



The Shofar

April 2020

Congregation House of Israel

7 Nisan - 6 Iyar, 5780



Covid-19 Outbreak

See the article by Rabbi Stephen Weiss on page 2

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The Shofar

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Persevering Through the Covid-19 Outbreak

By Rabbi Stephen Weiss

This is a trying time for all of us. This pandemic has affected all our lives in many ways: socially, emotionally spiritually and financially. It is also forcing us to redefine what we mean by community and to reshape our personal interactions. It can make us feel isolated and powerless. The challenge of living with the reality of this pandemic will become greater before it finally lessens. Still, we need not despair. We have two extraordinary gifts that, used properly, can help us surmount even the most daunting of difficulties: We have each other and we have God.

We have each other. We do not need to allow this pandemic to drive us apart. If we are creative, we can find the ways to support each other, to enjoy fellowship, to express our love and concern, to help each other with our needs, to lift up those that are fallen, stand for causes we care about and even to

celebrate and have fun. Do not allow the physical requirements of social distancing to fray the ties that bind us to friends, loved ones, community and those in need. In the words of Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky of B'nai David-Judea Congregation in Los Angeles:

“Every hand that we don't shake must be a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern. Every inch and every foot that we place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to the other, should the need arise.”

We also have God. The psalmist also wrote: “God is our refuge and our strength, and ever-present help in times of trouble.” God is always with us, watching over us. Jewish mysticism teaches that God's spirit and light flows through all creation, even through our very being. Through prayer and meditation, we can envelop ourselves in God's spirit and find inner strength, calm, security and joy.

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Reb Shelly's Desk



Gam Zu Yaavor

By Shalom Lewis

It's an old legend but it possesses new meaning.

King Solomon sends out his servant to find a magic ring that makes happy people sad and sad people happy. After a year in fruitless search, the frustrated servant is reluctantly prepared to return to his king empty handed when he stumbles upon a jeweler near the palace gate. He explains to the artisan what he is seeking and is told to return the next day. He does and is handed the magical ring he has long sought.

Carved into the gold were the words '*Gam Zu Yaavor – This too shall pass*'.

When life is proceeding flawlessly, do not assume permanence. A fumble is inevitable. When life is proceeding miserably, do not assume permanence.

From the depths, there is always ascension. Immersed as we suddenly are in the surreal, the bizarre, the unexpected, the unbelievable. We must look beyond the unnerving moment. This now is not forever.

Most of us have no memory of World War Two, but evil came perilously close to victory. The post war Communist juggernaut when the Red Tide swept ominously across Europe and Asia threatened democracy. Bomb shelters and fear of nuclear annihilation were real. McCarthyism ripping the soul out of American tolerance. Race riots and assassinations. 9/11. The economic collapse of 2008.

We trembled. We quivered. We questioned; but we prevailed.

COVID-19 is not The Zombie Apocalypse. It is not The End of the World as We Know It. It is not Armageddon.

Let us do what we must. Let us be cautious, not hysterical. We will be triumphant. "*Gam Zu Yaavor – This too shall pass.*"

Sisterhood



"Shelter in Place" and "Flatten the Curve", two phrases we now hear daily, were unknown two weeks ago when we held our March 2nd Sisterhood Meeting, gathered closely together listening to the beautiful, calming, voices of the Hot Springs

Threshold Singers. Wouldn't we be thrilled with the opportunity to do that again today!

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in another reality, staying away from one another to halt the spread of the Coronavirus. Now, we are tasked with seeking a way of reaching out to each other without touching anyone. I recently read an essay by Priya Parker, the author of "The Art of Gathering" titled, "How To Be Together Apart in the Time of Coronavirus: An opportunity to experiment with meaningful digital gatherings, from book clubs to happy hours to religious services."

Last Friday evening our family shared a group FaceTime candle lighting and cocktail hour with our daughters in Seattle and Austin. It was wonderful. As a Sisterhood we too must now be creative in reaching out to one other.

Many of us are already sharing photographs, uplifting or humorous quotes, recipes, book titles and logging into online workouts. Creative ideas for challenging times! We have been reminded that our regular gatherings, visits with friends and family, taken so lightly only a few weeks ago are special privileges not to be taken for granted again. April Showers bring May flowers and hopefully by then we will set our digital lives aside, joining together, together at our next meeting on May 4.

Patti

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Purim Celebration

By Ruth Sedler



This year Congregation House of Israel celebrated Purim with members of the Piney Grove United Methodist Church on Friday night March 6.

We started with an enhanced oneg provided by **Karen Reagler, Carol Kleinman and Ruth Sedler.** However, the highlights of the oneg were the Hamentaschen provided by and donated by **Millie Baron**, from Ambrosia Bakery. Not only were they tasty but they were beautiful.

Following the oneg we went around the room and both congregation members and our guests took turns reading The Whole Megillah.



Everyone had their own copy to follow along with and **HAMEN's** name was in red so we could all be prepared to use our groggers when his name was read.



When **Nate Bernstein** read, he would just randomly shout out **HAMEN** to add to the fun of the evening.

I think I can speak for the group when I say that a good time was had by all.



Israel, Coronavirus, and Hope for the Future

Weekly Words of Torah

By Rabbi Josh Weinberg

There was something slightly eerie about watching the Knesset's swearing-in ceremony this week, as each legislator-to-be filed in Noah's-ark-style – two by two, or in some cases, threes – to avoid going over the mandated maximum of gathering. The irony of the name Knesset, which means “gathering,” was not lost.

During this time of a near breakdown in societal norms, Israel is rapidly dealing with the spread of COVID-19, closing all major opportunities for gathering, including restaurants, bars, and the school system; it is now even limiting public transportation.

The other big news this week hinted that we may see a leadership turnover after 11 consecutive years (and three years in the '90s) of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rule.

Early this week, 61 Members of Knesset publicly recommended to President Reuven Rivlin that Benny Gantz become the country's next prime minister. Not only is this a change after the past three elections, but the unlikely political bedfellows and loose alliances that have been forged are truly remarkable and unprecedented.

The 61 MKs who would constitute the coalition include the 33 members of Blue and White, the six members of Labor-Meretz (despite the abandonment of Geshet's Orly Levy-Abukasis), the 15 members of the Joint List of Arab Parties, and, shockingly, the six members of Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu party.

Members of the Joint List of Arab parties have never, ever seen Avigdor Lieberman as a political ally. This would be the first time since each of their relative existences that the parties would agree to endorse the same candidate for prime minister. Their shared desire to remove Netanyahu brings them together, yet some are seeing this move as a sign of changing times.

It's not quite the moment the prophet Isaiah dreamed of:

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid; The calf, the beast of prey, and the fatling together, with a little boy to herd them.” (Isaiah 11:6)

But it is a moment for optimism in that this move may be the necessary step in avoiding a fourth election, restoring a more permanent government instead of the placeholder government currently at the helm.

The first order of business for the Gantz, Lapid, and Co. is to replace Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein with a Blue and White MK in order to insist that Netanyahu stand trial. However, due to the debilitating effect of the coronavirus pandemic, the Government of Israel has rightfully shut down most institutions – now including the Knesset – which could pave the way for Netanyahu to secure his rule, insisting on emergency measures for both a unity government and delaying a transition.

Questions remain as to whether either or both of the two Haredi parties will join the ruling coalition. The Haredi parties, Shas and United Torah Judaism, largely detest Yair Lapid and see Lieberman (who campaigned largely on the promise of ridding Israel of the ultra-Orthodox monopoly of the Chief Rabbinate) as anathema. But the prospect of finding themselves left in the political wasteland of the opposition is a fate worse than excommunication.

Sympathy for the ultra-Orthodox parties in Israel continues to wane, especially this week, as they are perceived to be irresponsibly ignoring the cautionary regulations and guidelines put in to place to try to stymie the indiscriminatory spread of the virus. Just this week, the Ministry of Health had to forcibly shut down Haredi institutions and legally forbid gatherings of more than 10 people (notably, the number required to form a prayer quorum). Images of hundreds gathering for a wedding between two Hassidic dynasties garnered great scrutiny and scorn as it plainly ignored the Health Ministry's directives and increased the risk of contagion.

With all of the stress, anxiety, and potential panic that this moment in time brings, many of these political developments offer us a small silver lining with which to find and grasp a glimmer of hope.



Thank you to the following for sponsoring an Oneg during the months of April 2020

- Apr 3 Stephanie Kleinman
Kay Fleischner
- Apr 10 Cynthia Rephan
Fran Rephan
- Apr 17 Goltz, Siegel and Bull Families
- Apr 24 Clarissa Kirsch
Betty Feir

Reminder: If you are scheduled for an upcoming Oneg and need to change dates, please find someone to switch with and then let Carol Kleinman know so the information printed in the bulletin will be correct.

Covid-19 Outbreak

Continued from page 2

Make time for prayer, whether joining us in person or immersing in private meditation.

We are in control. We are not powerless. We cannot control everything regarding this pandemic, but then again, we cannot control everything in our everyday lives. But we do have a lot of control. We can help determine the course of this plague. By practicing handwashing, avoiding face-touching, practicing social distancing and observing other guidelines of our health authorities, we can collectively “flatten the curve,” greatly reducing the burden on our healthcare system and saving literally thousands of lives. We can reach out to those who are isolated. We can donate to help those who are needy. We can choose to continue our involvement in synagogue, study and community organizations, shifting our involvement online, to maintain the strong bonds of community that we so value. What we do matters and determines in large measure what our future will be.

Mazel Tov

Betty Forshberg



On Receiving the Tikkun Olam Award

Here's Betty (c) with her daughter Michelle and Son-in-law David Meeks.

Awwww....



Meet **Shmueli**, great grandson of Betty Feir and Mike Richardson, and son of Simcha and Faigy. Straight from Israel, dressed in all his Purim finery.

April Yahrzeits

Kaddish Recited April 3

Larry Wolken

Father of Brad Wolken

Larry Carrington

Son-in-law of Betty Forshberg

Sandra Rans

Sister-in-law of Fred Korngut

Roslyn Kirsch

Mother of David Kirsch

Eva Brown

Mother of Betty Forshberg

Max Prushansky

Father of Carol Kleinman

Kaddish Recited April 10

Nettie Gladner

Mother of Neal Gladner

Luman Sheets

Father of Mary Klompus

Craney Bellin

Mother of Ruth Sedler

Kaddish Recited April 17

Lonnie Pederson

Nephew of Cheryl Cohen

Bernard Rephan

Father of Jerry Rephan

Sam Savel

Grandfather of David Cohen

Note: There are no yahrzeits to be read for the Shabbat Services on April 24

Birthdays & Anniversaries

April Anniversaries

Lou and Susan Siegel April 1

April Birthdays

Barbara Morgan	Apr 4
Larry Levi	Apr 7
Maya Grenman	Apr 9
Annette Baim	Apr 14
Rachel Gordon	Apr 16
Stuart Fleischer	Apr 22
Betty Kleinman	Apr 23
Jennifer Grenman	Apr 26
Gary Lax	Apr 29
Cheryl Cohen	Apr 30

Refuah Shelemah

The following people are in our thoughts and prayers:

- Bill Ginsburg
- Jerry Tanenbaum
- Ken Baim
- Annette Baim
- Art Williams
- Ellen Eubanks

Please offer prayers that they all have a full and speedy recovery.

If you are aware of anyone needing spiritual or any sort of assistance, please let Carol Kleinman know.

Our Caring Committee is here to help all of our members in any way we possibly can.

April Parshiyot

Tzav

April 4, 2020

The fire on the Altar must be kept burning at all times. In it are burned the wholly consumed ascending offering; veins of fat from the peace, sin and guilt offerings; and the “handful” separated from the meal offering. The kohanim eat the meat of the sin and guilt offerings, and the remainder of the meal offering.

The peace offering is eaten by the one who brought it, except for specified portions given to the kohen. The holy meat of the offerings must be eaten by ritually pure persons, in their designated holy place and within their specified time.

Aaron and his sons remain within the Sanctuary compound for seven days, during which Moses initiates them into the priesthood.

Shemini

April 18, 2020

Aaron and his sons begin to officiate as Kohanim (priests); a fire issues forth from G-d to consume the offerings on the Altar and the Divine Presence comes to dwell in the Sanctuary.

Aaron's two elder sons, Nadav and Avihu, offer a “strange fire before G-d, which He commanded them not” and die before G-d. Aaron is silent in face of his tragedy.

G-d commands the kosher laws, identifying the animal species permissible and forbidden for consumption.

Tazria/M'tzora

April 25, 2020

The Parshahs of Tazria and Metzora continue the discussion of the laws of tumah v'taharah, ritual impurity and purity.

Tzaraat (often mistranslated as “leprosy”) is a supra-natural plague, which can afflict people as well as garments or homes. If white or pink patches appear on a person's skin (dark pink or dark green in garments or homes), a kohen is summoned. Judging by various signs, such as an increase in size of the afflicted area after a seven-day quarantine, the kohen pronounces it tamei (impure) or tahor (pure).

A person afflicted with tzaraat must dwell alone outside of the camp (or city) until he is healed. The afflicted area in a garment or home must be removed; if the tzaraat recurs, the entire garment or home must be destroyed.

When the metzora (“leper”) heals, he or she is purified by the kohen with a special procedure involving two birds, spring water in an earthen vessel, a piece of cedar wood, a scarlet thread and a bundle of hyssop.

