

Temple Beth El Bulletin

VOLUME 51, No. 11
APRIL 2020
NISAN/IYYAR 5780



The Temple Beth El Bulletin is published monthly according to the Gregorian calendar.

Phone:
(805) 928-2118
Email: TempleBethEl@verizon.net

Website:
<http://www.TBESantamaria.com>
The Bulletin is emailed for free to Members and Friends of TBE.

Street address: 1501 E. Alvin Ave., Santa Maria, CA 93454
Mailing address: P.O. Box 5217, Santa Maria, CA 93456

Rabbi's Message ~ Dov Gottesfeld

WHAT DID WE (Jews) KNOW, and WHEN
DID WE KNOW IT?
(And have we learned anything since then?)

Dear congregants and friends:
I am referring to the knowhow of surviving epidemics, pandemics, and other communicable diseases. Well, we should have. After all, we've been in the midst of many of them, and even we were blamed for causing quite a few of them throughout the centuries. However, looking at those illnesses from our (Jewish) perspective, we know WHO really brought it upon human kind and for what reason.

But, first, let's discuss some terminology translations. It is important, because the meaning of the words in Hebrew point the way in which we ought to relate to those diseases in order to survive the ordeal.

The word Pandemic comes from Greek "pandemos" which means All-People. It was coined in the middle of the 17th Century. The word Epidemic comes from the Greek



Dov Gottesfeld

"Epidemios", which means upon the people. Also "Epidemia" means the "prevalence of disease". It was also coined in the early 17th Century.

In Hebrew, those two words are translated as "Mageifah". The root of the word is N'G'F' (NaGaf), and it appears 26 times in the bible. It means: to bolt, to close, to block, and to lock. The verb already indicates what is needed to be done in the event of such an ailment. A person (either the healthy or the sick) needs to isolate or insulate himself from the rest of the society in order not to spread or be infected by the specific communicable disease.

During the biblical plagues in Egypt (1300 B.C.E.) (Exodus 12:22) Moses commands the people to mark their doors with animal blood, and thus to be protected from the wrath of the angel-of-death, and proceeds: "...and none of you shall go out of his house until the morning."

During the sojourn in the Sinai desert, those who were afflicted by disease, like Leprosy, needed to be

Continued on Page 2

April Schedule of Services:

No services scheduled until further notice due to COVID-19.

Educational Activities:

No activities scheduled until further notice due to COVID-19. Please see calendar at the end of this bulletin for Zoom platform meetings.

Continued from Page 1

taken outside the encampment and be treated by the Cohen (who also served as a medic). Purification included a great deal of washing in water. (Leviticus 13:46) "All the days when the disease shall be in him, he shall be unclean, and he shall dwell alone outside the camp shall his habitation be."

Jewish rituals include water – which is the symbol of life; not merely because humans need water in their system in order to live, but because water was a symbol of cleansing; washing off dirt or any type of contamination that can pass from one individual to another individual.

The Black Death plague, which hit Europe in the middle of the thirteen century, which historians believe began somewhere in mid-Asia along the silk road, killed between 74-200 million Europeans. However, at the time, the plague was blamed as the doing of the Jews. The reason: There were many less Jews in the morgues than Christians, or from other religions. The masses attribute it to the facts that the Jews isolated themselves in ghettos, the Jewish laws promoted cleanliness, the Jews needed by law to wash their hands before eating bread and after using the bathroom. In addition, they had to wash before the Sabbath.

There is a wealth of material about Jewish survival using cleanliness as a weapon against diseases. Let's do what our Jewish predecessors had done – insolate and isolate ourselves and keep ourselves clean by washing, washing, washing.

May we, and our brothers and sisters from other faiths stay alive and healthy to continue God's work on earth.

Best wishes.

Rabbi Dov.

Prayer for Medical Personnel in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic

Ribbono Shel Olam – Sovereign of the Universe.

We ask your blessings for all those in the medical profession, whose work and courage and commitment protect us.

Please protect the medical personnel of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. Shield them from harm and pain and sustain their faith in the face of the formidable enemy that they confront daily on our behalf. May all of their efforts be crowned with victory. May they be returned to the loving arms of their families and a grateful community - safely, speedily, and in good health.

Amen

Board of Directors 2019-2020

President:

Suzanne Levy, slevy93455@gmail.com>

Vice President:

Gary Epstein, gepstein@calpoly.edu

Treasurer:

Ron Levy, ralevy@juno.com

Executive Secretary:

Oceana Heath, oceanarhmd@gmail.com

Past President:

Michael Sachs, mjs1526@aol.com

Committee chairs:

Brotherhood:

Michael LeCover

Buildings & Grounds:

Ken Wolf, kennethlwolf94720@gmail.com
& Sid Goldstein

Education:

Amber Medina, amedinacasa@gmail.com.

Membership:

Alyshia Iles-Brunk, brunk3@live.com

Religious Practices:

Anita Friedman & Gary Epstein

Sisterhood:

Marsha Epstein, mepstein@calpoly.edu

Ways & Means:

Diane Borad-Mirken,
diane.boradmirken@mail.com

Sunshine Chair:

Judith Klinger, judythecutie@comcast.net

Social Action Chair:

Open

Additional Contacts:

Rabbi: Dov Gottesfeld

Bulletin Editor:

Leslie Epstein, leslicchan31@yahoo.com

Webmaster:

Joel David, jandidavid@yahoo.com

President's Column ~ Suzanne Levy



Suzanne Levy

Remember telling your kids how you used to walk to school in the snow? I remember standing at the bus stop, freezing, for hours (literally) and the bus didn't come because the roads were blocked. Amazing how we survived that. Of course, our kids and grandkids will now tell theirs how they survived the year of COVID-19. What makes this more unprecedented than anything before is that it is occurring all over the world. I guess there is something to the saying "We are all in this together."

Of course, Temple Beth El, as everyone else, has had to adapt. We have closed the building to all Temple activities. That means Shabbat services, Religious School, Hebrew classes, Torah discussion meetings, the temple work day that was being planned, and of course, the Community Passover Seder. If you so desire, there are many virtual sources for services and the Seder. Other temples are streaming theirs. We will not be, but we will be delivering gift baskets to some of our members who may not be able to shop for their own Passover supplies. We also have three young ladies who would be happy to do your errands for you, Oceana, Mia and Shayna. If you need ANYTHING, let me know and I will put you in touch with one of them. My phone number is 805-934-0477.

This time, more than any before, is a time to reach out and support others. Phone calls are important and free. I urge you to call someone you have been thinking of. It will make both of you feel better during this difficult time.

On another note, Rabbi Gottesfeld was in Los Angeles and is home now recovering from heart surgery. He is doing as well as can be expected. If you would like to send him a card, call me (yes I am making you reach out on purpose) and I will share his address. Our thoughts and prayers are of course with him and Sharon during this difficult time.

Suzanne Levy

Bulletin Briefs

April Birthdays

1	Niki Eschen
2	Sid Goldstein
3	Marsha Epstein
14	Raul Medina
16	Caleb Medina
17	Cesar Vidales
22	David Goldstien
28	Sheryl Brunk

Donations:

Jaffa Café
Andi and Jeff Portney
Gloria Ortiz
A tree was planted in Israel in memory of Dr
Suresh Lodha by the Wolf Family

Are you ordering a lot from Amazon these days?
If so, there are two ways you can help the Temple
to raise money. The first is to by Amazon script
from Mike Sachs. When you get the gift card
(scrip), you can go into Amazon, enter the code
on the back of the card, and Amazon will deduct
from the card balance. The other way is to always
use Smile.Amazon.com
<<http://Smile.Amazon.com>> . Amazon will
donate directly to TBE. To do this, go into
smile.amazon.com <<http://smile.amazon.com>> .
Choose "Temple Beth El Santa Maria" as your
charity. Then be sure to always order through
Smile. The Temple really appreciates your
support.

Anita Friedman & Gary Epstein, Religious Practices co-chairs, would like to thank the following people for leading lay Shabbat Services:

Diane Borad-Miken (January 10th)
Anita Friedman (January 17th)
Andi & Jeff Portney (January 31st)
Anita Friedman (February 7th)
Andi & Jeff Portney (February 14th)
Diane Borad-Mirken (February 28th)
Josue Medrano (March 13th)

Brotherhood

The Temple Beth El Brotherhood normally meets the first
Sunday of the month. While the temple is closed due to the
Corona virus, we will not meet formally. However, I will still
be sending out articles of interest to members of the group.
Any responses will be emailed to the rest for comment or
interest.

Be well,

Gary Epstein

Sisterhood

The Temple Beth El Sisterhood meets the second Tuesday of
the month at the Jaffa Café in Santa Maria. We will not meet
as long as social distancing is in effect. The Jaffa Café is still
open for takeout. If you visit on the second Tuesday, April
14th, and write TBE at the top of your order form, the temple
will still get 15% of your order as a donation.

Hope we will meet again before long.

Marsha Epstein

Exciting Fundraising Events coming to Temple Beth El

**Please note that all these events are subject to change
due to the COVID-19 situation.**

Please mark your calendars and SAVE THE DATES for the
following great events. PCPA has a really good season this year
and the Temple will be selling tickets for FOUR shows. Our
price is the same price you would pay at the PCPA box office.
First, on Sunday afternoon May 3 is the "Sound of Music", a
wonderful musical for the whole family. Then the hilarious
"Little Shop of Horrors" comes to PCPA and we will be selling
tickets for Sunday, June 28. Last is a musical not to be missed
named "Something Rotten". It is a really funny play taking
place in Shakespeare's time. This play we will be seeing on
Sunday, July 26. I have heard some of the music and it is SO
funny! All of these will be in the Marian Theater right here in
Santa Maria.

Our first concert this year will be on Sunday, November 17th at
3 PM. Barbara Wilson will be returning to Temple Beth El to
put on another great show. She will be starting with "swing era
Big Band music" and she will throw in some country and old
standards. The second half will be audience participation and
sing alongs. She is a great entertainer, having performed on
Celebrity Cruise ships, Las Vegas venues, Country clubs
etc. One of our members, Mike Kaver, said "She is the best
entertainment you've ever brought to the temple!" If Mike said
it, it MUST be true. I will be selling tickets for these fun
activities as the dates get closer.

Diane Borad-Mirken, Fundraising Chair

Board Slate for 2020-2021

Normally we would be having our General Membership meeting this month, but there is nothing normal about these times.

April is the time when we choose a new board for next year. As you know, most of our board members have been on the board for many, many years. If I were to add up just the board service by the current members, it would be well over 100 years! Needless to say, we need some new blood.

All the positions are open, though we do have a few current members who plan to stay on the board if elected (Diane as Ways and Means, and Ron as Treasurer). We are looking for other people, or two persons who can share a position.

The New Board takes over June 1. If we are not able to have a meeting in person in May, we will send out ballots instead. Therefore, we need you to let me know if you are interested in running for a position! If you are not sure what that person does, let me know and I will fill you in, or call the person currently in the position and ask them.

The Board positions are:

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Membership
Ways and Means
Buildings and Grounds
Religious Practices
Social Action
Education

We need your help to make sure that Temple Beth El is here for our children.

Suzanne

slevy93455@gmail.com

Exchange of emails between Gary and his son Benjamin in Pearland, Texas

Dear Ben & Allie,

March 30, 2020

I was following the news about the Coronavirus in northern Italy. The population there has started applauding the doctors, nurses, and other health workers every night precisely at 7:00 pm local time. They applaud (and whistle and shout) from their windows and balconies. Now the same thing is happening in New York City.

So I decided to do it from the front of our house at 7:00 pm California time. The first two nights there was no reaction from the neighbors, no sign of life. Then tonight there was a sign of life but not from the neighbors; it was two young kids walking around the corner, followed by their parents. I kept clapping as they walked past our house. They didn't acknowledge me at all. In fact, the parents didn't even look at me.

I'll do it again and again...

What would happen if you took it up in your neighborhood? I think the value in it is the building of solidarity in the community.

-Dad

Dear Dad,

March 31, 2020

We had a few in our neighborhood.

First, they encouraged children to write hopeful messages in chalk on the sidewalk. So now when you walk around, you'll see cute messages written everywhere in the neighborhood.

Then they did a bear hunt. People put teddy bears in their front yard "hiding" in spaces. Allie put one up in our tree, for instance. Others would be in bushes and on light posts. And people would walk with their children (I did with Sarah) and spot the bears in people's yards. "Do you see the pink one up there?" It was really cute.

Third, they had some local restaurants bring food trucks to sell to people at the park. There was a custard truck, a Nacho truck and a ... I can't remember what the third one was. Anyway, we had a custard for dessert. Allie wanted a Nacho dinner for herself, but they were so overwhelmed with orders that it took an hour and a half for her to get her food.

There's a facebook group Allie and I are both members of for the Canterbury Park residents. (That's the name of our neighborhood). Many of our neighbors are in this group, so people can post and learn the goings-on in our neighborhood. That makes planning events like this easier to organize.

Instead of clapping for the health care workers, maybe another idea is to organize with people in the Nipomo neighborhood and send things like pizzas to the local hospitals for the staff? Or maybe someone can bake cookies and send those to the ER workers.

-Ben

In This Emergency, Mom Knows Best

By Bret Stephens, opinion columnist for the New York Times

“Don’t worry about me,” my mother says when I bring her some groceries. “I have a Ph.D. in loneliness.” We choreograph our movements so as to keep our distance. I take care not to touch anything she might touch, much less touch her. As the severity and scale of the coronavirus pandemic have become clear in recent weeks, she has had no physical human contact whatsoever. This could go on for months.

My mom puts the groceries away and we sit down to talk on her patio, keeping our chairs far apart. She didn’t think much of my last column in which I argued that we need to balance the public-health risks of pandemic against the risks of a global depression.

“I don’t remember your degree being in medicine or epidemiology,” she observes.

I try to cheer my mom with optimistic forecasts from more authoritative sources. Michael Levitt, a Nobel laureate in chemistry at Stanford, accurately predicted the declining rate of increasing coronavirus cases in China based on available data, and now predicts that the pandemic will end sooner than most people expect. “We’ll see,” she says. Another Stanford professor, John P. A. Ioannidis, has suggested the ultimate case-fatality rate from Covid-19 might be around 0.3 percent, much lower than most estimates.

“Have you seen what’s happening in Italy?” she replies. The fatality rate there appears to be just north of 10 percent — as of Friday, 9,134 dead out of 86,498 confirmed cases. My mother was born in Milan (or, as she would correct me, *Mi-LA-no*), and she takes her native city’s suffering especially to heart. When I point out that one likely reason why Italy has been so hard hit is that it is much more densely populated than the U.S. and has one of the world’s oldest populations, she asks tartly, “And how is that supposed to comfort me?”

I think of my mom as a stoical pessimist. She considers herself a highly experienced realist. She knows that calamities happen in the lives of people as well as nations — and that they happen far more quickly, unexpectedly and irreversibly than most members of my generation have either known or been led to expect.

She has been widowed twice, first at 26 and again at 71. Her mother fled Moscow and the Bolsheviks shortly after the October Revolution of 1917 and Berlin and the Nazis sometime after the Reichstag fire of 1933. She remembers the Allied bombings of Milano, which obliterated much of the city. She remembers the poverty after the war, and the time she snuck into a vineyard to liberate some grapes. She remembers the prejudice, when a grocer told her mother to “go back to where you came from.”

When I see her, she recalls a memory from around the time she was 3, when a young nun abruptly pulled her under her habit. By then the Nazis had effectively taken control of northern Italy. “She must have smelled that I was Jewish,” she surmises, without knowing for sure what had induced the nun to hide her. “Well, not smelled. Sensed. Maybe that’s why I’ve always been fond of the Catholic Church.” The conversation returns to the coronavirus pandemic. “You’re not taking this seriously enough,” she says. “I do take it seriously,” I reply. “I just don’t think we should panic.” She gives me the kind of look I used to get over some doubtful assurance that I’d done all of my homework.

It doesn’t help my case that Donald Trump, who talks about not letting the cure be worse than the disease, is sounding a lot like my column from last week. My mom will sometimes concede that the president possesses a kind of reptilian political genius. Otherwise, she sees him as embodying everything that’s gone wrong in the United States since she arrived as a refugee in 1950: the triumph of coarseness; the nonstop dishonesty; the dangerous indifference to basic concepts of right and wrong. (She detested Bill Clinton for similar reasons, but not like she detests this guy.)

My mom may fear the coronavirus, but I suspect she isn’t entirely averse to the idea of a sudden sharp downturn, even if it hits her financially too. For years she’s said that America could benefit from what she calls “a non-fatal catastrophe.” She doesn’t mean this callously or altogether seriously. She just thinks America needs some blunt but bloodless lesson to help us distinguish between the things that matter and those that don’t — the sort of lesson she’d had long before I came around.

So I sit on my mom’s patio and listen. Not out of filial deference or compassion, but because deep down I know there’s usually more wisdom in my mother’s instincts and perceptions than there are in my clever (or not-so-clever) concatenations of facts, concepts and hypotheticals. And while I can’t hug her, I can at least try to honor her by paying close attention — as we should all of our elderly loved ones, now so vulnerable, never more precious.

April Yarzheits

4/1/20	Stan Eschen*	7	Nisan	Father of Donna Eschen
4/1/20	Juan Velasquez Jr.	21	Nisan	Cousin of Cesar Vidales
4/1/20	Sam Resnick	7	Nisan	Husband of Trudy Resnick
4/2/20	Sherwin Sidney Bereskin	8	Nisan	Brother of Shep Bereskin
4/2/20	Lyn Meltzer	8	Nisan	Mother of Lori Meltzer-Sutton
4/2/20	Lillian Fischer Vincent*	8	Nisan	Grandmother of Kenneth L. Wolf
4/5/20	Harry Heller*			Husband of Hazel Heller
4/6/20	Henrietta Swimmer*			Mother of Annette Barnett
4/6/20	Arnold Stone	12	Nisan	Uncle of Jeff Portney
4/7/20	Lillian Balsam	13	Nisan	Mother of Shirley Kaver
4/9/20	Denise Abb	1	Nisan	Cousin of Marsha Epstein
4/9/20	Michael Ratner	11	Nisan	Cousin of Marsha Epstein
4/12/20	Conrad Sylinski*			Husband of Ruth Sylinski
4/13/20	Joe Martin	8	Nisan	Friend of Tom Geiger
4/13/20	Annabelle Abramson	19	Nisan	Aunt of Abby Lassen
4/13/20	Miriam Barkai	19	Nisan	Friend of Lyn Meltzer
4/13/20	Marsha Miliman	19	Nisan	Sister of Yael Gott
4/16/20	Cynthia A. Cohen			Daughter of Edgar Cohen
4/17/20	Paul Evans*			Brother of Ben Evans
4/17/20	Nathan Robbins*			Father of Evelyn Lubin
4/18/20	Barry Green*	24	Nissan	Husband of Phyllis Green
4/19/20	Dave Argov*			
4/19/20	Anna Eschen			Grandmother of Donna Eschen
4/19/20	Barry Lipman*			
4/19/20	Helen Lipman*			
4/19/20	Janet Melman*			Wife of Harvey Melman
4/19/20	Zetta Rykiss			Aunt of Errin, Sari, and Abby
4/20/20	David Wall*	26	Nisan	Son of Leo and Florence Wall
4/21/20	Karl Wolf*	27	Nisan	Grandfather of Kenneth L. Wolf
4/29/20	Shulamit Ben-Moshe			Mother of Ilana David
4/29/20	Avrum Goldman*			Father of Cary Goldman

Months of Mourning

Mel Bilow	Father of Aaron Bilow	5/23/19
Mike Kaver	Husband of Anne Kaver	5/28/19
Syd Hershfield		8/5/19
Lil Klempfner	Sister of Seymour Hersh	9/4/19
Miriam Gaon	Daughter of Bernice Gaon	10/9/19
Emily Hoffman McGinn	Historian of SLO Jewish community	12/12/19
Joanna (Joey) Bilow	Mother of Aaron Bilow	1/22/2020

Calendar for April:

Wednesday, April 1:

Thursday, April 2:

Friday, April 3: No services

Saturday, April 4: No Etz Chayim religious school (Etz Chayim has a page on Facebook and they are sharing information that way.)

Sunday, April 5: No Brotherhood breakfast meeting (Email comments on Seminar articles being shared over the March/April and April/May periods.)

also: Bluegrass concert canceled.

Monday, April 6:

Tuesday, April 7: Conversational Hebrew class to be done on Zoom

also: TBE Board meeting to be done on Zoom (7:00 pm)

Wednesday, April 8:

Thursday, April 9: Community Passover Seder canceled

Friday, April 10: No services

Saturday, April 11: No Etz Chayim religious school

Sunday, April 12:

Monday, April 13:

Tuesday, April 14: Conversational Hebrew class to be done on Zoom

also: No Sisterhood dinner meeting

Wednesday, April 15:

Thursday, April 16:

Friday, April 17: No services

Saturday, April 18: No Etz Chayim religious school

Sunday, April 19: Spring General Membership Meeting canceled

Monday, April 20:

Tuesday, April 21: Conversational Hebrew class to be done on Zoom

Wednesday, April 22:

Thursday, April 23:

Friday, April 24: No services

Saturday, April 25: No Etz Chayim religious school

Sunday, April 26:

Monday, April 27:

Tuesday, April 28: Conversational Hebrew class to be done on Zoom

Wednesday, April 29:

Thursday, April 30: