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V'shinantam I'vanecha

05/13/2020 09:30:08 AM



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She will then let the moderators of the service know to expect other people at the service. If you have any questions about this, please let us know.

Please click here or email Liz directly to let us know if you are inviting a non-member to attend one of our services.

Dear Friends,

In the midst of the corona virus crisis, sometimes it may be challenging for some of us to show gratitude. Our tradition encourages us to say "modeh/modah ani" every day, a prayer which gives thanks for being alive.

Gender of speaker	Hebrew	Transliteration	English
Male	מוֹדֵה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ חַי וְקַיָּם. שְׁהַעֲחֵזַרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמַחְתִּי בְּחֵמְלָה. רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:	<i>Modeh ani lefanekha melekh chai vekayam shehechezarta bi nishmahti b'chemlah, rabah emunatekha.</i>	I give thanks before you, King living and eternal, for You have returned within me my soul with compassion; abundant is Your faithfulness!
Female	מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ חַי וְקַיָּם. שְׁהַעֲחֵזַרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמַחְתִּי בְּחֵמְלָה. רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:	<i>Modah ani lefanekha melekh chai vekayam shehechezarta bi nishmahti b'chemlah, rabah emunatekha.</i>	

I want to share a wonderful statement of gratitude written by Ann Ungar. I hope it inspires you to give thanks.

(See below)

Happy Wednesday!

Rabbi Bruce Aft

A SONG OF GRATITUDE

Baruch Hashem My Shepherd
From dust you created us, blew breath into us and our Life began
and we live, only by your gracious mercy,
For like the Butterfly taken by a sudden wind,
You, Hashem,, can take our life from us at any unexpected moment.

You, Almighty G-d, work Your miracles quietly and mysteriously,
Your miracles surround us morning to night, always;
Baruch Hashem!!!

We knew nothing before life, we know little during life; we pray our souls return
to your keeping. Our incomprehensible lives last for a mere moment in time. If we
said
Every word of Praise for You in every language spoken, they would not be
enough. Your Being is beyond our understanding.

Please forgive us for our human failure to recognize how glorious it is to wake
each day, to hear the songs of birds, feel the sun warm our skin, to be able to
smell a Rose, plant seeds in Your earth and grow food to sustain us; Your
wonders are countless, Baruch Hashem, Baruch HaShem My Shepherd

Like the Sabbath candles begin with full flames then burn down quickly to embers

and are gone, so are our lives.

Oh let us be mindful of the glory and sanctity of life, let us be ever aware that if not for your grace and lovingkindness we would not be. Let us thank you and praise your Name as long as we have breath. Let us sing with joyous voices in gratitude, and have the wisdom to live lives of lovingkindness.

Let us bow low to the earth, and thank you; let us utter, whisper, cry out, sing loud and long, raise our eyes to the stars with every word of praise for the life You have allowed us.

Baruch Hashem let us never forget before Whom we Stand.

Ann M Ungar
May 10, 2020

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V'shinantam l'vanecha

05/12/2020 09:30:39 AM



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know.

Please click here or email Liz directly to let us know if you are inviting a non-member to attend one of our services.

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate Lag B'Omer, the 33rd day of the counting of the omer, please note the article from My Jewish Learning that describes this festive day on the Jewish calendar. (See below)

It provides me a source of faith that the plague that afflicted Rabbi Akiba's students finally ended. Perhaps sooner, rather than later, we will be able to live in a post Corona virus world. I wonder what celebratory day we will add to the calendar to mark that day when it finally arrives.

In the meantime, I hope that you find the song by Journey to be inspiring. (Also, see below) Lorraine Daxe wanted this song to be part of her celebration of life. As she fought cancer for years, it was a theme song for her. Her life was a tribute to having the courage to make her life a blessing and she touched the lives of so many of us. (Thank you, Mitch, for finding the link)

Stay well and Happy Lag B'Omer,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

"Don't Stop Believin' "

Music by Journey

Performed by Journey

[Click here to view video](#)

LAG B'OMER

What Is Lag B'omer?

This minor holiday -- known for bonfires, weddings and haircuts -- begins the evening of May 11, 2020.

BY FRANCINE KLAGSBRUN
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Lag B'omer is a minor holiday that occurs on the 33rd day of the Omer, the 49-day period between Passover and Shavuot. A break from the semi-mourning of the Omer, key aspects of Lag B'omer include holding Jewish weddings (it's the one day during the Omer when Jewish law permits them), lighting bonfires and getting haircuts.

Why We Celebrate

There are a few explanations why we celebrate Lag B'omer, but none is definitive. The Omer is a time of semi-mourning, when weddings and other celebrations are forbidden, and as a sign of grief, observant Jews do not cut their hair. Anthropologists say that many peoples have similar periods of restraint in the early spring to symbolize their concerns about the growth of their crops. But the most often cited explanation for the Jewish practice comes from the Talmud, which tells us that during this season a plague killed thousands of Rabbi Akiva's students because they did not treat one another respectfully. The mourning behavior is presumably in memory of those students and their severe punishment. According to a medieval tradition, the plague ceased on Lag B'omer, the 33rd day of the Omer. (The Hebrew letters lamed and gimel which make up the acronym "Lag" have the combined numerical value of 33.) As a result, Lag B'omer became a happy day, interrupting the sadness of the Omer period for 24 hours.

Rabbi Akiva and the Bar Kochba Rebellion

The Talmudic explanation makes most sense when put into historical context. The outstanding sage Rabbi Akiva became an ardent supporter of Simeon bar Koseva, known as Bar Kochba, who in 132 C.E. led a ferocious but unsuccessful revolt against Roman rule in Judea. Akiva not only pinned his hopes on a political victory over Rome but believed Bar Kochba to be the long-awaited Messiah. Many of his students joined him in backing the revolt and were killed along with thousands of Judeans when it failed. The Talmudic rabbis, still suffering under Roman rule and cautious about referring openly to past rebellions, may have been hinting at those deaths when they spoke of a plague among Akiva's students. Possibly, also, Lag B'omer marked a respite from battle, or a momentary victory.

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Dear Friends,

It has become an annual tradition that roses are given to religious school Moms on Mother's Day.

This year since there is no religious school at the building, we decided to get roses anyway and donate them to Alexandria Hospital for their medical personnel from Congregation Adat Reyim.

Please note their response and the pictures below.

Have a good week and stay safe,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Hello Rabbi Aft! These are a few of the pictures we took with the Mothers Day flowers! Thank you so much for them! We'll try our best to pass them out to more mothers and staff when we can. Thank you again from all the Alexandra staff!







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Rabbi Aft's Friday Message -Stay Well and Safe.

05/08/2020 09:30:09 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim

Congregation Adat Reyim Presents...

Rabbi Aft's Corner

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Dear Friend,

As we celebrate Mother's Day this year, I hope that, despite social distancing, we will find meaningful ways to connect with our mothers. Technology makes these connections possible and so if you are blessed to have a mother who is alive, please tell her how much you care about her.

Those of us whose mothers are no longer with us should share memories of our Moms with those with whom we are close to keep their memories alive.

Those, who did not or do not have a good relationship with a mother should try to find some way to forgive them if you can.

Those, who have been unable to become a mother, there are really no words to comfort you but please understand that we know this is a difficult day for you.

Jewish tradition certainly encourages us to celebrate Mother' Day but reminds us that each day should be Mother's Day. I hope that in the midst of challenging times, we will be motivated to show appreciation and affection to all those about whom we care.

Please note two items below. First, there is a poem that was written by Sherri Shunfenthal in memory of her beloved Mother. Secondly, please note an excerpt from an article about the Bible and Jewish Mothers (from My Jewish Learning.com) which presents an interesting perspective that may resonate with all of us in one way or another.

Be well and safe and Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

This Small Treasure that I Keep

I still have it. I could not leave this small treasure in my mother's home after she had died. Her creme-colored brush sat so comfortably in her hand. I still have it. Her only brush with the funny, prickly black bristles.

I remember often sitting on her bed talking to her while she stood in front of her vanity table brushing and brushing her hair, then carefully teasing her hair with her comb. Then as the process continued, we continued talking about everything and anything- the day, my plans, my homework, where she and Dad were going that evening, while she put on her make-up.

When finished she always asked, "How do I look?" as she added a simple piece of jewelry. Smiling at my sweetly elegant mom, I replied "You look great!"

*I did not know why I felt the need to keep this brush.
Mom's brush was not an expensive one. Yet it was well cared for over time.
In our current disposable, throw-away society, we often throw away our
brushes after a few months or a year then buy a new one. But mom cared
for this inexpensive brush cleaning it weekly- pulling out layers of hair that
filled the bristles, scrubbing then soaking it in the sink till it was purged and
purified, sparkling and looking brand new.*

*Perhaps I keep this brush to be close to memories of our time together
talking or perhaps I keep it because the base of human hairs contains
cellular material rich in DNA.*

*But being a poet, somewhere deep down in this poem, I find this metaphor:
My mother cared for this brush the way she cared for most things
mindfully, meticulously, with love until it shined, and was restored almost
new.*

Sherri Waas Shunfenthal 2020

BY RUTH ABUSCH-MAGDER | MAY 7, 2015

The challenges of mothering go back to childless Sarah the Matriarch, who knowing how precious offspring were gave her servant Hagar to provide a scion. Yet when Sarah did finally have one of her own, Sarah was not happy with the competition and original mommy wars got really ugly. She forced Abraham to send Hagar and her kid out to the desert to die. Did she get flowers on Mother's Day? I doubt it.

In the next generation, Rebecca had no trouble getting pregnant. With twins she should have had double the mothering pleasure but instead fell into the trap of favoring one over the other. What did the less loved one give her for Mother's Day? A toad? A lamb carcass? After all he was a hunter...

After her there was another round of mommy wars between sisters Leah and Rachel. Rachel had difficulty conceiving so her boys were truly precious to her. But she died in childbirth. Ask, those who have grown up without a mother, what Mother's Day is like, they get loss.

There was Yocheved who birthed a child only to have to give him up for adoption. A mother yes, but no easy Mother's Day for her. And Hannah who had to endure many a painful Mother's Day while she prayed for her wish to be fulfilled. It was eventually. But the price was high. Like those enduring repeated rounds of fertility treatments she must of wondered if it was worth it. And what about Esther? She did not embrace motherhood, focusing instead on her career as a queen and "mothering" so many through her capable diplomacy that saved a nation. On Mother's Day did she order an extra mimosa from the palace kitchen to drown the shame of not living up to expected models of feminine fulfillment?

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Congregation Adat Reyim



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Dear Friends,

As we hear of special stories, I thought you would want to read about a situation which our member, Jonathan Price, observed and shared with me.

I'm working as a cashier at Walmart and a lady's purchases comes to \$175. But she is upset by the total and needs to talk to her mother about how they're going to pay for all this since she is out of work due to the virus. I suspend the transaction so they can plan and 10 minutes later she is back and says that they'll have to return a fair amount of their intended purchases, since she needs to keep the bill to \$100. Just as we're about to start removing items from the bill, the next customer says that she should keep all her purchases and she will pay for it. I tell her that will come to about \$75 and she replied that she will pay the entire bill of \$175! Wow. There is intense gratitude and the lady simply shrugs it off and says that she knew that God would give her an opportunity today to do something good. She was only too happy to listen to that kind voice inside her and take action when the opportunity arrived.

I hope this motivates all of us to do something special. We are taught that mitzvah goreret mitzvah, one good deed/commandment leads to another. I hope we listen to the still small voice in our hearts and souls and perform deeds of lovingkindness whenever and wherever we can. We are being reminded that life is too short to squander opportunities. Remember the Seals and Crofts Song, "We will never pass this way again...."

Happy Thursday!

V'shinantam l'vanecha

05/06/2020 09:30:23 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim



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Dear Friends,

Although you may have seen this already, I recently received this from a dear friend and wanted to share it.

I hope this will be as meaningful to you as it was to me.

What are the stories we will tell and what will we have learned from our experiences when we "teach our children and loved ones diligently" about this time in our lives?

Have a fulfilling Wednesday and hope you are all remaining well.

Please click here to view video

B'shalom,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

V'shinantam I'vanecha

05/05/2020 09:30:09 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim



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Dear Friends

Okay I need to confess...I love to order Ledo's pizza (they didn't pay me to advertise for them, I JUST REALLY like it). I try to live by their motto and as a rabbi, I try not to cut corners (if you hear their ad, you will understand the previous comment and if not, they have square pizzas and you can figure it out)!!

BUT...our children do not want me to order take out so I miss it and had to turn to another place for pizza. I hope this will bring a smile to your face:-)

Happy Tuesday!

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Ordering Pizza in 2020...

CALLER:
Is this Gordon's Pizza?

GOOGLE:

No sir, it's Google Pizza.

CALLER:

I must have dialed a wrong number. Sorry.

GOOGLE:

No sir, Google bought Gordon's Pizza last month.

CALLER:

OK. I would like to order a pizza.

GOOGLE:

Do you want your usual, sir?

CALLER:

My usual? You know me?

GOOGLE:

According to our caller ID data sheet, the last 12 times you called you ordered an extra-large pizza with three cheeses, sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms and meatballs on a thick crust.

CALLER:

OK! That's what I want ...

GOOGLE:

May I suggest that this time you order a pizza with ricotta, arugula, sun-dried tomatoes and olives on a whole wheat gluten-free thin crust?

CALLER:

What? I detest vegetable!

GOOGLE:

Your cholesterol is not good, sir.

CALLER:

How the hell do you know!

GOOGLE:

Well, we cross-referenced your home phone number with your medical records. We have the result of your blood tests for the last 7 years.

CALLER:

Okay, but I do not want your rotten vegetable pizza! I already take medication for my cholesterol.

GOOGLE:

Excuse me sir, but you have not taken your medication regularly. According to our database, you purchased only a box of 30 cholesterol tablets once, at Drug RX Network, 4 months ago.

CALLER:

I bought more from another drugstore.

GOOGLE:

That doesn't show on your credit card statement.

I paid in cash.

GOOGLE:

But you did not withdraw enough cash according to your bank statement.

CALLER:

I have other sources of cash.

GOOGLE:

That doesn't show on your last tax return unless you bought them using an undeclared income source, which is against the law.

CALLER:

WHAT THE HELL!

GOOGLE:

I'm sorry, sir, we use such information only with the sole intention of helping you.

CALLER:

Enough already! I'm sick to death of Google, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and all the others. I'm going to an island without internet, cable TV, where there is no cell phone service and no one to watch me or spy on me.

GOOGLE:

I understand sir, but you need to renew your passport first. It expired 6 weeks ago...

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Congregation Adat Reyim



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Dear Friends,

I gave a lecture (virtually) for Greenspring Village which played on their TV station this past weekend. (I wonder how many folks changed the channel in the middle of the talk).

One of the residents sent me the following poem which I hope you will find meaningful, as we begin the work/school week in whatever way we are doing that these days. (See below)

Stay well and shavua tov,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Quarantine, As You Must
Barry Centini
3/30/2020

Quarantine, as you must, but how about a little reflection
Through a thorough, and honest, self-inspection.
With the world under siege and the options declining.
The last thing we need is some self-centered whining.

Quarantine, as you must, but how's this for suggestions,
Go back to your roots and rekindle your affections.
Listen to music you haven't heard in years,

Or watch those old movies that still bring the tears.

Quarantine, as you must, but try this paradigm

Live by the motto, "one day at a time",

Yesterday is a check, tomorrow's a loan,

But today is cash that stands on its own.

Quarantine, as you must, but don't forget medical first liners

Who daily risk their health to save us old timers.

Who, by doing many selfless and heroic deeds,

Might cause you to ponder your wants and your needs.

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Rabbi Aft's Friday Message -Stay Well and Safe.

05/01/2020 09:30:47 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim

Congregation Adat Reyim Presents...

Rabbi Aft's Corner



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Dear Friends,

This Shabbat we will be hearing from Shy Ashkenzazi who will be talking about Israel at 72. His unique insights as our community shaliach, should be a treat when he delivers his talk on Friday night during services at 8pm.

Please also note the advertisement for a very meaningful conversation sponsored by OUDC with which I have worked for more than 20 years. I quoted from Sarah's book on the High Holidays and hope you will join us for this special program and subsequently read her book. (See below)

This week we read from the Torah portions, Acharei Mot/Kedoshim. Acharei Mot deals with the Yom Kippur ritual of sending a goat to the wilderness and the forgiveness rituals which are part of our Yom Kippur liturgy. Kedoshim deals with holiness and is highlighted by the verse "love your neighbor as yourself."

As we all wrestle with opening up the commonwealth a bit, vs. keeping people home, I personally am challenged by what steps should be taken to help be sure we all stay well. We need to care for ourselves and our health and need to be cognizant of the needs of our neighbors so we can love our neighbors as ourselves. And so...if we open things up, but people don't take precautions, some of us will be at risk...if we don't open things up, others will be at risk economically.

Holiness means that we recognize that we all are all supposed to love each other as ourselves and what is hateful to us, we should not do to others. (Rabbi Hillel, from Pirkei Avot). So whatever gets decided I hope we will remain safe and respect the holiness of each member of our society. Tough times and tough decisions....may those empowered to make them, be blessed with wisdom and be guided by facts and not partisanship.

Finally, one of the songs whose lyrics have inspired so many conversations which I have had with others is one called "Dangling Conversation." (See below) I have found, in speaking to many of you, that our conversations have been more intense than some of the conversations we have had in the past. We are spending more time with each other and as I contemplate ending my career as your rabbi electronically, I am thankful for these precious conversations. Please don't hesitate to call me if you wish to have a meaningful conversation in the next couple of months. A number of you have reached out and I am grateful for your kindness and hope that we all will continue to grow and learn from this experience which we have shared. I hope that in the years ahead we will tell stories of kindness and how we connected in ways previously never contemplated and that we have become closer as an Adat Reyim, a community of friends, and as a society. I hope we have learned the holiness of human interaction through more meaningful, less superficial conversations,(even if just by phone or e-mail or webex or zoom:-)) as the words to the song remind us.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

*It's a still life watercolor
Of a now-late afternoon
As the sun shines through the curtain lace
And shadows wash the room
And we sit and drink our coffee
Couched in our indifference, like shells upon the shore
You can hear the ocean roar
In the dangling conversation
And the superficial sighs
The borders of our lives
And you read your Emily Dickinson
And I my Robert Frost
And we note our place with book markers
That measure what we've lost
Like a poem poorly written
We are verses out of rhythm
Couplets out of rhyme
In syncopated time (in syncopated time)
And the dangling conversation
And the superficial sighs*

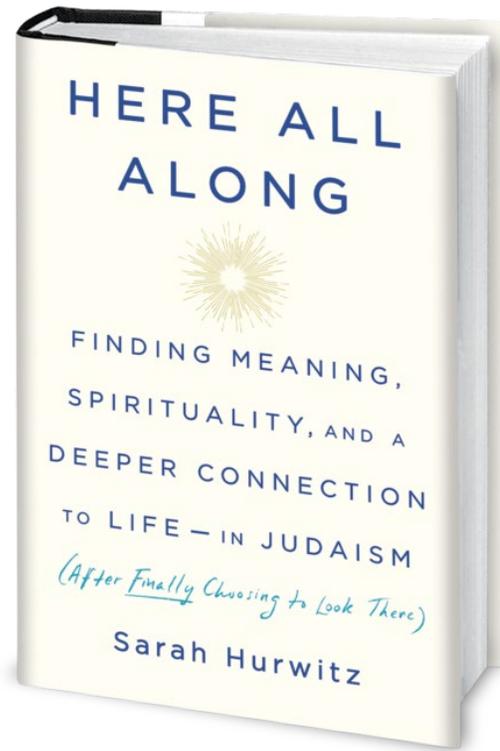
*Are the borders of our lives
Yes, we speak of things that matter
With words that must be said
"Can analysis be worthwhile?"
"Is the theater really dead?"
And how the room is softly faded
And I only kiss your shadow, I cannot feel your hand
You're a stranger now unto me
Lost in the dangling conversation
And the superficial sighs
In the borders of our lives
Source: LyricFind
Songwriters: Paul Simon
The Dangling Conversation lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group*

Join us for A Conversation with Sarah Hurwitz
On May 3rd, 2020 from 3-4:30 p.m, OUDC will host an online fundraiser with Sarah Hurwitz. From 2009 to 2017, Sarah Hurwitz served as a White House speechwriter, first as a senior speechwriter for President Barack Obama and then as head speechwriter for First Lady Michelle Obama. Prior to serving in the Obama Administration, Sarah was chief speechwriter for Hillary Clinton on her 2008 presidential campaign. She is the author of Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life – in Judaism (After Finally Choosing to Look There).

Tickets are available through the Eventbrite link below.

[Click here to get tickets](#)





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V'shinantam l'vanecha

04/30/2020 09:30:11 AM



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Dear Friends,

As we continue to deal with "quarantine fatigue," I came across this song from Adam Sandler. You may not have seen it so I thought I would send it along.

I hope his song will brighten this rainy day.

Stay well and safe,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

[Click here to view video](#)

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V'shinantam l'vanecha

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Dear Friends,

As we all wrestle with our "new reality" a number of us are getting tired of not being able to see each other and are experiencing "quarantine fatigue."

I found this poem, written by one of our congregants, to be meaningful and to summarize my feelings at this time.

I hope it inspires you to "make our way."

I also hope you will join us tonight for our adult education session about Israel at 72 which will occur at 6:30pm before minyan.

Have a good day and stay well and safe,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

WE MAKE OUR WAY
by Barry R. Berkey, MD

Choices change from yesterdays,
Brim full with non-stop tasks.
But no one likes to dwell upon,
Old age with all its masks.

Advancing years bring countless fears,
Eerie shadows do appear.
With seasoned might, we stay the fight,
With smiles, dear friends, not tears.

Oh, how to smile when tough times strike?
When challenges abound?
We laugh, we cry, we search the sky,
No answers to be found.

And yet, somehow, we make our way,
As dawn lights up each coming day.
We stand, we hope, we join the fray,
And so, dear friends, we make our way.

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V'shinantam I'vanecha

04/28/2020 09:30:40 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim



Dear Friends,

A simple act of kindness as Rebecca Gibson, co-chair of our religious practices committee, delivered urgent supplies to Jerry and Doris Wolf. Jerry celebrated his 96th birthday yesterday. We had a little party at our Havdalah service on Saturday night.

Jerry and Doris are married for over 70 years and needed these supplies to cope with their isolation with each other. (one for each decade)

I hope you will smile at this act of kindness and Doris' note.

Have a good Tuesday,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Doris Wolf

Date: Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 1:17 PM

Subject: Fwd: Urgent Medical Supplies Have Arrived in the Nick of Time

To:

Talking about wine, this photo was sent forward to Rebecca. She is a blessing And has so much on her plate. We are so grateful for her help. . Doris



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Congregation Adat Reyim



I received an email from a relative who sent me some first hand information about the corona virus and its symptoms. Please read for more details

[Click here to read more details](#)

Dear Friends,

Often I read an article that is clearly better than anything I can write. Rather than excerpt from it, I want you to read Rabbi Sacks' posting about last week's Torah portion. I also hope you will see the movie about Mr. Rogers which is rich with inspiration about the power of forgiveness.

During a week when we learn about the damage that lashon hara can do, this wonderful article reminds us that our words can heal.

I hope you find this to be as meaningful as I did. I quoted from it during Shabbat services but please take the time to read the entire article.

Please feel free to pass it along...

Also, please open the family edition and scroll down to the story "it once happened" and look at the letter he received. Maybe you or people you know can send a letter to a local hospital, place where first responders work, or put a note on your trash and/or recycle containers, your mailbox, or on your door if you are expecting a delivery.

These folks are our heroes.

Have a good week/shavua tov,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

[Click Here to read full article](#)

Rabbi Aft's Friday Message -Stay Well and Safe.

04/24/2020 09:31:44 AM



Please join us at Services this weekend

Friday, April 24th

6:30pm - Erev Shabbat Service with Shir Reyim

Meeting link:

[Click Here](#)

Meeting number:

790 923 595

Password:

P3PvSKEaJ77

Join by phone

+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll

Access code: 790 923 595

Saturday, April 25th

9:30 am - Shabbat Morning Services (Reoccurring) with Torah Discussion and a Congregational L'Chaim with Rabbi Aft (drink of your choice - BYOB)! Please logon at 9:15am to resolve any technical issues before we start services at 9:30am.

HOST: Bruce Kaplan

Meeting link:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Meeting number: 794 796 695

Password: GxPGvPGv784

Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388

Access code: 794 796 695

Shabbat Family Jam - Interactive Via WebEx with Morah Andrea

Meeting link:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Meeting number:799 340 517

Password: imKMJynm327 (46565966 from phones and video systems)

We invite you and your family and friends to join Morah Cate for an interactive Shabbat Family Jam. For security please send you family and friends this RSVP link and we will send them the link for the WebEx.

[RSVP HERE](#)

Havdalah

8:00pm

A great way to end your Shabbat and start your week with your Community of Friends.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Meeting number:795 672 239

Password:WPasnPmY385

Join by phone

+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll

Access code: 795 672 239

SUNDAY 4:00pm Adult Education - Theater J

A BACKSTAGE LOOK AT JEWISH THEATER

With Theater J Artistic Director Adam Immerwahr Join Zoom Meeting

[CLICK HERE](#)

Meeting ID: 952 084 8110

Password: 5780

Phone: 929-205-6099

[Click here for Video 1](#)

[Click here for Video 2](#)

Dear Friends,

This is a tale of three messages: I hope you will take a look at both videos which will brighten your day. Many of us will relate to "Searching for Glasses" either for ourselves or for our older relatives:-). The other video is a very touching segment that I thought you would like to see since we are in the midst of the season when we remember the Holocaust, we commemorate Yom HaZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day), and we celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel's Independence Day (72 years!). Thank you, Valerie Schwartz for forwarding the video about the pilot and the Holocaust survivor.

I usually don't like to overlap between the article I send to the religious school parents and the one I send to the congregation as a whole, but wanted you to see a segment of my article to the students and their families. I hope you will join us for a discussion of Lashon Hara as part of our Torah discussion at services on Shabbat morning.

So here goes...

As we read from the Biblical portions, Tazria Metzora this Shabbat, we know that many of the commentators discuss these two portions which deal with leprosy and other physical issues, as a metaphor for lashon hara or negative speech.

When we say bad things about others, we are afflicted with sores which affect not only our bodies, but our hearts and souls.

We are taught that lashon hara affects the one who is being talked about, the one who says it, and the one who hears it. The Chofetz Chaim, a famous rabbi who wrote a book called "Guard Your Tongue", outlines how careful we need to be when we speak.

Many of you have heard me say that I grew up hearing that "sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Robert Fulgham a minister, who wrote, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten" rephrased this to say "sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can break my heart."

In a world where we hear a lot of negative speech, I hope we can read the following prayer regularly which gives the secret to life according to the Chafetz Chaim. We often read it at the conclusion of the Amidah on Shabbat morning and other times.(See below)

Finally, as the current situation continues, please notify me if you have any financial needs. There are limited communal funds available to help people through this period. Please call me privately at 703-407-7690.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

(From Wikipedia)

The "**Sefer Chafetz Chaim**" (or **Chofetz Chaim** or **Hafetz Hayim**) (**Hebrew**: סֵפֶר חֻפֶּזֶת חַיִּים, **trans. *Desirer of Life***) is the magnum opus of Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, who later became known simply as *The Chofetz Chaim*. The book deals with the Jewish ethics and laws of speech, and is considered the authoritative source on the subject.

The title of the work *Chafetz Chaim* by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan is taken from **Psalms** :

Come, children, hearken to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desires life, who loves days to see goodness? Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceitfully. Shun evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.

— Psalm 34:12–15



Rabbi Kagan (the Chofetz Chaim) at the first *Knessia Gedolah* of Agudas Yisroel in Vienna, 1923

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V'shinantam I'vanecha

04/23/2020 09:30:41 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim



Join us online tonight at 7:30 PM for a conversation with Jennifer Rosner, debut novelist of *The Yellow Bird Sings*, a novel inspired by true life stories of Jewish children in hiding during the Holocaust. [Click this link](#) to register and receive log in information.

Dear Friends,

One of the more inspiring aspects of living during this pandemic is the creativity of our members. ***Please let me know if you have something you would like to share with the congregation in these daily columns. Also, if you have a special story you would like to share, something special you have done, or how you are coping professionally or personally during this time, please let me know. We would welcome hearing what you have to say at a Friday night service or as part of our havdalah ritual or in another setting to be determined.***

Today, we are blessed to read a couple of poems from Ann Ungar who is active in our caring committee.

Have a wonderful Thursday and stay well,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

DAFFODILS

Magnificent

Stepping outside, leaving the apartment today for
10 minutes after a week of shut-in time

Seeing sky, earth, buds on branches
Breathing fresh air

LOVING THE DAFFODILS!!!!

Stately, pale yellow, deep yellow colors,
with centers that look like bugels,
Bellowing out, it's SPRING!!!

Sing out in voices loud and strong
Yellow is the color of happiness.
DAFFODILS are kin to red breasted Robins
That herald Spring....

I saw two Robins circling each other round and round
Bumping into each other's wings

Sing out in voices loud and strong
Today is like no other!
Let us relish the Host of Daffodils
Like Wordsworth's Daffodils "fluttering and dancing
In the breeze"

They thrilled my soul today

The Sky is Still Blue

The Moon's pull still makes the Tides roll in,

The Wind still plays with the Clouds,

The Sun still rises every day in the East,

and sets every evening in the West;

The Whippoorwill is singing its song,

Spring is here, here in all its Glory.

The barren Trees are being adorned in Leaves of
every kind and every shade of Green;

Forsythia, Daffodils, Tulips; Cherry Blossom and
Magnolia Trees still bloom, adding yellows, pinks, reds,
Purples, colors of every hue to the landscape, and

sometimes a Rainbow reminds us of a Promise we
may have forgotten.

The sounds of birdcalls still sing out their mating dance,

Robins are still building nests, Geese are still flying in formation,

The Earth is still turning, in keeping with the rhythm of the Universe.

Stars hidden by day can still be seen burning brightly at night,

We can still make wishes on them,

We can draw strength from the gifts of nature everywhere,

We can

The sky is still blue...

Ann M Ungar
April, 2020

V'shinantam I'vanecha

04/22/2020 09:30:11 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim



6:30pm Adult Education with Rabbi Aft - The topic is spirituality and spontaneity:
Why did Aaron's sons die and what does G-d expect of us?

[CLICK HERE](#)

Meeting number:793 776 588

Password:gbWAtQiP223

Join by phone

+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll

Access code: 793 776 588

Wednesday, 7:30PM Please Join Carolyn Kaplan for Minyan

WebExHost: Bruce Kaplan

Meeting number (access code): 799 847 420

Meeting password: sqB8u6h6cxZ

[Click here to Login](#)

Join by phone:+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll

Access code: 799 847 420

Join us online on Thursday, April 23 at 7:30 PM for a conversation with
Jennifer Rosner, debut novelist of *The Yellow Bird Sings*, a novel inspired
by true life stories of Jewish children in hiding during the Holocaust.

[Click this link](#) to register and receive log in information.

Dear Friends,

Yesterday was the day which is set aside on the calendar to remember the Holocaust. There are those who feel that our day of remembrance for all our tragedies should be Tisha B'Av, the Ninth Day of the Hebrew month of Av. However, most Jews do commemorate Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Commemoration Day.

Recently, a number of us helped a Holocaust survivor, Itka Zygmuntowicz, to whom I have referred on a number of occasions, celebrate her 94th birthday. It was a wonderful celebration by zoom and I recall when I first met her.

We were traveling to Auschwitz in April, 1996 on her birthday. She was the survivor on our bus on the March of the Living. Itka was standing at the shooting wall at Auschwitz, where she last saw her mother alive, and she collapsed. Students ran to get me and as I lifted her up, we recited the Mourner's Kaddish. As she said the words, she became stronger and finally had a small sense of closure as she remembered her Mom. I was in awe of the power of this simple ritual to give strength to a woman who never had the opportunity to say good bye to her Mother.

Each year, I struggle with the best way to remember the events of the Holocaust. Most of us have heard stories from survivors or from children or grandchildren of survivors. I am always inspired by their courage and bravery to deal with situations of which I cannot conceive.

Yet, I wonder what the lessons are for us today. We should fight prejudice, hatred and bigotry for sure. We should work to lessen bullying. I believe (although not all of you would agree) that we need to be open to immigrants who are searching for a better life or who are escaping danger.

But this year, perhaps the most important lesson for me is that we take personal responsibility when we see government leaders doing things that can jeopardize our health. Now I am not smart enough to know which leaders have the best solution for the problems we are currently facing. But I do believe that we need to be aware of the fact that decisions that are being made will affect our health and our economic standing. I hope that some of the partisan differences which have plagued us over the past several years will be put aside so that the best medical information will lead our leaders to make responsible decisions on our behalf. If you care, which I am sure you do, please let your elected officials know how you feel so that all of our voices are heard.

Finally, I wanted to share some of the wisdom of Itka. You have heard/seen some of these words before, and I hope they will inspire you.

We cannot always choose our circumstances, but we can choose our responses.

We usually get what we settle for; we might get less but seldom more.

Love can understand what reason cannot.

Life is a mixture of vinegar and wine; it is important to choose carefully with whom we dine.

Love builds bridges of communication, and hatred builds walls of isolation.

The best way to improve the world is to improve ourselves.

Extreme suffering can make us bitter or better, depending on our attitude.

We reveal most our character by the way we treat those who are less fortunate than we are.

Kindness is our greatest gift.

I hope that these inspirational words will encourage us to take responsibility and do our share to make the world a brighter place. During a week in which we have just read in the Torah about Aaron lighting a fire to bring himself closer to G-d through the ritual of sacrifice, may we light up our world through acts of love and

kindness.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

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V'shinantam l'vanecha

04/21/2020 09:30:11 AM



Dear Friends,

As I follow the discussions about what to do regarding opening up the economy, when to do it, and how to do it, I believe that all of us can learn from this inspiring poem by Sherri Shunfenthal. (See below) I know that it captures my fears, hopes, and desires, and hope that it will serve as a reminder of the words of the Psalmist which we often quote:

Hiney mah tovu manayim, shevet achim gam yachad, how good and pleasant it is when we
COME TOGETHER. Although physically distant, may we all come together in order to stay safe, healthy, and support those who are in need.

Have a good day,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

One Nation Indivisible?

Invisible. Ultra-microscopic
So small we cannot see it
And yet looming large in our lives
Pushing us further and further from each other
So that we cover our mouths and divert our eyes.

Coronavirus
I fear you. I feel unsafe.

And yet it is Spring. Vibrant floral colors
push up from dirt having been hidden
all winter. I too have been in hiding, wanting to come out
in full bloom ready to start again, have hope.

Hope that we have learned that this virus
can choose anyone, anywhere
and is not partisan or biased.
We must come together strong as a nation once more?
Help one another be courageous
like our nurses, doctors, trash collectors, mailmen
shop staff, taxi drivers.
Stand together Americans! Help each other
Or you may die alone.
We all make America or break it.
Working together, we can heal.

Sherri Waas Shunfenthal © 2020

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V'shinantam l'vanecha

04/19/2020 10:44:39 PM





Join us for an hour of prayer

Multi-faith Supplication

APRIL 22, 2020 | 5:00 PM

Rabbi Bruce Aft
Angela Ayaz
Rev. Joseph Grieboski
Rev. Ruth Hamilton
Rev. Leonard Hamlin
Simran Singh Khalsa
Rabbi Jack Moline
Rev. Deborah Dickison Porras

Click to join in  Click to join in 

Dear Friends,

Please link in for this multi faith event. I hope we will all find it to be a special experience.

Since the above is a photo, the click here links don't work.

So to join us, [please click here for Youtube.](#) and [click here to join us by Zoom](#)

B'shalom,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Dear Friends,

One of the most inspirational moments of my rabbinate has been when I change the candle for the eternal light which is over the Ark. It has been a ritual for many years with students as they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the students have the opportunity to remove the old candle, light the new one, and are part of the ancient ritual of keeping the light of our people strong and G-d's presence in the sanctuary.

During the pandemic, either Carolyn Kaplan or I have been changing the candle and we both have agreed that it is surreal to be in the empty sanctuary as we perform this ritual.

When I was walking home on Thursday night after having changed the candle as Passover was concluding, I noticed the beauty of the sun setting through the trees. Usually I am driving back and forth to Adat Reyim and so I don't have time to notice some of the beauty of nature.

As I watched the sunset, (see picture below), I thought about so many different things...



First, I was saddened to realize that as the sun sets on my career as your rabbi, it is so disappointing that we can not physically see each other. As the lyrics to a song go in "My Fair Lady," "I've grown accustomed to your face(s)." I hope you all realize how much our interaction has meant to me over the years and enjoy the opportunities to "see" you at our webex services and meetings.

Second, a congregant pointed out to me how fortunate we have been to share many beautiful moments together that have been emblazoned on our hearts that were represented by the sun setting.

Third, although we cannot physically change the eternal light together, we will be celebrating a number of B'nai Mitzvah in the next two months (many of our students will be participating by webex in some fashion on Shabbat mornings and have rescheduled their ceremonies in the sanctuary to a later date). Their presence at our services will represent that the eternal light is burning strong. They may not be able to change the candle but they can light up our lives by reminding us that our future will be strong as they become adults in the eyes of our tradition at a unique time in our history.

Fourth, I thought about the lyrics (See below) by Bill Withers who passed away recently. "Lean on me" is a wonderful metaphor for what we have done over the years with each other, and will continue to do as the sun sets on my rabbinic career at Adat Reyim. Please let me know what I can do to support you since your presence in my life has been and continues to be a blessing. Certainly in the world in which we are living today, we know that we are leaning on each other and our support for each other is a beautiful blessing.

Fifth, tomorrow night (Tuesday) there is a membership meeting (by webex) and I hope you will fill out the survey that Josh Green and Michelle Mermelstein sent out. Adat Reyim wants to continue to meet as many needs as we can during these challenging times.

Finally, I personally know of the significant challenges that many of you are facing and hope and pray that you will find the "courage to make your life a blessing" as it says in our prayer for healing.

As Moses said to Joshua when he was transferring the authority of leadership to him, "Hazak v'amatz" be strong and of good courage. Once again, please let us

know if we are missing something and can help and/or support you.

Shavua tov, have a good week,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Lean On Me
Bill Withers
Sometimes in our lives we all have pain
We all have sorrow
But if we are wise
We know that there's always tomorrow
Lean on me, when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on
Please swallow your pride
If I have things you need to borrow
For no one can fill those of your needs
That you won't let show
You just call on me brother, when you need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem that you'll understand
We all need somebody to lean on
Lean on me, when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on
You just call on me brother, when you need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem that you'll understand
We all need somebody to lean on
If there is a load you have to bear
That you can't carry
I'm right up the road
I'll share your load
If you just call me (call me)
If you need a friend (call me) call me uh huh(call me) if you need a friend (call me)
If you ever need a friend (call me)
Call me (call me) call me (call me) call me
(Call me) call me (call me) if you need a friend
(Call me) call me (call me) call me (call me) call me (call me) call me (call me)
Source: LyricFind
Songwriters: Bill Withers
Lean On Me lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group, BMG Rights Management

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Rabbi Aft's Friday Message -Stay Well and Safe.

04/17/2020 09:30:41 AM



Friday, April 17th
8:00pm - Erev Shabbat Service

[Click here to Join](#)

Meeting number: 790 923 595

Password: P3PvSKEaJ77

Join by phone

+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll

Access code: 790 923 595

Saturday, April 18th
9:30 am - Shabbat Morning Services
(Reoccurring) with Torah Discussion and a
Congregational L'Chaim with Rabbi Aft (drink of your
choice - BYOB)! Please logon at 9:15am to resolve any technical

issues before we start services at 9:30am.

HOST: Bruce Kaplan

[Meeting link: Click Here](#)

Meeting number: 794 796 695

Password: GxPGvPGv784

Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388

Access code: 794 796 695

8:00pm Havdalah - Reoccurring

Saturdays 8pm, with Rabbi Aft

Join the Meeting:

<https://execdirector-200.my.webex.com/execdirector-200.my/j.php?>

MTID=m25ead16cf06c6197a7ce4e27d7a918d0

Meeting number: 795 672 239

Meeting password: WPasnPmY385

Join by phone: 408-418-9388

Access code: 795 672 239

Open Mic Night - Virtual
Entertainment!****~~CANCELLED~~****

7:00pm - 8:00pm

Performers and attendees must RSVP to receive link

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Yom Hashoa JCRC

Yom Hashoah - Programming on Sunday and
Monday (see link below)
HEARING SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE YOU.
This year, the JCRC's annual Dor L'Dor are moving online.
In commemoration of Yom Ha'Shoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, join us to

dialogue with Holocaust survivors as they share their war-time experiences.
Become inspired to speak truth to power, seek justice, and fight against hatred of
all kinds.

[Click here to join us](#)

*****PLEASE NOTE THAT UNFORTUNATELY DUE
TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES WE HAD TO
CANCEL THE OPEN MIC NIGHT SCHEDULED
FOR TOMORROW NIGHT*****

There was a link for a Passover Mashup video in an article I put out yesterday.
Some people had trouble viewing it, so please try again.

[Click here to view it](#)

Dear Friends,

Please note that this article will have a number of components to it.

First of all, you will note my nephew's posting on Facebook after having contracted
the corona virus. He was released from the hospital last Saturday and we are
grateful.

Second of all, you will see a link to special meditations for each day of counting
the Omer. I hope you will check out the Homer omer counter and will spend some
quality time each evening counting the omer with your loved ones and discussing
the meditations.

As we count the Omer, I hope we will think about the plague which afflicted 12,000
pairs of Rabbi Akiba's students. We are taught that there were 24,000 deaths.
We learn that it was 12,000 pairs of students because in their small study groups
(chevruta, from the Hebrew word chaver, which means friend), they used to
disagree about legal Jewish (halachic) issues and then speak disparingly about
each other. The plague wiped them out to teach us the value of treating each
other with kavod or honor and not using lashon hara (negative speech).

Now, I don't personally subscribe to the belief that G-d would punish us in this
way. However, I value the teaching that it is wrong to dishonor the person just
because we disagree with their position on a particular subject.

My personal hope is that one of the lessons we will have learned in the midst of
our own challenges of dealing with the corona virus, is that we will treat each other
more kindly. When we disagree I hope we will disagree more agreeably and we
won't dismiss the person just because of their perspective.

We have several weeks to journey toward Mt. Sinai and Shavuot now that we

have finished Pesach and will be talking about our preparation for the receiving of the Torah in future columns.

Stay well and Shabbat Shalom ☺ . I hope to "see" you at some of our upcoming services, the open mike, and the Yom HaShoah Holocaust commemoration.

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Eric Aft FACEBOOK April 12, 2020

Good morning & Happy Easter - I don't know where to begin to express my thanks and love for the overwhelming kindness, support, and encouragement that has been expressed to me and my family during the last week. Forgive me if I don't respond to each of you individually, but please know how much your positive thoughts, prayers, and words of concern have meant. There are many others in our community, nation, and world who are or have not fared as well with this terrible virus - please continue to hold them and their families in your thoughts and prayers. After a four day hospital stay, I am thankful to be home and fever free for the past 60 hours. I want to share a quick note of caution provided by my care team, which I hope you will read. There is so much unknown about the path of this disease and exactly how to treat it. As a virus, much of the work is supporting each person's body in the battle. There is no magic bullet and there won't be any type of vaccine for quite a while to come. Now, if you are interested, I will share a few additional thoughts about my own journey with the hope that it might help or encourage others. First, I want to thank four incredible groups - my family for their support, help in my early (and immediate) isolation once symptoms appeared on March 27th. The love of my wife and daughter within our home was incredible and the messages from my son over in Raleigh were more helpful than he knows. The love and support from my parents, brothers, sisters-in-law, nephews, uncle and aunt, and others has meant the world - I love you all! Next, my friends and community support network has been overwhelming. There were two or three times when I have been brought to tears with the messages and acts of love and kindness towards me and my family. I am simply amazed and speechless by who you are and what you've done. Third, the entire team at Second Harvest Food Bank, both staff and volunteers. While they are also encompassed in the last group, from a professional standpoint, I knew that our critical work would not only carry on, but would thrive through the brilliance and commitment from this group of special people. Thank you for giving me the confidence that I had plenty of room to heal. Finally, and certainly not last, the care team at Novant's Forsyth Medical Center. While there are too many to name (although I have you all written down) and will communicate again later, their care, understanding, and patience (especially with a very inquisitive patient) gave me great comfort when things were not going so well. Okay, just a few more items. This virus is horrible. I suffered through 13 straight days of a fever with headache, four days when breathing was more uncomfortable and labored than anyone should deal with caused by pneumonia brought on by the virus, a couple of days when, candidly, doubt of having a positive outcome was part of my thinking, but ultimately I received the right support that helped my body fight the disease - although I still have work to do over the coming days. As a community, nation, and world we have a long way to go against this struggle, so I ask that everyone support each other, respect each other, and give them the gifts of love that all of you have provided to me. I am indebted to you and am more committed than ever to serve others who are impacted by this crisis and the many other challenges that exist in our world. Thank you is not enough, but it is the best this forum provides (and social distancing allows). Please know how much you all mean to me. Be well, my friends.

Please click on the links below to view

[A Spiritual Guide to the Counting of the Omer - Forty-Nine ...](#)

V'shinantam I'vanecha

04/16/2020 09:30:40 AM



Dear Friends,

As we conclude Passover today, I thought you would enjoy the following musical pieces that have been shared with me over the Passover Holiday.

As we remember our loved ones on this final day of Passover, I thought it would be a hopeful way to conclude our Festival. We all have been inspired by the creative way in which we have celebrated Passover this year and I hope that you have found some new meaning in our journey from slavery to freedom. In each generation we are told in the Haggadah that we are to view ourselves as slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and journeyed to freedom.

What will our liberation look like in 2020 when we enjoy freedom from the corona virus and all the restrictions we have experienced? What will be the story we will tell future generations? We are writing that story each day now and I hope you will find hopeful and inspirational ways in which we have responded.

I continue to think about the note a close friend sent me weeks ago which said, "our grandparents were called to go to war and we are being called to go to our couches; we can do this." Certainly this has provided me a continuing dose of perspective.

Happy Passover and be well! My parents loved to dance and when I hear these songs, I can picture them dancing to their favorite music, "The Anniversary Waltz." May this music inspire us with good memories and hope for the future.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Watch 2 videos below

[Click here to view Video 1](#) Passover Songs Mashup - Dance Spectacular! - Elliot Dvorin | Key Tov Orchestra -

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V'shinantam I'vanecha Wednesday

04/15/2020 09:30:09 AM



Dear Friends,

As we celebrate the conclusion of Pesach, I hope you will enjoy the beautiful song presented by Susan Gaeta from the Sephardic tradition. Please note the link for Susan's website which will provide meaningful and inspirational information.

I hope you will join us for our minyan tonight where we will commemorate Yizkor and celebrate the final day of Passover through the recitation of Hallel, Psalms of Praise. In lieu of services on Thursday morning, we hope you will also join us for Maurice's Torah cafe for a meaningful discussion as we conclude Passover. A number of you have wanted to discuss his sermon from the first day of Passover which we shared in the Monday column and hope you will join us for a lively session. (see services links below)

Be safe, healthy, and enjoy the conclusion of Pesach,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Here is the Passover song. Please check out Susan's website, susangaeta.com for music and information.

[click here to view video](#)



Please remember that there are Services tonight followed by Yizkor Services. In addition please light a Yartzeit candle tonight for your loved ones.

To access this service,

Wednesdays at 7:30 PM.

Please Join Carolyn Kaplan for Minyan

WebExHost: Bruce Kaplan

Meeting number (access code): 799 847 420

Meeting password: sqB8u6h6cxZ

[Click here to Login](#)

Join by phone:+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll

Access code: 799 847 420

We also have our Torah Study with Dr Maurice Mizrahi this Thursday and can be [viewed Here](#)

Thursdays 10am: 'Torah Cafe'

Join us for a lively discussion on the Torah Portion of the week with the (always marvelous) Maurice Mizrahi.

Please logon at 9:45am, so that we can resolve any technical issues.

JOIN WEBEX MEETING

[To Login Click Here](#)

Meeting number (access code): 793 337 351

Meeting password: hxXmBTGd833

JOIN BY PHONE

408-418-9388

V'shinantam l'vanecha

04/14/2020 09:30:12 AM



Dear Friends,

As we all continue to learn about how to connect electronically, I thought you might like to see this "midrashic" interpretation of the Four Children section of the Haggadah. (Thanks to Michael Halle for the forward). (See below). Please let us know if you need help in this area since we have members who have even been able to teach me:-)

As the days go by, I know that many of us are increasingly frustrated. I hope that you will reach out to the caring committee or me if there is ANYTHING we can do. Frustration has been manifesting itself in various ways, including loneliness, depression, tempers flaring, domestic violence, drinking, and "snarkiness." PLEASE REACH OUT FOR HELP! It will be confidential. My phone number is 703-407-7690 and I have received calls at all hours so DON'T HESITATE TO CALL!

As we discussed in our Passover workshop, our seders, and in many conversations, what is the STORY that we will tell our loved ones 10 years from now about how we coped with the corona virus? I hope that we will be able to tell them of the wonderful opportunities to connect with loved ones electronically and how we held seders with people all over the country and the world. I hope that our story will be one of freedom from doing the things the same way we always did them and the new possibilities that have emerged. I hope we will tell the story of health care professionals, people working in Food Banks, individuals who were generous through shopping for others or volunteering, or other creative ways in which people helped out. I hope we will tell the story of how our congregation's caring committee has kept in touch with all of you, either by e-mail or phone, truly being an Adat Reyim, a community of friends.

We know that in each generation we are to see ourselves as if we were in Egypt. Mitzrayim, (the Hebrew word for Egypt), translates as narrow. If we limit ourselves to a narrow view of how inconvenient these times

are, then we will continue to be frustrated. But if we think about the new worlds we have created, then we will tell a story of hope about the resilience and power of the human spirit.

On a personal basis, the corona virus has hit our family and a nephew of mine was hospitalized with serious illness due to the virus. He is involved in community food banks and the need is so great, that he had to be on the front lines of service delivery. However, on Saturday, he was released from the hospital and we are SO GRATEFUL. We must remain hopeful and continue to work together and support each other.

Once again, we are in this together and so please call if we can help.

Moadim l'simcha, enjoy the intermediate days of the Festival,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Pesach for the Zoom generation

The Torah Speaks of Four Kinds of People Who Use Zoom:

- The Wise
- The Wicked
- The Simple
- The One Who Does Not Know How to "Mute"

The Wise Person says: "I'll handle the Admin Feature Controls and Chat Rooms, and forward the Cloud Recording Transcript after the call."

The Wicked Person says: "Since I have unlimited duration, I scheduled the meeting for six hours—as it says in the Haggadah, "whoever prolongs the telling of the story, harei zeh 'shubach, is praiseworthy."

The Simple Person says: "Hello? Am I on? I can hear you but I can't see you."

[Jerusalem Talmud reads here: "I can see you, but I can't hear you."]

The One Who Does Not Know How to Mute says: "How should I know where you put the keys? I'm stuck on this stupid Zoom call with these idiots.

To the Wise Person you should offer all of the Zoom Pro Optional Add-On Plans.

To the Wicked Person you should say: "Had you been in charge, we would still be in Egypt."

To the Simple Person you should say: "Try the call-in number instead."

To the One Who Does Not Know How to Mute you should say: "Why should this night be different from all other nights?"

from Rabbi Richard Hirsh, Pesach 2020

V'shinantam l'vanecha

04/13/2020 09:30:11 AM



Dear Friends,

On Passover morning, Maurice Mizrahi delivered the following Dv'ar Torah. It is a hopeful reminder of the good that can come out of challenging situations.

As I heard him speak, I was filled with both hope as he expressed it, but also sadness that so many have died and we have more unemployment since the Great Depression.

As I have mentioned, even at a wedding when we celebrate joy, we break a glass to remember there is sadness in our world. Let's not forget to find the joy in our world and not be overwhelmed by the sadness.

Please read his words below or click on the video link.

Moadim l'simcha, Festival days for joy,
Rabbi Bruce Aft

[Click here to view video](#)

The Benefits of the Coronavirus Crisis

For the first time in living memory, we are forced to celebrate Passover almost individually, away from all other people, instead of in joyous family get-togethers. The coronavirus pandemic is forcing us to stay away from others. People are getting sick and dying all over the world, hospitals are overwhelmed, the economy is taking huge leaps back, unemployment is soaring, the country is paralyzed, people are practically barricaded in their houses, and children are schooled much less effectively.

Some people believe the evil and suffering in this world will be balanced by the good of the afterlife, in what Judaism calls Olam Haba, the "World to Come".

Others believe there is always some good behind the bad; that good things always emerge from bad things, and justifies them; that all suffering is for some greater good. After all, the Torah tells us, at the very beginning:

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד

Vayyar Elokim et kol asher 'asa v'hinne: tov me'od.

And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. [Genesis 1:31]

We read in the Book of Psalms:

טוֹב-יְהוָה לְקַלְ לִרְמִיּוֹ עַל-כָּל-מַעֲשָׂיו

Tov HaShem lakol, verachamav 'al kol maasav.

The Lord is good to all and his mercies are over all His works. [Psalms 145:9]

So we must have faith that, somehow, it's all to the good.

An objection can quickly be made: Why can't we see the good? Some answer: Because of our limited understanding. A primitive man in a dentist's chair or a surgeon's table only knows he is being hurt. He does not see it's for his own good. In the Torah, Moses could not see the good either. As soon as he complained to Pharaoh, Pharaoh made the life of the Israelites worse. Moses tells God:

My God, why have You done evil to this people? Why have You sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, [Pharaoh] has done worse to this nation, and You have not saved Your people! [Exodus 5:22-23].

A rabbi in the first century, by the name of Nachum ish Gamzu, was severely handicapped, yet he was always optimistic. No matter what happened to him or around him, he would say: "Gam zu l'tovah -- This, too, is for the good". He always saw a silver lining. Here is what the Talmud says about him: Nachum of Gamzu was blind in both his eyes, his two hands and legs were amputated, his whole body was covered with boils, and he was lying in a dilapidated house on a bed whose feet were standing in bowls of water to prevent the ants from crawling on to him...

Why was he called Nachum of Gamzu? Because whatever befell him he would declare, "Gam zu l'tovah -- This, too, is for the good." [Taanit 21a]

Rabbi Akiva, a student of his and arguably the greatest rabbi in the Talmud, followed in his footsteps. He used to say:

כָּל דְּעֵבִיד רַחֲמָנָא לְטַב עֵבִיד

Kol d'aved Rachmanah l'tav 'aved.

Everything God does is for the good. [Berachot 60b]

Can one really always find a silver lining, no matter what tragedies occur around us? Long after the event, one can sometimes say "yes", especially when there is plenty of uncertainty. For example:

- The destruction of the Temple led to a Judaism centered on synagogue, prayer, study, and spiritual matters, rather than animal sacrifices.
- The Diaspora helped us learn new skills from the host countries, and prevented the destruction of all the Jews. When some countries were hostile to Jews, others were friendly.
- The various expulsions, from Spain and elsewhere, led us to seed our knowledge and bring new skills to the world at large.
- The Holocaust led to the world allowing the creation of the State of Israel.
- The State of Israel may be under perpetual siege and surrounded by implacable enemies, but this keeps the country together, increases the determination to keep the state Jewish, and reduces internal strife.

Some will object and say, "Even so, it's not worth it." I am not arguing that it is, just that some might consider it so. It is, of course, a subjective matter.

Some people argue that when bad things happen to us, it means we did something wrong. But the Torah tells us that that is not always the case. Take slavery in Egypt, for example. God tells Abraham in the Book of Genesis: Know for certain that your offspring will be strangers in a strange land, and will be enslaved and afflicted for four hundred years. [Genesis 15:13-14]

It does not state a reason, and none is obvious. It is not punishment. So evidently God thought slavery was necessary and led to some good. But what good? There are many possible answers, which I gave in another d'var Torah. In brief, slavery was necessary for our protection. Jacob's clan in Israel was an easy target for neighbors, but in Egypt, a superpower protected us, albeit to exploit us. Slavery allowed us build up our numbers in safety, to build up our identity and community spirit. Slavery minimized contact with the outside world, which reduced the practice of idolatry and eliminated the possibility of intermarriage. Slavery created a scenario that allowed God to show the Jews and the whole world that He was in charge. Also, the gratitude that we felt upon liberation and the slave mentality we had acquired made it easier for us to accept the Torah.

On the personal level, I can say that without the expulsion from Spain, my parents would not have met and I would never have existed. The Haggadah of Pessah enjoins us to recall the words of the Mishnah:

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר תִּיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עֲצָמוֹ כְּאִלוֹ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם

B'chol dor vador, hayyav adam lir'ot et 'atsmo, k'llilluhu yatsa mimmitzrayim.

In every generation, every Jew must regard himself as though he, himself was personally rescued from Egypt. [Pesachim 10:5]

That's easy for me to say, since I grew up as a Jew in Egypt. Indeed, if I, myself, had not personally been forced out of Egypt, I would never have met my wife, had my children and grandchildren, and led a productive and satisfying life. Our forced Second Exodus led us to better lives.

Now let's apply all this to the coronavirus crisis we are in today. Can any good come out of it? Yes, plenty. Let's talk about eight good things, one for each of the eight days of Pessah.

First, we must be thankful because it could be far worse:

-We could be cut off from the Internet, or have no telephone, no TV, no radio, no electricity, no water, no gas. But we have all these things. We are not facing this crisis alone, cut off from everybody.

-We could be in the dead of winter, with freezing weather outside, or suffering hurricanes and tornadoes, new Katrinas or Sandies. Instead, most of us are enjoying great springtime weather.

-We could be in wartime, as in 1918 with the Spanish flu.

-We could be living in a time when there is no hope for a cure or a vaccine, such as the time of the Black Plague in 14th-century Europe, or the Spanish flu in 1918-1920. Today, most people firmly believe that science will come to the rescue, as it has for so many other diseases, and produce a vaccine and a cure. Faith in science has never been higher.

Hope is ever-present, sustains us, and keeps despair at bay.

Second, even if you catch the virus, the chances of dying from it are extremely low. The death rate could be a lot higher, as it was in the past. But it is only 1.4% on average for all diagnosed cases, certainly an order of magnitude higher than the 0.1% for the seasonal flu, but still very low.

And it is probably much lower if we include undiagnosed cases. Indeed, the top US immunologist, Dr Anthony Fauci confirmed last Sunday that half the people infected with the coronavirus do not have any symptoms at all and don't even know they are sick, a much larger fraction than previously believed.

The death rate does go up with age, to be sure, but that means our children and grandchildren are far safer than we are. We would not want it any other way. That's still a lot of people dying on a worldwide scale, but at the individual level, the chances of recovery are extremely high.

Third, the medical establishment will learn its lessons and be better prepared next time. Consider this crisis a "vaccine" of sorts against a bigger epidemic or a biological terrorist attack. Lots of rogue states and terrorist groups have been preparing to conduct biological warfare attacks, and this crisis will heighten awareness and allow better preparation. I personally spent a lot of time in the Defense Department building defenses against biological threats. And washing hands, something we Jews have been doing since time immemorial, is back in fashion.

Fourth, air pollution is way down because most cars are off the road and factories sit idle. NASA satellite images show clearly that pollution is dropping rapidly in cities across the globe. The canals of Venice are crystal clear for the first time in ages. We have cleaner water and cleaner air. Cleaner air will reduce respiratory infections perhaps even more than the coronavirus increases them. Traffic deaths and accidents have fallen by half.

Is this God's way of forcing us to tackle global warming?

Fifth, the digital transformation is accelerating. When this is over, the new normal will be working from home, telecommuting, teleconferencing, telemedicine, distance learning, and even televoting. People, businesses and institutions are being forced to adapt fast to the technological wave of the future. Most will not leave it. I doubt our electronic get-togethers will end when this crisis ends.

Sixth, political enemies are forced to work together for the benefit of all. A few months ago, who would have thought that Congress would pass anything important almost unanimously?

Seventh, the crime rate is down. On April 3rd, the New York Police Department reported that criminal incidents fell by 20% in March. Murder went down 25%, robberies 10% and grand larcenies 37%. Also, warlike actions across the globe have decreased. We celebrate heroes of a different kind: Health care providers and providers of other necessities who put their lives at risk to serve the public.

For all the reasons mentioned above, the coronavirus may be saving more lives than it takes.

Eighth, and perhaps most important, we are learning the true meaning of family and community. Households stay together, spend quality time together. The Mishna tells us that the Messianic Age will be Yom shekulo Shabbat – A time that is all Shabbat. [Tamid 7:4] That's how it feels today. Could it be that we are already in the Messianic Age?

Speaking of which, let us make this time of confinement a time of reflection, a time to take stock, a time to return to faith, and a time to return to God. Chag kasher ve-sameah!

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Rabbi Aft's Friday Message -Stay Well and Safe.

04/10/2020 09:30:10 AM



Dear Friends,

Recently in one of our online discussions, someone asked how to find faith in the midst of the corona virus.

I promised this person that I would talk about what inspires me at this time.

Some of you will remember that during the High Holidays I shared some of the lyrics from Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah. I hope you will read the lyrics below and click on the You Tube link.

While I was exercising recently, I was listening to this song and tears came to my eyes. How can I sing Hallelujah when I know that people are dying, health care workers are risking their lives, and so many are getting sick?

And then...all of a sudden it occurred to me that I needed to say Hallelujah. At a Jewish wedding we celebrate and then break a glass as we remember that even in the midst of joy, we recall that there is sadness in our world. The sadness in our world is so very real for so many so that perhaps we should be breaking numerous glasses. BUT...

How many of us have been inspired by the deeds of heroism about which we have read or which we have seen in various forms of media? How many of us

remember that as Egyptians were drowning, Miriam sang a song of joy to inspire people to have faith? Please note the picture and texts below from health care workers in the ER of a hospital for whom we provided lunch.

How many of us remember the message of Victor Frankel from the concentration camps that taught us that we must keep our hopes alive?

How many of us welcome Elijah the Prophet to our Passover seder because he brings hope that redemption is always possible and that we can get through those things that enslave us?

How many of us pour water into Miriam's Cup to remind us of how she nurtured us and we can nurture each other?

So...please find little things that will inspire you to have faith in G-d, faith in each other, and faith that hope will prevail. Out of despair can come hope and may each of us in our prayers and actions do what we can to do our part to lessen our spiritual distance, while maintaining our physical distance.

As Debbie Friedman continues to teach us in the mishebarach, may we find the courage to make our lives a blessing and find our faith in helping others and remembering to count our blessings. The stars are brighter, the sunsets are more beautiful, and we are all in this together to help and support each other.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

[Leonard Cohen - Hallelujah \(Audio\) - YouTube](#)

www.youtube.com › watch

Lyrics

Now, I've heard there was a secret chord
That David played, and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really care for music, do you?
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth
The minor fall, the major lift
The baffled king composing Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Your faith was strong but you needed proof
You saw her bathing on the roof
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew ya
She tied you to a kitchen chair
She broke your throne, and she cut your hair
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
You say I took the name in vain
I don't even know the name
But if I did, well really, what's it to you?
There's a blaze of light in every word

It doesn't matter which you heard
The holy or the broken Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
I did my best, it wasn't much
I couldn't feel, so I tried to touch
I've told the truth, I didn't come to fool you
And even though it all went wrong
I'll stand before the Lord of Song
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah
Hallelujah

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V'shinatam L'vonecha Thursday

04/09/2020 09:30:11 AM



Dear Friends,

Tonight at our virtual Passover seder, we will conclude with Hatikvah, the Israeli National Anthem. We will do this because Hatikvah means "the hope".

We also will conclude with Next Year, physically together with our friends and families, in lieu of next year in Jerusalem,

What gave/gives me hope are the following pictures and notes: (see below). (from the ER of an Indianapolis hospital where our daughter-in-law works).

Hag Sameach,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

PLEASE SEE BELOW

THANK YOU SO SO SO MUCH!!! That was sooooo nice!!! SO KIND!! Everyone is freaking out and so excited! You're the best!! Thank you!

I got chills and almost cried that's so nice!!!!

Seriously everyone is so excited! You really lifted our spirits!! Thank you again from everyone!!



Jokes! Jokes! Jokes!

Social Distancing Report

- 1) Half of us are going to come out of this quarantine as amazing cooks. The other half will come out with a drinking problem.
- 2) I used to spin that toilet paper like I was on Wheel of Fortune. Now I turn it like I'm cracking a safe.
- I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
- 3) Still haven't decided where to go for Easter ---- The Living Room or The Bedroom
- 4) PSA: every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
- 5) Homeschooling is going well. 2 students suspended for fighting and 1 teacher fired for drinking on the job.
- 6) I don't think anyone expected that when we changed the clocks we'd go from Standard Time to the Twilight Zone
- 7) This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house, told my dog..... we laughed a lot. So, after this quarantine.....will the producers of My 600 Pound Life just find me or do I find them?
- 9) Quarantine Day 5: Went to this restaurant called THE KITCHEN. You have to gather all the ingredients and make your own meal. I have no clue how this place is still in business.
- 10) My body has absorbed so much soap and disinfectant lately that when I use the restroom, it cleans the toilet.
- 11) Day 5 of Homeschooling: One of these little monsters called in a bomb threat.
- 12) I'm so excited --- it's time to take out the garbage. What should I wear?
- 13) I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to Puerto Backyarda. I'm getting tired of Los Livingroom.
- 14) Classified Ad: Single man with toilet paper seeks woman with hand sanitizer for good clean fun.
- 15) Day 6 of Homeschooling: My child just said "I hope I don't have the same teacher next year"... I'm offended.
- 16) Better 6 feet apart than 6 feet under~Stay safe everyone- stay inside

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V'shinatam L'vonecha. Wednesday

04/08/2020 09:30:43 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim



Dear Friends,

As we are all bound to our homes, I hope you find this rendition of "Homeward Bound" to brighten your seder tonight. The original song by Simon and Garfunkel (for those who were at Latkes and Lights and remember Chip Rome's comments) is "my favorite song:-)"

Enjoy!

Rabbi Bruce Aft

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW YOUTUBE VIDEO](#)

Dear Friends,

As we approach the Seder tonight, I wish everyone a healthy, safe, and Happy Passover.

Tonight we have the opportunity to tell a story of hope. We remember that in every generation we are commanded to tell the story of our ancestors in Egypt. We are to view ourselves as if we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. This is an opportunity for us to raise questions that are on our minds now. We are all restricted in a way that is unprecedented in our lives. What questions has this raised for us? What opportunities have we been given that have provided new meaning to our lives? In what ways do the rituals of Passover express our current feelings?

What do the tears of salt water represent? How many of us know of someone who has lost their lives or who is sick with the corona virus?

What does the bread of affliction mean, as we know that many of our fellow Americans are now laid off and some of them may soon be struggling to have food to eat?

What does maror mean for us as we encounter the bitter blame game as politicians blame each other for the pandemic?

What does Haroset mean? What is sweetening our lives and what can we do to sweeten the lives of others? How many of us have treasured more time with our families? How many of us have been connecting electronically with people with whom we haven't connected in years?

What does welcoming Elijah mean to us as we welcome him to our seder but ask him to stay six feet away? The spirit of all our first responders and health care workers inspires hope about the potential of human beings to be selfless and save lives!

Four cups of wine or grape juice remind us of Biblical verses that describe moments of redemption which are a reminder that gam zeh yaavor, this too will pass and we can be redeemed from that which enslaves or limits us?

As we all search for hope, when we find the afikomen this year, what can we do to share our blessings with others? Afikomen, as we remember is the Greek word for dessert and is part of our seder to keep our youngest participants interested and engaged in the seder. What ways will we help others enjoy something sweet? Will you provide a meal for someone in need? Will you go shopping for someone who is older or shut in? Will you provide something sweet to a health care professional?

Finally, please see the following guide from a colleague of mine. (See below)

I hope you all enjoy a sweet Passover, a zissen Pesach, and some kind of virtual connection with people with whom you are close. If you are alone, please log in to our congregational seder on Thursday night at 5:30pm.

Hag Sameach and stay well. Please let us know if we can support you in any way.

Rabbi Bruce Aft

**Published on ReformJudaism.org
(<https://reformjudaism.org>)
10 Thoughtful Discussion Topics for Your Passover Seder**

By:

Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro

Somewhere during the course of your Passover seder this year – whether it's just you and your roommate, or with your partner and kids, or even with virtual guests joining you from afar – ask one (or all) of these questions and see how others respond.

Depending on your audience, the responses may be either serious or playful. Either way, you're guaranteed interesting discussion.

Think for a moment about the future of the Jewish community. Do you think your great-grandchildren will be sitting at a Passover seder someday? Why or why not?

Which symbol on the seder plate do you think is the most important?

What if the other proverbial bitter herb at the table is your brother-in-law or a family friend? How should such an individual be treated at the seder?

It is traditional for the youngest person at a seder to ask the Four Questions. If you were to create a new tradition for the asking of the Four Questions, who would you choose to ask the questions and why?

What do Passover and Easter have in common? (Think spring festivals,

eggs, and redemption, to start.) How do they differ?

Tradition says that Elijah the Prophet is supposed to announce the coming of the Messiah. If you could send Elijah to any spot on the globe to make the announcement of the Messiah, where would you send him?

If the president, your favorite actress, or a famous athlete (or any other celebrity you like) came to your seder, which symbol or ritual would you want to show them first?

Some people say the Ten Plagues are part of tradition and so they should be included in the seder. Others say the plagues lead us to inappropriately exalt in the adversities suffered by the Egyptians. Others say that Jews take a drop of wine from the cup for each plague, acknowledging that freedom was won at a cost. Do you believe in a God who punishes people? Would God slay the Egyptians' firstborn sons? What do you think? Should the Ten Plagues be part of the seder?

Do you believe we can eventually eradicate wars, poverty, and starvation? Or do you believe we will always be stuck in some version of these issues? How can we spread a more hopeful message and deal with the cynicism and self-doubt that sometimes accompanys conversations about changing the world?

What experiences in your life have given you hope? Tell about some struggle to change something that worked. What did you learn from it? What other discussion topics have spurred interesting conversation at your seder table?

Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro is the rabbi of Sinai Temple in Springfield, MA. He created "The God Survey" which was featured in Reform Judaism magazine in summer 2012. Rabbi Shapiro's love of Passover and its themes has led him to create many opportunities for creativity around the seder table.

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V'shinatam L'vonecha

04/07/2020 03:03:34 PM

Congregation Adat Reyim



Dear Friends,

A little lighter message to brighten your day.

Hope you are all doing as well as we can be doing.

Have a great Tuesday,

Well.....if this doesn't make you smile, then











Please let me know if we can support you in any way.

B'shalom and stay well,

V'shinatam L'vonecha

04/07/2020 09:30:13 AM



Dear Friends,

A little lighter message to brighten your day.

Hope you are all doing as well as we can be doing.

Have a great Tuesday,

Well.....if this doesn't make you smile, then











Please let me know if we can support you in any way.

B'shalom and stay well,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

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V'shinatam L'vonecha

04/06/2020 09:30:41 AM

Congregation Adat Reyim



Dear Friends,

As we prepare for Passover this week, I think you will enjoy these very meaningful poems by our poet laureate, Sherri Shunfenthal.

Have a good day, and please let me/us know if you need anything.

Rabbi Bruce Aft

The Sneeze

There was a sneeze
not large, not small
just a sneeze
that turned into a cough
somewhere in Wuhan China

and somehow that sneeze flew all the way
across the world
over oceans and seas
on airplanes, on ships

then pleas

to stop! Just stop! Coughing, sneezing, wheezing

People are dying.
People are scared.
Life is precious. A virus can't make it all the way here?
Can it? It can and did indeed.

We are all connected. Viruses hit

without prejudice regardless of religion,

economic status, political persuasion, age.

So instead of rage let's create a new day-
we are all connected. One small planet
the size of marble from space.
This time it is a race against a virus
Let's never make it a race against nuclear bombs,

or the end of earth due to climate change.

Rejoice. Be with family, organize your home, read a book,
look inside yourself. You have a heart, and ears and eyes,
a spirit and a delicate immune system
just like everyone else.

One small planet. All connected.
I hope this helps us find new paths to peace.

Sherri Waas Shunfenthal 2020

Miriam in the time of Coronavirus

Here in this time of Coronavirus, I better understand biblical Miriam.

She stood at the edge of the Red Sea and chose faith before fear could paralyze her. She walked confident, head straight into the Sea, women following closely behind. Safely ashore on solid ground, Miriam, giddy with relief and wonder, grabbed her timbral. Miriam led the women in song, dancing with unbound joy. Free! Not captive anymore! But in the midst of celebration, G-d admonished, "Do not celebrate while my people are dying." Sobering
Miriam realized the road ahead would be difficult and unsure. Mourn the past, remember all that was lost, move ahead into the unknown.

Soon my husband and I will be at our Passover table isolated from the rest of family, feeling captive by fear, praying coronavirus will Pass Over our family and friends. Longing to break free from fear, constant reports of struggle, illness and death. The world seeming paralyzed and unmoving, no longer spinning on its axis. We will remember Miriam who chose faith over fear. And at the end of our seder my husband and I will rejoice maybe sing and dance, say thanks we escaped the virus another day. Life will never be the same. We will remember those who are gone regardless of which side they are on, what age, what race. Passover: We celebrate and have faith while knowing the road ahead is unbalanced and unknown.

Sherri Waas Shunfenthal 2020

Please let me know if we can support you in any way.

B'shalom and stay well,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

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Rabbi's weekly message

04/03/2020 02:56:56 PM

Congregation Adat Reyim



Dear Friends,

So many things to deal with in our world today...So I am not going to kid you...we are an Adat Reyim of nervous people, a community of friends who are trying to make sense of the situation in which we find ourselves. However, I MUST tell you that in my 29 years of being your rabbi, I have NEVER seen the level at which people are asking me if they can help anyone and those who are doing special things for each other. Someone recently actually laughed at one of my jokes and I asked him why. He said that even I deserved to feel better:-)

Seriously, you have provided so much support to each other and I hope that as our current crisis continues, we will continue to be there for each other. NO ONE knows how long this will last and yet NO ONE knows how creative we can be in our ways to help each other.

Please see the note below which was sent to our religious school families that tells a story of something very creative that is making a difference. (See below)

We are taught that the greatest Jewish value is pikuach nefesh, saving a life. I hope that we will follow health guidelines in order to maintain our health. Some of us are a bit antsy and may want to "test" the limits of physical distance. PLEASE DON'T! Saving each other's lives also includes saving each other's emotional lives and make sure that your family agrees that whatever precautions you are taking will allow you all to feel good about your choices.

Finally, during this week when we are reading the Torah portion Tzav, we are reminded of the thanksgiving sacrifices during Biblical times which brought us closer to G-d. I hope that as we discussed on Erev Rosh Hashanah, we will count our blessings and give thanks for the connections we are making. Let's look at the new opportunities we have and give thanks for what we can do, rather than what we cannot do. A number of congregants have gone for walks at night and have remarked about the beauty of the stars. Sue and I walked around a local lake and felt the wind in our faces and paused to appreciate the beauty of fresh air.

As always, please let us know if we can do anything to support you during these unprecedented times.

I hope to "see" you at services tonight, tomorrow morning, Havdalah tomorrow night, the Women's Seder on Sunday afternoon, and the Passover workshop to help you lead your seder which will occur Sunday at 7pm. Please note the links below. And....please sign up for our virtual seder on Thursday night!

Shabbat Shalom and be safe,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

Note sent to religious school parents

Dear Friends,

We read the first part of Leviticus last Shabbat. We know that the little aleph in the first word can serve to remind us of each of our potential to make a difference.

Each of us can do little things that make a huge difference.

Please see the link below. I hope you will find this to be as inspirational as I did.

[Click here to view article](#)

To see all our reoccurring virtual programming please click here

Please let me know if we can support you in any way.

B'shalom and stay well,

Rabbi Bruce Aft

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