you can do it wherever you are, whenever you need it.

While it has many practical benefits, it is, however, fundamentally a practice that allows you to align yourself with your deeper spiritual nature, the G-d within. So, whether you are simply wanting some relief from the pressures of contemporary life or you're longing for a more intimate relationship with the sacred, or both, meditation is the answer.

Sandy Leader, CBI's interfaith board trustee and an experienced meditation teacher, will be offering once a week, hour-long meditation sessions on Zoom starting **Wednesday, Dec. 2, at 3 p.m.** A meditator for 30 years, Sandy has been facilitating classes, workshops and retreats for 20 years. She will offer instruction and present a variety of approaches, including some ways to give a Jewish flavor to this ancient practice. Open to beginning and experienced meditators.

To sign up, please contact Abby at the CBI office, 831-624-2015. Once you've registered, further information and a Zoom link will be provided.



### **United Jewish Communities**

David Sabih & Anna Swartley in honor of Awerbucks, Fentons, Packers, Nussbaums, Gumbergs, Waxers, Gerbers, and Carla Gelfand

David Sabih & Anna Swartley in honor of Malina Breaux

Michael & Debora Waxer

### **Cantorial Restricted Fund**

Suzanne Guinane in honor of Dan & Bev Nussbaum & Richard & Susan Platt

Michael & Debora Waxer in honor of Debora Waxer and the Aliyahs of the Waxerians

### **College Scholarship Fund**

Gail & Dennis Bates in memory of Sadok Masliyah

Michael & Constance Kean in memory of Sadok Masliyah

Jim & Natalie Sammet in memory of Sadok Masliyah

Andrew & Wendy Schmidt in memory of Sadok Masliyah, a wonderful man

Jim & Jill Sleeper in memory of Sadok Masliyah

Lester Tockerman in memory of Sadok Masliyah

Mitchel & Debbie Winick in memory of Sadok Masliyah

Martin & Karen Wiskoff in memory of Sadok Masliyah

### **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

Barry R. Harrow

Jim & Jill Sleeper in loving memory of Mylle Perkins

### **Happy Chanukah Stay-at-Home Gala**

Marshal & Angelica Blatt

Malina Breaux

Mark & Danette Crossgrove

Robert L. Fenton & Debra A. Givner

Bob Fields

Vic & Rena Feuerstein

Thomas & Ellen G. Krause

Rosemary Lande

Lewis A. & Sandra Leader

Laela Leavy

Peter & Judith Levin

Daniel & Beverly Nussbaum

Bill Pardue & Barbara Mitchell in honor of Rae

Mitchell whose dying wish was that we all vote in all elections

Seth & Naomi Pollack

Peter, Michele, & Jordan Serchuk

Gary & Judy Simon

George & Lily Waissbluth

### **You in the Pew Fundraiser**

Malina Breaux

Suzanne Guinane

### **Doctor/Lawyer Fundraising Challenge**

Mitchel & Deborah Winick

### **General Donations**

Marshal & Angelica Blatt in honor of Cantorial Soloist

Suzanne Guinane

Barry & Randi Brookstein

Ellyn Gelson in honor of November birthdays and anniversaries

David & Ila Kleinman

Stephen L. & Wendie A. Ryter in memory of Betsy Goldstein Smith

Rabbi Jeffrey Schulman & Susan Alnes in memory of Jennie Kiviat Schulman

Gary & Judy Simon in memory of Inga Simon and Abraham Lefkowitz on the occasion of their yahrzeits

Lester Tockerman in honor of Joshua & Nathan Tockerman

### **Social Action**

Susan Schwartz







## JCM United's Food Service Continues to Grow!

Jews, Christians and Muslims United (JCM United), the non-profit organization our rabbi helped create, has now been serving dinners weekly for over a year! Every Thursday a handful of volunteers meet at

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Seaside to prepare and distribute over 130 meals in what is now named Abraham's Kitchen. Most dinners are picked up at the church but a few of the meals are delivered to those who might not be living outside but still in need of assistance.

Since Covid-19 and the shortage of supplies at the Monterey Food Bank the majority of the food now has to be purchased. Unfortunately costs have risen as has the number of meals being provided each week. Abraham's Kitchen costs are expected to total approximately \$18,000 next year. While most of the expense is food and packaging supplies (plates, plastic ware, napkins...) insurance and kitchen supplies also are required. In fact the average meal cost is only about \$2.60. This program is completely run by volunteers, from the cooks to those delivering meals and washing pots and pans. A few CBI members volunteer almost every week to support this effort. If you want to volunteer (even just once) contact Rabbi Greenbaum.

While a couple small donations have been given by meal recipients, the majority of funds are from grants and donations. The rabbi's discretionary fund has supported this cause and last year CBI hosted a dinner that raised over \$2,000 for Abraham's kitchen. If you know of a grant resource that might support JCM United's Abraham's Kitchen, please contact the rabbi. Let us take pride in knowing we are supporting this social justice program.



## Dog Training Classes at CBI

"UnChained is going to be holding dog training classes outdoors geared towards kids and teens. They'll play fun games and learn tricks that promote building healthy, strong relationships. Each registration allows for two adults, two kids between 8-12 years old or teens between 13-17 years old, and one dog over 4 months old. The classes will be held **December 5 and 12.**

CBI Members can receive a 25% discount for the class by using the code **25OFF** at checkout. For more information and to sign up, go to <https://livingunchained.org/group-training-class>.

UnChained is a local nonprofit that supports the social and emotional development of youth through training and socializing of dogs. Youth learn the skills of patience, empathy, and compassion in their work with dogs which can translate to improved sense of self worth and positive interpersonal skills with people. UnChained also offers private dog training services and classes that are open to the community."



## Building Bridges Understanding Zen Buddhism

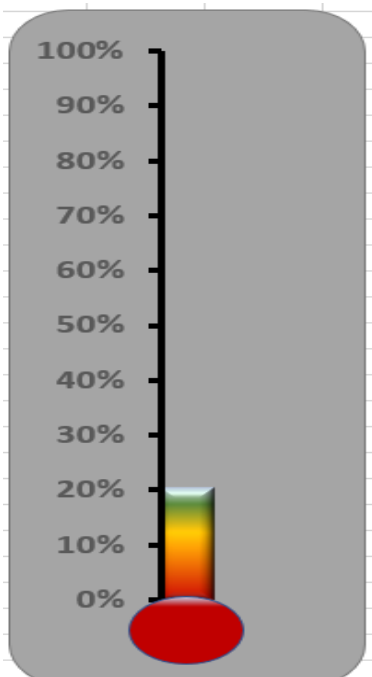
In an effort to do our part in healing divisions and building bridges of connection and understanding in our world, Congregation Beth Israel is offering a Zoom presentation on Zen Buddhism on **Tuesday, January 12, at 7 p.m.**

Patricia Wolff, a longtime Zen practitioner who was given lay Dharma Transmission authorizing her to teach in 2010 at the Monterey Bay Zen Center, will give a talk on Zen Buddhism, lead a meditation then answer any questions.

If there is an affirmative response to this offering, CBI will present a series of programs exploring other religions.

To register and receive a link, please contact Abby at the CBI office, 831-624-2015.

# CBI FUNDRAISING



Help us reach our fundraising goal.

*This time of year there are many demands on your generosity. This year especially CBI is working hard to both nurture our Jewish Community and maintain the financial health of our synagogue. To that end, our tireless fundraising committee has a number of creative ways for you to give.*

**amazon.com**  
Smile

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

## 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).





Fund of \$2 million dollars would generate enough interest and dividends each year to keep our Synagogue financially viable for the generations to come.

There are 4 ways for you to make End-of-Year donations that can help us grow the Endowment Fund and provide you with a tax benefit at the same time.

One, you can donate stock that has increased in value. Regardless of the cost of the stock at the time you bought it, your donation will be valued at the price of the stock when you make the donation, and that will also be the charitable value you can claim on your 2019 tax return. (Note: Based on the 2017 Tax Act, taxpayers in states with high income and real estate taxes are capped at \$10,000 in State and Local Tax (SALT) deductions, so your itemized deductions may not exceed your new standard deduction.)

Second, you can establish a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) through your Financial Advisor. Whatever money you donate to the DAF will generate a tax reduction in the year you contribute the funds. However, you get to maintain control over the distribution of the funds to the charities of your choice over a timeframe decided by you. For example, if a hypothetical David and Ruth Greenstein contribute \$50,000 to a DAF, they can make contributions to the charities of their choice over the next several years in the amounts and at the times of their choosing.

Third, if you are over age 70½, you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from your IRA to CBI. The QCD is considered part or all of the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) that you must start taking from your IRA at this age. However, unlike the RMD, which is considered part of your taxable income for the year, the QCD is not considered part of your income and is not taxed.

Finally, if you wish to help the Endowment Fund grow, you can make a cash contribution, in your name or the name of a loved one.

Please consider performing a year-end Mitzvah, and contribute something to the Endowment Fund this year.

NOTE: Establishing a DAF or QCD takes a little time, so start to work with your Financial Advisor by the beginning of December.

[As with any tax strategy, you should consult your tax professional on whether any of these approaches are right for you.]

*Please join our Stay at Home*

*Chanukah Gala with a gift to*

*Congregation Beth Israel.*

*Suggested donations: \$144 per individual or*

- Chanukah Miracle (20 x Chai(18) = \$360)
- Chanukah Menorah (8 lights x Chai = \$144)
- Chanukah Latke (6 Ingredients x Chai = \$108)
- Chanukah Dreidel (4 sides x Chai = \$72)
- Chanukah Present (2 x Chai = \$36)



## End-of Year Donations: The Endowment Fund Needs Your Help !!

One of the most important and significant efforts currently underway at our Synagogue is to grow our Endowment Fund to \$2 million dollars over the next five years. As with every home and business in our country, the basic costs to run CBI keep going up year after year. But the size of our CBI family remains relatively constant, and the ability of younger families to make the recommended Pledge amount each year is declining. An Endowment

## History: The Chanukah Story

*Continued from page 1*

Although historians debate the causes and outcomes of the war in which Judah Maccabee and his followers defeated the Syrian armies of Antiochus, there is no doubt that Chanukah evokes stirring images of Jewish valor against overwhelming odds. Other themes of the holiday include the refusal to submit to the religious demands of an empire practicing idolatry, the struggle against total assimilation into Greek culture and loss of Jewish identity, and the fight for Jewish political autonomy and self-determination.

Chanukah, which means “dedication,” is the festival that commemorates the purification and rededication of the Temple following the Greek occupation of that holy place. Today, the holiday reminds Jews to rededicate themselves to keeping alive the flame of Jewish religion, culture, and peoplehood so that it may be passed on to the next generation.

### THE MIRACLE OF THE OIL

Originally, the eight-day holiday was intended to parallel the eight-day festival of Sukkot. The Books of the Maccabees made no mention of the legend concerning a small jar of oil that unexpectedly lasted for eight days. Only centuries after the Maccabees’ defeat of the Syrians did the story of the jar of oil – which has come to be associated with Chanukah – appear in the Talmud.

According to the legend, when the Maccabees entered the Temple and began to reclaim it from the Greeks, they immediately relit the ner tamid, which burned constantly in the Temple and has a parallel in our synagogues to this day. In the Temple, they found a single jar of oil, which was sufficient for only one day. The messenger who was sent to secure additional oil took eight days to complete his mission, and miraculously, the single jar of oil continued to burn until his return. The rabbis of the Talmud attributed the eight days of Chanukah to the miracle of this single jar of oil.

### MODERN OBSERVANCE

Although the practice of lighting the menorah (also called a *hanukkiyah*) was common throughout much of the 19th century, North American Jews tended to neglect most of the other traditions and practices associated with the holiday. By the 1920s, however, Jews increasingly added gift-giving to their Chanukah celebrations, prompting some people to refer to Chanukah as the “Jewish Christmas.”

In some ways, the transformation of Chanukah was linked to the growth of North American Jewry within its unique environment. The elevation of Chanukah to a major holiday was partly the result of Jews acculturating themselves to a North America that was overwhelmingly Christian in population and symbols.

Although Chanukah had become an important holiday among North American Jews by the 1920s, it would be incorrect to regard it as an imitation of Christmas with an emphasis on the exchange of presents. Rather, North American Jews use this holiday as a celebration of family, reinforcing Jewish identity in a place whose population may be overwhelmingly Christian but in which Jews feel at home. Chanukah, therefore, is a means for North American Jews to feel a kinship with their neighbors, while simultaneously asserting their Jewish distinctiveness.



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### A Season to Share Joy & Give Thanks

*"I slept and dreamt that life was joy.  
I awoke and saw that life was service.  
I acted, and behold, service was joy."*

Rabindranath Tagore, Bengal, India poet, writer, composer, philosopher & painter who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913

So much to share, so much to be grateful for despite these unpredictable, extraordinary times. There is the joy of family (even from afar), the joy of our friends, the contentment and security that I hope we all share as part of our CBI community. We can acknowledge and be most grateful that we are there for one another and especially "there for those in need."

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

Our work with I-HELP continues, as the men (now 9) and the women (now 5) Shelter in Place at local churches, where the men and women have been staying since March with food and now CBI's holiday gifts delivered directly to them.

Thanks once again to Matthew and Charlene Schuss of our Social Action Committee, who prepared a homemade meal of beef stew, potatoes & a yummy berry dessert. With the help of Charlotte Salomon, we provided the breakfast-- including pancake mix, maple syrup, oatmeal & muffins-- and lunch foods with drinks, desserts, meats and cheese, for the men to prepare their own sandwiches.

Charlotte Solomon recently joined our Social Action Committee, and we are also grateful CBI member Deborah Stern has also reached out to assist our efforts! Welcome!

The Lambourne Institute for Life Mastery will provide dinner for the November 30<sup>th</sup> Women's I-HELP. Additionally, Charlotte, Deborah, Cara Lieb & I are "set to gift" the women the items that they'd so appreciate receiving (i.e., leggings, undergarments and hairbrushes). We'll also provide toiletry gift bags.

The December 6<sup>th</sup> Men's I-HELP, is being organized by the Religious School's Grades 3 -5. The children will also prepare holiday greeting cards. Since we will provide dinner, breakfast and lunch, we'd so appreciate your help. Please contact Suzanne, our Cantorial Soloist & Religious School Director, [suzanneg@carmelbethisrael.org](mailto:suzanneg@carmelbethisrael.org) or me to participate.

We are waiting to learn from the I-HELP coordinators what the men would appreciate receiving for our gift-giving to them. Please contact me if you would like to purchase items for them. Thank you.

### The Food Bank Barrels!

Our barrels were loaded to the top, overflowing with shopping bags too! The Food Bank now has these, so thanks to everyone who contributed.

### Abraham's Tent!

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

Wishing you joy, good health, and a season of giving,

Arlene Krebs

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





# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Peggy Harmatz	1
Kenneth Kroopf	2
David Goldberg	4
Sara Rubin	4
Anita Artstein-Dunsay	5
Gabrielle Kaatz	8
Mary Munsterman-Sher	9
Robert Conner	10
Davida Irving	10
Howard Messinger	11
Bonni Weinstein	13
Lois Epel	15
Larisa Modorsky	16
Daniel Nussbaum	16
Randi Brookstein	17
Rosemary Lande	17

Wendy Schmidt	17
Rich Ader	20
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# FAMILY NEWS

We are saddened by the loss of two long-time CBI members, Sadok Masliyah and Richard Rosen.









May their memory be a blessing to us all.



# Congregation Beth Israel

## December 2020

### Kislev ~ Tevet 5781

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<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> 		1	2	3	4	5
			<p>3:00 PM Virtual Meditation -Zoom</p> <p>4:30 PM Hebrew School - Zoom</p> <p>6:00 PM Aleynu - Zoom</p>	 <p>12:00 PM Lunch with Rabbi via Zoom</p>	 <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings Via Zoom</p>	<p>10:30 AM Shabbat Service &amp; Study with 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup> grades joining us. Via Zoom</p> <p>4:00 PM The Life, Times, and Teachings of Rabbi Sacks followed by Havdalah</p>
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>Religious School on Zoom</p> <p>12:00 -2:00 RS Chanukah Bag Pickup</p> <p>5:00 PM I-Help Men Off site</p> <p>6:00 PM UJC event</p>		<p>3:00 -5:00 RS Chanukah Bag Pickup</p>	<p>3:00 PM Virtual Meditation -Zoom</p> <p>4:30 PM Hebrew School - Zoom</p>	<p>10:00 - 12:00 RS Chanukah Bag Pickup</p> <p>Erev Hanukkah</p>	 <p>5:30 PM Virtual Hanukkah Celebration</p> <p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services via Zoom</p>	<p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study via Zoom</p> <p>4:00 PM The Life, Times, and Teachings of Rabbi Sacks followed by Havdalah</p>
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<p>Religious School on Zoom Hanukkah</p> 		<p>7:00 PM CBI Executive Committee</p>	<p>3:00 PM Virtual Meditation - Zoom</p> <p>4:30 Hebrew School - Zoom</p> <p>6:00 PM Aleynu Zoom</p>		 <p>7:30 p.m. Erev Shabbat Services via Zoom</p>	<p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study via Zoom</p> <p>4:00 PM The Life, Times, and Teachings of Rabbi Sacks followed by Havdalah</p>
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<p>No Religious School</p>			<p>No Hebrew School</p>		<p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Anniversary Blessings Via Zoom</p>	<p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study via Zoom</p>
27	28	29	30	31	1 January 2021	2
<p>No Religious School</p>			<p>No Hebrew School</p>		<p>7:30 PM Erev Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings via Zoom</p>	<p>10:30 AM Shabbat Torah Study via Zoom</p>



## Torah Secrets

When reading the Torah in English, it is impossible to see subtlety in the Hebrew words, some of which will totally shock

you. There are places where a word is used in one context, and then, sometimes in the very next verse, the same word has a **very** different meaning.

One of the best examples of this unusual phenomenon occurs in the first portion of the Torah:

***"And they were, both of them, naked (arumim), the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed. Now the serpent was cunning (arum) beyond any beast of the field that Hashem God had made..."*** (Genesis [Beresheet] 2:25 and 3:1)

The Hebrew word 'arum' translates as 'cunning' when describing the trait of the serpent, but in the immediate prior verse, the plural of this same, exact, word 'arumim' means 'naked' when describing Adam and Chava (Eve). How does this same exact word have such different meanings? Is there a connection between these two concepts, of being 'naked' and being 'cunning'? In fact, one might think that 'cunning' is more of an opposite to 'naked', as when you are 'naked' you are not concealing anything.

Another great example of this phenomenon occurs at the very end of this same portion, and it expresses a unique emotion that God experiences:

***"And Hashem regretted (va yenachem) that He made Man on earth and He was saddened in His heart."*** (Genesis [Beresheet] 6:6), and then, in 6:8:

***"But Noah (ve noach) found favor in the eyes of HaShem"***

The word, 'yenachem', and 'noach' are related to each other. Noah is associated with the concept of 'comfort', so in the Hebrew 'comfort' and 'regret' are connected.

One might recognize that the key word used to describe one item, that has a negative connotation, is connected to a 'balancing' concept with a positive connotation, or vice versa. In the first example, being 'naked' is a positive term connoting innocence, and the next verse introduces the idea of 'cunning', something more sinister.

In the second example HaShem is experiencing 'regret' since man is doing evil all the time, and so HaShem chooses to start anew. But, this one individual, Noah, is a positive balance to this story. HaShem's 'regret' is balanced by the 'comfort' of Noah. At the literal level of understanding, the Hebrew gives an insight that is not observable in any translation.

At a higher level of reading, we can interpret these early Torah stories as telling us about human nature and science: The original creation of Adam and Chava includes the insertion of

our 'neshama', our life essence, as can be understood from this famous verse, Genesis 1:26-27:

***"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, .... And God created the Man, in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them."***

Having made humans in God's image means that **we all have an innate understanding of right and wrong**. This is one reason why God was so disappointed in His creation, that even when knowing good from evil the humans chose to be only evil, all the time... except for Noah. The second story, now about Noah and his family, answers the question that science sometimes asks, which is, if we start over with just the best human family would we have a better world?

Science calls this concept 'eugenics'. The Noah story answers this question, so future civilizations need not go thru the horror of wiping out people, in this endeavor to 'improve' the human race. This desire was arguably Hitler's motivation, yet the Torah already gave us the answer. It was 10 generations from Adam to Noah, where the world was filled with evil, and it was exactly another 10 generations for HaShem to introduce Abraham. In both examples, humanity degraded rapidly, from a wonderful start in generation 1, to tremendous evil in generation 10.

This third 'creation' story takes an individual, has him leave his homeland, but HaShem introduces the concept of an **instruction manual**, and anybody who follows this manual can pursue goodness and make a better world. This instruction manual is called 'The Torah'.

We see that even when we read Torah literally, it is helpful to see the Hebrew words to notice when these unusual word sets occur. From these examples we can see that these word sets have a yin and yang duality and balance to them.

We also can see that there are deeper ways to understand the teachings in the Torah, such as seeing these first three stories telling us about fundamental human nature. We can see that just 'follow your heart' does not work for civilization (the Adam and Eve story), as the lure of power, jealousy, and corruption ultimately takes over the population. We also know that humanity is humanity... there are no superior genetics which would avoid the pitfalls in the human experience (the Noah story).

Finally, spending time with Torah, to read and understand its wisdom, is the thing that can make the difference. This one tool can give humanity the ability to overcome its evil inclinations which cause us to descend. With the Torah we can lift ourselves up, our children, our societies, and be partners with HaShem in bringing light into this world, and enhancing our ability to develop spiritually.

*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@sbcbglobal.net](mailto:mlwaxer@sbcbglobal.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**

**December 5, Vayishlach**  
**T: Genesis 32:4-36:43**  
**H: Hosea 11:7-12:12**

**December 12, Vayeshev**  
**T: Genesis 37:1-40:23**  
**H: Amos 2:6-3:8**

**December 19, Miketz**  
**T: Genesis 41:1-44:17**  
**H: I Kings 3:15-4:1**

**December 26, Vayigash**  
**T: Genesis 44:18-**  
**47:27**  
**H: Ezekiel 37:15-28**