

MISHPOCHEH

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM
August 2020 Vol. 28, No. 6

Brigantine Jewish Community Center

Rabbi Gerald R. Fox

Av/Elul 5780

Covid-19

There were signs of hope towards our objective to return Temple Beth Shalom to an in-shul environment. The governor said that we could reopen with limited occupancy. St. Thomas on the island reopened for limited occupancy masses on June 29. Shirat Hayam started regular Shabbat services.

Then the reports started pouring in from those states that opened contacts before New Jersey did...Florida, Texas, California and Arizona were experiencing record breaking outbreaks of the virus. In fact, 39 states were showing that they did not have the pandemic under control.

The conclusion seemed evident to the Temple Beth Shalom Task Force. We do not have enough information to open Temple Beth Shalom to in-shul services and guarantee the safety of our congregation. Therefore, and until the Task Force feels that the opening would be safe enough for comfort, our week-end services will continue to be virtual.

The synagogue is fully stocked for a reopening. We have gloves, masks, sanitizers and professional cleaning services on stand-by. When safety is assured we will be able to open expeditiously.

In the interim, please join us on Zoom Friday evenings to Welcome Shabbat. The services start at 6 p.m, but Zoom starts at 5:45 to give attendees the opportunity to “mingle” with friends that they cannot see in person. The service lasts no more than one hour and provides a true Welcome Shabbat opportunity. The service includes the elements of an in-shul service and allows for your healing and memorial prayers.

If you have not participated in a Zoom service, give it a try. We typically have a group of about 20 participants. The invitation is sent by email on Thursdays. If you have email and have not been getting the invitation, please notify Donna by calling the office at (609) 266 0403. If you do not have email or a computer you can still join in over the telephone. If you need that link each week, call the office at the above number. Your

(Covid-19 continued on page 2)

RABBI'S COLUMN *Making Elul Count*

The Jewish month of Elul, which begins this year later in the Gregorian calendar month of August, while being granted the honor of consideration as one of the four Jewish New Years, is a very intense month for those who willingly attach its yoke. The month that leads into Rosh Hashanah and the High Holidays season is filled with shofar blasts to awaken our souls and ample reminders of our obligation to Teshuvah, to return to the path of righteousness.

If so, how is this month different from all other months? The month of Elul sets a table before us and requires us to choose. There are no holidays specifically designated within Elul. There are no specific meals that we plan with special foods (except, of course, as we transition from the last day of Elul into the first day of Tishrei, Rosh Hashanah). There are no massive gatherings where families rejoice at each other's arrival or become stressed over minutiae or both.

Instead, the month of Elul is an inward month, a month of introspection, a month that begs us for self-transformation. It is a month that so much wants to be the month that comes after it, Tishrei, which bears the fruit of the hard work that we put into ourselves during the month of Elul. As we prepare for the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement, this month reminds us that it is easy to slip backwards, to turn instead from a path on which we have strayed to a righteous path and back again. It is easy for us to miss the on-ramp to the cloverleaf that will bring us back to the best of ourselves. This is why we need the month of Elul to prepare ourselves for the Days of Awe.

(RABBI continued on page 8)



Friday Evening Services Reminder

Even though we cannot assemble in our beautiful building we can still get together, virtually. Every Friday evening at 6 p.m., we join together for our Welcoming Shabbat Zoom gathering. All members receive an email invitation with a Zoom link. If you are not receiving the Zoom invitation and would like to be included, send an email to rabbi@seashul.org with your email address and

request. If you know of anyone who wants to participate but does not have the ability to join the Zoom services on-line they can still join via telephone. Leave the pertinent information on the TBS answering machine at 609-266-0403. We will find a way to communicate the access information.

The Prez Sez

There are many thoughts racing through my mind as I start to pen my monthly contribution to this fine publication, so bear with me as I share some of those with you.

As I write this, the Rabbi, Sarah, Matan and Doron are off on vacation as the Foxes celebrate their 20th anniversary. I am sure I express the unanimous sentiments of Temple Beth Shalom as I say MAZEL TOV. Accept our wishes for many, many more happy years of wedded bliss.

Speaking of the Rabbi and Sarah, a well-earned, well-done goes to them for arranging our Welcoming Shabbat Friday evening Zoom services. They did not have a Temple Beth Shalom Zoom manual to follow. They figured it out. I have not spoken to a single participant of those services who has not had praise for the resulting experience.

I am extremely pleased with the Temple Beth Shalom Covid-19 Task Force that was assembled. I was very fortunate. The Task Force has **Rabbi Fox** (Religious leader and keeper of the rules), **Gloria Jacoby** (Ritual Chairperson with a great feel for the layperson's perspective of what is appropriate from a congregant's viewpoint), **Drs. Judith P. and Burton W. Schwartz** (both medical professionals with a very pragmatic approach to the application of today's news to Temple Beth Shalom's reality), **Bernie Rosenberg** (our treasurer who is there to remind us that every action has a financial reaction and he is also a great Zoom host), **Jack & Donna Pressman** (use their years as small business owners to provide a dose of reality to our discussions and they are also the ones that beat the shortages and acquired the supplies to prepare for our eventual reopening) and **Jan Sarratore** (our newest officer, has the wonderful ability to cut through minutiae and ask pertinent questions and steer the meeting back on course and she also has a great response to a number of issues, "I'll do that."). I feel that I was truly blessed with this assemblage and I know that they are making selfless decisions with the safety of our congregation as the guiding light.

I also commend **Camille Rosenberg** for her contributions during this difficult time. Camille has done her duty as a Zoom hostess, for our Task Force meeting and has also done an amazing job keeping the new and improved website up to date.

While I contemplate my good fortune, I must include our Administrator, **Donna Jordan**. Donna had the foresight to spend hours upgrading our administrative system so that she can work from home, without missing a single requirement. Donna still visits Temple Beth Shalom regularly to assure that the physical plant is functioning properly. Oh, and I forgot to mention that Donna's daughter, **Meghan Martin**, is now a fully trained back-up.

Kudos to **Shirley Morgan**. Shirley is regularly communicating with the Temple Beth Shalom Literary Society, AKA the Book Club. Her communiques go well beyond books as she provides many viewing diversions.



Then there is Adult Education. Rather than wait for the virus to disappear, **Jan Sarratore** pursued a course of, "Why not now?" As a result we have had classes by **Afton Koontz** and **Neil Brandt** and we have **Daniel Paul Alva** on tap. The lectures provide a well needed diversion. I should also mention that Jan keeps up a lively communication stream to the Temple Beth Shalom dinner club.

I am also grateful to those of you who have continued to sponsor services and to those who have paid their dues promptly (dues for fiscal year 2020-2021 were due July 1, 2020) and to those who continued their financial support. I remind you again that our expenses do not stop just because we are not in the building.

If I haven't mentioned someone specifically, please forgive me. The comments in this article are solely mine and do not have the approval of Temple Beth Shalom. I appreciate each and every one of you and your contributions in every way, shape and form! So, I can close with a thought that has nothing to do with any of the above, but it is a sentiment I want to express. As I was watching the news, I got caught up in the controversy over the Civil War statues (and I am just talking Civil War). When I first saw the issue, I wasn't really sure about where I stood. Then I had an epiphany. How would I feel, if after World War II, the German Bund declared that from their perspective, the war was "noble" and they then erected a statue of Adolph Hitler to commemorate that nobility. There would be no question how I would feel.

*Shalom,
Jack Lieberman*

Covid-19 (Continued from page 1)

presence will be welcomed.

The key question that all synagogues are facing is, "What will happen on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?" Based on the safety concerns discussed above, the Task Force, as of now, sees no way that we can plan on in-house services.

It is probable that Rabbi Fox and Cantor Abramson will be in the sanctuary, but the services will be virtual. Whether that is on Zoom or a more sophisticated streaming service, is being investigated. (If anyone has expertise in the elements for staging a quality streaming production, your assistance would be appreciated.) Whatever media is chosen, we have the assurance of Rabbi Fox, the Ritual Committee, Cantor Abramson and the Task Force that the services will be appropriate for the solemn occasion. As plans are finalized, you will be kept informed so that you will feel assured that the High Holy Days will be properly observed. You will also receive information on the inclusion of family members and other guests.

The Task Force is available to receive any suggestions or questions you have on Temple Beth Shalom's response to the virus. Send those to president@seashul.org.

Your physical presence is missed, but your virtual attendance is essential. Please, be with us as we travel through this pandemic.

Coming Events

ADULT EDUCATION

Thursday, August 6 7 p.m.

Congregant Daniel-Paul Alva will discuss
"Understanding Legal Terms in Today's News"
with us.

Congratulations

to **Lill & Ron Shender** on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Elaina Ryan on July 16, 2020, weighing in at 8 lbs., 9 oz!

Yahrzeit Plaque Order

Fran Dratch

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Fran Dratch

Drs. Burton W. & Judith P. Schwartz

Beth & Carl Apter

Bernard & Camille Rosenberg

Drs. Robert & Roberta Ball

General Donations

Donations were made by the following:

Leo Greenberg in memory of Barry Bornstein,

Dr. Henry & Gloria Jacoby, in honor of Rabbi and Sarah Fox's Anniversary,

Dr. Henry & Gloria Jacoby, in honor of Shirley Morgan's Birthday,

Dr. Henry & Gloria Jacoby, in memory of Bill Hahn, son of former Rabbi Sanford Hahn (deceased) and stepson of Linda Hahn,

Camille & Bernard Rosenberg, in honor of Shirley Morgan's Birthday,

Camille & Bernard Rosenberg, in honor of Gene Solomon's Birthday,

Ronald & Jo-Ann Massanova in memory of Matthew Lomazoff, son of dear friends, Howard & Lynn Lomazoff,

Drs. Robert & Roberta Ball, in honor of their birthdays.

Message Cards

Sidney & Shirley Morgan happy birthday to Gene Solomon.

Beth & Carl Apter a happy special birthday to Shirley Morgan

Sidney & Shirley Morgan congratulations to Lill & Ron Shender on the birth of their great granddaughter, Elaina Ryan.

Steven & Janet Sarratore congratulations to Lill & Ron Shender on the birth of their great granddaughter, Elaina Ryan.

Beth & Carl Apter a happy special birthday to Robert Ball.

Yahrzeit Donations

Drs. Judith P. & Burton W. Schwartz in memory of Judith's mother, Yetta Parker.

Jacqueline Fabel in memory of her mother, Betty Bilk.

Dr. Burton & Ruth Weiss, in memory of Burton's father, Robert Weiss.

Albert & Barbara Dragon, in memory of Albert's father, Dr. Arnold Dragon.

Ronald & Shelly Iris Miller, in memory of Ronald's former spouse, Phyllis Miller.

Susan Orloff, in memory of her grandmother, Yetta Levin

Dr. Gene Solomon in memory of his mother, Lillian Solomon.

Jo-Ann & Ronald Massanova, in memory of Jo-Ann's father, Albert Aufiero.

Steven & Janet Sarratore, in memory of Steven's parents, Thomas & Phyllis Sarratore and Janet's mother, Gladys Goldsmith.

Drs. Robert & Roberta Ball, in memory of Robert's sister, Barbara Ball Portner & Roberta's mother, Evelyn Robin.

Marvin Waxman, in memory of his father, Max Waxman.

TBS Literary Society

Our next Zoom book discussion will be held on August 17th at 1:00 p.m. and we are going to discuss the book "The Secret Book and Scone Society" by Ellery Adams.

We have also selected the book for September but no date has been scheduled yet. The book to be discussed is "The Giver of Stars" by JoJo Moyes. Both discussions are via Zoom video format and please contact Shirley Morgan at bookclub@seashul.org if you need additional information! We look forward to "seeing" everyone there!

Chumash Dedication

Shabbat prayer books are full with dedication panels but with a \$36 donation, you may dedicate one of our Chumash books for any purpose you desire.

We have 38 books remaining for dedication, so call the office at 609-266-0403 and make your wishes known.

TBS Team Oneg

It looks like we won't be having onegs at the Temple for a while, so I'm sending along a delicious cookie recipe that we've made in the kitchen for you to try at home. M & M's make these cookies pretty fun!!

While we're staying at home, this is a great opportunity to go through your recipes and try some that you haven't made in a long time! Be sure to send some dessert recipes our way!!

PARTY COOKIES

(Dairy/no nuts)

1 C shortening	1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp. vanilla	1-1/2 C M&Ms plain
1 C brown sugar firmly packed	2 eggs
2-1/4 C flour	1 tsp salt
	1/2 C sugar

Blend shortening and sugars in large bowl. Beat in vanilla and eggs.
Sift dry ingredients together; add to mixture, blending well. Stir in 1/2 C candy.
Drop by teaspoon on ungreased baking sheet; decorate tops with remaining candy.
Bake 375° for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Some cracking should occur – makes 72, 2-1/2 inch cookies.

If you have a favorite dessert recipe that you'd like to share with us, please email it to tbskitchen@seashul.org so that we can purchase the necessary groceries and supplies needed prior to our next baking date. Thanks!

Jan Sarratore
tbskitchen@seashul.org

Simkha, Simkha — Read All About It!

Don't Keep It to Yourself — if you have great news, share it! Please let us know about your wonderful news such as births, graduations, promotions, awards and, we hope for many, weddings, and so on! No matter your joy, we'd like to share in it! Whether with a blessing or an "attaboy," communities are built by getting to know each other and sharing both bad times, but even more so, our good times! Contact us at the office via phone or via email at office@seashul.org or rabbi@seashul.org for Rabbi Fox.

Adult Education

On July 15, Afton Koontz treated us to a very good presentation and discussion about Jewish Feminism. Seventeen of us gathered over Zoom and learned about Jewish Feminists, the definition of feminism and its history. Neil Brandt's discussion on differences in Jewish opinion was on July 22. A HUGE thank you to each of them for keeping Adult Education going during this pandemic.

Plans are in the making for many more adult education sessions this summer and fall! As soon as we know dates and details, we'll post them on our website. Until we can be together in the Temple, we are committed to bring some wonderful Adult Education sessions your way via ZOOM. These sessions will last about an hour and include a Question & Answer period. All congregants will receive a link to these ZOOM sessions. Non-members may request an invitation by sending their request to office@seashul.org.

On **Thursday, August 6 at 7:00 p.m.**

Congregant **Daniel-Paul Alva** will discuss "Understanding Legal Terms in Today's News" with us.

Daniel-Paul Alva was a criminal defense lawyer for 45 years with a national practice. He was also an adjunct professor at Temple University School of Law where he taught trial advocacy for 15 years.



BIRTHDAYS

6	Camille Rosenberg,	16	Jack Lieberman
8	Jack Pressman	18	Diane Hatoff,
9	Joshua Shapiro		Rachel Myers
10	Mitchell Kramer	20	Cary Durant
11	Joel Miller	21	Jonathan S. Caplan
12	Jeffrey Mazur	23	Roxanne Elias
14	Deborah M. Cimini	26	Dr. Henry Jacoby
15	Gloria Jacoby		

ANNIVERSARIES

2	Michael & Marcia Kurland
7	Howard & Natalie Solomon
14	H. David & Gloria G. Caplan Drs. Warren Heymann & Rhonda Schnur
15	Dr. Howard & Arlene Waronker
16	Larry & Diane Hatoff
23	Barry & Sandy Cogan, Ralph & Roxanne Elias

Simply Shirley . . .Zoom Edition

Welcome to all of my readers.

TBS Literary Society News:

To all of my faithful readers,

So, since I really don't know where I left off, I will just start here:

On Monday, July 13 our Zoom group was led by our Zoom Specialist, Camille Rosenberg, and we had a wonderful discussion regarding the book "The Plot Against America," which was written in 2004. Hard to believe that a book of this age could make you realize the connection to our present time. I must say I was a little concerned about a political book right now – however, once again, my fellow bookies made me realize I had no need to worry. We had a wonderful discussion and a wonderful get together. During times like these, I am so very grateful for having been introduced to Zoom. Our next Zoom book discussion will be held on August 17 at 1 p.m. and we are going to discuss the book "The Secret Book and Scone Society" by Ellery Adams. We have also selected the book for September but no date has been scheduled yet. The book to be discussed is "The Giver of Stars" by JoJo Moyes.

Now, I would be remiss if I failed to say just how spectacular my birthday was this year. I was treated as if I was a queen. NO, really, I had a crown and a banner and signs and a parade and was made to feel like royalty at such a stressful time, it was simply wonderful. To all here who helped make that happen and to all my community friends who also came out to share and take part, I am grateful and feel truly blessed.

Next on my list of happenings – the TBS Adult Education Program that was presented by our own Afton Koontz. The subject was Feminism in Judaism. This was truly a most informative and interesting way to spend an afternoon. Many topics were discussed that I was not aware of and I thank Afton for enlightening us with this presentation.

I find it just wonderful that at this time of doubt, many of us that are finding ourselves to be home bound are coming up with interesting ways to meet and discuss a variety of topics.

It is my sincere hope that you all stay healthy and happy and that we will once again be able to resume our lives. It

may be in a different normal, but at least we will be able to see each other in person. In the meantime, please know you are all in my heart and prayers and I truly do know that THIS TOO SHALL PASS, and we may not be hugging but at least we can be together in person.

OK – Stay safe, wash your hands, wear a mask, stay home when you can and with that all be being said, smile and know we are the lucky ones.

With much love and an attempt at wit, (I did say an attempt!)

Until we meet again, and we will, I remain

Simply Shirley

TBS Literary Society

Monday, August 17 • 1 p.m.

"The Secret Book and Scone Society"

By Ellery Adams

via Zoom video format.



September (no date yet)

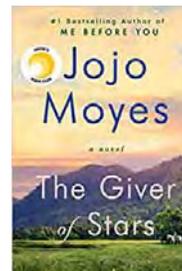
1 p.m.

"The Giver of Stars"

By JoJo Moyes

via Zoom video format.

Please contact ShirleyMorgan at bookclub@seashul.org if you need additional information! We look forward to "seeing" everyone there!



Temple Beth Shalom's Technology Committee

If you have not had an opportunity to check out the updated and streamlined Temple Beth Shalom website at www.seashul.org, I encourage you to do so at this time. If you have, please continue to do so and read about important notices, up-coming calendar events, synagogue programs, current and archived newsletters, and other *pop-up events*.

Requests for additional support will be included in the near future.

Religious Committee

The Religious Committee offers a gentle reminder to please refrain from conducting synagogue business during Shabbat and holidays, including e-mails, texts and phone calls. We would like to honor our observance in the spirit of Jewish life and our traditions.

Gloria Jacoby

Chair

Religious Committee

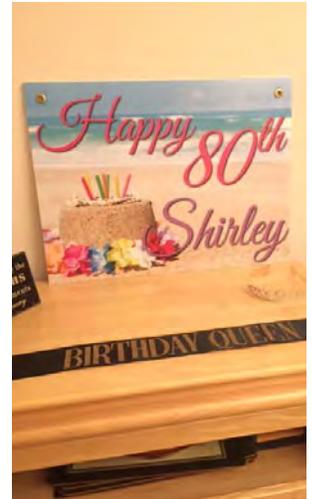
Camille Rosenberg
TBS Web Design Committee

August Yahrzeits

- 8/1 Joel & Stephanie Miller *in memory of* Joel's uncle, Abraham M. Goldsmith
Dr. Gene Solomon *in memory of* his mother, Lillian Solomon
- 8/2 Hannah Karsevar
Jack Lieberman *in memory of* his wife, Rosalie Lieberman
Barry & Sandy Cogan *in memory of* Sandy's mother, Evelyn Rubinstein
- 8/4 Jacqueline Fabel *in memory of* her mother, Betty Bilk
Arnie & Lory Schuster *in memory of* Lory's mother, Eva Zeidel
- 8/5 Wendy Martelli *in memory of* her father, Martin Himmelstein
- 8/6 Dr. Martin & Linda Millison *in memory of* Martin's mother, Mamie Millison
- 8/7 Camille & Bernard Rosenberg *in memory of* Camille's mother, Nancy Clare
- 8/8 Albert & Barbara Dragon *in memory of* Albert's brother, Dr. Arnold Dragon
- 8/10 Howard Abber *in memory of* his father, Bertram Abber
Norton & Gloria Freedman *in memory of* Norton's father, Leon Freedman
Dr. Robert Schwab
- 8/11 Ronald & Jo-Ann Massanova *in memory of* Jo-Ann's father, Albert Aufiero
- 8/12 Michael Axler *in memory of* his father, Nathan Axler
Debbie & Gail Coplein *in memory of* their grandmother, Sylvia Coplein
Trudy & Cary Durant *in memory of* Trudy's father, Eugene Deutsch
Michael Axler *in memory of* his father-in-law, Arthur Myers Tina Tolk
- 8/13 Jack Lieberman, *in memory of* his mother-in-law, Reba Eisenstein
Sam Holtzman
Dr. Martin & Tina Freedman *in memory of* Tina's father, Solomon Ribowsky
Drs. Robert & Roberta Ball *in memory of* Roberta's mother, Evelyn F. Robin
- 8/14 Neil Brandt & Afton Koontz *in memory of* Neil's grandmother, Rose Archinow
Norton & Gloria Freedman *in memory of* Gloria's father, Charles Kuperstein
- 8/16 Vera Getz *in memory of* her father, Abraham Greenberg
Nancy Zucker *in memory of* her friend, Herb London
- 8/17 David Koetseroff
- 819 Sidney & Shirley Morgan *in memory of* Shirley's sister, Helen Berger
Sue Goldstein *in memory of* her mother, Evelyn Lipson
Mildred Richmond
Natalie & Howard Solomon *in memory of* Natalie's father, Israel N. Schenker, MD
- 8/20 Linda Hahn *in memory of* her brother, Dr. Harvey Klevit
- 8/21 Jerald & Sheila Cohen *in memory of* Sheila's stepfather, James Clancy
Ralph & Roxanne Elias *in memory of* Ralph's mother, Esther Elias
Hannah Lindenbaum
Stephen & Jamie Satz *in memory of* Stephen's mother, Leah Satz
- 8/22 Marvin Waxman *in memory of* his father, Max Waxman
- 8/24 Bernard & Norma Gittelman *in memory of* Norma's father, Sam Cohen
- 8/25 Jack Lieberman *in memory of* his father, Hyman Lieberman
- 8/26 Brenda Sacks *in memory of* her daughter, Ina Gordon
- 8/27 Betty Chaikin *in memory of* her sister, Esther Epstein
- 8/28 Irving Schwab
- 8/29 Brenda Sacks *in memory of* her mother, Matilda Altschuler
Betty Chaikin *in memory of* her mother, Belle Schindler
- 8/30 Lilyan Cralle *in memory of* her husband, Jack Cralle
Susan Orloff *in memory of* her father, Maurice Orloff
Karen Beth Ferguson *in memory of* her mother, Harriet Sederholm
- 8/31 Lilyan Cralle *in memory of* her brother-in-law, James E. Carlin
Laurence & Debra Berger *in memory of* Debra's father, Simon Nager



Shirley Morgan.
A birthday celebration fit for a queen.



Above left, birthday queen Shirley, standing with husband Sid, displays beautiful birthday flowers.



Above right, Shirley's Happy Birthday sign.

Right, it's party time.

Bottom right, Shirley Morgan enjoying a slice of birthday cake with husband Sid.



Randumbthoughts

by Nachum, Gloria Jacoby's backup Ba'al Tefillah

July 4, 2020 an Independence Day like none other
12th of Tamuz 5780

I was always asked in Hebrew School am I a Jewish
American or an American Jew?



I have had more
randumb thoughts this
year than any other year.
Wherefore should this
year be different than all
other years?

Who remembers back in the distant past the first two
weeks in March?

We could go to concerts, sporting events, el Presidente
probably we won't see the Nittany Lions in person or at all.

We had shul dinners at restaurants. Ah the good old daze.

Last day Afton worked was March 16. It was the last
day I did cross fit.

Then came 85 interminable days of stay-at-home orders.
(If there is a second wave of the virus, do we have to be
locked up with the same person? Asking for a friend.)

Afton hasn't killed me yet.

Fortunately, my sons are still working.



Get off
my lawn!
I was
so bored I
even
watched
Korean
baseball
at 5 AM
on ESPN.

I looked forward to bull riding, PBR, no Jack Pressman
it doesn't stand for Pabst Blue Ribbon, it's professional
bull riding.

Stay on the bull
for 8 seconds,
unlike Steve
Sarratore that
throws the bull for
8 seconds.

Returns to CBS
Sports Net July 10.
Check your local
listings.

This is how I
taught my classes. I wore pajama bottoms they didn't
know.

Makes one wonder about Zoom Friday night services.



Anybody we know in
the minyan?

This is how I go food
shopping.

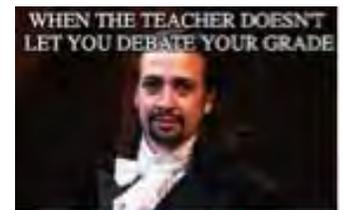


Social distancing.
Rabbi Fox thanks for
connecting us on Zoom
Friday night services.

Watched too many hours of Netflix, History Channel,
Road Scholar webinars, Amazon Prime.

I made breakfast casseroles from recipes on
Allrecipes.com & the Nosh.

Gotta stay current on Facebook.



I don't have my Apple watch
yet.

How many times have you
seen Hamilton on Disney Plus?

We can look forward to
more of this.



Shalom,



Nachum

Rabbi (Continued from page 1)

The Talmud teaches that we should have a special meal to greet Shabbat. The Rabbis understood this meal to contain some form of favored animal protein, something truly special to lift up our spirits and to enhance our health; in their day, pheasant or goose would do nicely. And yet, they made a clear point of the fact that not everyone would be able to afford the fanciest animal protein for their Shabbat table. And so, the Rabbis explained in an incrementalized listing that if one cannot afford one sort of animal protein then one should step down their choice to the next most succulent and nutritious dish. Eventually, from meat and fowl to fish, the Rabbis even concluded that should one not have many funds at all, one should acquire and prepare a special vegetable to serve in honor of welcoming Shabbat. And, if even this would be unattainable, one could prepare the simplest of meals, this time in a special way, to honor Shabbat.

So it is with each of us in the month of Elul: We seek the absolute best that we can achieve as we turn from the path we are on and recalibrate ourselves to a righteous path for the year to come and beyond. What we strive to achieve may not be possible. Do we abandon our path? The Rabbis would say, "no." Instead, we are encouraged to reach for the next highest rung. And so on and so on and

so on until one can partner with God in some way to rise up from whatever strayed path we have followed to this moment.

This Elul, with so much in our society and in our world to which our attention has been drawn, we are slowly coming to the realization, individually and communally, that our self-transformation is central to our being able to be in partnership with God in continuing the act of creating a more perfect world. Elul brings us the permission to try to see ourselves for who we are in the moment and, even more so, to provide us the clarity we need to make our lives and the lives of our loved ones, our community, and our world more whole and more holy. At its outset, the month of Elul gives voice to our brokenness, but upon its exit we can proudly declare our readiness to embrace the effort needed to become the best of who we are.

As we greet the month of Elul, let us take the time that is needed uniquely for our own spiritual needs so that we may find comfort in our introspection, and joy in our healing. As such, should you wish to explore what is vexing you, please do not hesitate to contact me. You are not alone as you face what can be Elul's harsh mirror of disappointments; instead, let your loved ones and friends reflect the best of yourself back to you as you seek a path forward with the beacon of the wisdom that you have earned to guide you forward.

Let us remember that the path is within us even if the destination remains elusive. And, let us embrace each other's burdens as we seek the best for our neighbor as we do the same for ourselves.

May Elul be kind to us by teaching us and bringing us the comfort of the knowledge that we are turning toward becoming our authentically best selves.

Rabbi Gerald R. Fox

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A Reminder

to all Temple Beth Shalom members. Please notify the office of any births, engagements, marriages, illnesses or deaths. This way the Rabbi, Board and Temple membership can be notified. The answering machine is on 7 days and 24 hours a day.

Help Our Temple through your donations

Your donations *in memory of* loved ones, simchas, our Library Fund or Rabbi's Discretionary Fund not only help the Temple, but also are a way to remember various happy and sad events in your life. Unsolicited general donations are needed to help the Temple meet its annual operating expenses. Keep in mind, less than 50% of our operating expenses are covered by membership dues. Listed below are the various items to which you can contribute.

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