



The Shofar

May 2020

Congregation House of Israel

7 Iyar - 8 Sivan, 5780



Difficult Times

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The Shofar

Published monthly by:

Congregation House of Israel

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Submissions due the 15th of the prior month.
Distributed free to members, prospective members,
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Difficult Times

By Sherrill Nicolosi

Jews around the world celebrated this Passover holiday in a very different, non-traditional way. Most of us were practicing social distancing from family, as well as from our dear fellow Congregants. We can now hope that the COVID-19 corona virus will soon "pass over" all of us, just as the Plagues passed over the Jews, allowing for the historic Exodus.

Although most of us are self-isolating, there are many things we can do for our fellow human beings. To avoid the feelings of helplessness during this pandemic, experts have suggested we may stay engaged:

1. Keep in contact with others outside your home by phone, Facebook, email, or good old fashioned regular mail etc. Check in with a neighbor, friend, or someone who is in a nursing facility or care unit, especially where no visitors are allowed.

2. When things normalize, donate blood through the Red Cross or other entities. Blood is already in short supply.
3. Donate money to charitable causes which support the needs of the less fortunate, BUT FIRST CONFIRM ITS LEGITIMACY!
4. So many who have never needed help before are now in crisis.
5. Last, but not least, adhere to Governor Hutchinson, as well as our federal leaders and medical specialists and scientists, and stay home if you can. Cabin fever is far less dangerous than this disease.

Stay safe. Stay healthy. As Rabbi says at the conclusion of Shabbat services, "May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens cause peace to reign among us, all Israel, and all the World".

Reb Shelly's Desk



Taming Tigers in the (Plague of) Darkness - Covid-19

There was an interesting article on yahoo which is very pertinent.

A number of years ago, a television circus show developed a Bengal tiger act. Like the rest of the show, it was done live, before a large audience.

One evening, the tiger trainer went into the cage with several tigers to do a routine performance. The door was locked behind him. The spotlights highlighted the cage; the audience watched in suspense as the trainer put the tigers through their paces.

In the middle of the performance, the worst possible fate befell the act: the lights went out! For twenty or thirty long seconds, the trainer was locked in with the tigers. In the darkness, they could see him, but he couldn't see them.

A whip and a small kitchen chair seemed meager protection under the circumstances. When the lights came on, the trainer was there, alive, intact, and he calmly finished the performance. In an interview afterward, he was asked how he felt knowing that the tigers could see him, but he couldn't see them.

He first admitted the chilling fear of the situation; but he pointed out that the tigers didn't know that he couldn't see them.

The trainer remarked, "I just cracked my whip and talked to them until the lights came on. And they never knew that I couldn't see them as well as they could see me."

For many of us, the coronavirus is such a time. It may feel as if we are in a cage with the door locked behind us, with the lights gone out. It seems as if the virus can see us, but we can't see it. It feels as if we have meager protections under the circumstances. Going shopping while physical distancing feels truly strange. Virtually all of us, like the trainer, have—at least briefly—felt the chilling fear of this situation.

While such thoughts are human, we can realize that, like our Israelite ancestors in Egypt, we are not alone during this plague of darkness. We know that healthcare professionals have been working constantly during this time. We know that state Governors and local officials have been responding with leadership, vigor, and consistent messaging, while enacting appropriate measures to ensure that we, like the tiger trainer, can keep ourselves safe. We also have each other—a warm, caring CHI family, along with our tradition of survival through character, prayer, and action.

And I know that in our lives we have all faced tigers in the dark before. I certainly have. Some of these tigers have been internal pressures, conflicts, guilt, diagnoses, and other sources of constant stress and a

depressing outlook. *Tzurris* —problems—have found us before, and we have found our way through them.

Our lives at some point will be in a post-coronavirus reality. The tiger trainer in the cage will emerge from that cage. We, too, will emerge from the plague of darkness and this Egyptian episode: the confinement of this moment. And it—and all—will be vital and wonderful again.



Too Close for Comfort

By Josh Weinberg

As the 28-day period awarded to Member of Knesset Benny Gantz expired this past Monday at midnight, President Ruby Rivlin succumbed to the pressure and granted a 48 hour extension just after he threw the political system a curve ball by deciding to not grant Gantz' request for a 14-day extension. Rivlin then turned the responsibility of forming a government over to the Knesset, who will have 21 days to piece together a government. If they are unsuccessful, the country will go to a fourth election in the fall. Enough is enough. Rivlin is quite fed up with negotiation shenanigans and in looking to avoid a potential fourth election, he might have actually laid the groundwork for it.

No, I didn't just cut and paste these words from a previous column from when Israel's Knesset received the mandate and were unsuccessful in September. From his quarantined quarters, Netanyahu's paranoias are unbound by the current physical restrictions placed on him and his family. We've seen him back away from the increasing reality of a prime ministerial rotation that includes legislation intended to establish the date he will leave his post. Netanyahu now fears the High Court of Justice will pull a fast one on him: allow him to form a new government, then after he and Gantz are both sworn, rule him unfit to serve in the position, leaving Gantz as the sole PM for the remainder of their joint term.

But by pushing everyone away, Netanyahu risks losing it all. His pipe dream of stealing a few Knesset seats from other party detractors and forming a narrow government, which will be presented as the "national and Zionist" government is risky, a short term solution, and inherently unstable. My how far we have come from a 61 majority of MKs – including 15 Arab parliamentarians – to the full pendulum swing back to a narrow, right-wing government poised to use this emergency moment to fulfill its political aspirations.

We're getting close.

To both a government and to political quagmire followed by disaster.

The irony of the phrase "getting close," at a time when we are compelling to maintain distance for the sake of public and personal health, is not lost.

Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aaron, get a bit too close in this week's Torah reading, Parashat Sh'mini. They offer what the text refers to as *eish zarah*, a "strange" or "alien" fire, and they pay for it with their lives. It would be far too simplistic to say that coronavirus is today's *eish zarah*, this alien fire, and that if one gets "too close" it will become very dangerous. We have to understand this metaphorically and on a higher level.

One interpretation is that Nadav and Avihu were punished so severely is less about what they did and more for who they are. Being public figures and in the spotlight, their alien fire, and their deliberate disobedience, from God's perspective, could not stand.

The ethos of holding public figures to higher standards is borne out in the rest of Jewish tradition: we do not and should not allow greater latitude for lapses in morality among leaders.

Perhaps Netanyahu senses that he is dangerously close to his own demise and his changing the rules of the game and refusing the previously negotiated terms is an effort of self-preservation. This would not be new for him, as we are largely in this perpetual political impasse as a result of his refusal to step aside, even if it means that the country will get very close to a government only to see that hope dashed.

Let's hold Netanyahu to a higher standard and demand that he act for the good of the citizens and people of Israel instead of his own clutch at power. Moshe's response in Parashat Sh'mini to the tragedy of Nadav and Avihu is:

This is what the Adonai meant when He said:
Through those near to Me I show Myself holy,
And gain glory before all the people. (Leviticus 10 :3)

All the people, not just a narrow interest group. Let us read this passage as a call for unity even at a time of physical distance at this critical moment in time.

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Welcome New Member

Leslie Campbell

Leslie Campbell moved to Hot Springs from Whitesboro, Texas in February 2020. She selected Hot Springs after visiting once in February and attending CHOI for Shabbat. That's all it took!

Before moving to Lake Texoma in 2007, Leslie lived and worked in OKC as a real estate investor, and then became a professional writer and blogger for her associates in real estate in OKC, as well as some lawyers and internet marketers.

She has two daughters and five grandchildren, ages 11 to 20, in California and Iowa. They are all eager to visit Hot Springs now, since grandma moved to a cool vacation spot.

Leslie enjoys writing as a hobby as well as a profession, scrapbooking, singing, sewing and gardening. She has the perfect hilly terrain to walk everyday in her neighborhood, and looks forward to scaling the mountains around Hot Springs soon, too.



To support the health and safety of our community, until further notice all religious services, Torah Study and other activities at the temple are suspended and being held virtually.

The purpose of enforcing this is to promote social distancing as the most safe and effective means to prevent the potential spread of the Coronavirus.

To receive an invitation to our online services or Torah study, please send an email request to info@hschi.org.

May Yahrzeits

Kaddish Recited May 1

Moria Viner

Sister of Cynthia Rephan

Hannah Taub

Grandmother of Betty Feir

Robin Rans

Neice of Fred Korngut

Carol Crow Nanez

Member of CHI

Kaddish Recited May 8

Mark Cohen

Father of David Cohen

Samuel Kirsch

Grandfather of Stuart Fleischer

Grandfather of Mark Fleischer

Grandfather of Steven Kirsch

Serena Kirsch

Mother of Steven Kirsch

Kaddish Recited May 15

Frances Koppel

Mother of Hal Koppel

Helen Kleinman

Grandmother of Ira Kleinman

Nathan Davis

Grandfather of David D. Reagler

Grandfather of Rachel Schulman

Kaddish Recited May 22

Louise Levi

Mother of Larry Levi

Morris Reagler

Grandfather of David D. Reagler

Grandfather of Rachel Schulman

Shirley Sedler

Mother of Ross Sedler

Kaddish Recited May 29

Irwin Kleinman

Brother of Sheldon Kleinman

George Thornton Ginsburg

Brother of Millie Baron

Norman "Dick" Franklin

Step-father of David Cohen

Birthdays & Anniversaries

May Anniversaries

Jerry and Fran Rephan	May 3
Les and Diana Surfes	May 18
Dennis and Anita Williams	May 25
Larry and Carol Levi	May 27

May Birthdays

Ira Kleinman	May 13
Mark Fleischer	May 14
Sharon Waxler	May 14
Elaine Wolken	May 16
Patti Fleischer	May 17
Glenda Kirsch	May 23
Rachel Schulman	May 26
Ellen Eubanks	May 27

Refuah Shelema

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.

May Parshiyot

Acharaei - Kedoshim

May 2, 2020

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 L rd your G d, am holy.” This is followed by dozens of mitzvot (divine commandments) through which the Jew sanctifies himself and herself and relates to the holiness of G d.

Emor

May 9, 2020

The second part of Emor lists the annual Callings of Holiness—the festivals of the Jewish calendar: the weekly Shabbat; the bringing of the Passover offering on 14 Nissan; the seven-day Passover festival beginning on 15 Nissan; the bringing of the Omer offering from the first barley harvest on the second day of Passover, and the commencement, on that day, of the 49-day Counting of the Omer, culminating in the festival of Shavuot on the fiftieth day; a “remembrance of shofar blowing” on 1 Tishrei; a solemn fast day on 10 Tishrei; the Sukkot festival—during which we are to dwell in huts for seven days and take the “Four Kinds”—beginning on 15 Tishrei; and the immediately following holiday of the “eighth day” of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret).

Next the Torah discusses the lighting of the menorah in the Temple, and the showbread (lechem hapanim) placed weekly on the table there.

B’har - Bechukotai

May 16, 2020

On the mountain of Sinai, G d communicates to Moses the laws of the Sabbatical year: every seventh year, all work on the land should cease, and its produce becomes free for the taking for all, man and beast.

Seven Sabbatical cycles are followed by a fiftieth year—the Jubilee year, on which work on the land ceases, all indentured servants are set free, and all ancestral estates in the Holy Land that have been sold revert to their original owners. Additional laws governing the sale of lands, and the prohibitions against fraud and usury, are also given.

Bamidbar

May 23, 2020

In the Sinai Desert, G d says to conduct a census of the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses counts 603,550 men of draftable age (20 to 60 years); the tribe of Levi, numbering 22,300 males age one month and older, is counted separately. The Levites are to serve in the Sanctuary. They replace the firstborn, whose number they approximated, since they were disqualified when they participated in the worshipping of the Golden Calf. The 273 firstborn who lacked a Levite to replace them had to pay a five-shekel “ransom” to redeem themselves.

When the people broke camp, the three Levite clans dismantled and transported the Sanctuary, and reassembled it at the center of the next encampment. Before the Sanctuary’s entranceway, to its east, were the tents of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron’s sons. Beyond the Levite circle, the twelve tribes camped in four groups of three tribes each. This formation was kept also while traveling. Each tribe had its own nassi (prince or leader), and its own flag with its tribal color and emblem.

