



# JOURNEY

*Pesach 2020 / 5780*



**COMING TOGETHER.  
INSPIRING ONE ANOTHER.  
SHAPING OUR COMMUNITY.**

**NOW MORE THAN EVER.**



## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Journey*. This certainly qualifies. Both the times we're each living through, and our living through them together. This is a special publication at a special time. As we get ready to experience a Pesach like none we've experienced before, a Pesach that Rabbi Freundlich referred to as "a Pesach we didn't want, but a Pesach we may have needed" (see this year's *Shabbat HaGadol Drasha* for full context), our hopes are that this small, unscheduled, publication can contribute in its own small way.

On Shabbat HaGadol we read in the Haftarah of G-d's promise to send Eliyahu HaNavi to usher in the Redemption. Earlier in Chapter 3 of Malachi, we find G-d's rebuke of the Children of Israel, highlighting that from their very early days, when urged to "*Return to Me, and I will return to you*" (שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם), their detached response was "*With what have we to return?*" (במה נשוב). What follows is a simple model and game-plan on how to shape behavior and prioritize actions in order to promote social justice and open the floodgates of endless blessing from Heaven. That's how they were, and still are, meant to return. We will be returning to our beloved shul in the near future. It may be a few short weeks away, or it may several longer months away. But we will be returning to it, and to one another's company within its walls. By then it may be situated at its new prime Jerusalem location (my vote: a corner lot somewhere in between the German Colony and Baka), or it may still reside for a bit longer at 6519 Baily Road. Either way, we'll be returning, and we'll be doing so with great excitement.

Picture that first return. The wave of people flowing through the doors, the kids running through our hallways collecting candies with joy and loud cheer, the huge smile and welcoming words from our Rabbi and Rebbetzin, the harmonies from all corners of the room... and all that for a weeknight Mincha-Maariv! Now imagine that first Shabbat back! All the above, plus an inspirational sermon, a bountiful kiddush, and a room full of family and friends all present in person. That first Shabbat will be magical. More magical than the last event to occur in our building prior to the doors being closed, 'The Most Magical Purim on Earth' (see photos taken by Ruby Friedman and Oshri Cohen on page 16). Our experiences at TBDJ each day, each Shabbat, and each Holiday are like none other in the city, and they're about to be even greater.

Like the blueprint put forth thousands of years ago, we'll be returning with some very simple, but immensely powerful, accomplishments. We'll have spent a significant amount of time apart, but more united than ever in mission and action. We'll have invested endless cycles into helping one another, strengthened our learning via technology tools, and connected with fellow members and neighbours who we've rarely, if ever, spoken to before. These activities of ours will have also been

contagious, in a good way, drawing in others to join every day, strengthening our collective results.

The days and weeks ahead may be challenging individually and collectively, but the anticipation of that return can help propel us forward. The perfect time for *Journey*. Re-branded a couple of years ago to reflect the aspirational nature of our community, this magazine will hopefully add some optimism to arduous days. In this special edition, you'll find a mix of upbeat stories, colourful photos that seem like they were taken ages ago, and deeper reflection from our leadership and membership that speak for many of us, reaffirming that none of us are truly alone. You'll see recaps of activities, some plans in the works, and a lot of familiar names and faces that will be back at your side soon.

All publications require a fair bit of work, and this unique edition was no different. Special thanks are due to all our contributors; to our "lone man on the ground" Yakov Lev, who single-handedly took care of much printing and distribution; to our Rabbi, President, and Executive, for their leadership in ensuring that the best today and the best tomorrow come to fruition in our community and in these pages; and to a couple of unsung heroes who helped transform these times into the best they can be: Yair Meyers, who you're all familiar with even if he hasn't hugged you in weeks, and Naftoli Jacobs, a new name for many but one that has stepped up and positively impacted more individuals than can be counted. Behind the scenes, these gentlemen have had their hands in too many recent activities to list, but suffice to say that this publication, and much of what is positively described within, would not be possible without them.

Please print and enjoy this edition of *Journey* over Pesach. Whether you glance through it briefly, read it cover to cover, or memorize it by rote before the three-day Yom Tov is over, we hope it will bring back pleasant memories while providing encouragement via great memories our community will create together in due time.

*Judah Aspler*





דע לפני מי אתה עומד

RABBI YEchezkel FREUNDLICH

# A MESSAGE

## From Our Rabbi

### WHY IS THIS NIGHT OF PESACH THE SAME AS ALL OTHER NIGHTS OF PESACH?

I write this note a little over a week before Pesach begins, but as we have all come to understand, in Corona-time, a week has become an eternity. Some days feel like they drag on forever, some feel like they go by in a flash. Every day has brought with it new understandings, new restrictions, and new realities. It is hard to predict now as I write this, what life will actually be like as we sit down to our Seders and you read it.

It is impossible to miss that this factor – the experience of time – has become so prominent in our lives as we enter into Pesach. Time is one of the most, if not the most, central themes in the entire Pesach story. The very first mitzvah given to the Jewish people as they prepared to leave Egypt was the mitzvah of **הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם** (*This month is to you*), which was the commandment for the Jewish Courts to sanctify and declare the new moon. A Jewish slave in Egypt had no time. The definition of servitude is being subject to whims of a master, having no ability to choose how to spend one's time, or in what to invest one's energy. We could not be sent into a life of freedom without first being commanded about the sanctity of time. We needed to understand its significance, we needed to be taught how to safeguard it fastidiously.

Similarly, the most prominent food item on our Pesach menu

is of course the matzah. Its ingredients couldn't be simpler: Just flour and water. The only thing that distinguishes it from chometz is the passage of time. Under 18 minutes and one can fulfill a mitzvah by eating it, over 18 minutes and it becomes the strongest of prohibitions.

So we sit down to the seder during this most unusual of Pesach celebrations with time on our minds. On a night designated for questions, there seems to be no end to the parade of time-related queries. How long will this last? When will things return to normal. How will we keep ourselves busy during a three day chag which is supposed to be about celebrating freedom while feeling like prisoners trapped in our homes?

But perhaps the most disturbing question is not actually about time and how we will manage it, but about what is different on this night from all other nights. Where are Bubby and Zeidy? Why aren't we with the cousins this year? Can it be there are Jews, so many Jews, who are literally having a seder by themselves?

How can this be?

This will be a challenging Yom Tov, no doubt. We are doing what we must to stay safe. We must stay inside and stay isolated, even from our beloved families, even from our own grandchildren.



We have no choice.

But I believe there is a different question which will actually help get us through. It's a familiar question, with an important twist:

Why is this night of Pesach the same as all other nights of Pesach?

You see, most years the Haggadah instructs us to focus on the differences. We need to shake ourselves out of our routine in order to appreciate the significance of the night before us. We wash our hands twice. We dip. We lean. We eat marror. We set the table with salt water, charoset, and a shank bone. The question forces itself upon us: *Why is this night different from all other nights?*

This year, though, our routines are already shot. Nothing seems ordinary. And that allows us to focus instead on what will still be the same. And what is the same is actually at the very core of what this Holiday is all about. We will still celebrate what it means to be a free Jewish people serving Hashem. We will still tell the same story we tell every year, starting with degradation and humiliation (*"Originally our Forefathers were Idolaters"*), and concluding with glory and exaltation. We will recount the 10 Plagues and Divine Retribution and then sing songs of dayainu, expressing our every level of appreciation and gratitude. We will drink 4 cups – leaning to the left – and eat matzah, which remind us both of the affliction we suffered (poor man's bread) and the blink of an eye speed with which Redemption comes.

As we do so, many of us alone and almost all of us at a different Seder table than what we had planned, we will remember that in the annals of Jewish History we have been through this before. In fact, we have been through far worse Passover Seders. We have made Seders fleeing the Crusaders, hiding from the Inquisition, starving in the Gulag, in the death camps of the Holocaust, and throughout every century during every imaginable circumstance. During every one of those Seders, we opened our doors (often only figuratively) to the Prophet Eliyahu, welcoming the herald of Redemption to our tables. Generations of Jews completed every single Seder for over 2000 years yearning for "Next Year in Jerusalem!" and we ourselves have witnessed the modern State of Israel reborn before our very eyes.

We have won. We have outlasted and outlived every form of oppression, we have thrived and continued to persevere through every century, so that we can continue to tell this story. Our story. The story of the Jewish people, the story of our G-d, the story of our history and the story of our future.

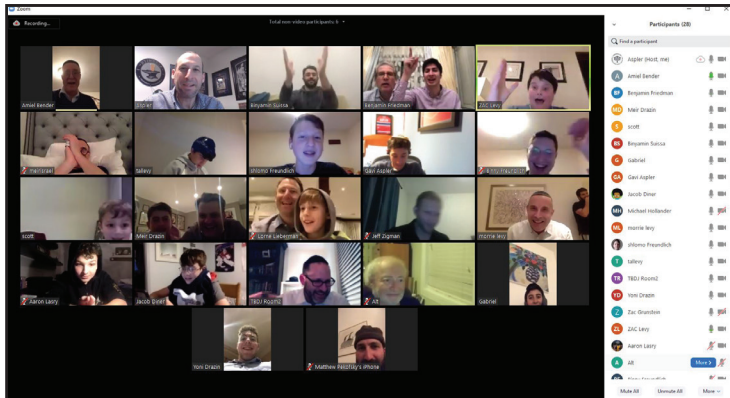
And that is the same story we will tell this year. Some of us alone. Some of us with only our nuclear families. But all of us united with our shared destiny. **Next year in Jerusalem!**



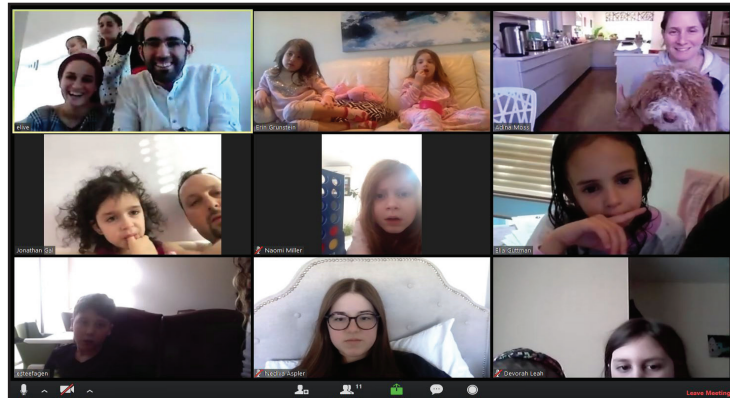
▲ The TBDJ TCBY Ice Cream Truck took to the streets on Purim



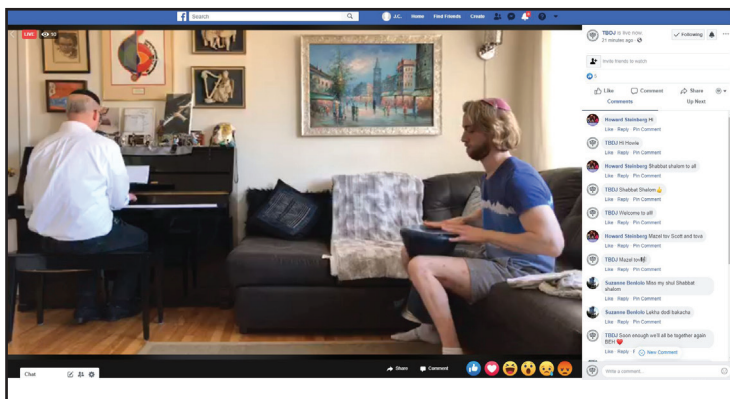
# SNAPSHOTS OF TBDJ ONLINE



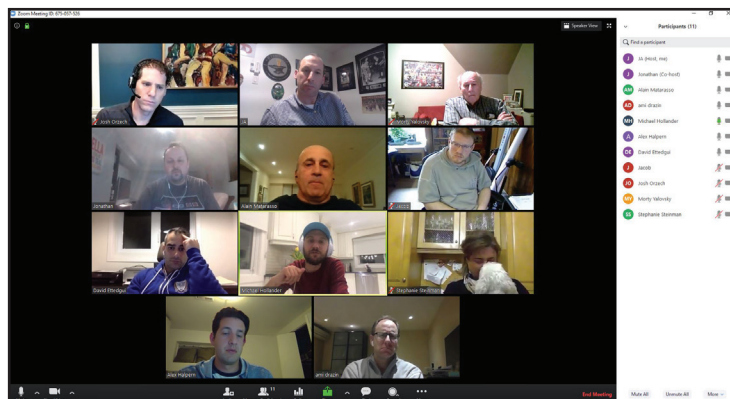
▲ Youth Minyan L-COVID Shabbos Tish



▲ Kef Club Youth Kabbalat Shabbat



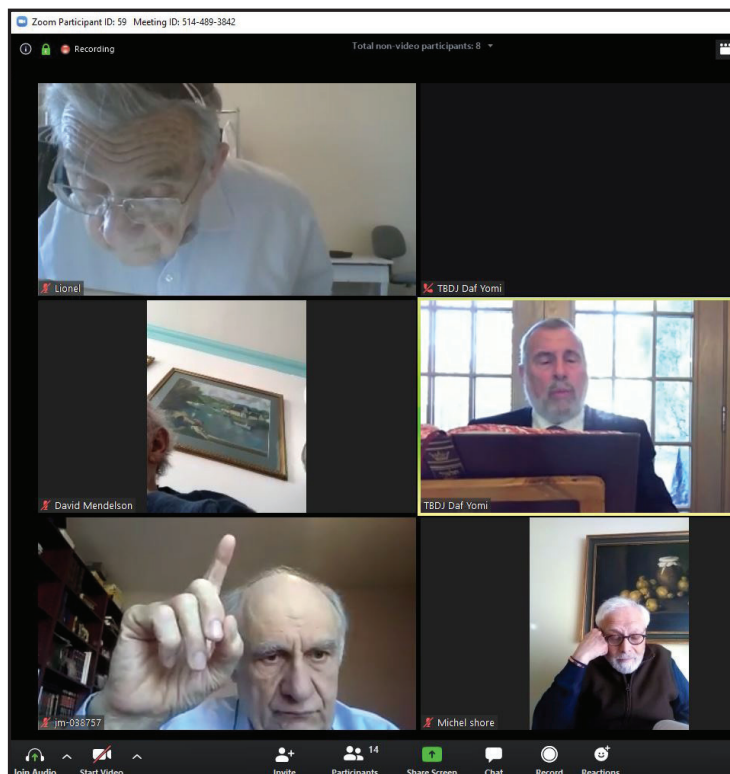
▲ Pre-Kabbalat Shabbat with Rev. Amiel Bender



▲ TBDJ Executive Committee Meeting



▲ 'Ask Me Anything' with Rabbi Freundlich & Rabbi Steinmetz



▲ Daf Yomi with Rabbi David Rothschild



# FROM OUR PRESIDENT



JONATHAN GAL

השיבנו יהוה אליך ונשובה חדש ימינו כקדם

*Restore us to You, O Lord, that we may be restored!  
Renew our days as of old.*

Eichah 5:21

Hearing these words, I am immediately transported to two diametrically opposite places. One, sitting on the floor at TBDJ on Tisha B'av night, saying those words in unison, pain in our voices as we mourn what we have lost as a people. The second, dancing during Selichot on Motzei Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah, arm in arm, singing joyously, over and over with increased fervor, asking Hashem to bring us closer to Him. I am always struck how the exact same words can evoke such strong yet conflicting emotions.

As you read this, you are likely sitting in your house, alone or with immediate family only. In less than a month, the entire world has seemingly been flipped on its head. Despite being in the middle of it, it really is difficult to believe this is happening and to figure out how we got here. It's seemingly unfair, inconvenient, difficult both emotionally and financially. Many feel trapped, and honestly, it's easy to focus and obsess over the things we miss and that were taken from us. At the same

time, there is so much positivity and selflessness out there, it's difficult not to be blown away and inspired by it.

There are heroes, literally, out there risking their lives to save others - doctors, nurses, and other healthcare practitioners who I am in awe of and forever grateful for. We all need to do our part, and for most of us, it is stay home! But for many here at TBDJ, withdrawing into our own cocoons and binge watching TV is simply not enough. Despite all the hardships and uncertainty out there in the world today, I have never been prouder to be part of the TBDJ family. Rabbi Freundlich has proven, once again, with his knowledge, wisdom and optimism, to be a shining star and tremendous role model for us all.

So many volunteers within our community have stepped up to help others who need it the most. Our Chesed committee, helmed by Yair Meyers, have done everything from calling to checking in, filling shopping lists to helping people pay their bills at the bank. TBDJ facilitated the purchase of Pesach food for our entire community and offered loans to those in need. The volunteer response has been overwhelming, the amount of people who give of their time and energy to help others in nothing short of inspirational. There are too many people to compile a list of those to thank individually, which in and of itself is just incredible. In addition, as we cannot gather physically, we have become a virtual hub of Torah; Daf Yomi, Shiurim, Tanach in Two, Lunch & Learn, and even Tefillah groups. It's remarkable the amount of activity we have going on at virtual TBDJ, and the running joke is that we have more things going on now than we did before! Judah Aspler deserves a tremendous amount of credit for getting us up and running through our Torah Portal seemingly overnight, and a huge thank you to everyone else involved in both leading and supporting those efforts.

On Kol Nidre night, exactly six months to the day of Erev Pesach, I said these words from the Bima in our shul that I miss so much: "I am proud to be the President of TBDJ. I am proud to say, this is my shul."

Well, the circumstances have certainly changed. But those words have never been truer. Collectively, we have much to be proud of. Stand tall, TBDJ Family. We have risen to the great challenge that has been thrust upon us. While physically distant, only if we depend on and support each other will we prevail.

May we all continue to find inspiration in these troubling times and may we continue to help each other through them.

Wishing you and your family a very happy and healthy Pesach. Chag Kasher v'Sameach!



# FROM OUR VICE PRESIDENT

## JOSH ORZECH

For the past few weeks, I have been waking up in the morning with the same thought- what a crazy nightmare I just had. I then realize, WOW, it's reality.

With so much negative and sadness filling our news feeds and social media outlets, now more than ever, it is so important to focus on the positive, and see all the good surrounding us.

I personally have been inspired and uplifted as I watch TBDJ continue its journey to greatness. These are just a few highlights:

- Our leadership, led by Rabbi Freundlich and President Jon Gal continue to display their tireless dedication, sensitivity and deep genuine care for the TBDJ family, Montreal community, Jewish people and world humanity. Their efforts and strong leadership have been magnificent attending to every detail no matter how big or small.
- Our Chesed team, both as a united group as well as individually, have been incredible and heroic. The endless acts of kindness and compassion displayed is truly magnificent and beyond words. From the phone calls, to shopping, to helping prepare for Pesach. The desire to do and do more has really been very special.
- The rapid digital transformation TBDJ has embraced has allowed us to continue our commitment and desire to pray, learn, and socialize. The online Zoom sessions have been packed with people. The Torah, song, and smiling faces are a pleasure to hear and see. The heartbeat of TBDJ couldn't be stronger and more alive, filling our minds and hearts with so much richness.

I want to personally thank the many many people who have been a part of it all. From planning, organizing, and executing, to attending, participating, and just being present. Every one of you make a difference.

How proud I am to be a part of the TBDJ family, proud of the incredible work being done, proud to call TBDJ home.

I pray and wish for the safety and health of us all, and am very much looking forward to seeing everyone back at TBDJ soon. Until then, see you on Zoom!

Chag Kasher V'Sameach! Stay safe everyone!!!







# CHAZZAN SHEINI'S TUNE

REV. AMIEL BENDER

## צא ולמד

One day preceding our forced hiatus from the synagogue, I mentioned to Rabbi Freundlich that I was fascinated by the phrase/words in the Haggadah - **צא ולמד**. The words mean “go out and learn.” These words lead us into a paragraph which traces the roots of Anti Semitism to our patriarch Yaakov’s father in law Lavan the Aramite, who wished **לעקור את הכל** to uproot everything that we, the Jews are all about.

I told the Rabbi that I had gone into an amazing website that stores Hebrew books and commentaries that are out of print: Hebrewbooks.org. This website contains many holy books that got lost during the terrible holocaust in Europe.

Looking through dozens of old Hagaddahs, I had the opportunity to learn what commentaries over the past 300 years or so had to say about this phrase: **צא ולמד**.

Why, you may ask, am I so taken with these two words/phrase? It is because of the truth that it speaks in today’s times as well as throughout our history. The only way we can really understand Anti-Semitism is by going out into the world and gauging it for ourselves. While you can read about it in the papers and you can watch it on the television stations, until you experience and feel Anti Semitism to the core of your existence, you don’t understand it. My own personal **צא ולמד** was probably learned during an altercation on New York’s streets in grade 9 and during my service in the IDF.

Interestingly, a commentary from 1895 in Warsaw, Poland wrote on these words, that, although things were good for the Jews in those

days in Warsaw, there were no guarantees and the Jews of Warsaw were urged by this commentator to be vigilant.

Though Lavan’s intentions may have been to get rid of the Jews in a physical sense, it is of note, that our enemies don’t necessarily need to destroy us through violence. Rabbi Jonathan Saks wrote a perspective that Lavan the Aramite wanted to destroy the Jews through assimilation. By helping his son in law / our forefather Yaakov get rich shepherding his herds, Lavan was trying to show Yaakov that the Jew could succeed in life without the Almighty’s help, that there was no need to cling to the G-d of Israel. It was a way to pull Yaakov and the promise of a rich heritage away from Hashem. It goes without saying, that this kind of thinking - that everything comes as result of our own efforts - is not the Jewish way of understanding the way our world works. Rather, everything we have comes directly from heaven.

As we read the Haggadah every year we realize that the Anti Semitic dangers of yesterday are very real throughout the generations. The paragraph of **והיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה** which leads into the words of **צא ולמד** tells us precisely that:

**שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בִּלְבָד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, אֲלָא שְׁבָכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם**

*For not only one has risen up against us to destroy us, but in all ages they rise up against us to destroy us; and the Holy One, Blessed Be He, rescues us from their hands.*

Hashem’s salvation is true and real.

My wife Cheryl and my family join me in wishing everyone a happy and healthy Pesach.



# MINYANE SEPHARADE

## ISAAC BENDAYAN

Le début de l'année 5780 fût un grand succès. Nous avons atteint un record de nouveaux membres et de sièges réservés, pour les fêtes de Rosh Hashana et Yom Kippour. Notre petite synagogue était pleine ! Pleine non seulement par la présence physique de notre minyan, mais également pleine de prières avec kavana, amour et unité.

Sous la direction de notre leader spirituel M. Raphael Benisti, nous avons passé d'excellentes fêtes incluant Succoth et Simcha Torah, et pour cela je le remercie au nom de toute notre communauté.

En novembre 2019, le minyan sépharade de TBDJ a organisé des élections pour élire deux nouveaux représentants qui participeront au conseil administratif de notre synagogue.

Résultat : Gabriel Cohen et moi-même, Isaac Bendayan. Une équipe qui représente vraiment notre minyan, débordante de connaissance, tradition, pratique, coeur et structure.

Notre but :

1. Une synagogue - une communauté
2. Deux ans pour bien servir notre minyan
3. Trois objectifs durant notre mandat
  - I. Structure - organisation
  - II. Levée de fonds
  - III. Participation de chacun d'entre vous
4. Quatre comités pour mieux servir notre kahal
  - I. Exécutif: Gabriel Cohen et moi-même élu par le kahal
  - II. Religieux: Leader Spirituel - M. Benisty, Gabbay - Armand Benhamou et Laurent Tordjman
  - III. Évènement: Karine Tordjman, Nathaly Hazot et Olivia Ouaknine. Un des points qu'on veut apporter sera de fixer un calendrier annuel avec tous les événements.
  - IV. Finance / trésorier: Edouard Sabbah

Pessah est une fête qui célèbre la délivrance et la création du peuple juif. Chaque année on lit la Haggadah les deux nuits du seder et on se rappelle de tous les miracles réalisés durant cette période, tous unis en famille. Cette année, les choses seront différentes, nous serons unis seulement en pensée. Personnellement ce sera mon premier seder sans mes parents, une situation qui me paraissait unimaginable. Je suis sûr et certain que tout le monde aura le même sentiment, loin de ses proches. La situation actuelle remet en question bien des choses dans notre quotidien, nous sommes obligés de changer

notre routine, nos habitudes. Sachez que l'une des choses qui me manque énormément c'est notre chère synagogue, notre minyan, et bien sûr les kiddush de Yaakov © ...espérant que le tout se termine rapidement, chacun en bonne santé.

Je souhaite à toute notre communauté un Hag Pessah Sameach, une bonne continuation ensemble et en santé. AMEN.

*Je suis très heureux de pouvoir assumer les nouvelles responsabilités pour lesquelles vous m'avez élus, avec mon ami, Isaac Bendayan. Je suis fier membre depuis 6 ans de notre cher minyan. J'ai fréquenté plusieurs synagogues, mais celle-ci a pris une dimension particulière dans mon cœur, j'y ai trouvé un esprit de famille et de camaraderie authentique, et dès mon arrivée ma passion du bénévolat a pris le dessus pour servir cette petite communauté. J'ai été par le passé président*



*du centre communautaire juif ainsi que vice-président de ce même organisme. Impliqué avec l'organisation de la marche de Jerusalem pendant plusieurs années et bénévole chez Mada. J'aurais donc tout le plaisir de vous servir.*

- Gabriel Cohen

*Pour ce qui ne me connaît pas, j'ai gradué de McGill en 2006 en génie civil avec un minor en management, je suis actuellement directeur de construction et gère*

*200 employés à travers le Canada. Je siège au conseil administratif des écoles azrieli Talmud Torah, en tant que père de 2 enfants. Cela fait presque 4 ans que je suis membre à TBDJ et que je participe au minyan sépharade Emet Le Yaakov. J'ai rapidement pu bâtir des liens étroits avec mes confrères. Nous sommes un petit kahaal avec un grand cœur. J'ai grandi en fréquentant une synagogue, celle de mon père. Il a toujours été impliqué et j'ai vu comment il l'a développée tout en me rendant compte du travail nécessaire pour bien réussir. J'espère aujourd'hui, moi aussi être à la hauteur de mon père et poursuivre le travail extraordinaire du comité précédent et ferai tout mon possible pour bien servir cette communauté que j'aime tellement.*

- Isaac Bendayan



# CHESED & COMMUNITY



YAIR MEYERS

**על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה  
ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים**

*The world stands upon three things: Torah,  
Service of G-d, and Acts of Kindness*

*Pirkei Avot 1:2*

Since the very first conversation regarding how we can help the community, our members and lay leaders have stepped up to the plate like true champs. From the amazing leadership of our Rabbi, to our president, board members, and volunteers, we all thank them for helping us through this difficult time. The story of their endeavors would ordinarily be addressed with humility and minimal attention, but today it can serve as a source of pride, and more importantly, a source of inspiration and motivation.

Overnight, we created a community within a community. One that goes above and beyond the call of duty and helps one another in many meaningful ways. The new volunteer group formed has its own email list to help with internal communication. The list's name is 'Pillar3', corresponding to the Mishna in Pirkei Avot stating that the world stands on three things: Torah, Serving Hashem, and Acts of Kindness. This third pillar is on full display within our TBDJ community. We also leveraged a community task board, developed in a flash by TBDJ member Jeff Zigman, which allows for tasks to be posted, assigned, and tracked through completion. This enables us to

quickly field new requests and see to it that they're carried out promptly. At time of publication, we have answered over 100 calls to our Hotline, executed 140 varying tasks, and have 60 active members in the Pillar3 group chipping in while also reaching out to our members each day. If you would like to be part of this initiative please email [chesed@tbdj.org](mailto:chesed@tbdj.org) or call our Hotline at 514-316-0939.

In addition to assisting with individual errands such as grocery shopping, banking, and transportation, we also set out to assist through special arrangements with local food providers. We've helped many stay at home by bringing Pesach food to their door through simplified online ordering and delivery. At time of publication, we've facilitated 195 orders through our connected vendors, with more services and options to follow after the holiday.

There have been countless stories and situations that we put our team in front of, and everyone welcomed it with a smile, always asking what else they can do. From simple projects to complex ones requiring logistical creativity, there isn't anything that we will put less than 100% effort into accomplishing.

We understand that the circumstances we're all facing right now are ones we see in movies, but it is now a reality that we as a shul, community, and world have been thrust into. As long as we stick together and look out for each other we will get through this.

One of our elderly members, when I speak to him, always insists on telling me what he can do for our shul. He is so thankful for what we provide him that he wants to help out as well. What I like to tell people, applicable to every age group no matter what minyan you go to or what side of the mechitza you sit on, is to think back to the last time you were in shul, to close your eyes and imagine the person that was sitting next to you. Whether it was a close friend or someone that you really only see on Shabbat, pick up the phone and call that person. See how they are doing. Ask them if there is anything the shul can do for them. We will never stop working for our members and community.

Before this crisis came about, when people would ask me about joining the Chesed Committee, I would tell them that every human being has their own chesed committee within themselves. You don't need to be part of an official TBDJ committee or Federation committee or CSL/Hampstead committee. Pick up the phone and call someone, or knock on your neighbour's door and see how they are doing. We all have that inner desire to help one another. Whether driven by a pandemic, or driven by calm everyday life, let's try to bring that out in everyone and make this world, our world, a better place.





# HOTLINE

**514-316-0939**

**chesed@tbdj.org**



**As you stay home and stay safe  
we have a team of volunteers  
ready to help with your errands**

**Groceries... online shopping assistance... pickups/deliveries...  
banking... post office... or anything else**



## **IMPORTANT**

**The Hotline is NOT intended for medical guidance or emergencies.  
For medical issues or emergencies call Info-Santé 811 or 911.**



# REDEFINING STRENGTH

DR. NORMAN N. BLUMENTHAL



DR. NORMAN BLUMENTHAL WILL BE TBDJ'S SCHOLAR IN (ONLINE) RESIDENCE FOR OUR SECOND ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SHABBAT. THE PROGRAM WILL INCLUDE ONLINE LECTURES BEGINNING THURSDAY NIGHT, MAY 7.

Dr. Norman Blumenthal, a renowned trauma specialist, practices as a licensed clinical psychologist in Cedarhurst, NY. Dr. Blumenthal is the Director at OHEL Miriam Center for Trauma, Bereavement and Crisis Response as well as Educational Director of Kollel Elyon and Semicha Honors Program at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University. As a past vice president of NEFESH (The International Network of Orthodox Mental Health Professionals), Dr. Blumenthal serves on the board of CAHAL - a yeshiva-based program of self-contained classes for children with learning differences from Kindergarten through High School; and is a consultant to TOVA - a mentoring program for disenfranchised teens.

I hear it all the time. Whether it is to those struck by illness, in the throes of grief or any other hardship, the compliments and approval abound for those who are “strong.”

*He's so strong, he never complains... she was strong, she hardly cried...he has such great emunah and strength - he took the tragic news without any sign of distress or unhappiness.”*

Is this really what measures strength? Is the absence of emotional outpouring and expression the true mettle of a pious Jew? Even more disconcerting, should those who succumb to tears, fright and comparable expressions of pain and horror, feel lacking in their emotional prowess and religious conviction?

I daresay the opposite is true. The genuine strength that is the hallmark of the observant Jew is to allow full entry and expression to the most heart wrenching experiences and simultaneously face them with the indomitable strength of G-d's faithful servant. If stoicism and callous disregard are the standard for a response to tragedy, then the courage and faith of the sufferer is diminished if he or she dares to indulge in an outcry of emotion. After all, if the victim or bereaved is not significantly fazed by the misfortune, what is so impressive about their silence or unemotional responses? Indeed, it is that person who lets pain, setback and shock fully penetrate their essence and being, who is truly challenged and ultimately triumphant.

*A woman who had suffered a terrible and sudden tragedy, calls me two weeks afterwards. She tells me how beset by tears and near constant crying she is and therefore concludes that she is so “weak.”*

*I tell her “No, that is because you are so strong.” Since she is confused by my response, I try to clarify with the following metaphor.*

*“Imagine an Olympic weight lifter purported to be the strongest man in the world. With his voluminous and muscular physique, he is about to break the world record and lift more than anyone has before. When the time comes, he is sweating profusely, every vein in his body is protruding, he is frenetically panting and out of breath, and with his last ounce of strength raises the barbells over his head, drops them on the floor and collapses from sheer and utter exhaustion.” I then ask her “Is he strong or is he weak?”*

*I go on to tell her that she too is heroically facing and internalizing her nearly unbearable misfortune with no pretense or denial... and there is nothing “stronger” than that.*

We were never meant to be robots or automatons but were created with a full capacity to cry, scream and both feel and express emotion. These emotional outpouring, though painful and destabilizing, contribute to the true strength and heroism of those who are suffering.

One has to look no further than our Torah to see the legitimacy and propriety of overt emotional expression. Our patriarchs and matriarchs together with other eminent Torah figures are recurrently described as giving full and unabated expression to horror and distress. These individuals, whose strength and faith we can only hope to remotely simulate, unhesitatingly cried and gave free rein to emotional outpouring. Avraham openly mourned his deceased wife, Yitzchok recoiled from shock when he discovered whom he had blessed, and

Yaakov was unrelenting in his grief until reunited with his beloved Yosef. These unsuppressed expressions of pain and shock in no way diminish their exalted status as the standard bearers for Jewish belief and conduct. Should we be any less?

Emotional expression is not just an indulgence or outlet. A full cognizance and wellspring of emotion is essential to the ultimate reconstitution and growth that invariably follows tragedy particularly among the religious and observant. The shock and pain prompts us to grow and redefine our existence and that is ultimately what allows those horrified to become calm and those wrenched from their loved ones to find comfort and solace.

Dr. William H. Frey II, a biochemist at the St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center in Minnesota and his team, analyzed two types of tears: the emotional ones (crying when emotionally upset and stressed) and the ones arising from irritants (such as crying from onions). Though appearing identical, the two tears are inherently very different. The emotional tears contained more of the protein-based prolactin, adrenocorticotrophic hormone, and leucine enkephalin (natural painkiller), all of which are produced by our body when under stress. The tears from onions contained no such substances. It seems as if the body is getting rid of chemicals that otherwise cause stress through our tears. That explains why we usually feel better after a good cry.

Besides reducing stress, the unabated expression of horror and sadness are often the indispensable first step in the psychological adjustment to trauma and loss. Using broad strokes, one can divide problems people face into two categories. There are

those that we can solve and those that remain insoluble.

Many of those challenges that cause us grief and shock are final and irreversible (short of messianic times). The ability to endure such loss and hardship requires a renewed and altered perspective of life and our circumstances. What we can't change externally is managed by changing ourselves internally. We can't undo death, but we can change our perspective on life incorporating the absence of the loved one. We can't change life altering events, but we can rewrite our life narratives within the context of this new situation.

The horror and shock fully expressed and evoked are the first steps in this process of growth and change. They often represent an unraveling of the world as it was known, for a new one with the dreaded event integrated and incorporated into it. Similarly, the pain of grief is an essential ingredient to the adaptation of a life without the corporeal presence of the loved one. Without those emotional expressions, these adaptive forms of growth and adjustment can be delayed or obstructed.

It is therefore our mandate as the providers of support and care to allow the shocked or bereaved person the opportunity to cathartically emit his horror and torrent of tears. It matters little if the calamitous event is a sudden one such as a death or injury or more of the prolonged or ongoing misfortune such as marital discord/divorce, financial hardship, disabilities and the like. People in such states, rarely want advice or proposed solutions. A sympathetic ear, warm hug and validation of the legitimacy of their emotions are usually far more comforting and helpful. Do not admire or encourage stoic or rational responses unless you are certain that these are legitimate and not strained attempts to achieve the aforementioned and ill conceived ideals of restraint and "strength."

In most instances, such emotional upheaval will subside and periodically reemerge. Post trauma reactions and bereavement are like roller coasters...they come and go and escalate and deescalate. This emer-

gence and diminution can persist even for years depending on the degree of distress. The reason for this is that some climactic events are too enormous to fully internalize and integrate at one time. We therefore incorporated different aspects of the calamity with more composed intervals to replenish our strength for the next onslaught. This emergence and defusing gradually subside as the person undergoes the necessary metamorphosis and change to manage the setback or loss.

It is often helpful to acknowledge or even anticipate these ups and downs in order that these changes don't catch the oppressed by surprise or demoralize them when they thought they were on the mend.

In rare instances, a person may become mired in unrelenting grief and fright. Most of the time, this is indicative of a pre-existing depression or anxiety disorder reignited by the tragedy or mishap. Other times, such stagnant and prolonged persistence of pain may be rooted in a piggybacking of past horrific events or losses that have not yet been adequately expressed or resolved. It is those types of reactions that are indicative of a need for professional help though it must be reiterated that such occurrences are the exception not the rule.

In Parshas Vayeitzei, our forefather Yaakov is at a critical and frightening juncture of his life. With his vulnerable wives and young children at his side, Yaakov is surreptitiously fleeing his conniving uncle Lavan, where he has lived for the prior twenty years. He is facing an uncertain future and precarious encounter with his brother Eisav.

During his final confrontation with Lavan, Yaakov declares (Bereishis 31:42) "had not the G-d of my father Avraham and the fear of Yitzchok..." similarly, at the conclusion of this tet-a-tet, Yaakov swears "by the fear of his father Yitzchok (ibid: 53)." What are these references to the "fear" of Yitzchok? Why not invoke the very same G-d of Yitzchok? Wouldn't that be more poignant than Yitzchok's fear? Not only that, but the very "fear" itself is not enumerated? What fear is this referring to?

Several commentators (Ibn Ezra, Abarbanel, Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch) suggest that Yaakov summoned the actual dread and fear that Yitzchok felt at the moment that Avraham lifted the knife to offer his son as a sacrifice. Had Yitzchok not been afraid – had he been anesthetized or asleep – the akeidah would not have been a nisayon - a test. It is the very fact that Yitzchok fully felt the dread of his near death and, though consumed by such fear, cooperated nonetheless is the basis of his gevruah – of his prototypical strength.

Similarly, Yaakov's circumstances at that point were so fraught with uncertainty and danger that he allowed it to fully penetrate his conscious mind and heart. At that critical moment of trepidation and uncertainty, he summons his father's comparable state at the akeidah. He then derives courage and strength from his father's willingness to proceed undeterred in fulfilling the command and desire of his Creator.

When confronted with family or friends who have suffered, G-d forbid, a terrible loss or calamity, it as much our mandate to facilitate and admire their full emotional outpouring as it is to proclaim their "strength." There is no strength to admire if not accompanied by the full expression of emotional dread and pain. Like our forefather Yitzchok, it is our license to let the horror and anguish penetrate our every pore and still forge forward by fulfilling the will of our creator. That is the true measure of strength and courage.

*My father, z"l, a decorated World War II veteran who donned his tefillin every day for the four and a half years he served, often told me as a child the following line he would hear from soldiers about to go to battle. "I am the first to be afraid and the last to run."*

We too are the first to feel every dread, convulse with shock and fear, and shed abundant tears while remaining the last to run from our faith and steadfast adherence to Torah principles and beliefs.

THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL TBDJ

# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

MAY 7-9, 2020

STAY TUNED FOR REVISED ONLINE SCHEDULE

SHABBAT



# KEF CLUB

ELI & SIVAN VERESH

## Hello Dear Kids!

Pesach is a very special holiday in the Jewish calendar. You must have already learned about Yetziat Mitzraim (the Exodus from Egypt), and about the ten plagues and the Seder's Ke'ara (Seder Plate). We are pretty sure most of you also know how to sing "Ma Nishtanah" beautifully and loudly. But we wanted to offer another reason for the holiday's uniqueness:

You probably know - Jewish holidays come with loads of Mitzvot, rules, customs and details.

You may also have noticed that in Judaism we often are asked to leave our house, step out of the four walls we live in, and keep the holiday commandments:

On Purim - we go out to deliver Mishloach Manot and give charity to poor people.

On Sukkot - we go out to sit in the sukkah, spending many hours each day outside in the sukkah.

On Tu B'Shvat - we go out to plant trees.

On Lag Ba'Omer - we go out to light bonfires.

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur - we are not home for most of the day... we go out to the shul (in the KefClub rooms!) with the whole community.

And even on Chanukah - we go out to light the menorah in the doorway or at the window - so that everyone outside our home can see and remember the miracle.

But there is one very special holiday where the most important Mitzvah is ... to stay home! That's right, you guessed it - Pesach! On Leil HaSeder (Seder Night) we all sit in our houses, with our family, eating, singing, reading from the Hagaddah, and imagining that we ourselves are leaving Egypt! It's amazing, unlike the rest of the holidays, on Pesach we just stay home. So much fun!

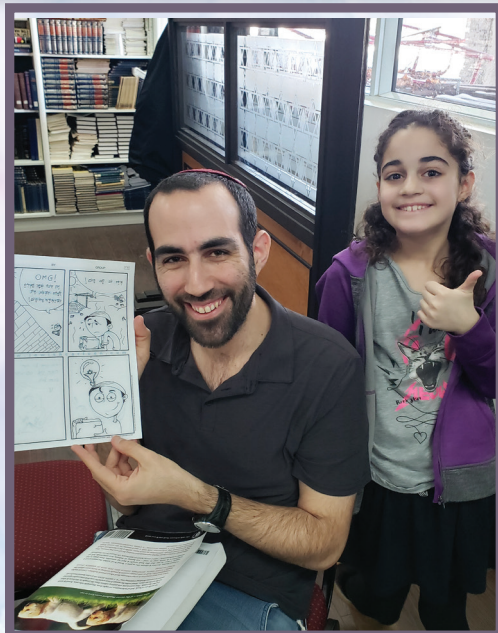
This past month there is a virus "driving the world crazy" and forcing us all to stay in our homes. And yes, sometimes it's a little annoying to stay home and not get together with our friends or go out to the park, and even school suddenly seems like a place that would be very nice to return to.

But you probably understand that it's best to be protected at home. At Pesach this year - the Seder night, the important Mitzvah of the holiday - will be easier to understand. Just stay home. Why? Because that's the commandment now.

We wish you a Chag Sameach. It will be a very meaningful and fun holiday this time, we're sure! We miss you very much and are glad to see you every week on our Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat!

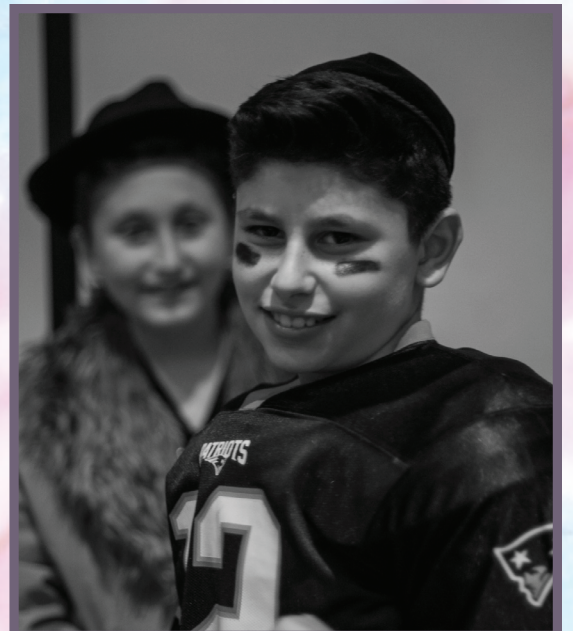
**Pesach Sameach!**

*Eli, Sivan and all KefClub staff*





# HIT C O X







A LOOK BACK AT

# OUR DISNEY PURIM

THE MOST MAGICAL PURIM ON EARTH





# A PHOTO ALBUM COURTESY OF OSHRI COHEN & RUBY FRIEDMAN

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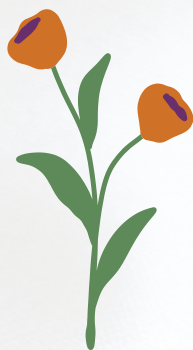
# A GLIMPSE INTO OUR THOUGHTS



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TBDJ Members share  
their experiences during challenging times,  
their thoughts on the Holiday we celebrate,  
their memories, and their hopes.

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**By Rivka Guttman**

### **Reflections From the Wife and Mother of Emergency Physicians**

When I met my husband Alex, it was clear he wanted to be a doctor. There were no ifs, ands, or buts. Let's face it, who doesn't want to be married to someone in this respected profession? When he chose Emergency Medicine, I thought the only challenge would be the lonely evenings, nights and weekends. It was this and more as we raised our three children, and I am still at it 40 years later. The only frightening recollection was when Alex described a night working Urgence Santé. It was a scene out of the television show 911 as he heroically went into a garage to help an injured person who had been shot without waiting for the police. But I learned about it after the fact and could only thank Hashem that he was safe. Along the way in "our" career, there were many long and tiring days, but this is what you expect, and I was always proud of the gifts he was able to bestow to those in need. Phone calls to our home and in later years to his cellphone regardless of where we might be is part of the "job" and "we" do it graciously.

Fast forward 18 years and my son Josh announces his future career in medicine. There were no ifs, ands, or buts. Let's face it, who doesn't want to be the mother of a doctor? When it was time to select a residency, he announced his choice of Emergency. My heart sunk as I sat him down and explained the challenges on family life with his choice of specialty. His response was simple and direct "I have to do what I want to do." Three years later, my daughter Dahlia announces her acceptance to the Emergency Medicine fellowship, no ifs, ands, or buts. The challenges to family life were many but they and their spouses make it work because it is what they chose.

Fast forward to 2020 and for the first time in my 40 years as "the wife and mother" that I am truly frightened. It's no longer about family life in the leisure sense, it is about the life of our family. This invisible, unpredictable virus is weaving its way into our lives. There is no option to stay home. The only option is to do the job you were trained for. But nobody trained for this pandemic. Everyday the guidelines as to which patients are at risk and which personal protective equipment to use change. The precautions taken yesterday are not the same as today and different from tomorrow. What if my husband, son, or daughter became contaminated while abiding by yesterday's precautions? What if, during the symptom-less phase, they contaminate their spouse or children? The domino effect is real, the anxiety is real, the anger at those in our communities here and afar who refuse to listen is real.

This Pesach will be like no other Pesach in the memory of many of us. However, we have among us as examples survivors who made Pesach in the most difficult of circumstances. My heart goes out to our elderly members who have not made a Pesach in many years or who find themselves alone at the table. My heart goes out to all the grandchildren who will not say Ma Nishtanah or hide the Afikomen from Zeidy or eat Bubby's special chicken soup.

So, I implore everybody who may think "it's just my daughter's family, it's just my Bubby, they don't have symptoms" to think about my family, the risks they are taking because they have no choice. You have a choice, make the right one. Stay home and stay safe for you, for your family, for my family.

May we look forward to rejoining each other in the very near future. Chag Sameach.





# OUR THOUGHTS



**By Mitchell Cobrin**

## **Why Is This Passover Different From All Others?**

And Moses said "Let my people stay home and exercise responsible social distancing." Who would have imagined that our Pesach Seders would be upended by a plague? There is no question of what will make this year's Seder different from all others; the Corona virus -designated as COVID-19 - it is this year's official 11th plague.

The central question asked at a Passover Seder is: What makes this night different from all other nights? Ma Nishtanah. There are the traditional responses cited in the Haggadah and then there are the new, ever-changing daily realities each of us are facing. Passover Seders hold some of our most cherished family memories. Often highlighted by big gatherings of extended families, wine, folding tables, wine, kids tables, wine, different foods, wine, noise, wine, songs, wine and many different opinions on how fast or how slow the Seder should be going. But this year's Seders will be remembered as the year when a public health crisis prevented generations of families from gathering together. Directives to keep us safe are changing daily and by Passover who knows what the guidelines may be, no doubt, it will surely be a Seder very different from all others.

Let us keep our eye on the prize. Let us look for the Afikomen; defined as "that which comes after." We have been asked to do something so unnatural to us, keep our kids away from their grandparents, don't be together with extended family, don't have Zaide hide the Afikomen, don't do what we do every year. It feels like everything is Ma Nishtanah. We have been given a gift of knowledge and information to keep ourselves and our families safe. Something Jews who have suffered in the past were not as lucky to have. Let us use those directives and make this year's Seders safe for all, even if it means small and quiet (still lots of wine) and maybe a little lonely so that next year, our Ma Nishtanah will be one of great joy.



**By Martine Cohen**

## **Never In Our History**

Never in our history has it been easier to connect across any physical distance

Never in our history has it been easier to stay in touch across continents

Never in history has physical distancing resulted in more human compassion

Never in history has it be easier to be there for one another

Never in history has it been easier to live our priorities

Never in our History has it been easier to live from our heart

Never in our history has it been easier to do good

Never in our history has it been easier to touch lives

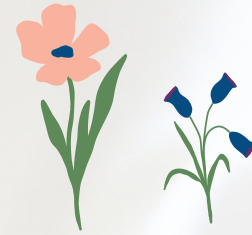
Never in our history has it been easier to save lives

Never in our history....Was ALL of humanity called to be ONE

Never in our history did we globally respond to that call

TOGETHER WE'VE GOT THIS!!





**By Talia Kliot**

### **The Holiday of Storytelling**

People often ask me why my favourite holiday is the one that mandates eating cardboard and cleaning the house. But what they don't understand is that, despite years of Pesach birthday cakes and eight days of longing for bagels, I have a special connection to this holiday because of a shared commitment to Jewish storytelling.

Those of you who have witnessed my childhood at shul will remember that there was a time when I could scarcely be seen without a book in my hands and completely disregarding my dad's very fair requests that I should at least try to schmooze for a couple minutes. Although I've grown out of that phase, I certainly held on to my love for stories and am now constantly writing articles and creative pieces that include a many nods to my beloved Jewish community. After all, we're supposed to write about what we know.

When I was younger, I always thought of the Seder as a really long bedtime story, an exciting one that I only got to hear twice a year. It seems as though the essence of Pesach revolves around storytelling, and good storytelling at that, since we are meant to feel as though we too left Egypt along with our ancestors. I recognized the importance of holding onto these stories from a young age, much to the dismay of my family's Seder guests. Throughout elementary school, I would write little plays and force everyone at the table to perform, just in case the 50 pages of the Hagaddah didn't do an adequate job at making sure we remember what happened in Egypt. While we don't do this anymore, I am now old enough to understand that this holiday is about much more than just the Exodus.

My family's Pesach Seder is a mosaic of people and stories. The table stretches from the door all the way to the edge of the dining room. Everyone has their own special something that they bring to the table (pun intended), whether it be some spicy *salade cuite* and Moroccan heritage or a taste of *l'shana ha'ba b'yerushalyim* from an Israeli ophthalmology resident. We converse with zadies and bobbies from families that aren't our own, friends that wouldn't otherwise have a Pesach Seder, old buddies that come in specially from New York, and of course, the usual Friday Night Dinner Squad. Over four (fine, six, who am I kidding) glasses of wine, the giggles get louder, the Hebrew gets shabbier, but the chronicles of our people flow like milk and honey.

At our Seder, we recount the stories of Jewish perseverance in Egypt and during the Shoah, but also lighter tales of success, like when a family friend found the last challah in all of Montreal right before Shabbat dinner. While I'm generally exiled to the kid's side of the table, these stories ring loud and clear, giving me plenty of new material for my writing, but most importantly, reminding me that we can get through whatever comes our way.

This Pesach, we will certainly miss the boisterous crowds at shul and the long tables for delicious meals. But, in the current situation, there is all the more reason to share stories of strength. While the physical togetherness is not possible, let us stay connected through narratives shared over FaceTime, Zoom, Skype or shouting across the street from six feet apart.

Chag sameach!





# OUR THOUGHTS

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**By Estee Rossdeutscher**

## **Our Upcoming Pesach in a Busy Busy House**

Passover. A holiday that is always known as one that is different. One where we go around the Seder and ask “why is this night different than any other night?” One where we tell our children, surrounded by our parents, grandparents, extended families, and guests, the story of how we were once slaves in Egypt. How we survived to tell the story of gaining our freedom. How we survived the hardest of times. A story filled with plagues that Hashem brought down on the Egyptians and details that are just crazy to imagine. Water turning into blood? Frogs falling out of the sky? An entire sea splitting in two? Extraordinary details that make up the whole Passover holiday. But now more than ever, this story makes a bit more sense.

This Pesach holiday is obviously an unprecedented one, and in all honesty, the details surrounding this one also seem like they’re coming out of a horror movie. Difficult to imagine, as well. If you’d have told me a few months ago this virus would take over the world, I would have been skeptical. Everything about this holiday, this year, is different. This year, we will all be hosting our own immediate family seders. Whether it be our first time hosting a Seder, or for some even making Pesach in our homes for the first time, it is a whole new and different experience for all. While I am so sad not to be able to be with our families sitting at a table filled with family and friends, this Pesach allows us, to just be us. We now have the responsibility to teach our children about Pesach, especially with all the schools being closed, and to make a beautiful Seder for them. It is not going to be easy for any of us, with no shul to go to over a three-day Yom Tov, but we will all be making the best of this surreal situation.

Being home with my four kids over the past few weeks obviously has been the furthest thing from easy. Trying to help my boys with their school work and keep them busy, while at the same time trying to set up structured games and activities for my 3 year old, all while watching over my 10 month old. The never ending meals, laundry, and cleaning. But at the same time, we are experiencing as a family nothing we have ever experienced before. We are together. We are eating meal after meal together, and sitting and playing together. With the busy world we are living in now, between all the sports, school, work, activities and parties, such simple and yet such necessary ‘just being together as a family’ is sometimes neglected. Noa, my baby, has the biggest smile each day after waking up from her naps to find all her siblings and father home waiting for her, or sometimes even waking her up to play. We are living in a time that we would never could have imagined. We are being forced to stay home and be together. But it is a blessing, and we are lucky to be able to do it. We are grateful for what we have.

Going into a holiday, alone, two Seders alone, we need to remember that we really aren’t alone. We are connected to our entire Jewish community, each member in the same situation as us. Over the past few weeks we have felt the connections through Zoom calls and videos, through the smiles from others we pass by on our daily walks. We are all in this together and with Hashem’s help, it will all be OK.

As we enter to host our own seders, a meal that is supposed to be in a structured order, where everything is supposed to happen at a specific time and in an organized fashion, the world around us seems like it is filled with chaos. Yes, this holiday will be different than any other night, or really every other year before. I will miss being with my grandmother and having my kids spend the night with our parents, but we will share our first intimate seder, together as a family, and continue to make memories for my children that they’ll remember and one day tell their children.

Wishing you all a beautiful and meaningful Pesach. May we all remain healthy, and next year be all together .

Chag Sameach.







**By Zachary Steinlauf**

### **Taking Stock of Health, Accomplishment, and Contribution**

Every year as Pesach approaches, I think of all of the months that have passed since Rosh Hashana. We have a custom in our home that every year, on Rosh Hashana, my father asks everyone around the table to talk about aspirations for the coming year. Every Pesach on the first seder night my father highlights all of the accomplishments that have happened in each of our lives. We take the time to look back and reflect on everything that has gone on in the past year. I look forward to this moment because it serves as a reminder that anything can be accomplished if you set your mind to it. It's a way for me to keep myself in check and make sure that everything I have committed to doing has been accomplished, or is in the process of completion. As Pesach approaches everyone is dealing with a major speed bump called COVID-19 and although things might be on hold in the interim I know that we as a family and the larger Jewish community will get through this stronger.

Pesach has been a rather unique experience over the last three years as I started to participate in the Yom Tov davening. Prior to three years ago, the last time I lead any portion of davening was my Bar Mitzvah some 13 years ago. Three years ago, the Gabayim, Ian and Steven, approached me and asked if I would be open to reciting the Haftorah on the 7th day of Pesach. It took about a day or two contemplating if I was up for the task, given that it's been a while since I looked at any Haftorah or sang out loud outside the comforts of my room. I asked myself how poor could the delivery really be? I decided to do it and embrace this honour. After completing it, I felt a sense of relief and a newfound excitement for Pesach as it will be the time where I can contribute to the uplifting services of a special Yom Tov. Several weeks ago, Steven approached me and asked me again, but this time I was given the choice of singing the Haftorah the second, seventh or eighth day of Yom Tov. It was in that moment that I realized that I'd finally gained some status in shul. I was no longer appointed a portion but rather asked which I was more eager to choose. Sadly, I've come to the realization that I will not be doing it this year due to our current situation, and that it will be put on hold. Once everything starts to get back to normal, I hope to make up for it then.

On another note, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone how important it is to stay in the right frame of mind during hard times. As many of you know, my brother Matthew and I started a business called Mtlftbros, or more commonly referred to as MFB. We offer various types of small group and personal training in our boutique fitness studio. Given that these can be hard times for everyone, we would like to remind you that exercising and moving is a great way to not only keep your physical health at a high level, but it also keeps your mental health strong. Fitness for the both of us has always been an incredible outlet and a way to de-stress. Working with various types of clients each and every day, one common feeling is shared across the board after a workout. It is a complete sense of freedom. You forget about everything else that's going on and you pride yourself on taking forty-five minutes to an hour to be completely free of the day-to-day.

On behalf of my entire family we would like to wish you a happy and a healthy Pesach.





# OUR THOUGHTS

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**By Karen Sigman**

## **Celebrating Together With Family and For Family**

I am sure I am not alone in feeling that it is a difficult year to get excited for Pesach. At the best of times, it is not an easy holiday to plan for. This year, for so many reasons, it will be a Pesach like no other. I know that each and every one of us in our community is experiencing this crisis personally. When asked to offer my reflections, I questioned whether I have anything valuable to offer. I do not have an answer to that question, but felt that if asked, I would try, as it is the only way to reach out to all of you at this critical time.

As a child, Pesach was my favorite holiday. I loved our seders with family and friends, filled with laughter and song. I am not sure I appreciated the effort that went into making a seder, the joyous occasion that it was, it seemed so natural. A few years ago, when I started to adjust to the fact that going forward, I would no longer be hosted by my parents but that I would be hosting them, I really started to reflect on what makes a seder meaningful to me and my family.

Of course, there is the food, the songs, and all of the discussion. There is the children's excitement searching for the Afikomen too. But most importantly, and why this year will be so different, it's the people sitting around the table.

In the past I too easily imagined or perhaps took for granted that we would always have extended family with us.

Last Pesach, that comforting sense of permanence changed as I watched my mother struggling as she stoically battled cancer. Fearing that it would be her last Pesach. I rang my children who were living away and at school and shared my worry that Bubby was losing her battle. My kids rushed home so that we could be together one last time as a family. We had to distill the Haggadah down to a "10 minute" abbreviated seder, so that she could make it through the evening and feel like she was with us through the whole seder. And it worked! The essence of the Haggadah was preserved, and we were together.

Sadly, a few short weeks later, she was gone, but I am forever grateful that we managed to bring our family together. As I begin my Passover preparations, I acutely feel the loss and find myself wanting to reach out to her for advice, to share a recipe, or just share a moment of my day. It's only a year later and the return to normalcy that I thought would arrive escapes me. Life is anything but normal. Who could have imagined how different this Pesach would be? As different and difficult as it will be, there are still many ways to make this Chag meaningful. We will all be missing at our table many of those who are important to us. Some, like me, because of the loss of a loved one, others separated by restrictions from this unprecedented crisis. I think this year we will sing a little louder to make up for the voices not there. We might reminisce about past seders to remember special times, and special friends or family. We might share what we're grateful for because even now there is so much to be grateful for.

I am grateful for my health, my family, and feel fortunate to be part of this wonderful TBDJ community. Wishing you all a Chag Kasher V'Sameach







## By Martine Cohen

### The Holiday of Freedom

Here we are, getting ready for Pesach, a holiday that symbolizes a time where our forefathers left Egypt, where they were freed from slavery. Our seders are an experiential re-enactment of that momentous time. Through symbolic foods and the reciting of the Haggadah, we attempt to relive the transition to freedom. What it would have felt like to be there? To be freed by the hand of Hashem? We try to imagine the transition, that feeling, of freely walking outdoors, living, breathing fresh air.

And yet this year, within the context of what we are experiencing, Pesach feels different. Pesach IS different. We are thank G-d not in bondage, not in slavery. We are home as a measure of prevention. And yet many of us may feel a certain sense of confinement. A limitation on our freedom so to speak.

So let's take a step back for a moment. What if there was more here, a different meaning to all of this? A deeper perspective.

Reflecting on this global shift, I cannot help but wonder about the timing. This is not happening in November, or in July, but over Pesach, a time where we normally celebrate the exodus from Egypt in large groups around a full table. This year we will each celebrate in our own homes. While we are physically apart, we will all be thinking of each other, probably more than we would normally have.

While Pesach is not playing out as any of us could have imagined, perhaps this year we are being asked to find a deeper meaning in a whole new way. Perhaps this year Pesach carries a louder message, one we can relate to, one we are experiencing first hand.

Pesach is about transitioning from bondage to freedom. So then, what is the bondage we are leaving behind?

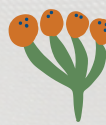
Perhaps we are being led out of a different, unique bondage. One that was globally imposed on humanity, by humanity, years ago. The bondage of divisiveness, of unhealthy competition, of a societal mindset where success was more important than family time, where materiality became more important than spirituality, where outer became more important than inner, where our fears drove our decisions and where judgment of others at times prevented human emotions from being expressed freely.

Today as we each embark on our own journey of Pesach, please take a moment to self-reflect. What can you free yourself of? What will be your personal yetziyat mitsrayim this year?

This Pesach we have the opportunity to transcend the physical in a sense, and come together in mind, heart and soul. To invite not only Eliyahu to our Seder table but to take a moment to acknowledge each other, the power of our community and the strength we have to celebrate together-apart.

This year let us collectively embrace the messages of Pesach. Let us celebrate the freedom we have to celebrate.

Wishing everyone a Chag Pesach Kasher V'Sameach!





# OUR THOUGHTS

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**By Morrie Levy**

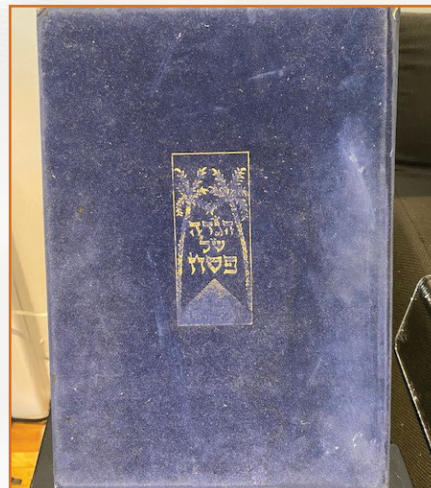
## **Smiling, Laughing, Hoping**

As we ALL are going through a serious and challenging time during this COVID-19 pandemic, and we are all anxious, concerned, worried, praying, and trying to support each other in our TBDJ community and Montreal Jewish community... I would love to bring a smile, hope, and strength through laughter and a small distraction during these trying times.

Please send us as many of the following items as you'd like, and we'll be sure to keep sharing them:

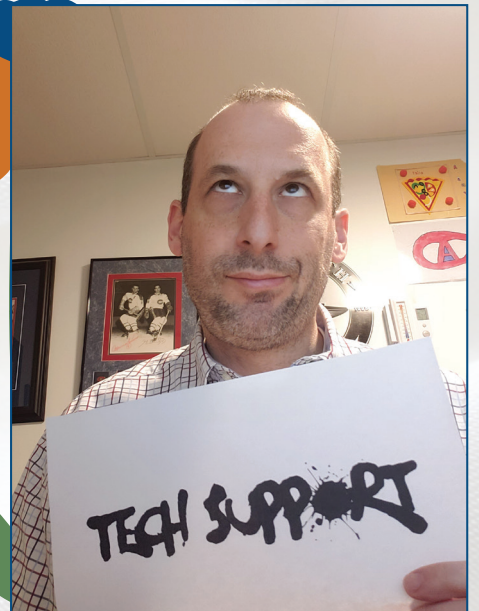
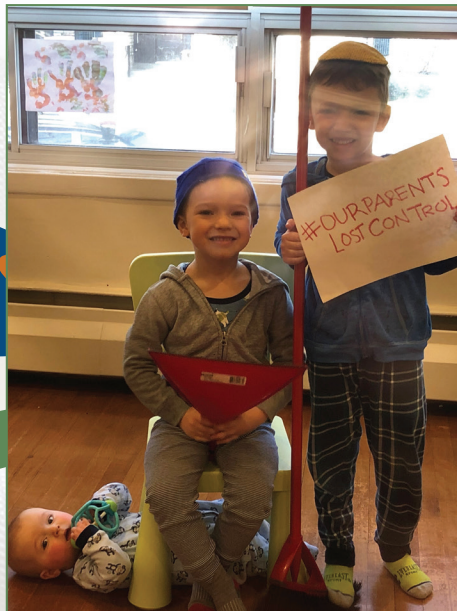
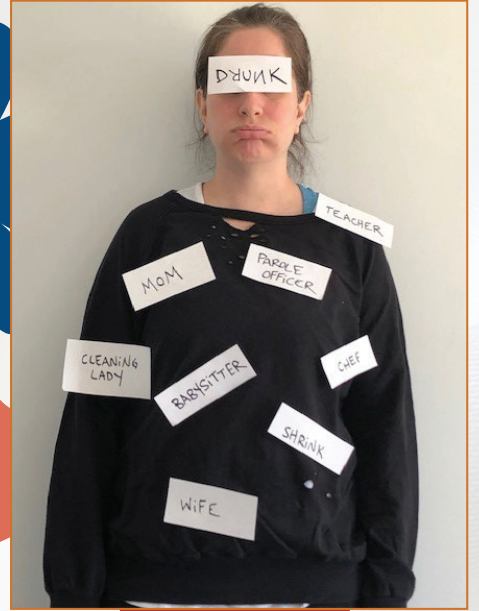
- a picture of you with a sign that says it all
- a picture of a Jewish family heirloom and sentimental Jewish object from your family
- a video of you lip syncing a favorite song
- an all-time favourite TBDJ event or moment
- your favourite TBDJ kiddush food
- your favorite prayer
- a video of you doing a "TikTok "
- a personal challenge you're taking on, whether serious, funny, or foolish

Send them to me at [photos@tbdj.org](mailto:photos@tbdj.org) and stay tuned... **Here are a handful to get us started.**



*Me in action; my late father's z"l hagaddah; and a Chanukiah from my aunt in Czechoslovakia that has been in our family for over 80 years*







# OUR THOUGHTS



**By Adina Moss**

## **Dealing Through #SocialMedia**

There are only two things on people's minds right now - Corona-virus and . . . Corona-virus.

We're inundated with it at all times - on social media, news sites, ALL sites, any and every conversation. There are kids running around our feet when they should be at school, zoom meet ups with the people who should be by our sides, and we practically suit up in hazmat gear to go get our groceries.

The situation is unprecedented, unstable, and terrifying. It has flipped our world upside down. But anyone who knows me knows that there is only one way I deal with extremely stressful situations, and that's with humor (sometimes at inappropriate times). So, in the hopes of bringing a smile to some of your faces, I present to you:

## **THE FUNNIEST (SHUL-APPROPRIATE) CORONA-VIRUS MEMES ON THE INTERNET**

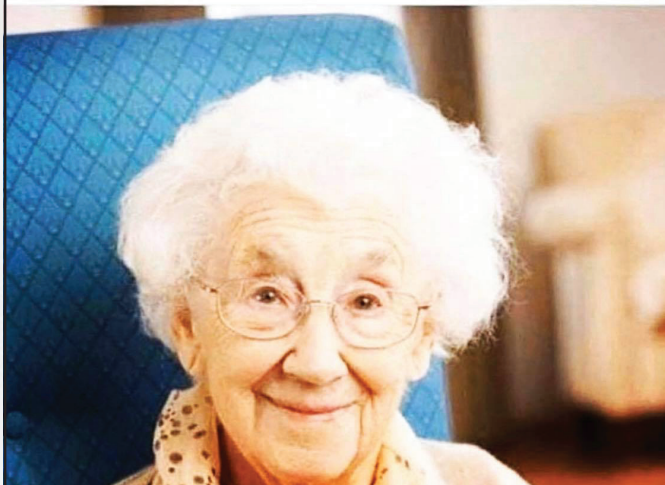
Wishing you all a chag kasher v'sameach, with plenty of sunshine, board games, and enough Charmin rolls to last 3 days of Yom Tov.

**#keepsmling**

**#stayhealthy**

**#stayhome**

Here's Sue. 31 years old, home schooling her kids for the last 5 days. Great job Sue. Keep it up.



**Jewish  
irony:  
Passover  
cancelled  
because of a  
plague.**

**Day 4 of social  
distancing: Struck up a  
conversation with a  
spider today. Seems  
nice. He's a web  
designer.**



**When they  
say close all  
schools till  
after Passover,  
they mean with  
the kids inside  
right???**

פסח 2020 - ליל הסדר

קדש; ירחי;  
כרפס; ירחי;  
יח; ירחי;  
מגיד; ירחי;  
רחצה; ירחי;  
מוציא מצה; ירחי;  
מרח; ירחי;  
פורה; ירחי;  
שלחן עורה; ירחי;

**REMINDER:**

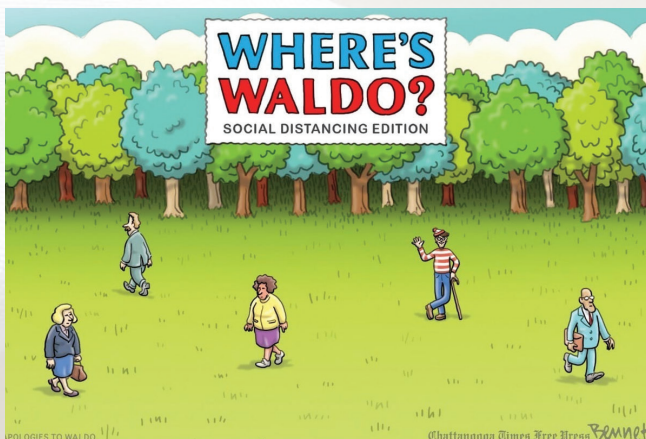
**9pm is the time  
to remove your  
day pajamas and  
put your night  
pajamas on.**

**WHAT IF THEY CLOSE THE GROCERY STORES?  
WE'LL HAVE TO HUNT FOR OUR FOOD.  
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE DORITOS LIVE!**

**They said a mask  
and gloves were  
enough to go to  
the grocery store**

**Have we tried unplugging 2020  
waiting ten seconds and  
plugging it back in?**

**They lied,  
everybody else  
has clothes on**



**For those who have  
lost track, today is  
Blursday the  
fortyteenth of  
Maprilay.**



# TORAH PORTAL

**All our shiurim and classes are available online!**

**Visit our new Torah Portal for a listing of all available programs, including the daily and weekly classes you're familiar with, and a few new additions!**

**[HTTP://TBDJ.ORG/PORTAL](http://TBDJ.ORG/PORTAL)**

*Below is our schedule of online classes, shiurim, and programs until we resume our learning and events in person.  
See our regular email updates for any changes or additions.*

## **DAILY**

### **MINCHA, MISHNA & MAARIV GROUP**

Accessed via: Zoom @ TBDJ Social Hall.

The room opens up 30 minutes early, allowing you to come in, see other folks, and schmooze.

## **DAILY**

### **DAF YOMI**

Accessed via: Zoom @ TBDJ Daf Yomi Room. Recordings are available at [TBDJ.org/dafyomi-rec](http://TBDJ.org/dafyomi-rec).

With Rabbi Dovid Rothschild: Sunday-Thursday at 6:00pm; See schedule for Friday & Motzei Shabbat.

With Rabbi Cheskie Buchinger: Sunday-Friday at 8:00am.

## **MONDAYS AT 8:00PM**

### **TANACH IN TWO - MONDAY NIGHT LECTURE**

Accessed via: Zoom @ TBDJ Social Hall. Recordings are available at [TBDJ.org/Tanach](http://TBDJ.org/Tanach).

With Rabbi Freundlich.

## **TUESDAYS AT 5:00PM**

### **18 MINUTES ON TEFILLAH**

Accessed via: Facebook ([Facebook.com/TBDJ.org](https://Facebook.com/TBDJ.org))

With Rev. Amiel Bender. 18 minutes each week focusing on a new piece of our Tefillah and liturgy, exploring its origins, customs, music, and meaning.

## **WEDNESDAYS AT 12:15PM**

### **LUNCH & LEARN PARSHA SHIUR**

Accessed via: Zoom @ TBDJ Library. Recordings are available at [Facebook.com/TBDJ.org](https://Facebook.com/TBDJ.org).

With Rabbi Freundlich. Don't forget to bring your own lunch!

## **THURSDAYS AT 8:00PM**

### **SEMICHAT CHAVER - GEMARAH SHIUR**

Accessed via: Zoom @ TBDJ Library. Recordings are available at [TBDJ.org/semichatchaver-rec](http://TBDJ.org/semichatchaver-rec).

With Rabbi Freundlich. Wednesday and Thursday shiurim are combined into one.

## **MONDAYS & THURSDAYS AT 3:00PM**

### **GEMARAH IN DEPTH**

Accessed via: Zoom @ TBDJ Daf Yomi Room.

With Rabbi David Elias. Currently learning Massechet Pesachim.



# ARE YOU NEW TO ZOOM?



WE HAVE A  
STARTER'S GUIDE  
FOR YOU  
WITH INSTRUCTIONS  
AND TIPS.

VISIT [TBDJ.ORG/ZOOM](https://tbdj.org/zoom)  
AND CONTACT US AT  
[TECH@TBDJ.ORG](mailto:TECH@TBDJ.ORG) FOR  
FURTHER ASSISTANCE



JOIN OUR  
**WHATSAPP**  
GROUPS

## 1) MAHARAL ON THE PARSHA

A daily recording from Rabbi Freundlich/  
Take 5 minutes to dive into the Maharal's  
commentary on Parshat HaShavua.

## 2) DAILY MISHNA

A daily recording from Rabbi Freundlich.  
Learn one mishna together each day.

Join these WhatsApp groups at  
[TBDJ.org/whatsappgroups](https://tbdj.org/whatsappgroups)

# SEFIRAT HAOMER

ברוך אתה ה' א-לקינו מלך העולם  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו על ספירת העומר.

היום יום אחד לעומר.

THURS. EVENING APRIL 9 1

הרחמן הוא יתזיר לנו עבודת בית המקדש למקומה במהרה בימנו. אמן סלה.

NOTE: IF YOU FORGET TO COUNT AT NIGHT, YOU MAY COUNT ALL OF THE NEXT DAY - BUT WITHOUT A BLESSING.  
YOU MAY RESUME COUNTING THE NEXT EVENING WITH A BLESSING.

היום שני ימים לעומר.	FRI. EVENING	APRIL 10	2
היום שלשה ימים לעומר.	SAT. EVENING	APRIL 11	3
היום ארבעה ימים לעומר.	SUN. EVENING	APRIL 12	4
היום חמשה ימים לעומר.	MON. EVENING	APRIL 13	5
היום ששה ימים לעומר.	TUES. EVENING	APRIL 14	6
היום שבעה ימים שהם שבוע אחד לעומר.	WED. EVENING	APRIL 15	7
היום שמונה ימים שהם שבוע אחד ויום אחד לעומר.	THURS. EVENING	APRIL 16	8
היום תשעה ימים שהם שבוע אחד ושני ימים לעומר.	FRI. EVENING	APRIL 17	9
היום עשרה ימים שהם שבוע אחד ושלשה ימים לעומר.	SAT. EVENING	APRIL 18	10
היום אחד עשר יום, שהם שבוע אחד וארבעה ימים לעומר.	SUN. EVENING	APRIL 19	11
היום שנים עשר יום, שהם שבוע אחד וחמשה ימים לעומר.	MON. EVENING	APRIL 20	12
היום שלשה עשר יום, שהם שבוע אחד וששה ימים לעומר.	TUES. EVENING	APRIL 21	13
היום ארבעה עשר יום, שהם שני שבועות לעומר.	WED. EVENING	APRIL 22	14
היום חמשה עשר יום, שהם שני שבועות ויום אחד לעומר.	THURS. EVENING	APRIL 23	15
היום ששה עשר יום, שהם שני שבועות ושני ימים לעומר.	FRI. EVENING	APRIL 24	16
היום שבעה עשר יום, שהם שני שבועות ושלשה ימים לעומר.	SAT. EVENING	APRIL 25	17
היום שמונה עשר יום, שהם שני שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר.	SUN. EVENING	APRIL 26	18
היום תשעה עשר יום, שהם שני שבועות וחמשה ימים לעומר.	MON. EVENING	APRIL 27	19
היום עשרים יום, שהם שני שבועות וששה ימים לעומר.	TUES. EVENING	APRIL 28	20
היום אחד ועשרים יום, שהם שלשה שבועות לעומר.	WED. EVENING	APRIL 29	21
היום שנים ועשרים יום, שהם שלשה שבועות ויום אחד לעומר.	THURS. EVENING	APRIL 30	22
היום שלשה ועשרים יום, שהם שלשה שבועות ושני ימים לעומר.	FRI. EVENING	MAY 1	23
היום ארבעה ועשרים יום, שהם שלשה שבועות ושלשה ימים לעומר.	SAT. EVENING	MAY 2	24
היום חמשה ועשרים יום, שהם שלשה שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר.	SUN. EVENING	MAY 3	25
היום ששה ועשרים יום, שהם שלשה שבועות וחמשה ימים לעומר.	MON. EVENING	MAY 4	26
היום שבעה ועשרים יום, שהם שלשה שבועות וששה ימים לעומר.	TUES. EVENING	MAY 5	27
היום שמונה ועשרים יום, שהם ארבעה שבועות לעומר.	WED. EVENING	MAY 6	28
היום תשעה ועשרים יום, שהם ארבעה שבועות ויום אחד לעומר.	THURS. EVENING	MAY 7	29
היום שלשים יום, שהם ארבעה שבועות ושני ימים לעומר.	FRI. EVENING	MAY 8	30
היום אחד ושלשים יום, שהם ארבעה שבועות ושלשה ימים לעומר.	SAT. EVENING	MAY 9	31
היום שנים ושלשים יום, שהם ארבעה שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר.	SUN. EVENING	MAY 10	32
היום שלשה ושלשים יום, שהם ארבעה שבועות וחמשה ימים לעומר.	MON. EVENING	MAY 11	33
היום ארבעה ושלשים יום, שהם ארבעה שבועות וששה ימים לעומר.	TUES. EVENING	MAY 12	34
היום חמשה ושלשים יום, שהם חמשה שבועות לעומר.	WED. EVENING	MAY 13	35
היום ששה ושלשים יום, שהם חמשה שבועות ויום אחד לעומר.	THURS. EVENING	MAY 14	36
היום שבעה ושלשים יום, שהם חמשה שבועות ושני ימים לעומר.	FRI. EVENING	MAY 15	37
היום שמונה ושלשים יום, שהם חמשה שבועות ושלשה ימים לעומר.	SAT. EVENING	MAY 16	38
היום תשעה ושלשים יום, שהם חמשה שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר.	SUN. EVENING	MAY 17	39
היום ארבעים יום, שהם חמשה שבועות וחמשה ימים לעומר.	MON. EVENING	MAY 18	40
היום אחד וארבעים יום, שהם חמשה שבועות וששה ימים לעומר.	TUES. EVENING	MAY 19	41
היום שנים וארבעים יום, שהם ששה שבועות לעומר.	WED. EVENING	MAY 20	42
היום שלשה וארבעים יום, שהם ששה שבועות ויום אחד לעומר.	THURS. EVENING	MAY 21	43
היום ארבעה וארבעים יום, שהם ששה שבועות ושני ימים לעומר.	FRI. EVENING	MAY 22	44
היום חמשה וארבעים יום, שהם ששה שבועות ושלשה ימים לעומר.	SAT. EVENING	MAY 23	45
היום ששה וארבעים יום, שהם ששה שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר.	SUN. EVENING	MAY 24	46
היום שבעה וארבעים יום, שהם ששה שבועות וחמשה ימים לעומר.	MON. EVENING	MAY 25	47
היום שמונה וארבעים יום, שהם ששה שבועות וששה ימים לעומר.	TUES. EVENING	MAY 26	48
היום תשעה וארבעים יום, שהם שבעה שבועות לעומר.	WED. EVENING	MAY 27	49





**CONGREGATION  
TIFERETH BETH DAVID JERUSALEM**

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