



March - April, 2023

Congregation House of Israel

8 Adar - 9 Iyar, 5783



Happy Pesach

April 6 - 13

(online seder details on page 2)

Thank You

We would like to thank the following donors (as of February 20, 2023)

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The Shofar

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Congregational Seder

Wednesday, April 5th

6:00 p.m.

Following the same general procedures as last year, our Congregational Seder this year will be "virtual" again, using Zoom Conferencing.

The Seder will be held on the first night of Pesach, Wednesday, April 5th at 6:00 p.m. Session will open about 15 minutes in advance to allow everyone to log on and get settled.

But together or on Zoom, the principals will be the same. The text will be displayed page by page as we go through the Haggadah, the Four Questions will be read, the children will be involved and all attendees will have an opportunity to participate.

You'll have to bring your own four glasses of wine, of course, (and don't forget the cups for both Elijah and Miriam.)



But hopefully your Seder meal will be filling and wholesome, and a good time will still be held by all.

Look forward to seeing you all.

Reb Shelly's Desk



I love learning about all the Passover traditions of different Jewish communities around the world.

Syrian Jews place matzahs on their backs and walk around the Seder table explaining 'This is Matzah, the bread of affliction... we are leaving Egypt and are on our way to Israel!'.
Others take scallions and "whip" each other during Dayenu as the Egyptians did to us when we were slaves.

At some seders the leader lifts the seder plate, walks around the table, and taps it three times on the heads of all the participants.

Hungarian Jews place gold and silver jewelry on the seder table, because in Exodus 12:35 it says as we left slavery we were instructed to ask the Egyptians for their silver and gold.

Shouldn't we have just one seder with one codified system of observance and rituals?

Midrash explains at the Splitting of the Red Sea (celebrated on the 7th Day of Passover) the waters actually diverged into 12 separate pathways – one for each tribe.

Should we not have been all unified and showed our solidarity?! Why travel separately!

This midrash teaches us a very important lesson. God saw that each tribe had its own melodies and traditions. Rather than force everyone to give up their family tunes and customs he created a path for each of us to celebrate and yet still be going in the same direction.

This is a message of inclusion, tolerance and acceptance. Just because another Jewish community eats rice, or '*gebrochts*' (recooked matzah such as used in matzah balls) or *kitniyot* (legumes) on Passover doesn't make them less observant or less dedicated to Torah observance. Instead, we should learn from God's example and create a path for each of our fellow Jews to observe and cherish their family's traditions and history.

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For true freedom is an attitude that includes loving, respecting, and protecting all the members of our community.

With such expressions of love and acceptance the coming of the Mashiach and Passover's prayer of "Next Year in Jerusalem" will truly become a reality!

Amen!!!

Our Social Contract...is Breaking

By Rabbi Josh Weinberg

The world as we know it exists on a social contract. This ancient philosophy was developed by early Enlightenment philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacque Rousseau. A social contract posits that to live together, people must agree to live peacefully, respect one another's rights, and obey the laws of the country and community in which they exist.

A social contract exists to instill the idea that political power is a property entrusted in the hands of government officeholders for the sake of the public. Accordingly, there are conditions that must exist so that the use of government power is legitimate, the most important of which is a concern for the rights of the individual regardless of one's political affiliation or ideology. A social contract posits that it's preferable to live in a civil society based on a social contract. As long as the state respects the social contract, citizens are morally obligated to obey the law and respect those institutions that protect the law.

Social contracts can be explicit as determined by laws, or implicit such as raising one's hand in class to speak. The U.S. Constitution is an explicit example of America's social contract in that it sets what the government can and cannot do. People who choose to live in America agree to be governed by the moral and political obligations outlined in the Constitution's social contract.

Regardless of whether social contracts are explicit or implicit, they provide a valuable framework for the establishment of harmony in society.

The Knesset's radical judicial reforms are an attempt to overturn Israel's democratic framework and crumble Israel's social contract.

In this week's Torah portion, we experience that moment of revelation when we receive Torah – our People's social contract:

The Maharal of Prague (1520-1609) reminds us of the Midrash that, at the time of the giving of the Torah, the "Holy One, Blessed be God, overturned the mountain above the Jews like a tub, and said to them: 'If you accept the Torah, excellent, and

if not, there will be your burial.'" (Shabbat 88a) He explained that it was necessary to hold this over their heads in case some decided to deny the covenant and relieve themselves of accountability to the Torah. Despite their initial desire to live by this social contract, they must be constantly reminded that they are bound by it.

Torah has always been more than a religious document. It is a social contract, the constitution for the united tribes of the Israelite nation that outlines an economic and political system emphasizing the centrality of the State along with a concern for the life and well-being of every individual. As Jews, we have lived according to this dynamic social contract for 3000 years, updating, amending, and interpreting its codes to adapt to new challenges of modernity and shifting paradigms.

The state of Israel today is a fascinating case study of a society that is in radical conflict over the very fundamentals of the social contract. Israel is today engaged in an internal struggle over fundamentals such as the legitimacy of the court system, the authority of the Knesset, the entitlement of the government to legislate in favor of the concerns of special interest groups, the right of the government to determine an economic policy that serves the state but not necessarily the interests of the citizens, the status quo between ultra-Orthodox and Progressive Jews and the fight over the boundaries of what are considered legitimate public expressions of religious freedom in the streets, "universal" human rights, the status of non-Jewish citizens, attacks against the LGBTQ+ community, the independence of the press, and more.

It is astonishing to note how many of these concerns are at the core of the Israeli social contract and how that contract is being currently threatened.

In a 112-page analysis, Attorney General Adv. Gali Baharav-Miara dismantles every assertion and justification put forward by the new government in support of its radical judicial overhaul and articulates the principle at the heart of the social contract:

"Democracy is not only 'majority rules.' True democracy also requires the protection of human rights, the rule of law, the separation of powers, and an independent judiciary that can serve as an effective check on the other

Continued on page 6

Sisterhood



As we move into the beginnings of Spring, marked by the first daffodils and the vibrant yellow of forsythia blossoms, we realize that the season of Passover will soon arrive. During this period of renewal, we stand in awe and joy as God's world unfolds

before us. This quiet meditation from the Covenant of the Spirit, speaks to the heart and soul of women everywhere, offering comfort and inspiration as we join them in turning our faces to the sun.

We are grateful to God who shows mercy when we face adversity, who has brought us the greatest gift of faith, trust and enlightenment through Torah.

If we appreciate the grace, harmony, and artistry of nature - Dayeinu

If we embrace the beauty of simplicity - Dayeinu

If we greet diversity with acceptance - Dayeinu

If we cherish the insightful wisdom of our elders - Dayeinu

If we perform deeds of loving kindness - Dayeinu

If we nurture the purity, creativity and hope reflected in the eyes of our children

- Dayeinu

If we embrace the positive forces that drive us to a peaceful existence - Dayeinu

If we are content to accept the serenity of God's light - Dayeinu

For all of this we are grateful. For all of this would be enough

May this season bless our membership with loving relationships, health, well being and inner peace.

Patti

Times to Celebrate in March and April

By Sherrill Nicolosi

Jews have so many celebrations, holidays, and commemorations in the months of March and April, 2023. The Fast of Esther, Purim, Passover, Yom Hashoa, and Yom Ha'Atzmaut make these months a time of great reflection and appreciation.

The Fast of Esther (13 Adar) is observed the day before Purim begins. It commemorates the day the Jews of Persia fasted, showing support for Esther's bravery, as told in the story of Purim (14 Adar), this year, March 6-7.

Purim, considered to be the Jews' "festive festival", is often called the Jewish equivalent of Mardi Gras. It is the story of the Persian Jews' deliverance from annihilation in the fifth century B.C.E. The beautiful and courageous Jewess, Esther, queen to King Ahashuerus, and her Uncle Mordecai, are credited with convincing the king to nullify the evil Haman's decree to exterminate the Jews. The jubilant atmosphere of Purim, with its masquerades, carnivals, and joviality, is in stark contrast to darkness Jews would have suffered without the intervention of Esther.

Reading the Purim Megillah (Scroll of Esther), eating hamantaschen (the 3 cornered pastries shaped like Haman's hat), and booing and shaking the groggers each time we hear Haman's name (while cheering and whistling when Esther's name is said) keep the joyous story alive.

Passover, beginning April 6 this year, is the celebration of the Exodus of the people of Israel from ancient Egypt. All leavened foods (chametz) are removed, eating instead unleavened Matzah. The Pesach Seder is conducted with its ritual foods and the reading of the Haggadah, to pay tribute to the importance of freedom.

Yom Hashoa, this year April 18, is Holocaust Memorial Day, in remembrance of the more than 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis. We pray, "Never again".

A beautiful day for the Jews is Yom Ha'Atzmaut, marking the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel in 1948. May we never forget the hard won battles to maintain the Jewish Homeland.

Jews have so much to celebrate and memorialize with each of these special days. It is good to know our history,

ARZA - World Union

Continued from page 4

government branches. The so-called reform says nothing about these principles.”

Baharav-Miara focuses on the citizen’s rights and how the proposed changes would be harmful:

“Citizens would no longer have a remedy to prevent harm to themselves and to their rights as the result of an extremely unreasonable decision ... if the proposal is enacted, we will have an unlimited executive branch, and it will no longer be possible to come to citizens’ rescue in the event of an abuse of governmental power.”

President Biden used Torah principles in his State of the Union speech this week when he said: “A nation based on an idea. All people are created equal. All created “ in the image of God.” On a state level, all people are created equal in the eyes of the Supreme Court. The new government threatens this principle and it is this that we stand to lose in Israel as legislation is presented this week to overhaul Israel’s justice system.

In an attempt to convey the severity of the moment, MK Rabbi Gilad Kariv called for significant action to prevent the government’s drastic measures including worker strikes and mass protests against the rapid advancement of the legislation:

“We are coming to the movement of truth. The coalition of destruction and corruption will bring the legislation on appointing judges to a first reading [in the Knesset plenum] in the coming days. This is the time to go from protests to strikes. In schools, in businesses, and at cultural events. This is the time for demonstrations of a million citizens. This is the time for tens of thousands of people to come and demonstrate outside the Knesset on the day of the vote.”

In fact, hundreds of thousands of Israelis will be striking this Monday to protest the legislation moving quickly through the Knesset attempting to slow down the economy in protest of these extreme and dangerous measures.

Former Minister, Jewish Agency head, Soviet dissident, and human rights activist Natan Sharansky warned against shattering our social contract this week as well:

“Who will protect human rights and how? The

claim ‘we were elected, we will protect’ is demagoguery. Democracy is two things simultaneously — majority rule and undeniable rights of the person which any majority cannot deny...The Knesset must have the last word on political decisions. And the Court [must make the] decisions related to human rights...an override with 61 votes is simply an absurdity.”

As we read the story of the revelation at Sinai, we recall that Torah society established a constitutional monarchy where the king held absolute power but was obligated to observe and uphold the laws and precepts of the Torah like every other citizen and was never above the law. History records that whenever a king acted above the law, or in ways not dictated by the Torah and against the will of the people, the people rose up and replaced the king.

President John F. Kennedy, in his Inaugural address (January 20, 1961) said:

“In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation ... has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty.”...

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, ‘rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation’ – a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.... The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.”



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Anniversaries

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| David and Glenda Kirsch | Mar 27 |
| Lou and Susan Siegel | Apr 1 |

Birthdays

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Michael Waxler | Mar 11 |
| Oded Grenman | Mar 18 |
| Phyllis Hearn | Mar 21 |
| Barbara Morgan | Apr 4 |
| Larry Levi | Apr 7 |
| Rachel Gordon | Apr 16 |
| Stuart Fleischner | Apr 22 |
| Betty Kleinman | Apr 23 |
| Gary Lax | Apr 29 |
| Cheryl Cohen | Apr 30 |

Refuah Shelemah

The following people are in our thoughts and prayers for healing. Please offer prayers that they have a full and complete recovery.:

- Sam Banks
- Millie Baron
- Mitch Boley
- Camy Crank
- Hy Fishman
- Oded Grenman
- Randy Lewis
- Mindy Lingo
- Pat McCarthy
- Ellen Rephan
- Mike Richardson
- Misty Stricklin
- Harry Taub
- Shep Taxer
- Steven West
- Anita Williams

At Home in Israel



Betty Feir with her grand (and great-grand) children during her recent trip to Israel (February 2023).

March - April Yahrzeits

Kaddish Recited March 3

Sally Friedlander Boley
Mother of Sherrill Nicolosi

Dorothy Robins Taub
Mother of Betty Feir

William J. Brown
Uncle of Betty Forshberg

Marvin Barenblat
Brother of Betty Kleinman

Kaddish Recited March 10

Herman Fleischner
Grandfather of Stuart Fleischner
Grandfather of Mark Fleischner

Jules B. Newman
Grandfather of Brad Wolken

Murray H. Forshberg
Father-in-law of Betty Forsbberg

Kaddish Recited March 17

Wanda Burns
Mother of Glenda Kirsch

Kaddish Recited March 24

Julia C. Wigderson
Mother of Sue Koppel

Bernice Weisman Sherman
Aunt of Larry Levi

Ralph Edward Ballard
Grandfather of Laura Castillo

Kaddish Recited March 31

Walter Ballard Haynie
Brother of Laura Castillo

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

Kaddish Recited April 7

Eva Brown
Mother of Betty Forshberg

Max Prushansky
Father of Carol Kleinman

Nettie Gladner
Mother of Neal Gladner

Kaddish Recited April 14

Luman Sheets
Father of Mary Klompus

Craney Bellin
Mother of Ruth Sedler

Lonnie Pederson
Nephew of Cheryl Cohen

Bernard Rephan
Father of Jerry Rephan

Kaddish Recited April 21

Sam Savel
Grandfather of Davud Cohen

Kaddish Recited April 28

Moria Viner
Sister of Cynthia Rephan

Hannah Taub
Grandmother of Betty Feir

March Parshiot

Tetzaveh

March 4, 2023

G-d tells Moses to receive from the Children of Israel pure olive oil to feed the “everlasting flame” of the menorah, which Aaron is to kindle each day, “from evening till morning.”

The priestly garments, to be worn by the Kohanim (priests) while serving in the Sanctuary are described. All Kohanim wore: 1) the ketonet -- a full length linen tunic; 2) michnasayim -- linen breeches; 3) mitznefet or migba'at -- a linen turban; 4) avnet -- a long sash wound above the waist.

Tetzaveh also includes G-d's detailed instructions for the seven-day initiation of Aaron and his four sons -- Nadav, Avihu, Elazar and Itamar -- into the priesthood, and for the making of the Golden Altar on which the ketoret (“incense”) was burned.

Ki Tisa

March 11, 2023

When Moses does not return when expected from Mount Sinai, the people make a Golden Calf and worship it. G-d proposes to destroy the errant nation, but Moses intercedes on their behalf.

Moses descends from the mountain carrying the Tablets of the Testimony engraved with the Ten Commandments; seeing the people dancing about their idol, he breaks the Tablets, destroys the Golden Calf and has the primary culprits put to death. He then returns to G-d to say: “If You do not forgive them, blot me out from the book that You have written.

Vayak'heil - Pekudei

March 18, 2023

Moses assembles the people of Israel and reiterates to them the commandment to observe the Shabbat.

He then conveys G-d's instructions regarding the making of the Mishkan (Tabernacle).

The people donate the required materials in abundance, bringing gold, silver, copper, blue, purple and red-dyed wool, goat hair, spun linen, animal skins, wood, olive oil, herbs and precious stones. Moses has to tell them to stop giving.

A team of wise-hearted artisans make the Mishkan and its furnishings (as detailed in the previous Torah readings of Terumah, Tetzaveh and Ki Tisa):



three layers of roof coverings; 48 gold-plated wall panels, and 100 silver foundation sockets; the Parochet (Veil) that separates between the Sanctuary's two chambers and the Masach (Screen) that fronts it; the Ark and its cover with the Cherubim; the Table and its Showbread; the seven-branched Menorah with its specially-prepared oil; and the Golden Altar and the incense burned on it;

the Anointing Oil; the outdoor Altar for Burnt Offerings and all its implements; the hangings, posts and foundation sockets for the Courtyard; and the Basin and its pedestal, made out of copper mirrors

Vayikra

March 25, 2023

Moses makes an accounting of the gold, silver and copper donated by the people for the making of the Mishkan. Betzalel, Ahaliav and their assistants make the Eight Priestly Garments -- the Apron, Breastplate, Cloak, Crown, Hat, Tunic, Sash and Breeches -- according to the specifications communicated to Moses in the Parshah of Tetzaveh.

The Mishkan is completed and all its components are brought to Moses, who erects it and anoints it with the holy Anointing Oil, and initiates Aaron and his four sons into the priesthood. A cloud appears over the Mishkan, signifying the Divine Presence that has come to dwell within it.

April Parshiot

Tzav

April 1, 2023

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 15, 2023

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 22, 2023

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.

Acharaei - Kedoshim

April 29, 2023

Following the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, G-d warns against unauthorized entry “into the holy.” Only one person, the kohen gadol (“high priest”), may—but once a year, on Yom Kippur—enter the innermost chamber in the Sanctuary to offer the sacred ketoret to G-d.

The Parshah of Acharei also warns against bringing korbanot (animal or meal offerings) anywhere but in the Holy Temple, forbids the consumption of blood, and details the laws prohibiting incest and other deviant sexual relations.

The Parshah of Kedoshim begins with the statement: “You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your G-d, am holy.” This is followed by dozens of mitzvot (divine commandments) through which the Jew sanctifies him- or herself and relates to the holiness of G-d.