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Portfolio

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Article for the Spiritual View

A column in the local Newspaper the Examiner. The Armonk Faith Alliance, which I am an active member of, started this column and I was a regular contributor from 2020-2021.

A Spiritual View

By Cantor Lilah Sugarman

I wanted to take some time to share a meaningful practice in the Jewish tradition that has become especially important during these challenging times.

In the Jewish tradition, we are in a time called the Counting of the Omer, in which we count 49 days from the second day of Passover up to the holiday of Shavuot, a holiday in which we celebrate receiving the Torah and all the commandments. Each day we say a blessing and count the day and week of the 49 days.

On a spiritual level, Counting of the Omer mirrors the anticipation and preparation our ancestors felt as they wandered in the desert, and before they received the Torah. In addition to giving time for noticing and saying blessings, the Counting of the Omer is considered a time

with great potential for inner growth. Throughout this time, we are invited to work on ourselves, reflecting and developing one aspect of our character for each of the 49 days of the counting.

As we wander through these uncertain times, Counting of the Omer has allowed me to take time each day to say a blessing, to bring gratitude toward this specific day and to work on inner growth. May we continue to balance these times of

uncertainty, fear and grief by carving out time to count our blessings.

Lilah Sugarman is the cantor at Congregation B'nai Yisrael in Armonk, which is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Hillside Church, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, St. Patrick's RC Church and St. Nersess' Armenian Seminary.



D'var Torah- Chukat: Fear- Crossing a Narrow Bridge Together -July 2022

In Chapter 5 of “Pirkei Avot,” the ethics of our ancestors, Ben Bag Bag, who tradition teaches was a convert of Judaism, said, when referring to the Torah, “Turn it, and turn it, for everything is in it. Reflect on it and grow old and gray with it. Don’t turn from it, for nothing is better than it.”

This quote, which some of you may be familiar with, is such a beautiful reminder that The text does not change, but we do. Our experience shapes the lens through that we engage with the Torah, and the Torah always seems to give us precisely what we need, whether it is spiritual support, prayer, or lessons. This week when re-reading this week’s portion, Parshat Chukat, a lesson I needed to hear emerged. The lesson is on fear; I know I am not the only one thinking about fear this week. There are a lot of things that can bring up fear right now. One of the ways I knew I was not the only one thinking about this is that every week my mentor and friend, Rabbi Matt Cutler, texts me Shabbat Shalom and a text or quote that he has been thinking about this week or for this Shabbat. I had already written this D’var, and he messages me, Shabbat shalom “Ecclesiastes was right; there is nothing new under the sun! Check out this quote from the 1951 sci-fi film “the day the earth stood still”: “I am fearful when I see people substituting fear for reason.” I have not seen or even heard of this movie, but I was struck by the fact that we were both thinking about this, and really so many of us are.

It is important for us to hold fear in front of us right now to talk about it and notice it rather than letting it drive us entirely.

In this week’s Torah portion, Chukat. Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites have a lot to fear; as I mentioned earlier, the prophetess Miriam has died, and with it, their access to water.

"וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־הָעֵדָה מִדְּבַר־צֹן בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן וַיָּשָׁב הָעָם בְּקִדְוֹשׁ וַתָּמַת שָׁם מִרְיָם וַתִּקָּבֵר שָׁם:

The Israelites arrived in a body at the wilderness of Zin on the first new moon,*first new moon and the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there.

וְלֹא־הָיָה מַיִם לַעֲדָה וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מִשְׁשָׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן:

The community was without water, and they joined against Moses and Aaron.

וַיִּרְבּוּ הָעָם עִם־מִשְׁשָׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאַהֲרֹן וְלֹא־גָנַעְנוּ בְּגִנְעֵי אֶחָיו לְפָנֵי יְהוָה:

The people quarreled with Moses, saying, “If only we had perished when our brothers perished at the instance of יהוה !”

The description in [Num. 20](#):1 of the death of Miriam is immediately followed in verse 2 by the description of the community being without water. This juxtaposition of Miriam’s death and the Israelites being without water are why the Rabbis attribute Miriam as the reason for the existence of the well that accompanied the Israelites on their journey through the wilderness on their way to the promised land and that with her death the Israelites did not have access to water. This caused a lot of fear, and Moses and Aaron went to God for support. God tells Moses to speak to the rock, but Moses becomes impatient and overwhelmed by fear and hits the rock instead. Water comes pouring out of the rock, but ultimately Moses is punished by not being able to accompany the Israelites into the promised land.

There are so many lessons we can learn from this well-known scene of the Torah, but as I have mentioned tonight, we focus on fear. I think the first step Moses and Aaron took was helpful when we are fearful of community or guidance from friends, family, or mentors. Moses turns to God, but then he lets his own fear overwhelm him and get in his own way.

Another place this shows up in the song

Gesher Tzar M’od

Music: Baruch Chait

Text: Based on Rabbi Nachman of Braslav

כל העולם כולו גשר צר מאוד והעיקר לא לפחד כלל

Kol Haolam Kulo

gesher tzar m’od

v’hayikar lo l’pached klal

The whole entire world is but a very narrow bridge, and the important thing is not to be afraid.

The original text is slightly different from the words of the song by Baruch Chait. Reb Nachman wrote:

וְדַע, שֶׁהָאָדָם צָרִיךְ לְעֵבֶר עַל גֶּשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד מְאֹד, וְהַכֵּל לְהַעֲקֹר – שְׁלֵא תִפְחַד בְּלֵל

"Know that a person needs to cross a very very narrow bridge, and what is essential is not to be afraid [or "... is that one should not be overcome by fear]."

In the original phrase by Nachman of Braslav, the word for fear is תִּפְחָד which is reflexive, so it is not saying to not be fearful or to not have fear. It is such a natural response to having fear in order to protect ourselves from danger and from getting hurt. The phrase says rather should not cause fear to oneself. We should not add to our fears or be overcome by fear. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov's version resonated with me because he is not saying do not have fear. There are a lot of things that can cause us to be fearful, especially right now. The key, Rabbi Nachman of Braslav says, is to not be overcome by fear. We must surround ourselves with a supportive community and turn to our friends, family, and God so that we are not alone with our fear and then can work through our fears. It is not that we should cross the narrow bridge without fear but rather remember that even when we have fear, we do not have to cross the narrow bridge alone.

Sing Gesher Tzar Meod

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Jlife

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NOVEMBER 2018
Cheshvan/Kislev 5779

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The Czech
Torah Scroll

AUTHOR
STEPHEN
FRIED'S
Founding
Father

JEWISH MUSIC

Beauty, Tradition
& Reflection





BEAUTY, TRADITION & REFLECTION

The Development of Jewish Music

BY CANTOR LILAH SUGARMAN

The gavel went down with a bang sealing the sale of "Girl with a Balloon," a piece of art by street artist Banksy for \$1.4 million dollars. Just as soon as the sale was complete, the painting self-destructed and slowly slid out of the frame shredded. This act is said to be Banksy's most spectacular prank and a big statement on the fleeting sense of our own creations. There are many ways in our mainstream society in which we are told that the things we create are fleeting and impermanent. This idea can be humbling, reminding us that our lives too are only temporary and we should, therefore, live life to its fullest.

I am reminded of the well-known phrase, "*gam zeh ya'avur*, this too shall pass." This reminder of impermanence can also inhibit connection. I am thinking about Snapchat, in which you take a picture and send it to friends and then it disappears moments later. Jewish music in ways is temporary as it is heard at the moment and is affected by the time and place, but Jewish music like Judaism is anything but fleeting. It has survived for thousands of years due to the fact that it has adapted and changed. When we connect to our Jewish tradition and specifically Jewish music, we are connecting to a tradition that lasts beyond our own individual lives, something that has adapted and changed over the years so that it resonates with people for thousands of generations. This is both humbling and contributes to a connection- connection with ourselves, G-d and our community. In our tradition we use our voices to sing, to pray, to take action, and to connect. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wisely states in his essay "The Vocation of the Cantor," "While other forces in society combine to dull our mind, music endows us with moments in which the sense of the ineffable becomes alive." Jewish music and particularly the music of the service has many layers added through history.

Traditional Jewish Music-Nusach and Chazzanut

The first layer is traditional Jewish Liturgical music or the *Nusach Ha-tefillah* of the annual cycle of synagogue prayer. Traditional Jewish music is like an oral calendar letting us know what time of year it is and if it is a holiday, if it's Shabbat, or if it's a weekday. There was no use of instruments. There is also Eastern Europe *Chazzanut* which is traditional cantorial singing and features, improvisatory style runs, impressive high

(cont.)

COVER STORY



The Hudaki Village Band on stage at the 2018 Klezmer festival.

notes, complex virtuosic technique.

Classical Reform

Liturgical reforms of the 19th and 20th century led to the development of the Reform movement and also was impactful on the music of the synagogue. At that time synagogues began introducing musical aspects to appeal to a community that was becoming more educated in Western Art. The role of the Hazzan was reduced or eliminated. There was a sense of grandeur to the music utilizing full four-part choirs, and instruments, especially the organ. It led to what scholars have called the “emancipation of the organ.” Jewish music of this time was very influenced by their Christian neighbors. As the Reform movement became very popular, some Jewish composers felt that this music had lost its traditional roots, so they began to combine *nusach* still heard in the traditional synagogues with more contemporary musical elements, creating a choral repertoire that combined high artistic value with Jewish musical tradition.

Folk Music

By the mid-1950s and '60s, both *chazzanut* and the choral arrangements of early classical reform began to be perceived as outdated. It is only natural that liturgical and musical change was on the horizon in the Reform movement, since at this same time a sea-change was stirring in America. Beginning in the 1950s and continuing on through the mid-1960s, secular music was undergoing a significant evolution with the arrival of folk and rock music. Artists such Peter, Paul and Mary, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, and James Taylor became highly influential in society, and their styles, elements, and messages had a profound impact not just on secular society but also the music of the Reform movement. Communities craved spiritual connection, and they felt that simple music could be easily understood and sung: Music that mirrored the American folk music they heard on the radio would allow them to connect. Additionally, there was a move away from organ and a growing use of guitar which supported the folk communal singing sound and was also portable, allowing people to connect spiritually outside the walls of the sanctuary. A Folk- and rock-influenced style has continued to dominate progressive Jewish music of today, with current artists including Noam Katz, Noah Aronson, Josh Nelson, Dan Nichols, Ken Chasen and Michelle Citrin. Communal singing became the new focus of American Reform Jewry as congregations sought cantors who could invite the congregation to sing along to music that was easy to follow.

Jewish Music of Today

There continues to be a pattern towards including Jewish sounds

back into these more Folk and popular styles. The Jewish music we find in the United States today also combines English and Hebrew and often has creative translations and interpretations of our traditional prayers. It focuses on communal singing encouraging people to connect to their Jewish identity and their community. It also often encourages reflection on one's life or actions. An example of this is Michelle Citrins, “*Yih Yuh L'ratzon*.” The traditional translation of the text of *Yih Yuh L'ratzon* reads, “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you my rock and my redeemer. After singing the Hebrew text Citrin sings, “Go inside your heart just be and go inside your heart and see what it wants, what it needs, what it yearns when it breaths, go inside your heart and see. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be kind, be true, may they be acceptable to you my rock and my redeemer.” In this piece we see English and Hebrew, a creative translation and guidance toward reflection.

Niggunim are also a big part of progressive Jewish music circles, allowing the music to fully carry one to spiritual connection. Niggunim are songs with a repetitive melody and often with no words or a short phrase repeated. Niggun were first thought to be developed and popularized with the development of Hasidism in the mid-18th century. Today, people like Rabbi Shefa Gold have popularized Jewish chanting as a form of deep spiritual connection.

Music lets us tap into emotions we may not otherwise be able to express. Music lets us connect beyond the words of the text and beyond ourselves. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote, “To sing means to sense and to affirm that the spirit is real and that its glory is present. In singing we perceive what is otherwise beyond perceiving.” Additionally, at times it is important to be reminded of our impermanence. It is also so important for us to remember that our actions can have a lasting impact—the actions we take, the things we do, things we can create can last for generations. Jewish music allows us to express our feelings beyond words and it reminds us of the potential for a lasting impact by connecting us to a system that reaches back many generations. The beautiful thing about Jewish music is that we can draw on different parts of it at different time sand even within the same service. Sometimes a more majestic choral piece allows us to connect spiritually with the grandeur of the universe, while at other times a community singing piece allows us to connect the spiritual experience sparked by the connection with other individuals. Each layer offers a different form of connection. ☆

LILAH SUGARMAN IS THE CANTOR AT TEMPLE BETH DAVID.

MESSAGE FROM THE CANTOR

Cantor Lilah Sugarman



As we approach the secular New Year I am reminded that in Judaism there are traditionally four New Years. The first of the Jewish New Years is the first day of Nisan which is considered the first month of the Hebrew calendar even as

the years are counted from the first day of Tishrei. The first of Elul is considered the New Year for animal tithes. The first of Tishrei is Rosh Hashanah, and the 15th of Sh'vat also known as Tu Bishvat, is the New Year of the trees. This may seem confusing but if you think about it this is much like our secular calendar we have a traditional New Year in January another day to start the fiscal or budget year for businesses, yet another new year for the Government's fiscal year, and then another day that marks the start of the school year.

I have always loved the holiday Tu Bishvat, often referred to as the new year of the trees. I love being in nature, growing plants, and have good memories from Tu Bishvat as we ate fruit, sang songs, recited blessings, planted trees and worked to help the environment. Our most sacred book the Torah is referred to as the "Tree of Life," which is the sustenance of the Jewish people. Trees themselves sustain the lives of humans and other animals in endless ways. Additionally, we often make resolutions for the secular New Year and as Jews we are asked to engage in tikkun olam, (repairing the world). The history of Tu Bishvat offers four ways to engage in tikkun olam.

Tu Bishvat in the ancient book the Mishnah, compiled around 200CE, was emphasized as a social tikkun olam. There was an awareness of

fundamental injustice, which had no complete solution but allowed for the possibility of tikkun (repair). The sages of the Mishnah suggested repairing these injustices through taxes and leaving the corners of the fields for those in need. The Kabbalists of eleventh century Tzfat, in Israel did not focus on Tu Bishvat as a time for social tikkun olam but rather a theological tikkun. They focused on the fact that the world was devastated as a result of the taste from the Tree of Knowledge and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. For the Kabbalists Tu Bishvat is a day in which they tried to get as close as possible to the Garden of Eden to taste fruits and enhance spiritual healing with blessings and a long Tu Bishvat Seder.

Later for the Zionists in early pre-state Israel Tu Bishvat became a day of national and historical tikkun, healing from the devastation of the exile. On Tu Bishvat Zionists planted thousands of trees in Israel. Finally, beginning around the 1970s people began to decry the devastation of our planet and Jewish people expressed their feelings through their Jewish lens. The environmentalist Tu Bishvat is a day of ecological tikkun olam, of repairing the planet, which has been devastated by humans. That is how Tu Bishvat became more and more the central day of environmental awareness in the Jewish year.

The history of Tu Bishvat offers these four different forms of Tikkun, - of repairing social, theological, national-historical and ecological realms. As modern-day Jews we get to draw on this deep history and connect to Tu Bishvat on all four levels. Ben joins me in wishing you a 2019 full of health, happiness, and many opportunities to do meaningful tikkun olam.

A Land and Law of Our Own: The five daughters of Zelophehad

Virginia Wolf once wrote for a woman to free her voice she needs a room of her own and a decent salary. However, before Virginia Wolf there were the daughters of Zelophehad, five strong women who knew the importance of using one's voice and having land of their own. In parashah Pinchas the five daughters of Zelophehad make the daring request to inherit land of their own. In this section of the Parasha Moses is dividing the land among the people of Israel at the Tent of Meetings. The daughters of Zelophehad, all five of whom are named in the Torah, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah, make a plea to Moses, "Let not our father's name be lost to his clan just because he had no son! Give us a holding among our father's kinsmen," (Numbers 27:4). In verse 5 Moses brings these women's plea to Adonai, and Adonai tells Moses, that the plea of the daughters of Zelophehad is just. What made these five women's case so strong and what makes them the encapsulation of healthy change? According to the Talmud (BT Bava Batra 119b), "Zelophehad's daughters were wise (chachamot), astute interpreters (darshanyiot), and pious (rachmanyiot): 'wise' because they spoke in the precise moment when the decision was issued; 'interpreters' because they in essence said, 'If our father had a son, we would not have spoken because he would have the inheritance'; and 'pious' because they did not want to marry men who were not worthy.' I would argue the three things that make these five women outstanding is that they know their history and the law well before they try to implement change, they assertively and calmly ask for what they need and want, and finally they desire to stay within the community.

The daughters of Zelophehad knew their history and the law well before trying to make changes. They model the importance of knowing what came first, knowing and understanding both the history and law before trying to making changes. The mantra of the reform movement is "Informed choice," and I would expand this to say, "informed change," is what allows for communities to grow. The women claim, "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah's faction, which banded together against God but died for his own sin; and he has left no sons. Let not our father's name be lost to his clan just because he had no son! Give us a holding among our father's kinsmen!" (Numbers 27:3-4). Here we see that the women use their knowledge of the past and the fact that their father was not among the rebels of Korach to support their case for land. They also know that the continuity of their family depends on the inheritance of the land, and that the current law does not take into consideration situations like their own. Rabbi Silvina Chemen writes in the Women's Commentary in her article "The Daughters of Zelophehad: Power and Uniqueness: Zelophehad's daughters call to us to take hold of life with our own hands," "They possess the acumen to recognize this omission--in God's law! But because they consider God's law to be just, or to aim to be just, they show no hesitation in pointing out the unfair nature of the present situation with complete confidence and supporting their claim with compelling arguments." In this case by these five women asking for what they need to sustain the future of their family name they create change to laws that were handed down to Moses at Sinai. They initiated positive change in their lives and lives of women for all time.

How many of us consistently ask for the things we need or want from others? In parashah Pinchas the daughters of Zelophehad show us a healthy example of assertiveness. In this section of the parasha the daughters of Zelophehad ask Moses for their own land since they do not have any men in their family to receive land. In this verse we see these strong women asking for what they want and what they need. Upon looking closely at the daughter's father's name in Hebrew, צֶלְפַחֵדֶר (Zelophehad), one can see two

words reflected in this one name. The word צל (Tzal) shadow, and the root פחד (pachad), fear, are both present. The father's name therefore reflects shadow of fear. I would argue that this is not to be overlooked since in this section of the parashah we see these five women facing and stepping into their fears. They do not let their own fears and they no longer stand in their father's shadow, the shadow of fear. From the beginning, these women dare to go out from their tent, and stand among the leaders of their community. They step out of the social norm set upon women. They came forward to stand among the main authoritative figure of their tribe. These women face the fear of not having their own land, and instead of standing back or getting over-powered by their fears these women have made the challenging step to ask for what they need. In this line God affirms these women's actions. They should ask for what they need and they should receive this land." כן בנות צלפחד דברת " "The plea of the daughters of Zelophehad is just," (Numbers 27:7).

I admire Virginia Wolf greatly, but find her requirements stated above insufficient. For me freeing my voice entails developing it within a community of people who are developing their own voices. One of the really admirable quality of these five women is that they do not decided to leave the people of Israel because they fear they are not going to be able to get land. In Numbers 27:4 they say, "Give us a holding among our father's kinsmen!" These women want to remain a part of the community and are therefore trying to make changes to the community that are in their best interest, and ultimately in the best interest of the community. It is the very fact that the Jewish people are so adaptable to change that we have survived and flourished for so many years. It often may seem easier to leave a community that does not appear to be offering and fulfilling all your needs and yet by leaving you could lose so many other things the community has to offer. This desire to remain in the community adds moral standing to their request for land within the community. It is not just the land but their voices being heard within a community that made them strong.

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Wolf argues for both a literal and figural space for women writers in a predominantly patriarchal literary tradition. In parashah Pinchas the daughters of Zelophehad argue for a literal and figurative space for women within a patriarchal society. I argue our place in our community is not a place in which we stand in the shadows of those who came before us but to learn from them and be able to call the land our own with our own voice.

*Iyyunim from service led at Day of Learning on Race and Spirituality at
HUC-JIR*

Before Elohai Neshama:

“When we speak, we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So, it is better to speak,” Audre Lorde
As we say prayers blessing our body and breath I invite you to think about how we have certain experiences because of our bodies. We are oppressed because of our bodies and privileged because of our bodies. Today we will try to explore this idea as we draw on empathy to think about how other’s experiences have been affected by their bodies and the color of their skin.

As Jews, it is important that we remember we were once slaves, as Jews it is important to remember we have experienced oppression and genocide.

As Jews, we must acknowledge oppression of all peoples and work towards equality.

Before Yotzeir Ohr

Nelson Mandela said “No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” In our society and throughout art, literature, and music light and white are often associated with purity, the sacred, and life while darkness and black are associated with fear, uncertainty, and impurity. It is so important that we look at these images we use and notice how they are consciously and unconsciously affecting our notions of race.

Byado Meditation

The only thing that is always in the present, is our bodies. Often our minds are wandering all over the place, sometimes in the present, sometimes in the past, sometimes in the future. When I wake up in the morning, before I even get out of bed my mind is already on the events of the day and week to come. Like our bodies, our breath is always in the present. By focusing on our breath, we can bring our minds back to the present, connected to our bodies. We would be able to walk into the day with body, mind, and soul together - allowing us to be present and grateful.

In the last stanza of Adon Olam reads

B'yado afkid ruchi

In your hands, (God's hands) I entrust my spirit

But too often we are really feeling B'yadeinu afkid ruchi- "In our hands I entrust my soul"
We forget that not everything is in our hand. We worry about things that are not in our control.

Meditation:

I invite us to check in with the things weighing on us right now and

Place your hands palms facing up in your lap with your right hand on top of your left.

Think of one thing right now you are worrying about and cannot control

On an inhale let us bring it B'yadeinu into our hands filling it up bringing it up to our hearts and releasing them on an exhale being reminded of B'yado part of our lives are in God's hands part of our life we cannot control.

Again, Inhale the things that are weighing us down and exhale let them go.

After Meditation/Words of Torah

Once we are able to breath and figure out which thing are in our control we are able to act for the things we do have control over, and release the others.

It is my blessing for all of us that we are able throughout this week to take a moment to breath and notice which things we are thinking and worrying about we actually have control over, and with that breath to release the things we do not have control over, and then with the next breath let us take action towards the things we have the power to change.

Meditation Parashah Eikev

In this week's Torah portion we are commanded to l'yriah Adonai to fear, to revere, to be in awe of Adonai. We are also told to love Adonai. As we approach the month of Elul a time which begins our preparation for the Yamim Noraim I want to invite us to look at fear.

Fear can be overwhelming it can lead to stagnation.

AND fear can be humbling and can lead to growth.

I want to invite you to think of something small something you are fearing right now. Notice how it's serves you and see on an exhale if you can feel a sense of acceptance.

Inhale fear. ----Exhale acceptance

May your fears be like fertilizer for growth rather than something that leads to decay.

This week's parashah tells us to circumcise our hearts and it is through an acceptance of our own fears we are able to open our hearts more fully to ourselves and others. Through this acceptance of fear we are able to Love Adonai.

בלק **BALAK**

Song from the text:

Numbers 24:5

מה-טובו אהליך, יַעֲקֹב, מִשְׁכַּנְתֶּיךָ, יִשְׂרָאֵל

Mah Tovv ohalecha, Yaakov, mishk'notecha, Yisrael.

How fair are your tents, O jacob, your dwellings, O Yisrael.

Pirkei Avot 5:6

עֲשָׂרָה דְּבָרִים נִבְרְאוּ בְעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת בֵּין הַשְּׁמֶשׁוֹת, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן, פִּי הָאָרֶץ, וְפִי הַבְּאֵר, וְפִי הָאֵתוֹן, וְהַקָּשֶׁת, וְהַמָּן, וְהַמָּטָה, וְהַשְּׁמִיר, וְהַכֶּתֵב, וְהַמְּכַתֵּב, וְהַלְוִיחֹת. וַיֵּשׂ אֲמָרִים, אֶף הַמְזִיקִין, וְקִבּוּרְתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה, וְאֵילוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ. וַיֵּשׂ אֲמָרִים, אֶף צַבַּת בְּצַבַּת עֲשׂוּיָהּ:

Ten things were created on the eve of the [first] Shabbat at twilight. And these are they: The mouth of the earth [that swallowed Korach in Numbers 16:32]; and the mouth of the well [that accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness in Numbers 21:17]; and the mouth of the donkey [that spoke to Bilaam in Numbers 22:28–30]; and the rainbow [that served as a covenant after the flood in Genesis 9:13]; and the manna [that God provided the Israelites in the wilderness in Exodus 16:4–21]; and the staff [of Moshe]; and the shamir (the worm that helped build the



Temple without metal tools); and the letters; and the writing; and the tablets [all of the latter three, of the Ten Commandments]. And some say, also the destructive spirits, and the burial place of Moshe, our teacher, and the ram of Abraham, our father. And some say, also the [first human-made] tongs, made with [Divine] tongs.

From Women of the Book

www.womenofthebook.org

Where did the Donkey go?

- **Rashi (French, 11th century)**

Argues that God kills the donkey after this episode to preserve Balaam's dignity, Rashi says, "to spare [him] the shame of having people point her out: 'That is the donkey who challenged Balaam and left him without a comeback'."

- **Abarbanel (Portuguese, 15th century)**

Abarbanel suggest the opposite that the donkey was in fact elevated after this episode: "in fact her animal nature died; she was re-created as a human being, and did not remain a donkey."

- **RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW, Learning Wisdom for a beast of Burden**

- Although in our biblical text, the donkey simply disappears, she leaves us a legacy. Like a true prophet, she makes us uncomfortable; she makes us think about who we listen to and who we ignore, when to keep silent and when to speak.
- The ass swerved from the road and went into the fields" (Numbers 22:23) — "She left the beaten path and continued forward through the field, where there was no path" (Ibn Ezra, Spanish, 12th century on Numbers 22:23). I like to think that she is still out there somewhere, leading the way

- **RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW, Learning Wisdom for a beast of Burden**

For the donkey to have a voice transforms power dynamics as much as when God turns curses into blessings. Strikingly, when the donkey speaks up, she does not tell the prophet about the angel standing in front of him. Rather, she draws his attention to what he did wrong: "on his abuse and her refusal to accept it."²

Balaam apologizes to God, but he does not apologize to the donkey.³ It is God who calls him on his behavior: "If she [the donkey] had not shied away from me, you are the one I should have killed, while sparing her" (Numbers 22:33).

Professional Background of Artist: Susie Lubell is a self-taught artist and illustrator. Her work has been included in galleries and private collections worldwide, including the Lucille Packard Children's Hospital of Palo Alto, which hosts the entire collection of her watercolor animal illustrations. She also creates lively ketubot for wedding and anniversary celebrations and whimsical illustrations for children.

Teacher during the Los Angeles Wide Jewish Wisdom and Wellness: A Festival of Learning



YOGA MINYAN
 WITH
CANTOR LILAH SUGARMAN
 MONDAY, APRIL 16
 10:00 A.M. TO 11:15 A.M.
 TEMPLE ISALAH

Yoga Minyan

April 16, 2018 | 10:00 am - 11:15 am

In a time in which we are constantly bombarded with information inviting us to pay attention to our body, being present is such an important and vital component of a spiritually fulfilling experience. As scholar Jay Michelson teaches, our minds are constantly wandering into the past and the future, but our bodies are the only thing fully in the present. This wandering of our mind can be helpful in that it allows us to connect to our past and be inspired to move forward into our future. It also gets in our way, leading to anxiety, unruly judgments and the inability to be grateful for what is right in front of us. Therefore, connecting to our bodies connects us to the present and allows us to fully be present to pray, and to be grateful. It is with this intention that we will be blending Jewish spiritual practices of Kabbalah (mystical Judaism) and Mussar (ethical Judaism), Jewish music, and text study with Yoga to connect us more fully with the present and to the daily miracles we experience. All levels of Yoga experience are welcome. Please wear comfortable clothing, bring a yoga mat or a towel, and water.

Program Details

Date: April 16, 2018
Time: 10:00 am - 11:15 am

Teachers

Cantor Lilah Sugarman

Sponsor

Temple Isaiah

Torah Yoga at University Synagogue, Los Angeles Saturday February 9, 2019

Torah & Yoga



Cantor Lilah Sugarman

from Temple Beth David in Temple City, CA.

\$10 per participant



Jewish Yoga

Thursday, 9/6/18, 7-8pm

We will be blending Jewish music, and text study with Yoga to connect the mind, body, and the soul in preparation for the New Jewish year.

All levels of Yoga experience are welcome



Please, wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat, or a towel.

Guest Teacher at Limmud Capital Region- Lesson Plan 2016

The session was on using music, movement, and yoga to Teach the Jewish Holidays. I have used this lesson in religious in New York and Los Angeles

Chanukah through Music and Yoga

- **Meditation:**

Close your eyes and think of your favorite Chanukah memory.

Does anyone know where the Chanukah story took place?

---Israel

- **Sing: Achshav B'Eretz Yisrael**

- A long time ago in the land Israel a Greek King, named King Antiochus IV ruled over Israel.

What does a King usually sit in?

---A throne

Every time I say King Antiochus: Chair pose/ Fierce pose

King Antiochus did not allow the Jewish people to practice their Judaism. They were not allowed to read Torah, go to their Temple, or celebrate Shabbat. King Antiochus was not a very nice King.

- A Jewish man named Mattathias and his sons decided stand up against King Antiochus. One of his sons was named Judah the Maccabee, Judah the Maccabee was a warrior.

Warrior pose- warrior II

Warrior I- warrior with a shield

Judah the Maccabees and the army fought against King Antiochus.

Two lines facing each other doing warrior pose, switching sides

· They fought in the hills of Jerusalem, **Hands and knees**. They fought in mountains **-Down Dog**

They fought in forests. **Tree pose (one both sides)**

The trees were blowing in the wind.

They fought and fought and then Judah the Maccabee won and King Antiochus and his men left Jerusalem.

Where is a special place that you go to be with a Jewish community?
A synagogue or Temple

In Jerusalem at this time there was a special Temple that the Jews got to take back. King Antiochus IV and his people did not take care of it very well, so the Jews had a lot of cleaning up to do.

Wide angle forward fold with sweeping.

- In the Temple they found a beautiful Chanukiyah. The Chanukiyah had little bowls to put the oil to light the Chanukiyah.

There was only a little bit of oil, there was only enough oil to last for one day but it lasted for 8 days!

It was a miracle!

- There are two wonderful things we learn from the Chanukah story. Does anyone want to share them??

-The miracle of the oil

-standing up for what you believe in

Sing Sevivon and have the kids turn like Sevivon

Have the kids sit in a circle, close their eyes, and think about what they will give on Chanukah. We often give presents and it is important to give our time. How can you give?

Torah Yoga at Congregation Beth Elohim, Brooklyn

Vayeshev: *And he dwelt*

Opening Ideas/ Meditation:

In this week's Torah portion, we are introduced to a seventeen-year-old Joseph, son of Jacob.

Joseph's recurrent dreams in which the entire family is bowing down to Joseph.

These dreams encourage Joseph towards greatness and also isolate him from his brothers. Jacob give Joseph the ornately colored coat that is both encouraging and isolating for Joseph.

In this portion, we are reminded that:

Confidence, appreciation of our uniqueness is so important and that too much pride can loneliness, when one is so self-centered their behavior can lead to isolation and disconnected from others.

Dreaming big can leads to reaching big goals and overcoming obstacle. This sense of reach and hope found in dreaming is vital and if taken too far can lead to disconnection from reality, therefore we must also always have a sense of groundedness.

Throughout this time together we will strive for **balance** finding a sense of **groundedness** and **aspiration**. A sense of **gratitude and self-love** all the while having a sense of **connection with others**.

Class Outline

- Opening meditation
 - Body Scan
- **Sing:** Ozi V'zimrat Yah
 - Seated side
- Chassidic tale two notes in pocket
- Right Side "*I am but dust and ashes*" Left Side "*for me the world was created*"
- *Stretch Center-we try to find a balance of these two in our life. The key is knowing that sometimes we need more of one or the other and know when to take out which note.*
 - forward stretch
 - Seated Twist
- Foot Yoga-blessing our feet

- Cat Cow
- Balance
- Down Dog/puppy
 - Tadasana
 - Calf stretch
 - Sun A
 - Sun B
- Sun A with Warrior 2-“Ma yihyu chalomotav” before Warrior two
 - **Tree:**

Our life like a goal or dream to be successful must have groundedness and a sense of hope or reaching, so too with our next balancing pose.

- Bridge
 - Supine Twist
- Genesis 37:21- “Ma yihyu chalomotav”
 What will become of his dreams?
- Shavasana
 - Alternate Nostril Breath- *creates balance*
 - End, **SingOzi**

Shabbat Shalom

Kol Hazzanim-The Cantors of Westchester and the Westchester Jewish Council Present

An Afternoon of Music and Joy

A Westchester-wide Celebration of Music and Community

\$20 Per Person until Nov.4th
\$25 Per Person after Nov.4th

Sunday, November 20, 2022@4pm
Westchester Reform Temple
255 Mamaroneck Road, Scarsdale, NY

Enjoy the music of the talented Cantors of Kol Hazz:

Register online at www.wjcouncil.org

This event will comply with current COVID health guidelines and Westchester Reform Temple policy. A virtual viewing option is available for the same price. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate refunds if there are streaming technical issues, so we hope you can join us in person.

For more information contact donna@wjcouncil.org or 914-328-



An Afternoon of Music and Joy

Sunday, November 20, 2022@4pm

Register at www.wjcouncil.org
\$20 per person until Nov 4th
\$25 per person after Nov 4th



Gaby Schwartz
Beth El Synagogue Center



Melanie Cooperman
Community Synagogue of Rye



Lilah Sugarman
Congregation B'nai Yisrael



Heredith Stone
Congregation Emanuel



Anna May
Greenburgh Hebrew Center



Fredda Mendelson
Larchmont Temple



Katie Oringel
Larchmont Temple



Margot Goldberg
Temple Beth Abraham



Robin Joseph
Temple Beth Shalom of Hastings



Shoshi Levin Goldberg
Temple Israel Center of White Plains



Jack Mendelson
Temple Israel Center of White Plains



Rita Glassman
Temple Israel of New Rochelle



Lauren Phillips Fogelman
Temple Israel of Northern Westchester



Sarah Zemel



Ethan Goldberg
Westchester Jewish Center



Nia Fram Davidson
Westchester Reform Temple



Amanda Kleinman
Westchester Reform Temple



Danielle Rodnizki
Westchester Reform Temple



Isaac Sonett-Assor
Westchester Reform Temple



Ellen Dreskin

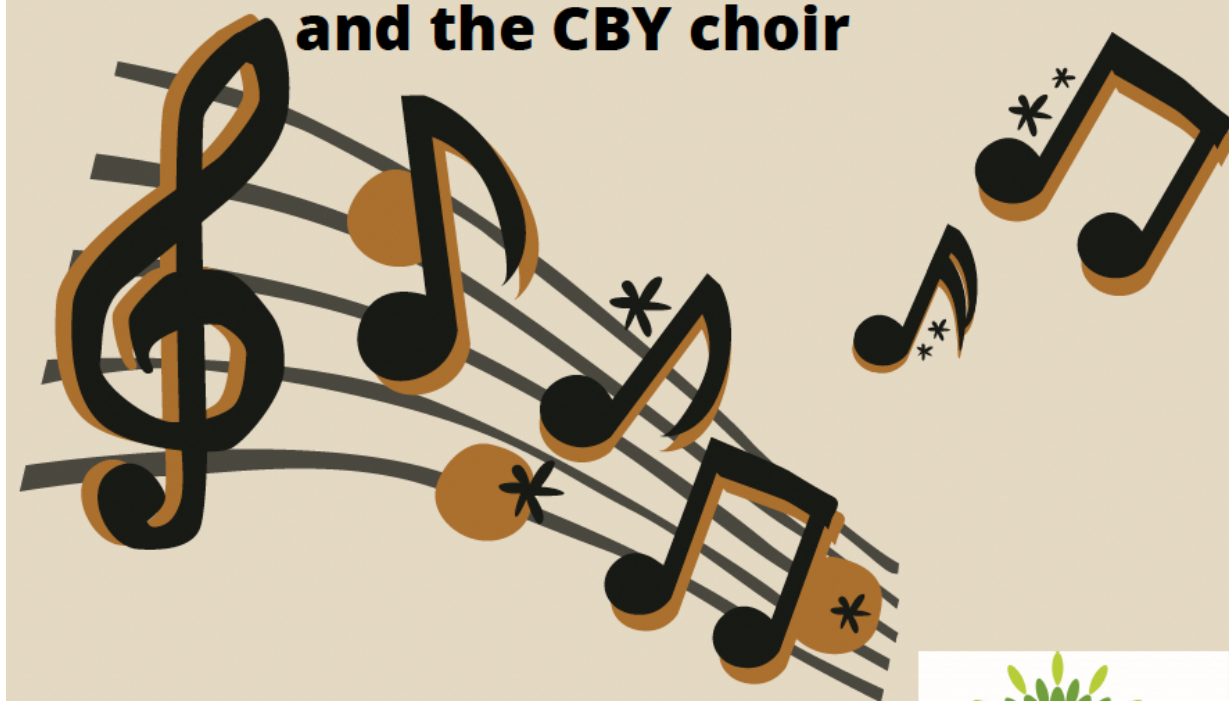
CANTOR'S CONCERT

SIMCHA!

**Joy in
Community**



**With Cantor Lilah Sugarman
and the CBY choir**



SUNDAY, MAY 22 AT 4PM

Dessert reception to follow



TAS Cantor's Concert

**Feb. 2
2019**

@ 7:30pm

Songs in the Key of Life!



TEMPLE AHAVAT
SHALOM

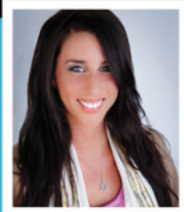


**Cantor
Ken Cohen**
Temple Ahavat Shalom,
Northridge



**Cantor
Lilah Sugarman**
Temple Beth David,
Temple City

**Cantor
Rachel Goldman**
Ner Tamid,
Rancho Palos Verdes



**Cantor
Shira Fox**
Beit T'Shuvah,
Los Angeles

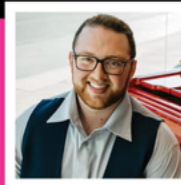


To
RSVP or
for more
info:

Dessert Reception to follow

**RSVP by
January 18, 2019**

at Temple Ahavat Shalom
18200 Rinaldi Place, Northridge, CA 91326
818.360.2258 www.TASnorthridge.org/concert



**Cantorial Student
Josh Goldberg**
Open Temple,
Venice

Congregation Har-Ei

presents

The Voices of Our People Concert

A Concert of Selections from the Jewish American Songbook
performed by members of
**The American Conference of Cantors
& The Cantors Assembly**

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2019 AT 5 PM

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
47-535 Highway 74, Palm Desert, CA 92260

\$180 Patron Ticket (with reception) ♦ \$36 General Admission*

* *Special!* GROUPS OF 20+ WILL BE GIVEN RESERVED SEATING
provided the check - or all of the group's checks - are received at same time.

FREE VALET PARKING

♦ Charge to your credit card or send a check using form below ...or...
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Check enclosed Payable to "Har-Ei"

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For more information call 760-668-3219



2019
Prayer for World Peace
Ceremony

祈求世界和平法會

1/5 **SATURDAY**
 TIME: 2:00pm – 4:00pm
 VENUE: MAIN SHRINE, HSI LAI TEMPLE

Tel: (626) 961-9697 ext. 5131 www.hsilai.org outreach@ibps.org
 3456 Glenmark Drive, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745



Write up for Justice Havdalah that went in the December edition of Temple Isaiah Edition (online newsletter).



JUSTICE HAVDALAH

In Pirke Avot, Ethics of our Fathers, it says "**mitzvah goreret mitzvah**" meaning one good deed or commandment leads to another. On Saturday, November 4 justice leaders and members of our Isaiah community gathered to inspire change by participating in a Justice Havdalah.

This event was attended by a wide breadth of congregants, from preschool to Chai Village. Justice leaders had the opportunity to highlight the work of our existing justice groups while members could connect their passions to these groups.

This event also helped deepen our partnership with People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) through information awareness and opportunities for future involvement. Participants created hygiene kits to be given to PATH and distributed to those in need.

Overall, this was a meaningful opportunity for members of our community to sing, pray, learn, and to inspire each other to take further action towards change in partnership with Temple Isaiah's justice leaders. Thank you to all the justice leaders who spoke to congregants about the justice work that is happening at Temple Isaiah. Thank you also to our PATH working group for organizing this event, and to Community Affairs VP Debra Silverman for sharing her passion for making change.

If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved in our social justice groups, please reach out to Lilah Sugarman at Lilah@templeisaiah.com.

Trainings and Adult Ed:

Leadership training at Congregation Gates of Heaven, Schenectady, NY, 2016

Moses, Miriam, Aaron, and Joshua: 4 Models of Leadership from the Torah

Olam Chesed Yibaneh (Psalm 89:3) by: Menachem Creditor

Olam chesed yibaneh...tai dai dai
Olam chesed yibaneh...tai dai dai
Olam chesed yibaneh...tai dai dai
Olam chesed yibaneh...tai dai dai

I will build this world from love...tai dai dai
And you must build this world from love...tai dai dai
And if we build this world from love...tai dai dai
Then God will build this world from love...tai dai dai

Moses, Miriam, and Aaron — Three Models of Leadership *A D'var Torah on Parashat B'shalach (Ex. 13:17 – 17:16)*

By Alan I. Friedman

“Vay’hi b’shalach Par’oh et-ha’am...” “Now when Pharaoh let the people go...”

Parashat B'shalach is the Exodus story. It tells how — following the ten plagues, culminating in the death of the Egyptians' first born — the Israelites, led by Moses, leave Egypt, taking with them the bones of Joseph, and encamp on the shore of the Sea of Reeds. We read how Pharaoh has a change of heart and sends his army to pursue the Israelites and bring them back to Egypt. But God miraculously parts the Sea, enabling the Israelites to cross safely to the other side. The pursuing Egyptians, however, drown as the waters close over them.

In thanksgiving, Moses, Miriam, and the Israelites sing a song of praise to God. The “Song at the Sea” (*Shirat Ha-yam*) vividly recounts Israel's miraculous deliverance, by God, from the pursuing Egyptian army. It celebrates God's compassionate intervention and offers assurance for God's everlasting presence in Israel's future.

Exceptional leaders share certain qualities like a strong personal ethic and a compelling vision of the future. Frequently, great leaders emerge in response to a crisis as they attempt to achieve a bold new vision.¹ Is leadership the consequence of an individual's intrinsic attributes; do traits produce the leader? Even though writers are fond of compiling lists of virtues held in common by leaders, it is clear that leaders exhibit a wide range of qualities.

Let's look first at Moses. Moments earlier, the sea had closed over the Egyptians. Moses didn't call a meeting for the following morning; he didn't wait for the people to gather round; he didn't even take the time to teach them the words of the song and rehearse them. "Rather, when the moment was ripe with exhilaration and passion, he began to sing, and the people responded ... The timing was essential, and Moses used the power of the moment to carry the nation along."²

Taking initiative is a basic principle in organizing the masses. Moses realized that acting quickly and decisively was the way to rally the people.

He knew that "people seek direction and respond to those willing to take charge."³ So Moses began to sing, and the people fervently followed.

Miriam waited until Moses was finished. Then she "took a drum in her hand, and all the women went out after her with drums and with dances. And Miriam chanted for them..."⁴ Miriam's model of leadership valued delay. She "recognized the power of timing, holding back until the people were ready. Being a leader often demands restraint, not impulsivity. It means relating to followers in ways that build confidence and understanding."

Also, by using musical instruments to encourage broader participation, Miriam demonstrated the importance of building consensus. The women of Israel responded to Miriam's sensitivity and compassion and followed her in song.

It might seem that Miriam was merely repeating her brother's words, but this is not so. A comparison of the two songs shows significant differences. Miriam chose to address the people in a language they could understand. She transformed Moses' magnificent but lofty prophetic song into a chant easily learned by the women who heard it.⁶ Miriam's song is neither an imitation of Moses' song, nor an inferior version of it. It is uniquely Miriam's, and it attests to her personal initiative and great influence as a leader.

Moses was an elitist leader, closer to God than to the people. In fact at one point, he refused to care for the people in a manner that he considered feminine: "Why have You ... place[d] the burden of this entire people upon me? Did I conceive this entire people or did I give birth to it, that You say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom?'"

Though Moses did not regard his leadership role as requiring a close connection to the people — a doubtless source of friction — this is precisely where Miriam excelled. Miriam's leadership was guided not by stressing her individuality but by forming a network of human relations.⁸ It was Miriam who enabled dialogue with the people. Through her unique brand of feminine leadership, Miriam was able to bridge the gap between the grumbling masses and their "distant" leader.

Miriam's leadership style more closely resembled that of her brother Aaron than that of Moses. As High Priest, Aaron was deeply involved with the people, concerned for their peace and well-being. Miriam, too, worked on behalf of the masses. Perhaps it is for this very reason that she is called Aaron's sister — that she exemplified her brother Aaron's style of involved leadership.

The leadership styles of Moses, Miriam, and Aaron can also be contrasted in terms of their perspectives or worldviews. In dealing with the day-to-day issues of putting God's commandments into practice and molding the Israelites into a Godly nation, Moses decidedly operated in the *present*. On the other hand, Miriam's focus was on the *future*. So confident was she of the ultimate liberation of the people from bondage that she even arranged for the women to take musical instruments with them in anticipation of a joyous celebration.¹⁰ Aaron was the diplomat who managed to direct the people's energies constructively. His leadership was derived from the *past* in that, as the eldest son, he was most connected to the previous generation.

A particular aspect of Moses's leadership is worthy of mention. Moses plays many roles throughout the book of Exodus, but some of his most memorable moments occur when he places himself between God and the Israelites. Time and again, Moses intercedes on the people's behalf — even when they've sinned, even when it means putting his own life on the line.¹² Steadfast, unwavering support for those in one's charge is the mark of a truly great leader.

Are leaders made or born? Evidence suggests that leadership emerges when individuals seize opportunities to develop themselves as leaders. They become leaders when they are given the chance to practice the craft of leadership in challenging situations.¹³

Over the last 80 years or so, researchers have been studying the relationships between birth order, personality, and leadership. One researcher, Frank Sulloway, concluded that birth order is profoundly important to the development of human personality and human history. He found that birth order is the single best predictor of personality traits and a less significant influence on leadership behaviors. Another researcher, Benjamin Dattner, examined how trait theories of leadership could be combined with Sulloway's findings to explain birth-order differences in leadership styles.¹⁵ Other researchers¹⁶ found a correlation between birth order and certain personality traits related to leadership. First-borns tended to be high achievers, perfectionists, organized, rule keepers, and detail oriented. (Is this not a description of a High Priest?) Middle children tended to be flexible, diplomatic, and social; and female middle children — like Miriam — tended to be very relationship oriented. Last-borns were predominately risk takers, idea people, creative, and questioning of authority. (What a match to Moses!)

Moses, Miriam and Aaron forged a successful three-way partnership. They constituted a powerful leadership team that dealt successfully with the trials and ordeals of a forty-year journey in the wilderness. "Miriam's role as spiritual leader complemented the roles of Moses, the legislator, and Aaron, the peacemaker."¹⁷ Each covered for the other's shortcomings and, together, they succeeded in guiding the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land.

Which type of Leader are you?

Moses- the "visionary": lots of ideas, but not always so great at communicating & inspiring the community. Used the power of the moment always in the present.

Miriam- the "passion" or "song-leader": Knows how to inspire and lead the emotions of the community. Consensus builder. Looks to the future.

Aaron - the "communicator": diplomatic and most effective with communication and getting the word out to the community, but not always creating the words himself.

Joshua- the "strategist": known for being skilled at war, thinking of numbers, organization, details. May not always think of the bigger picture.

All of them are leaders, leaders in different ways. They all have strong qualities but are not perfect by themselves. What kind of leader(s) do you connect/relate with?

Olam Chesed Yibaneh (Psalm 89:3) by: Menachem Creditor

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Olam chesed yibaneh...tai dai dai
Olam chesed yibaneh...tai dai dai

I will build this world from love...tai dai dai
And you must build this world from love...tai dai dai
And if we build this world from love...tai dai dai
Then God will build this world from love...tai dai dai

Sing/Teach -“Return Again”: 5 mins

Activity: Notes under feet: 10 mins

Something that is on your mind.

Something you are struggling with.

Unpacking Questions:

How was this, was it hard to walk around and keep the paper hidden?

What is having this paper under your foot represent?

What does it mean to have these papers under your foot?

Teaching 10 mins

T’shuvah -What does T’shuvah mean to you?

Taking something negative that is not serving us and turn it into a positive

Two Examples:

1. Rabbis of the Chasidic Tradition suggest that if we get distracted in prayer to turn that distraction into a positive addition to our Prayer.
2. Mah Tovu Parasha Balak Bilham is hired to Cure Israel

Mah Tovu Ohalecha Yakov Miskenotecha Yisrael

How goodly your Tents Oh Jacob, Your dwellings Oh Israel

recognition of things in ourselves and turn to positive

Also in Selichot Liturgy, much of Selichot is in Yom Kippur

Ashamu -list of our sins

Reform Ashamu list of positive things we are striving for

Take time with Chavruta to look at these two lists: 7 mins

Looking at the Ashamu text

1. What do you notice about this list and it’s form?
2. What on this list catches your attention, are you surprised by any of the transgressions that were chosen to be put on this list?
3. How do you feel about chanting these together as a community in services?
4. The Reform movement created a list of aspiring attributes to go with the traditional list of transgressions. What effect does this have?
5. How do these two lists, and the fact that we say them together as a community relate to your idea of Teshuvah?

Discussion: 10 mins

Self Reflection/Journaling: 10 mins

Take three of the things on the list and think about how at times they serve you and at time they get in the way. Think of positive alternatives to three things of the list of “sins”

Closing: 5mins

Return Again: 5 min

**Adult Education class from Community wide Tikkun Leil Shavuot
Schenectady, NY**

Engaging in Torah with our Five Senses

How do we engage with the Torah with our five sense today?

Exodus 19:16

טז וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בְּהֵיטֵב הַבֶּקָר, וַיְהִי קֹלֶת וּבָרָקִים וַעֲנָן כָּבֵד
עַל-הָהָר, וְקוֹל שֹׁפָר, חָזָק מְאֹד; וַיִּחַרַד כָּל-הָעָם, אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה.

16 And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a horn exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled.

- *In a time in which we are constantly bombarded with information inviting us to pay attention to our body and being present is so important and a vital component of a spiritually fulfilling experience. Scholar Jay Michelson in his book entitled, *God in your Body*, articulates that our bodies are and can only be in the present. (Michelson 2007, xi) Our brains are constantly wandering into the past and the future, but our bodies are fully in the present.*
- *This wandering of our mind can be helpful in that it allows us to connect to our past and be inspired to move forward into our future. It also gets in our way leading to anxiety, unruly judgments and the inability to be grateful for what is right in front of us. Therefore, connecting to our bodies connects us to the present and allows us to fully be present to pray, and to be grateful.*

Taste

- *There are some obvious flavors that come along with Shavuot the sweet and savior taste of the dairy we eat on Shavuot, the barley that makes of the omer.*
 - *In the book of Ruth Famine in the land, taste of food is precious*
 - *“I can almost taste it”*
 - *The word for Ta’am means Taste and reason and Discernment.*
 - *Torah study is not just an intellectual experience an engagement so intense that it is something of substance and reality something you can taste.*
- (From the blessings preceding Torah study in the daily liturgy.)

May the words of Your Torah be sweet in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people, the House of Israel. And may we and our descendants and the descendants of Your people, the House of Israel, know Your Name and learn Torah for its own sake. Blessed are You, God, who teaches Torah to God's people, Israel.

וְהָעֵרֶב נָא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ בְּפִינוּ וּבְכַף עֵמֶךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְנִהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְצִאֲצָאֵינוּ. וְצִאֲצָאֵי עִמָּךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ וְלוֹמְדֵי תוֹרָתְךָ לְשִׁמְחָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַמְּלַמֵּד תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

SWEET AS HONEY (LA'ASOK B'DIVREI TORAH)

Dan Nichols

Sweet as honey, sweet as honey, sweet as honey on our tongue
Sweet as honey, sweet as honey, sweet as honey on our tongue

Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-o-lam
Asher k'-di-sha-nu b'-mitz-vo-tav v'-tzi-va-nu
La-a-sok b'-div-rei To-rah
La-a-sok b'-div-rei To-rah

Sweet as honey, sweet as honey, sweet as honey on our tongue
Sweet as honey, sweet as honey, sweet as honey on our tongue

Touch

Exodus 19:12

You shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, 'Beware of going up the mountain or touching the border of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. . . '

שמות יט:יב

והגבלת את-העם סביב לאמר, השמרו לכם עלות בקר ונגע בקצהו: כל-הנגע בקר, מות יומת.

- Appropriate care and reticents in approaching the holy
- Kotcho rebbe
- “One who ascends on high should not be content with only touching the edge but should go all the way. This bring forth the idea of engaging fully and completely.”
- The idea of Ruth clinging to Naomi -the idea of commitment

Smell

Song of Songs 5:13

שיר השרים ה:יג

לחיו פערוגת הבשם מגדלות מרקחים שפתותיו שושנים נטפות מור עבר:

His cheeks are like beds of spices, banks of perfume, his lips are like lilies.

BT Shabbat 88b

Rabbi Yehoshuah ben Levi said: What does it mean: "His cheeks are beds of spices?" (Song of Songs 5:13) With every single utterance that came from the mouth of the Holy Blessed One, the whole world was filled with [the fragrance of] spices. And since the first utterance filled it, where did the second utterance go? The Holy Blessed One took the wind from God's storehouse and brought around each [fragrance], one by one, as it is stated: "His lips are like lilies. They drip flowing myrrh." (ibid.) Do not read "shoshanim" [lilies], rather "sheshonim" [repeat].

Sefat Emet on Bemidbar / Shavuot

In any case, every creature can sense the fragrance of Torah, just like in: "the whole world was filled with [the fragrance of] spices" (BT Shabbat 88b). This means that even those who were unable to receive the core of Torah could absorb its good fragrance, as is the case with "one who enters a spice store" [with many spices and is required to say the blessing on smelling spice (Shulhan Arukh OH 217:1)]. So too, when the Holy Blessed One descended to give Torah to Israel, everyone received the fragrance of Torah.

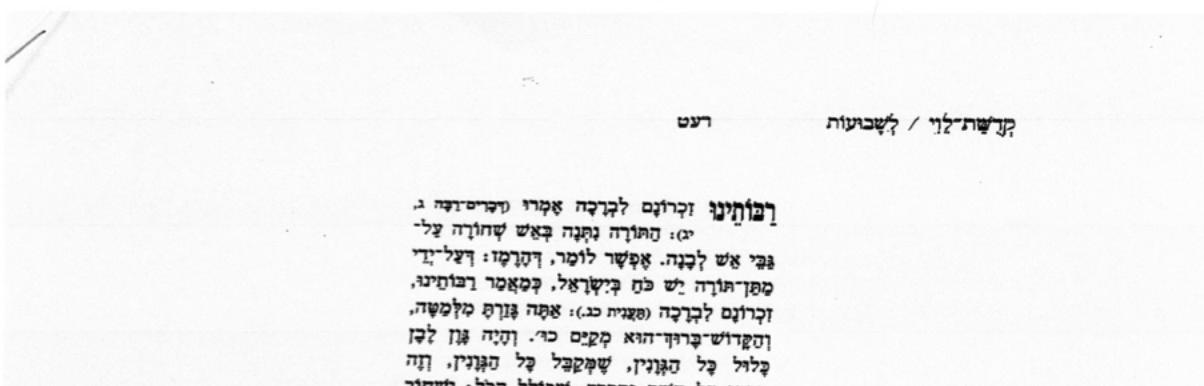
Sounds

- The Megillot that are chanted on the Three Festivals; Ecclesiastes on Sukkot , Song of Song on Pesach, and Ruth during Shavuot, are all chanted in the same trope or melody. The Trope is called Shir Hashirim trope and is known for its beautiful, melodic quality.

Akdmut

- *Akdmut*, Aramaic:, "In Introduction to the Words," i.e. an introduction to the ten commandments. Akdamut is a prominent liturgical poem(piyyut) recited on the Shavuot by Ashkenazi Jews written in Aramaic. It was written by Rabbi Meir bar Yitzchak ("Nehorai"), who was a cantor in Worms, Germany, (died ca. 1095).
- It is also the name of the nusach, melody that is used to chant the liturgy of the three festivals.
- A link to the whole poem can be found here:
- <http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/jewish-law/holidays/shavuot/akdamut-from-or-hadash.pdf>

Sight



*Sources:

JTS

Torah translation, JPS

DanNichols.com

| | | | Circulum for Grades 4-5 | | | Lilah Sugarman |
|--|--------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|--|
| Holiday | Date/Lesson Number | Teach /Review | Song | Composer | Source | Notes |
| | Lesson 1: 9/2/2013 | R | Hinei Mah Tov | folk | Shireinu | |
| Rosh Hashanah 2 days | | T | Hinei | Rick Recht | sheet music, from my library | First together, then as a round. |
| Yom Kippur week and a half | | R | Shofar Blast | Allard | handout | review from last year |
| | | T | L'shanah Tovah for Rosh Hashanah | Friedman | Shirim Al Galgalim/handout | |
| | Lesson 2: 9/16/13 | R | Hinei | Rick Recht | sheet music | |
| | | T | Aveinu Malkienu | folk song | M-90 | |
| Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur (past) and Introduce Sukkot | | R | Shofar Blast | Allard | | |
| -Sukkot 2 days | | R | L'shanah Tovah for Rosh Hashanah | Friedman | Shirim Al Galgalim/handout | |
| | | T/R | The Lulav Shake | Dropkin | M-II 136 | review from last year, learn other verse this year |
| Sukkot/ Simchat Torah | Lesson 3: 9/23/13 | R | Sweet as Honey | Nichols | handout | |
| Sukkot(now) Simchat Torah- 2 days | | T | Sukkot Song | unknown | handout | |
| | | T | Hashkeivnu/ Ufros Aleinu | folk/colin | oy songs | |
| | | R | The Lulav Shake | Dropkin | M-II 136 | |
| | | R | Aveinu Malkienu | folk song | M-90 | |
| Sukkot/ Simchat Torah | Lesson 4: 9/30/13 | R | Tree of Life | Silverman | S-321 | review from last year |
| | | T | B'simchat Torah | Paikov | JHS 37 | |

Full Curriculum and other grades available upon request.

Poetry

Yotzeir Ohr

Light streamed in from above the sky light
separating strands thinking I looked up
never seeing light in this way.

Light exists as tiny packets
Particles.
Light lives as waves congregating
working together to brighten and to warm.

Light casts Shadows on the ceiling
I try to make out certainty.
It's not black and white.
It is beautiful.

Light wraps you
Wrings you of resolve
Remembering to add a pinch of patience.

Light reflected, refracted and dispersed
inside water droplets arcing
Reminding us of God's covenant.

Light dances over skin
Forming freckles and
I saw you in a new way.

Mah rabu ma'asecha Adonai
Right now I see life in a new light.

BepaSheli

In memory of my grandfather

I remembered Bepa
the other day as we unloaded
plants from the Uhaul, and placed them
one
by
one
in his side yard.

Ficus
by
ficus,

I thought of clippings that cluttered Bepa's house
Ivy, jade, and obituary
in round clay pots from the 1970's,
lined his bathrooms, halls and window sills.

Through the kitchen window I see
sprouted avocado pits sitting in glass
jars along the sink. Ever since I can recall Bepa
sprouted avocados, sometime a potato.

Pits dipped in water like the salt water
on Pesach that reminds us of our ancestor's tears.
Did he plant the pits once they began to grow?
Did he discard them?

Did he bury them in the ground under inches
of dirt to decay, never again to come up for air?
I have never seen an avocado tree in his yard.

We placed a cactus among the other plants
in the periphery of the house.
The cactus and ficus in a line
against the cement wall like the sad
displaced face of a refugee.

They cannot go home and the ground
is not yet ready to receive them.
They must remain in these plastic residences;
these plants like oracles allow me
to converse with the dead.

We wondered who would care
for the plants now that Bepa was gone.
Bepa's sweaters droop from hangers
In my closet but I never wear them.
I write his name in the cover of all my
books but I only read the pages.

Baruch Atah Adonai

I watch trees grow out of seeds
I have thrown aside.

*Elo-heinu Melech Ha-Olam
she-lo chisar b'olamo kulum,
u-vara vo beriyot tovot v'ilanot tovot,
l'hanot bahem b'nei adam,*

And I say a blessing to myself
for the blossoming of a tree.

Jerusalem, If I Forget You

Arriving in Israel has been a constant
coming to my senses.
I have opened my ears to the sounds of the land-
the consonant filled language,
the sounds of horns blown incessantly,
the sounds of protest, the sounds of acceptance,
the sounds of hatred, the sounds of prayer.
Like a shofar I am called to introspection,
questions and action by the sounds of Israel.

There is something that I will be leaving
behind in Jerusalem, somethings
I can only experience here.

The way Jerusalem stone
gets slippery when wet.

The way there are no dividers
in the grocery store checkouts
leaving you to communicate
with others in line to create a
barrier between your food.

The way a young Ethiopian boy hummed
Debbie Friedman's Havdallah melody
as he walked across my campus holding
hands with his mother and the next day a
Haredi man sang the same melody in the walls of the old city.

The way I learned you must use a clothes pin
drying clothes three stories high or it will fall
in the bushes and be sat on by a kitten,
and I will want to take it home

The way Jerusalem stone
blinds when reflecting sunlight

The man in the red jumpsuit who every
morning gave me a newspaper, and every
morning I tried to read a headline or two.
The way he disappeared one day

The way inanimate objects
wish me Chag Sameach

The way the city takes a collective
deep breath on Shabbat and slows down.

Strangers saying Shabbat Shalom

The way abandoned kippot
litter the streets.
The way I feel uncomfortable
wearing a Kippah in the streets, unless
I forget I am wearing one.

Strangers asking for directions
in broken hebrew until I answer in English

The way we express our praise
for God by the way we live our daily lives.

The way Jerusalem stone
glows as the sunsets

And from now on no matter where I go
I will always be 1/26 Jerusalemite.
Jerusalem, How could I forget you?

The Sounds of Listening

I.

Standing in synagogue under my
grandfather's tallit, fringes tickling
my forehead. I am too young
to wear a tallit of my own. I braid the fringes
together weaving three white strands
entangling myself with my families past.
I am listening to the voice of my Cantor leading prayers.
I am still finding my own voice.

II.

I am becoming a Bat Mitzvah wearing the
Tallit my mom and I made.
In my voice I hear the sounds of my ancestors, as I stand solitary
reciting prayers. I am alone
part of a community of people
who have come before me, of people who will come after me.
Shema Israel, adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad.
“Hear, O Israel Hashem is our God Hashem is One,”
Shema listen or hear—I want to be heard. I want to hear. I listen.

My tallit envelops my body,
it wraps around my back and falls over the hill, my shoulders.
My skin dented with sounds sings in silence.
I sing out—with silence
still
in my throat.
The fringe of my tallit the veins of my arm circulating life
through my body. A prayer, I face the east
asking for forgiveness for not understanding
what I have asked—for not listening,
I ask to hear.

III.

Listening to the sunshine sing
through my skin, I plant a tree.

Alon, an oaktree defeating the disease
that took over his leg. Chazak, your roots
entangle with the earth below.

I lower my ear to the soil listening
to the ancient song of my ancestors.

Bar-uch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-he-nu Me-lech ha-olam
She-heche-ya-nu ve-ki-yi-ma-nu ve-higi-a-nu- laz-man ha-zeh.
Sometimes I remember silence as the loudest part of my day.

Why Squared

His foot slaps pavement, his leg swings like the rotating arm of a clock, metal bone within will never bend. He told me last night

God was the exponential why. So we formulated questions. *Why, why? Why me?*

he asked. He told me if he could do anything right now he would want to walk around without pain in his leg. I pictured him yesterday in front of a Lego like building, crutches under arm. The building less colorful more symmetrical than Legos like the Kotel questions stacked I pieced together his image as he stood leg in brace looking to his left.