

TEMPLE BETH-EL OF GREAT NECK

SHEMA

שְׁמַע

SHEMA HAS BEEN LOVINGLY ENDOWED BY SANDRA ATLAS BASS

VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 2 | SPRING 2021/5781

Moving Forward

A Time for Hope

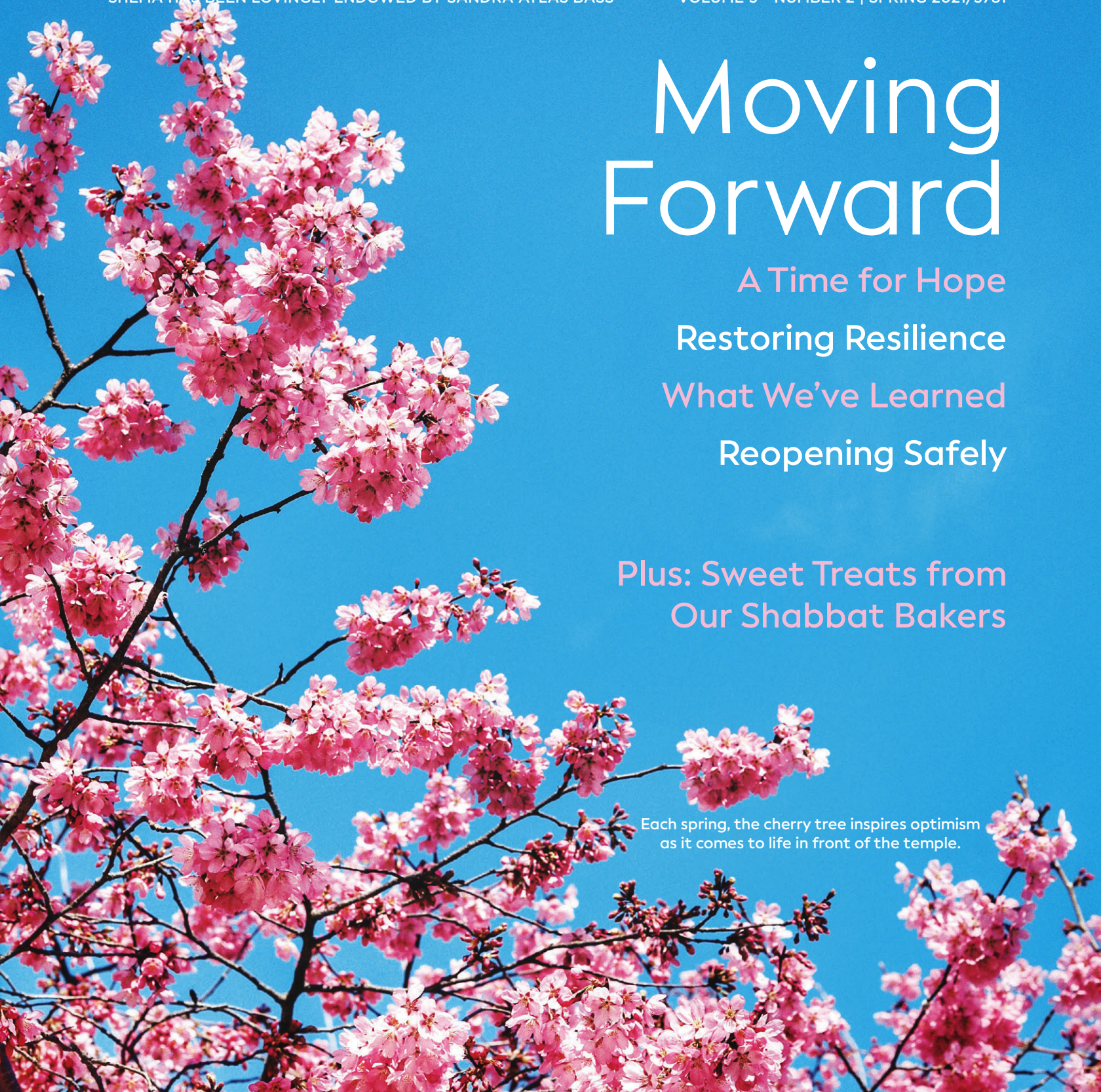
Restoring Resilience

What We've Learned

Reopening Safely

Plus: Sweet Treats from
Our Shabbat Bakers

Each spring, the cherry tree inspires optimism
as it comes to life in front of the temple.





WHAT A YEAR!

BY GARY SLOBIN, PRESIDENT

This has been a year like no other, and the theme of our spring *Shema* magazine focuses on moving forward from COVID-19. In this issue, Dr. David Podwall, chair of our Medical Advisory Committee, shares how our congregant medical experts are helping us plan to reopen the building safely.

Two of our High Holy Days speakers update us with sage advice. Dr. Maurice Policar, chief of infectious diseases at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst, discusses how vaccines are offering hope, and Dr. Victor M. Fornari, director of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry at Northwell Health, shares tips in "Restoring and Building Resilience in Our Youth." In each of their columns, our clergy members share the valuable lessons they've learned, as do several congregants in "Moving Past COVID-19."

Look for the adorable pictures of our little ones from Vicki Perler, director of

our Early Childhood Education Center, in "Enriching Outdoor Classrooms Offer Seasons of Memories." Find out about our new Netivot program for TBE student and family engagement by educator David Woolfe, and read about the success of our new joint religious school program with Temple Israel in "Kulanu: Powerful Educational Experiences in Person and Online" by Rabbi Amy Roth, director of Kulanu Religious School.

As Rabbis Meir and Tara Feldman plan to relocate to Israel in June 2022, we have begun developing our Rabbinic Transition plan. A Transition Committee is being formed, chaired by Executive Committee members Jordana Levine and Ronald M. Epstein.

During the first half of 2021, our congregation will be engaged in a series of discussions about the vision for Beth-El. The search will be held from

mid 2021 to early 2022, with the help of a search subcommittee. As we approach June 2022, we will express our thanks to the Rabbis Feldman for their tenure at TBE. Opportunities will be available to recognize their generous spirit, keen intellect and inspiring rabbinic leadership since 2009. We will welcome our new rabbi in mid 2022.

Several subcommittees will offer opportunities for our membership to be involved, from helping with focus group conversations to planning farewell events for Rabbi Tara and Rabbi Meir to creating welcome and introductory opportunities for the new rabbi.

If you wish to be involved in the transition efforts, please send your name and a brief description explaining your area of interest to sbotwinick@tbegreatneck.org. General offers to help in any way are most appreciated. 🌸

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BY RABBI
MEIR FELDMAN

What has COVID-19 taught me? That's the theme of this edition of the *Shema*.

I am happy to share what I have learned in this last year. But for starters, I have a request—please spend 107 seconds and listen to a beautiful song by Hanan ben Ari, one of Israel's beloved singer-songwriters. You can find the video with Hebrew and English subtitles at www.thejewishinsights.com/wp/hanan-ben-ari-gaaguim-livnei-adam/.

The title of the song is “Ga’agu’im Livnei Adam—געגועים לבני אדם—Longing for People.” It begins by reminding us how confident we all were before COVID-19.

“We thought we’ve already won it all
Made buildings that reach the sky
Man, who needs people?
Another flood won’t come nowadays.
We will never ever fall
Drop it, we’ll be fine on our own
Wise, correct and just
And nothing is above us.”

Hanan ben Ari is a bit of a prophet. Before COVID-19, so many of us felt

WHAT COVID-19 TAUGHT ME

that we could manage on our own. We could outsmart, outmaneuver anything.

Our buildings were so tall—and not just in space but in time, as well. We built skyscrapers in our calendars. Not a single brick of time was open; no crack appeared between our meetings and trips. No windows opened between social commitments and entertainment opportunities. Our calendars were strong and solid—completely booked.

We almost forgot about time—to be together, to be quiet, to be calm, to just be. I, for one, was determined that I could be everywhere and celebrate everything. I wasn’t worried about doing too much. But I was (and we were) wrong. The first lesson of COVID-19 is to *do* a little less and *expect* a little less.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel suggests that we Jews are unique in what we build. We Jews build cathedrals in time. Even more important than tall towers, strong structures in space, we build cathedrals in time. The first time in the Torah when God uses the word *kadosh*, sacred, is in sanctifying time—Shabbat, the seventh day. It isn’t a *building* or a person or a place that the Torah calls sacred. No king or castle, no sports stadium or vacation destination is declared *kadosh*, holy.

What is sacred for us Jews? Time.

Cathedrals in time remind me to expect less, to build less, to try to do less. As the great Jewish spiritualist Sylvia Boorstein put it: “Don’t just do something, sit there.” And who knows, if we expect less we just might receive more in return. Our fundamental COVID-19 lesson is about simple, soft, quiet, personal time with loved ones and with random helpers and strangers, as well.

Listen again to the song. Hanan ben Ari reminds us of something else: We’re wise. We’re right. We know the answers. We’re so darn certain, self-confident, maybe dangerously arrogant. We were fine, great, before COVID-19—and there was nothing higher than us.

“Until you came along
And infected us
And drove us mad
And confined us
And confused us
And frightened us
Who are you?”

Hanan ben Ari says that hidden within our madness, confusion and terror is hope, even blessing. What have we learned? Are more buildings, in time and space, the answer? Will more things cure our woes—solve the epidemic of fear and frailty, depression and anxiety?

“How you’ve brought back the sanity
Longing for other humans
The loneliness aches suddenly
We no longer fly from here to there
All the parks are closed
Weddings are almost empty
We’ve almost lost ourselves
We’ve almost stopped feeling.”

COVID-19—and Hanan ben Ari—have taught me, reminded me, about the one primary lesson. The best cure is the human bond, personal connection. Our *ga’agu’im*, our longing for people, is the greatest takeaway for me.

It’s time with our children and spouse or significant other, with parents and siblings and family. It’s time with friends who we haven’t seen. It’s the celebrations—and also the losses— together, with hugs and coffee cups. And it’s also the brief moments of kindness and care with the people who cut us a slice of pizza, pour us a cup of

coffee, hand us a newspaper or a bus pass and those who say hello to us on the streets. This is the lesson of COVID-19.

Try, try harder, to expect less. Our expectations were so high. As Hanan ben Ari sings: “We thought we’d won it all. We built tall buildings.” We traveled to every vacation spot, ate at every restaurant. But notice, the problem wasn’t really the trips, the buildings, the meals, the parties. The problem was more subtle—it was our expectations. We thought: *I have no choice. I have to go. I deserve this. I need it.* But it’s not true. It’s not healthy. We don’t need it all. We do have a choice.

Expect less, suggests Hanan ben Ari. And what will happen? We quite possibly will receive more—more goodness and kindness, more warmth and friendship.

The singer closes with this (maybe listen one last time).

“Soon this would all end
And I’m asking you, if I may
That on the morning, after you leave
We won’t be the same again.”

What is he saying? Are you clear? I’m not. What is his prayer? That we’re able to go back to the way things were—to the good ol’ days? Is he implying that we won’t be again as we were during this wretched year of COVID-19 or that we won’t be again as we were in the years leading up to COVID-19? The difference is important. What are we asking for? Hanan ben Ari has an opinion, an answer to this question, but he wants each of us to decide for ourselves.

What are your lessons from this year of COVID-19? 🕊

געגועים לבני אדם ארי בן חנן LONGING FOR OTHER HUMANS BY HANAN BEN ARI

כבר חשבנו ניצחנו הכל
מגדלים בשמיים בנינו
בן אדם, מי צריך בן אדם?
לא יבוא עוד מבול בימינו

We thought we’ve already won it all
Made buildings that reach the sky
Man, who needs people?
Another flood won’t come nowadays.

לעולם לעולם לא ניפול
תעזבו, נסתדר בעצמנו
חכמים, נכונים וצודקים
וכלום לא נמצא מעלינו

We will never ever fall
Drop it, we’ll be fine on our own
Wise, correct and just
And nothing is above us.

עד שבאת
והדבקת
ושגעת
והסגרת
ובלבלת
והבהלת
מי את?

Until you came along
And infected us
And drove us mad
And confined us
And confused us
And frightened us
Who are you?

איך החזרת את השפיות
געגועים לבני אדם
פתאום שורפת הבדידות
כבר לא טסים מפה לשם
כל הפארקים נעולים
חתונות כמעט בלי איש

How you’ve brought back the sanity
Longing for other humans
The loneliness aches suddenly
We no longer fly from here to there
All the parks are closed
Weddings are almost empty

כמעט איבדנו את עצמנו
כמעט הפסקנו להרגיש

We’ve almost lost ourselves
We’ve almost stopped feeling.

עוד מעט זה הכל ייגמר
ואני מבקש אם אפשר
שבבוקר אחרי שתלכי
לא נהיה שוב אותו הדבר

Soon this would all end
And I’m asking you, if I may
That on the morning, after you leave
We won’t be the same again.



BY RABBI TARA FELDMAN

ויט משה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּזְלַף יָהוָה אֶת־הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קָדִים עֲזָה כְּלִי־לֵלָה וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַיָּם לְחָרָבָה וַיִּבְקָעוּ הַמַּיִם: וַיָּבֵאוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בַּיָּבֵשׁ וְהַמַּיִם לָהֶם חֲמָה מִימִינָם וּמִשְׂמָאלָם:

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and God drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry land and the waters were split.

And the Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

—Exodus 14:21–22

From Passover onward, springtime challenges our expectations of the possible. If our people can walk through a sea on dry ground, then—perhaps—the world is not quite so narrow, not quite as limited as it may have appeared to be in Egypt or in the dark days of winter. As spring awakens into summer, we

LEANING IN TO THE IMPOSSIBLE

are granted the opportunity to let go of preconceived notions and to imagine what could be.

This year of living through a global pandemic has imposed incredible restrictions on us all. As we face the reality of COVID-19, humanity has been humbled. Yet, even with the heartbreaking toll that this virus has inflicted, the loss of human life and so much more, COVID-19 has opened new possibilities.

Like our people passing through the Sea of Reeds, we are experiencing an utterly new reality: new ways to connect; new ways to move through time; new ways to think about life, our priorities and our future. As in ancient times when we embarked on our freedom journey, we face the unknown and “lean in” to the impossible.

Personally, the pandemic has necessitated my remaining in Jerusalem, for an extended period, working virtually. (Even one year ago, who would have thought this was possible?!)

As always, I have been amazed by the ways in which Israelis confront the seas of limitation and seek to part impossible waters. The images shared here capture the essence of this spirit, which I have experienced in recent months. I share them to offer inspiration, as we continue to move through this challenging time.

May each of us find the strength and support to live with hope, opening our hearts and minds so that we can see the world in new ways, knowing that we will travel through this time together and emerge on the other shore with renewed perspective, resilience and gratitude. 🌸

Sleeping outside in a sukkah in Jerusalem pushes Rabbi Tara out of her comfort zone to experience the change of the seasons in new ways, to befriend a few mosquitos and to consider the impossible heights of the stars above.



As Israel leads the word in vaccination rates, Rabbi Tara and her son are vaccinated.



On Kibbutz Ramat Rachel in Jerusalem, olive trees—an ancient symbol emblematic of the Holy Land—are planted atop pillars.



“Wishing Tree” in a field overlooking the American Embassy holds a message of hope for the coming year: “A good year for all humanity, health and abundance without corona.”



Thousands of volunteers gather on Israel’s beaches to clean the devastating results of a late February oil spill in the Mediterranean.



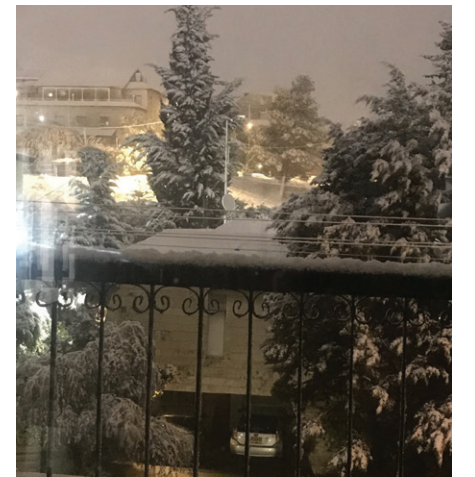
In the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, a human body floats upward.



A rainbow arches over Jerusalem’s skyline.



Volunteers remove remnants of the February oil spill.



Jerusalem was hit with a spring snowstorm.



Two weeks after this Jerusalem neighborhood was covered in snow, flowers bloom.



BY CANTOR
ADAM DAVIS

Every week, the Jewish people participate in an amazing ritual: *Kabbalat Shabbat*, the receiving of Shabbat. What is fascinating is that we don't receive a physical object but, rather, an idea. We welcome Shabbat in metaphorical language, of weddings and receiving a bride. We take part in this weekly wedding reception, an event inherently interwoven with joy.

Some of us are also aware of the similarly named Jewish mystical tradition, *Kabbalah*. Both share the same Hebrew root word—K-B-L—for receiving. It was, after all, the *Kabbalists* who created the idea of *Kabbalat Shabbat* from the book of Jewish mysticism, the *Zohar*, which centers on received wisdom. Thus, we find another, related and beautiful link between conceptual receiving in Jewish tradition—this time in wisdom.

Judaism does not overlook the importance of receiving physical objects. The idea at the center of reciting *brachot*, blessings, is to acknowledge the many gifts we receive every day. There's one thing of late that we have all been

CANTOR'S NOTES THAT WAS QUITE A RECEPTION

extremely aware of actually, physically receiving: a vaccine for COVID-19.

An interesting connection exists here, as well. We've all been overjoyed to see family, friends and members of our community receiving their vaccinations. Appropriately, we've even seen *brachot* to recite when receiving a vaccine. Why not? In Judaism, nothing is more precious than the life we have been given! As we hear stories of our community getting vaccinated, we are aware both of the amazing gift of life we have received as well as our joy for all the lives being saved.

There is another, more familiar gift we receive that is both concept and object in Jewish tradition: the gift of Torah. A *Sefer Torah* is, of course, a physical object—ink painstakingly handwritten on rolls of parchment attached to wooden staves. Torah, however, is also a form of received wisdom and the compiled generations of lessons taught to our people throughout the ages. It is not by accident that the root word of *Torah* is shared with that of the words for parent, *horah*, and teacher, *morah*. Torah is more than a book. It is inherited learning, passed down through the generations.

Torah, then, is not merely our stories, history and laws. It is a compendium of how to find our way through this world. It speaks to us and remains compelling, because in every generation we have turned it again and again to discover the relevance of its teachings in our own lives.

Temple Beth-El is incredibly blessed to have in its collection of scrolls one very special ancient Sephardic Torah, which we are honoring through the

Torah Celebration Project inaugurated in March. This amazing Torah has been a force for guiding the lives of Jews for more than 500 years, and we have received it into our community's loving arms.

It is incredible that we can connect to it and to Jews who lived hundreds of years ago, thousands of miles away, by receiving and immersing ourselves in the words it contains. What does it mean, *l'kabel divrei Torah*, to receive words of Torah? Or better still, *lasok b'divrei Torah*, to immerse in words of Torah? Or even greater, to find one's own word in Torah?

As our Torah Celebration Project unfolds, we will journey through classes exploring the exciting history of our ancient Sephardic Torah. At the same time, we will journey into our own souls, with the Torah as our guide, to seek out the words of Torah that give meaning to our lives. We can't receive those words into our hearts until we find them.

We look forward to taking that journey alongside you and for you to eventually experience this amazing Torah up close and personal, help you discover your *dvar*, your word, so you can receive it in your heart. 🕎

“We will journey into our own souls to seek out the words of Torah that give meaning to our lives.”

ENRICHING OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS OFFER SEASONS OF MEMORIES

BY VICKI PERLER, DIRECTOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF SPACE around the Temple Beth-El campus, the Early Childhood Education Center successfully created outdoor classrooms for each class. The opportunities for our young children to engage with nature were vast, and there were endless possibilities for exploration. The stimulation and creativity with friends outside provided all of us with strength and resilience, excitement, laughter and happiness—as we immersed ourselves in a world of wonder and new discoveries. ▶

OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS



RESTORING AND BUILDING RESILIENCE IN OUR YOUTH

BY DR. VICTOR M. FORNARI

Parents and teachers are faced with the challenging task of discussing COVID-19 with their children and adolescents. As these issues impact everyone, we need to be mindful of how to restore and build resilience in our youth during stressful times. The following tips offer valuable guidance for interacting with our children.

1. First and foremost, create an open and supportive environment where all children know they can ask questions. At the same time, it is wise not to force kids to ask questions or discuss issues until they are ready to do so.
2. Answer questions honestly. Trust is important now, in order to reassure your child in the future.
3. Gear your explanations to the age and developmental level of your child.
4. Help children find out accurate information from the Centers for Disease Control, so they know where the guidance is coming from.
5. Be prepared to repeat information as often as is needed.
6. Validate the child's thoughts, feelings and reactions. You could say, "I know that it's really hard not being able to go to your friend's house."
7. Remember that children will hear what is said, and they may worry about their own safety as well as the safety of others.
8. Be reassuring, but do not make unrealistic statements.
9. Children learn by watching their parents and teachers, and they learn from listening to conversations between adults.
10. Do not leave the television or radio on while the news is being broadcast. This may be frightening and disturbing.
11. Youth who have experienced serious illness or losses may be particularly vulnerable to prolonged reactions and may require additional attention or support.
12. Children who seem overly preoccupied or have significant changes in their functioning, such as changes in sleep, appetite or mood, may benefit from an evaluation by a trained mental-health professional. Ask your child's pediatrician or family physician for a referral.

Public health emergencies are not easy for anyone to understand or accept. We can help by listening and responding honestly in a supportive fashion. Fortunately, most children will be quite resilient. 🙏



Congregant Victor M. Fornari, MD, MS, is director, Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, and professor of Psychiatry & Pediatrics, Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell. These suggestions from the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry offer a follow up to his talk during Temple Beth-El's High Holy Days services.

KULANU: POWERFUL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN PERSON AND ONLINE



BY RABBI AMY ROTH,
DIRECTOR OF
KULANU RELIGIOUS
SCHOOL

each week. They attend Kulanu on-site at Temple Israel once a week, where they learn, pray and gather as a community.

Both Temple Israel and Temple Beth-El clergy are a presence as *tefilla* (prayer) educators for the various classes. Once a week, Kulanu students do a “deep dive” into Hebrew literacy, proficiency and practice with a semi-private Zoom Hebrew class consisting of two or three children per class.

The combination of in-person and remote learning affords the children the opportunity to connect with their peers and develop a sense of camaraderie with their classmates, chemistry with their teachers and individualized attention in Hebrew reading and prayer-book literacy.

Kulanu also has 15 children who are engaged in a fully remote learning

program. These students participate in the semi-private Hebrew Zoom classes as well as a once-a-week Judaica class on Zoom.

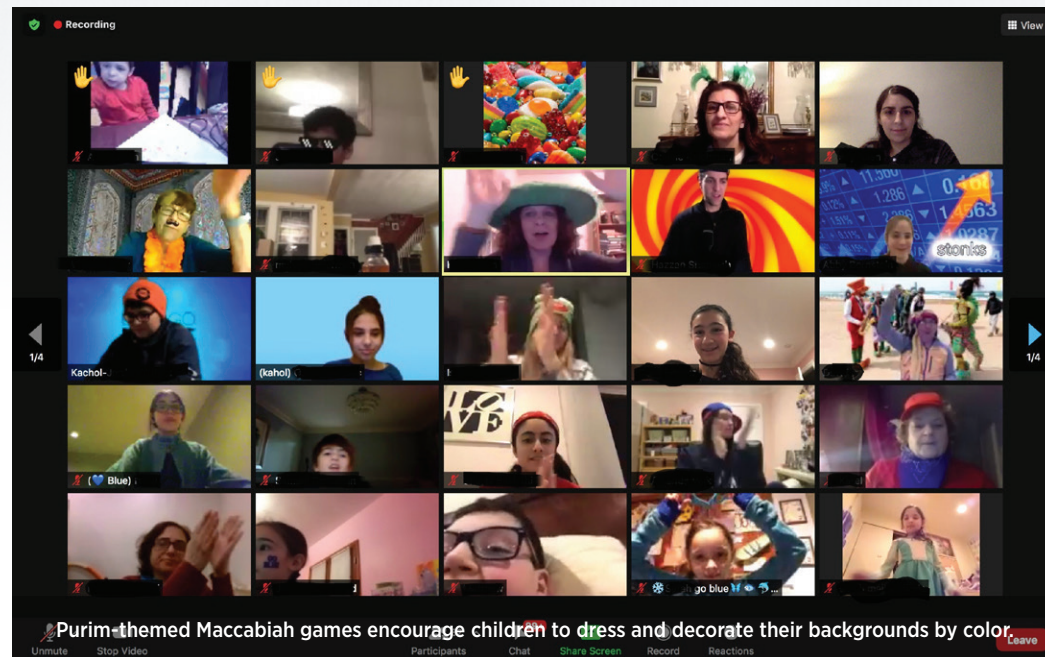
Our Kulanu Education Committee, comprised of lay leaders from both synagogues along with David Woolfe and me, was able to meet in person—outside, with masks and distanced—in the fall and has now transitioned to Zoom meetings.

Festivities foster engagement. Our in-person students celebrate Rosh Hodesh (each new Hebrew month) together, with spirit, music and fun. We learn about the upcoming month and its holidays, reinforce customs and values, and sing “Yom Huledet Sameach” (“Happy Birthday”) to those celebrating during that month. Of course, the students love the raffle prizes offered at each gathering.

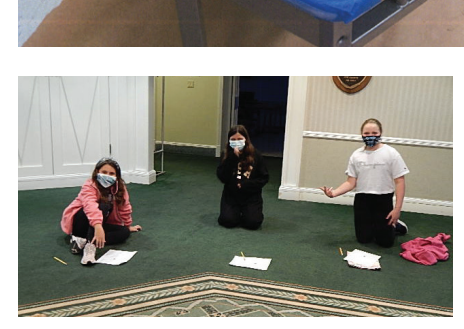
Kulanu Religious School, the new joint educational venture of Temple Beth-El and Temple Israel, became a reality this past September. Our aptly named school, Kulanu (which means “all of us”), fosters *ruach* (spirit) and love of Judaism through powerful learning experiences.

We kicked off the school year with an ice cream social in the Temple Israel tent. The Mister Softee ice cream truck, along with chalk art and socially distanced reconnecting, made for a delicious, fun gathering—the perfect way to start the sweetness of Jewish learning.

As part of our current COVID-19 reality, we made the necessary changes to our learning routines and environment. Kulanu children in first through sixth grades participate in two days of formal Jewish education



This page, clockwise from top left: Rabbi Meir lights Chanukah candles during a technologically engineered multi-location celebration. Cantor Adam leads some Chanukah fun. Sukkot is celebrated with the Lulav and Etrog. Gimmel children learn about Israelite slavery, as they reenact making bricks. Games and learning take place in all settings. The school year is kicked off with song and prayer. Pupils recite prayers over the Lulav and Etrog during Sukkot. Religious school students are welcomed to Kulanu with ice cream treats. Rabbi Tara shares an amazing shofar blast during the month of Elul.



For our Chanukah celebration, we utilized technology. Grades four through six gathered in two large locations, where we were able to see each other on a giant screen, and parents were invited to participate in our candle lighting via Zoom.

We celebrated Purim in a most unusual way, too. We held Maccabiah games (color war) for kindergarten through sixth graders with a Purim theme. Prior to the actual event, each child was assigned to blue (Esther) or red (Mordechai) teams. We gathered as a full community to kick off the event, then we divided up into age cohorts for scavenger hunts, trivia contests and art competitions.

Kulanu also includes our twice-a-week seventh-grade program, which is run by Avi Siegel, director of Teen

Engagement. This course of study is designed to foster connections and relationships and to inspire continued commitment to the program during these crucial adolescent years.

This new joint venture has proven to be an overwhelming success.

“Kulanu has provided a safe, nurturing learning environment during the pandemic,” says Gabby Verkman, a Temple Beth-El member and Kulanu Education Committee member. “My daughter’s Hebrew has improved extensively during this time.”

Lauren Juceam, a Kulanu Education Committee cochair and Temple Israel member, agrees. “Kulanu offers the best of both traditions, merging them under one roof into a Judaism that is vibrant, authentic and educational.”





OUR NEW PATHWAY FOR STUDENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



BY DAVID WOOLFE

“Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths (netivot) are whole.”
—Proverbs 3:17

When Temple Beth-El partnered with Temple Israel to form our combined Kulanu Religious School, our vision included bringing the power of Beth-El’s unique energy and gifts to that union. Our community’s mission has remained consistent with the call of the prophets—to deliver justice and to work continually toward the ongoing perfection of the world.

Our commitment to *tikkun olam* is a particularly important contribution to Kulanu. In addition to bringing social action content and opportunity to the Kulanu Religious School, we continue to fulfill our vision and commitment to our Beth-El students and families with the ongoing engagement and embrace of our temple community.

To further this commitment, we are excited to introduce our program for family and student engagement at Beth-El, with Beth-El clergy and professionals,

called Netivot. Meaning “paths” or “pathways,” Netivot is designed to foster relationships among school-age families, TBE clergy and professionals, as they journey the pathway to the b’nei mitzvah experience and into Jewish adulthood. Netivot are the pathways that we at TBE look forward to walking with our students and families.

Netivot, *tikkun olam* and the Kulanu Religious School are the pillars by which we educate our students and families, providing them with the tools for meaningful lifelong Jewish experience, engagement and learning at all levels.

SEVENTH GRADE

The Netivot program brings our seventh graders into Temple Beth-El each Tuesday evening from 5:30 to 7 p.m., where they are taught about Jewish identity, Jewish ritual participation and the skills required for significant text inquiry by Cantor Adam, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Tara and educator David Woolfe. Our goal is to use these learning sessions to train our students to become active Jewish leaders in all aspects of their Jewish lives and experience.

In many ways, the seventh grade is a culminating time in our students’ lives. With bar and bat mitzvah, they stand on a plateau and are able to envision a meaningful way forward into their Jewish adulthood. We look forward to standing alongside them—and then going forward with them!

We also recognize that for the bar and bat mitzvah experience to be truly valuable and meaningful for our students and their families, we must devote care and attention to the years preceding the seventh grade.

SIXTH GRADE

Netivot provides monthly family education for sixth-grade families. The programming brings together Temple Beth-El students and their families for Jewish experiential sessions designed to enrich Jewish learning and skills, strengthen the bond students and families feel toward TBE and hone the practical skills that our students will use as they prepare for b’nei mitzvah and a meaningful, engaged Jewish adulthood.

Our monthly programs are staffed by and designed to strengthen the relationship between our students, families and Temple Beth-El clergy and staff.

FIFTH GRADE

Like our sixth-grade programming, Netivot for our fifth-grade families seeks to create a learning community between clergy, staff and families. With learning projects and engagement, our experiential sessions will be meaningful for our fifth graders and their families. These programs will take place every six to eight weeks.

FIRST TO FOURTH GRADE

Families of our younger students will be invited to participate in one or two programs each year. These sessions will focus on home and family ritual experiences, making Jewish learning fun and meaningful for every member of the family.

Learning (*kulanu*), repairing the world (*tikkun olam*) and being embraced by a caring, loving community (*netivot*) are the commitments Temple Beth-El makes to our students and families. We share an incredible journey together. May all our paths be smooth! 🌟

KEEPING OUR BUILDING— AND OUR COMMUNITY—SECURE

BY STUART BOTWINICK

Safety and security have become an even more formidable responsibility of the Temple Beth-El of Great Neck leadership and staff during the past five years. The physical protection of our members and holy building—along with our virtual safety as many of our programs and services have shifted online during the pandemic—have required greater attention.

Fortunately, both federal and state governments have recognized the threat and have assumed the responsibility to provide financial support and guidance to nonprofit and religious institutions like ours. While these federal and state dollars are helpful, they are limited. We rely on our members’ annual commitment to cover new ongoing safety and security costs.

Some of Temple Beth-El’s changes and improvements have been visible to

all who enter our temple home. Key fobs and door codes are now required for entry. Throughout the years, security cameras and access-control systems have been added so that we are prepared for emergency situations.

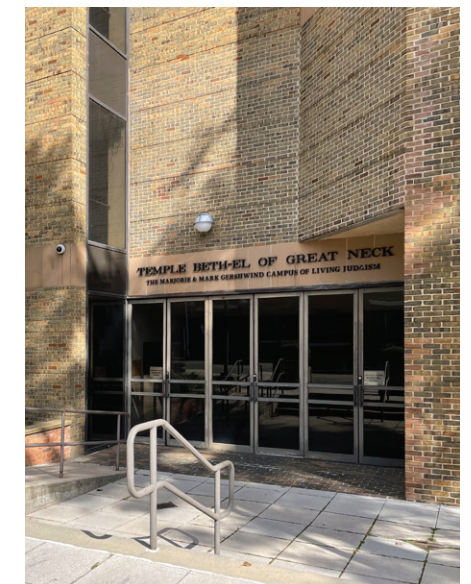
“These upgrades will not only strengthen our security but will provide an updated aesthetic to our entryways.”

To ensure that only the right people can easily access our offerings, we recently refreshed our mailing lists

and limited the sharing of online event links. Some of our safety protocols and preparations are less obvious and won’t be visible to most TBE members. These measures are meant to provide deterrence and protection.

As part of our ongoing plans to secure our building, several visible changes will be made to our facility this spring. Three sets of exit doors will be replaced: those near the original Old Mill Road Rudin Chapel entrance, the ones on our mezzanine level near the Rudin Garden outdoor staircase and the exterior lobby doors at the main sanctuary entrance on Old Mill Road.

These upgrades will not only strengthen our security but will provide an updated aesthetic to our entryways. Watch for these and other improvements as we continue to enhance our building’s safety measures. 🌟



As part of our ongoing plans to secure our building, three sets of exit doors will be replaced this spring.

REOPENING SAFELY WITH GUIDANCE FROM THE MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BY DAVID PODWALL, MD



Barbara and David Podwall share their medical expertise as part of Temple Beth-El's Medical Advisory Committee.

“Our committee will help guide what we hope is a modified reopening of in-person events at TBE.”

At the height of the pandemic when we were in lockdown, Temple Beth-El leadership began asking questions about how to reopen once it was allowed. This led to the formation of the Medical Advisory Committee, comprised of temple members who are physicians.

The medical doctors invited to participate represent various specialties and belong to different health systems. I head the committee that includes my wife, Dr. Barbara Podwall, as well as Drs. Elizabeth Mirro, David Sutin, Maurice Policar and Paul Levin.

Using our knowledge, as well as the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control and medical societies (some that I am privy to as a Nassau County Medical Society board member), our goal is to provide the best guidance to the TBE Board of Trustees.

Once Governor Andrew Cuomo allowed in-person events, the committee came up with a safety plan for participants and attendees of the June b'nei mitzvah and the temple staff. We reviewed protocols and determined what personal protective equipment would be needed.

The temple was able to significantly upgrade the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system with multi-spectrum ultraviolet germicidal irradiation lamps in the main sanctuary.

As fall 2020 approached and larger groups were allowed, we implemented detailed safety protocols to allow larger groups to attend both b'nei mitzvah and some general congregation events. These changes were evident to those who enjoy our services remotely, as enforced mask wearing, social distancing and the addition of Plexiglas barriers could be clearly seen.

One of our true success stories has been our Early Childhood Education Center. Under the leadership of Director Vicki Perler, the committee designed a safety plan that allowed our Early Childhood Education Center to continue in-person learning with minimal distractions.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon. Guidelines and best practices are constantly changing. By the summer, most of us may be vaccinated, and we anticipate easy access to point of care or home testing. Our committee will consider these issues in order to help guide what we hope is a modified reopening of in-person events at TBE in the months ahead. ❧

Congregant David Podwall, MD, practices general neurology with a subspecialty in neuromuscular diseases at Neurological Associates of Long Island. He is a clinical assistant professor of neurology at the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell and an attending physician at North Shore University Hospital and St. Francis Hospital.

VACCINATIONS: TIME FOR HOPE

BY DR. MAURICE POLICAR

More than a year after the explosion of COVID-19 cases hit New York, real hope for some control of this pandemic has finally arrived. Along with other measures, vaccines are the key to reclaiming our right to a more “normal” life.

The success of a vaccine is measured in various ways. Does it prevent infection? Does it prevent or reduce spread? Does it prevent severe illness, hospitalization and death? The great news is that all vaccines currently used in the United States are essentially 100 percent effective in preventing serious illness and death in those who are fully vaccinated.

Vaccines not only prevent illness and death but also greatly decrease the risk of asymptomatic infection and reduce the infectiousness of the few individuals who do become infected.

The available vaccines are amazingly safe. If you are eligible to receive one, there is almost no reason to decline it. Vaccines cannot cause COVID-19. They do not change our DNA and do not cause infertility. Serious allergic reactions to the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are rare and treatable.

The J&J vaccine is associated with a risk of serious blood clots in less than two persons per million. This reaction seems to occur mostly in women younger than 50. Now that the condition is better understood, doctors are able to provide appropriate treatment. It is important to put this in perspective: The risk of serious blood clots is much higher from COVID-19 than from the J&J vaccine.

A splash of cold water on the enthusiasm regarding vaccines comes from the appearance of virus variants. The most common source of new infections in the United States right now is the UK

variant, or B117 strain. This variant is 60 percent more contagious and 67 percent more deadly than the original virus.

That means this strain spreads more easily and results in more illness and death in unvaccinated people.

Infections in younger, unvaccinated individuals are resulting in more hospitalizations, even in those *without* other underlying illnesses. An increasing number of younger people are being admitted to hospitals with the coronavirus, more than during any other time throughout the pandemic. Although the spread of some of these variants is concerning, the strategy to vaccinate as many individuals as possible, as quickly as possible, is still the best way out of this pandemic.

Overall, the news is good, and things are looking better. We are all missing the connections that give so much meaning to our lives. Does this mean we can ease up and relax? At what point is it fine to say, “Forget the masks and distancing?”

People often ask me for advice about what activities are acceptable once vaccinated. The call for continued precautions seems to defy logic at times. We talk about how the vaccines can protect people, and at the same time we suggest continuing using masks and avoiding large gatherings. At this point, getting together with others who are fully vaccinated seems reasonable.

However, it is important to remember that we have repeatedly grossly underestimated the severity of this pandemic. Given the continuing number of new infections, hospitalizations and deaths, it is not yet time to abandon precautions.

One thing that the medical community has learned since the



beginning of the pandemic is that this virus can act in unpredictable ways. Factor in new variants, which spread more easily and may infect those who were previously infected or vaccinated, and the message about continuing the proven precautions makes sense—at least for now. The suggestions to use caution and be vigilant are well-founded.

I believe that it is our responsibility to be vaccinated when eligible—not just for ourselves, but for our family and friends, and for all those who are not vaccinated.

The concept of *pikuach nefesh* reminds us that saving a human life should take priority over everything. Each and every one of us has a responsibility to preserve the sanctity of life, our own and that of others. Please get vaccinated. Please help to spread positive messages about vaccination. Please continue to mask and distance (for now).

In the words of one of the great sages of our time, Dr. Anthony Fauci, “Now is the time...to care selflessly about one another.” ❧

Congregant Maurice Policar, MD, is chief of infectious diseases at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst and assistant professor of medicine at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. He enlightened the TBE community about infectious diseases during the High Holy Days.

MOVING PAST COVID-19

COMPILED BY SHERI ARBITALJACOBY

The coronavirus has changed our lives in many ways. Our time quarantining has not only taught us some valuable lessons, including what we previously took for granted, but will also change how we conduct our lives going forward. Congregants share what they've learned to appreciate during the past year and how they hope to embrace life after receiving the vaccine.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the pandemic, I learned:

- I will never take for granted the smallest joys of life.
- I am grateful that my beloved mother of blessed memory left us before this hit, as she was in a nursing home for four long years.
- I was able to miraculously reconnect with my very best friend after a period of 60 years, and we can't wait to see each other.
- Very, very special people contacted me after years of separation.
- My students were resilient and brought me joy each and every day—and continue to do so. Their daily thank yous made me cry.
- Miracles abound all around if you are vigilant enough to notice them.

—Linda Goldenberg



MAKING CONSCIOUS CHOICES

As a result of the pandemic, I've become more aware of my ability to make conscious choices for myself. With extra time on my hands, I've become more careful about the food I choose to eat. There's more time to prepare a shopping list and healthy meals. With so much more leisure time, it's become clear that my default activity of watching cable news is not the healthiest. Don't get me wrong, I still watch the news a lot, but I now have the time to select and read good fiction and nonfiction books, which I find much more relaxing. Exercise is another issue. Before the pandemic it was easy to just go to the gym. Now I have to be more creative to choose activities, usually walking outdoors, to stay in good shape. Once life returns to something closer to normal, I hope to continue to act on the lessons I've learned.

—Howard J. Herman



Throughout the pandemic, the TBE Writing Group has been meeting weekly on Zoom rather than monthly in person. Our online meetings have been the next best thing to being together. Our friendships continue to grow, and our Zoom gatherings feel natural. We appreciate seeing each other's faces without masks!

We feel that we've grown both spiritually and in our writing during the pandemic. Our Zoom meetings allow us to maintain contact, continue

WHAT REALLY MATTERS

enjoying and supporting each other, and acknowledging our talent for the written word. After writing our own responses to each week's prompt, our brains get sharpened a bit, as we listen to everyone else's interpretations and flow of ideas. We laugh a lot—and sometimes cry.

COVID-19 has taught us what really matters in life. We miss holding and kissing our children and grandchildren. Some of us are already making plans to see out-of-town family. We are more aware of the need to touch the people we love. Those of us who live alone have become better at enjoying our own company. Some of us have taken up new hobbies. Long phone calls have reconnected a few of us to relatives and friends who we lost touch with before the pandemic.

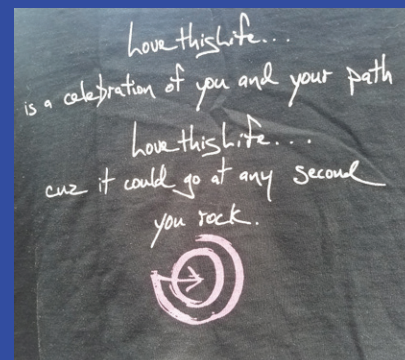
Only one of us got the virus. She was quite sick and later got ill from the vaccines. She is still working to

resume her healthy life. Her difficult experience reminds the rest of us how lucky we have been to stay well.

After both vaccines, we look forward to the spontaneous encounters and last-minute plans we've missed, such as dinners at friends' homes, trips to museums and gardens, and feeling safe. One member described her first manicure and pedicure as "unbelievable!"

Even for some of us who weren't sick, switching gears after all these months and getting back to our regular lives feels scary. We're confused by contradictory advice about what we can do safely. One member of our group expects to continue wearing a mask post pandemic. Masked or not, we all look forward to meeting in person; we even chose the brand of ice cream with which we'll celebrate that happy occasion.

—TBE Writing Group



—Submitted by Dr. Karen Siegel

LEAVING OUR NARROW PLACE

Barbara and I are blessed to have our children and grandchildren living nearby. Before COVID-19, we visited at least weekly. However, beginning in March 2020, we went months at a time without seeing them in person. Like many others, once vaccines became available, we spent hours on the computer vying for appointments, and our persistence finally paid off. With all the adults vaccinated, we were able to leave our *mitzrayim*, our narrow place, and join with our children and grandchildren for a Passover Seder. We are forever grateful to those at all stages of the process who brought the vaccines to us, and, with humility, we acknowledge the millions of people, including some of our friends, who have lost loved ones during this dreadful time.

—Howard J. Herman



GIVING BACK ON MITZVAH DAY

BY JAQUI WADSWORTH
DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL ENGAGEMENT



Volunteers come together to pack 40 reusable bags with snacks and lunch supplies.

Rabbi Hillel says, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?” These wise words teach us that while we have a responsibility to care for ourselves, we also have an obligation to care for others. Caring for others is exactly what more than 75 Temple Beth-El and Great Neck community members did for Mitzvah Day on Sunday, March 14. Individuals and families had the opportunity to give back in three different ways: through Great-Full food packing, Whitney Pond Park trail restoration and blood donation.

Mitzvah Day morning began outside the temple with hopeful words

of wisdom from Rabbi Meir and meaningful songs of joy from Cantor Adam. Afterward, our enthusiastic volunteers departed for different locations to begin their projects.

Great-Full food packing, an ongoing mitzvah opportunity that runs throughout the year, brought volunteers together to pack 40 reusable bags with snacks and lunch supplies—all of which are donated by a generous temple family.

The filled bags are brought to St. Aloysius RC Church in Great Neck and distributed to local families who participate in the free and reduced-cost lunch program through the Great Neck Public Schools. However, during school breaks the district does not provide

food, so our Great-Full program offers much-needed provisions—this time for the upcoming spring break.

The Whitney Pond Park trail restoration offered an incredible morning of physical and rewarding labor during the first steps in this cleanup effort.

“We have an obligation to care for others.”

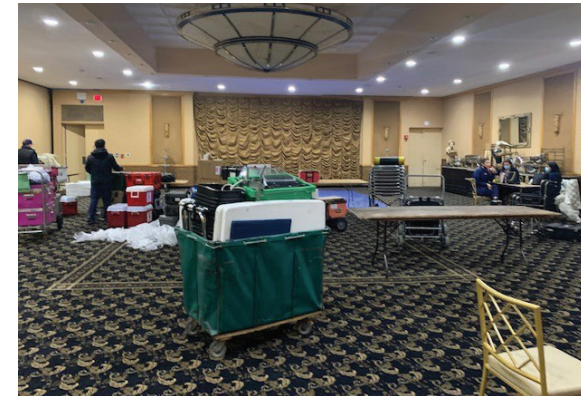
“Restoring the nature trail has been a dream for our Parks Department,” said Veronica Lurvey, councilwoman for the Town of North Hempstead, as well as for John Darcy, deputy parks commissioner for the town.

Temple Beth-El will continue to support this ongoing project with more volunteer opportunities in the future.

The blood drive could not have gone better. Held in our oneg room, 32 donors, comprised of Temple Beth-El and Great Neck community members, saved more than 100 lives.

This was the first blood drive at Temple Beth-El since 2013—and it will not be the last. We look forward to our next blood drive on Giving Tuesday, November 30. Plan to join us.

Social action work is an important element to Temple Beth-El and our members. The overwhelming turnout on Mitzvah Day made this clear. Thank you to everyone who participated. We look forward to seeing you all at our future social action events. 🌱



This page, clockwise from top left: Great-Full food packing is an ongoing mitzvah opportunity that provides much-needed provisions to local families during school breaks. Volunteers prepare to restore the trail at Whitney Pond Park. Trail restoration at Whitney Pond Park offers an incredible morning of physical and rewarding labor. Volunteers come together to pack 40 reusable bags with snacks and lunch supplies. Town of North Hempstead Councilwoman Veronica Lurvey (far right) says that restoring the nature trail has been a dream for the town’s Parks Department. Rabbi Meir and Cantor Adam welcome the volunteers. The filled bags are brought to St. Aloysius Church and distributed to local families. More than 100 lives were saved thanks to those who donated blood in the oneg room.

MEMBER PROFILE: GETTING TO KNOW GLORIA AND JERRY LANDSBERG



Jerry and Gloria Landsberg have belonged to Temple Beth-El for 35 years.

BY STUART BOTWINICK

GLORIA AND JERRY LANDSBERG have been members of Temple Beth-El since 1986. They have been married for 64 years and have four children, 12 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Executive Director Stuart Botwinick interviewed the couple for *Shema* magazine to find out about their special connection to our temple.

SHEMA: Tell us how you came to join Temple Beth-El.

Jerry Landsberg: This was the second Great Neck synagogue we joined. We moved here from Texas in 1963 and we wanted to join TBE, but there was a waiting list to become a member!

Gloria Landsberg: When our children were older, we finally joined TBE. We are still members at Temple Emanuel. We also have membership at Congregation House of Jacob in Wichita Falls, Texas. That's where I was born!

“People who have chosen to be involved will become connected.”

—Gloria Landsberg

SHEMA: How wonderful to be connected to the greater Jewish community. Please share more about that.

GL: I was the president of the Sisterhood at Temple Emanuel at the same time Marge Kurcias was Sisterhood president at Temple Beth-El. The Sisterhood groups were very friendly, and we held community-wide Sisterhood meetings and luncheon events together. Jerry and I have served on the TBE Board as honorary trustees for many years, too. Outside of the synagogue world, I have been a volunteer with the Helen Keller Center, since I am a certified

brailist. As a breast cancer survivor, I have worked with [what is now known as] NYU Langone to create a breast cancer prevention shower card. I've been involved with Hadassah for many years and they helped distribute the cards to thousands and thousands of people through hospitals and universities around the world.

SHEMA: We've seen those cards, we have some in the temple lobby and TBE's executive director even spotted one at his parents' house in Florida.

JL: I served on the Board of Trustees of Temple Emanuel for 20 years, and I've been a longtime Brotherhood member of both Temple Emanuel and Temple Beth-El. I've been on the board of Parker Jewish Institute since 1979, including serving as chairperson, and I've been on the board of the College of Nursing at Adelphi for 40 years. I was a trustee of the Village of Kensington and served as deputy mayor and police commissioner. I've also been a trustee of the Great Neck Water Pollution Control District since 2007, serving as both commissioner and chairman of the Board of Commissioners. I am currently the secretary.

SHEMA: You've been so involved—what incredible dedication to the community and the greater good! Thank you for all you have done and continue to do. What would you tell a friend who wanted to get more involved?

GL: When the waiting list opened for our membership, I was told that the temple was very “cliquey.” But I knew how to

break in—anyone can do it. Volunteer! Do what you say you are going to do. Volunteer again and again—and you are in the clique. It's about being involved. People who have chosen to be involved will become connected.

JL: We have been involved in a synagogue in every community we've ever been in, since we were dating.

GL: I got involved at Temple Beth-El when I asked Gale Sena about volunteering. Gale worked in the office, and I learned about turning on the Yahrzeit lights in the chapel from her. That was 30 years ago—and I'm still doing it.

JL: She's been turning them on ever since!

SHEMA: Wow! What an incredible mitzvah and responsibility. Does anyone else know how to do it?

GL: Yes, I taught Elaine Springer. Teaching others is important. She can reach the higher light bulbs, too. I've volunteered with many other things at the temple: teaching our religious school students how to bake, proofing the High Holy Days memorial booklet and providing general office help.

SHEMA: Any last words for our *Shema* readers? What's something you didn't realize you would find at Temple Beth-El?

GL: A second home.

JL: Yes, a second home. We look forward to being back in person with our temple family soon. 🕍



Clockwise from left: Soft lavender blooms line the Old Mill Road pathway. Vibrant buds welcome guests from the back parking lot. Flowering trees brighten the temple landscape each spring. Visitors are greeted by this beautiful garden, brimming with texture and color—even in October. Blossoms frame the entrance to Temple Beth-El. Sweet yellow tulips signal the start of the season.

PERENNIALS PROVIDE NATIVE BEAUTY YEAR AFTER YEAR

BY GAYLE MONASTER, BARBARA WEXLER, EILEEN WALK AND DAVID SUTIN, VOLUNTEER GARDENING GROUP

Spring is here! The time has come to dig out your gardening tools and get in touch with the earth again. What grows in your garden? Do you plant new annuals each year, spending money and time weeding, feeding and spraying? Maybe you should consider an easier, new vision.

Our Temple Beth-El gardens have been evolving into lower-maintenance beds filled with easy care, hardy perennials that bloom and return year after year.

Perennial plants require less water, are perfectly adapted to our native environment and are irresistible to pollinators like butterflies and bees whose natural habitat has been threatened by manicured lawns and non-native gardens. Alien to our area, these non-native plants are rejected by butterflies and bees.

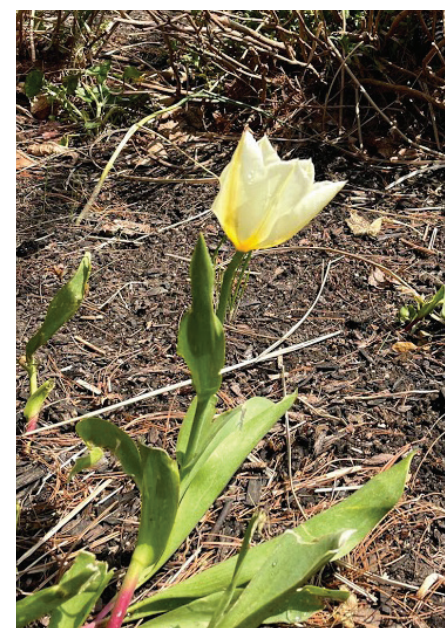
Native plantings attract pollinators, which are vital to maintaining healthy ecosystems, essential for plant reproduction and responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of our food.

The Volunteer Gardening Group has added some beautiful native plants to the TBE landscape. Look for the sedum, grasses, coneflowers (*Echinacea*), hostas and *Carex*. Many of the grasses are evergreen, adding interest in winter.

Our horticulturists aim for a garden that looks lovely in all four seasons. The volunteers hope that we will all soon enjoy our Temple Beth-El gardens in person together.

Take a look at your own garden. Maybe this is the year when you plant beautiful native perennials that are beneficial to the environment—and soothe your soul with their beauty.

You are all are welcome to share your time and expertise to help keep the gardens at our temple home beautiful. 🌿



PEOPLE OF THE BOOK: OUR TBE LIBRARY

BY STUART BOTWINICK

In 1931, S.R. Ranganathan proposed the Five Laws of Library Science, a theory of principles on how to best operate a library. These laws remain a foundation for public libraries around the world, even today as times have changed.

As public libraries evolve, our synagogue library must evolve, too. For generations, Temple Beth-El's library has served both casual readers of all ages as well as those exploring more esoteric Jewish scholarly works.

While the longer-term plans for the library space are to be developed, it is Ranganathan's fifth law, A Library

Is a Growing Organism, that begins our process. Under this law, we are considering growth, modernization, weeding and safeguarding.

Thanks to the efforts of Arlene Nevens, a temple member and a recently retired librarian, we have begun the process. A review of our content has started with a culling of our materials. Outdated books and those that are beyond their useful life will be recycled. Books of interest and value are being sorted and saved.

As our TBE building reopens, congregants may even find books to



Our Temple Beth-El library houses an extensive collection of Jewish books, which has served generations of North Shore readers.

purchase for their own personal library during a book sale. New mini collections will also be accessible in areas around the temple, such as in the lobby.

We invite queries, ideas and involvement, as we look for our Jewish library to best serve the People of the Book. 📖

BOOK REVIEW

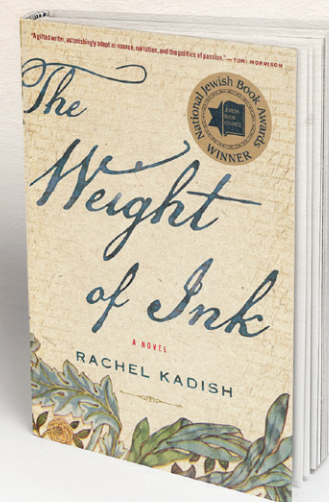
THE WEIGHT OF INK BY RACHEL KADISH

BY JENNIFER STILL-SCHIFF

Adiscovered artifact in ancient writing; a crippling pandemic; a female scribe: It sounds like 2020 here in Great Neck—but these are the surprising elements woven together by Rachel Kadish in her historical novel *The Weight of Ink*, recommended for lovers of language, Jewish history and texts, and mystery.

Readers of academic mysteries, such as A.S. Byatt's *Possession*, will find a familiar trope in the modern-day

characters—a mismatched pair of scholars working in London. Aaron, a young PhD candidate, is trying to prove something—anything—new about Shakespeare and is on the edge of despairing. Helen, on the verge of retiring, is an impatient specialist, whose worsening hand tremors make the painstaking work of exploring crumbling text a challenge.



When a large trove of letters and papers from the 1600s is found beneath the staircase of an old house, the two are unprepared for the complexity of their find. Not only are the letters from a Rabbi HaCohen Mendes, living in London in the 17th century, written in Hebrew, English, an archaic Portuguese and Latin, but references to Mendes indicate that he was blinded in the Inquisition. Close inspection shows that his letters are penned by a mysterious scribe who is identified on the bottom of each leaf as “aleph.”

The revelation of the novel is the rabbi's helper, Ester; a woman who desires learning above marriage and family is an oddity, if not a pariah. We are drawn into her life as she becomes an unexpected scholar and goes beyond the roles she was born for. As England suffers from the plague, her existence is more and more precarious.

If you are intrigued by life in another time, by examination of old documents and interaction of the contentious characters in academia, go find a copy of Kadish's novel and dig into this compelling story. 📖

Sweet Treats

COMPILED BY
SHERI ARBITALJACOBY

Before the pandemic, congregants regularly enjoyed baked goods after Erev Shabbat services each Friday evening thanks to our talented and thoughtful Oneg Mensch Committee members. Several of our bakers have shared a favorite recipe, so you can enjoy their desserts at home.

Blueberry Breakfast Cake

FROM SHERYL SILVERSTEIN GINSBERG

This recipe is super easy—and delicious. Everybody loves it!

INGREDIENTS

2 cups fresh blueberries (feel free to throw in a few more), rinsed and dry
1¾ cups flour, plus ¼ cup separated
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 tsp lemon zest or 1 capful lemon juice
⅞ cup sugar, plus 1 Tbsp to sprinkle on top
1 egg, at room temperature
1 tsp vanilla
2 tsp baking powder
½ cup buttermilk

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Grease 9-inch square baking pan.
3. Toss blueberries with ¼ cup flour; set aside.

Sugar Cookies

FROM DONNA GANZER

This Sugar Cookie recipe from my Aunt Josie might have magical powers. She lived to be 105!



INGREDIENTS

½ cup granulated white sugar, plus more for dipping
½ cup powdered sugar
½ cup butter, softened
½ cup oil
1 egg, beaten
1 Tbsp vanilla extract
1 Tbsp orange zest (optional)
2¾ cup flour
½ tsp cream of tartar
½ tsp baking soda



Sheryl Silverstein Ginsberg's Blueberry Breakfast Cake is simple to make—and oh so delectable.

4. Cream butter with lemon zest or juice and the ⅞ cup sugar until light and fluffy.
5. Add egg and vanilla; beat until combined.
6. Add baking powder and beat.
7. Add remaining 1¾ cups flour, a little at a time, alternating with buttermilk.
8. Fold in the coated blueberries.
9. Spread batter into pan; sprinkle with the remaining tablespoon of sugar.
10. Bake for around 45 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean.
11. Let cool for 15 minutes. Serve and enjoy.

Donna Ganzer's aunt passed down this special Sugar Cookie recipe.

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
3. Mix together granulated and powdered sugar, butter, oil, egg, vanilla extract and orange zest, if using; set aside.
4. Mix together flour, cream of tartar and baking soda.
5. Add the flour mixture to the sugar mixture in batches until well combined.
6. Make spoon-size balls of dough and place them on parchment paper.
7. Put the decorating sugar in a flat bottom bowl and dip a flat-bottom glass into the sugar for each cookie. Use the glass to flatten each ball and top it with sugar.
8. Place each baking sheet in the oven and bake for 9 to 11 minutes. Watch as the cookies crisp on the edges; they should be light tan when done. Repeat with additional baking sheets. ▶

Magnolia Bakery's Classic Vanilla Cupcakes

FROM RONIT PEARL

I discovered the most adorable bakery while strolling in the West Village one summer day in the 2000s. It was the Magnolia Bakery. Once I finally entered after a long wait on line, I saw beautiful, colorful cupcakes on display, along with the famous banana pudding—and, most importantly, people having fun. Right then and there, I decided I would start a new hobby—baking. It is creative, colorful and makes people happy. I got my first baking book, The Complete Magnolia Bakery Cookbook, and started baking for friends, family, work and later for onegs.

INGREDIENTS

CUPCAKES

1½ cups self-rising flour
1¼ cups all-purpose flour
2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
2 cups sugar
4 large eggs, at room temperature
1 cup milk
1 tsp vanilla extract

VANILLA BUTTERCREAM ICING

2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
6 to 8 cups confectioners' sugar
½ cup milk
2 tsp vanilla extract
Food coloring (optional)



Ronit Pearl prepares Magnolia Bakery's Classic Vanilla Cupcakes for an oneg. See if you can spot the cookbook on her table.

DIRECTIONS

- To make the cupcakes:** Preheat the oven to 350F.
- Line two ½-cup, 12-capacity muffin tins with cupcake papers.
- In a small bowl, combine the flours; set aside.
- In a large bowl, use an electric mixer on medium speed to cream the butter, until smooth. Add sugar gradually and beat until fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the flour mixture in 3 parts, alternating with the milk and vanilla. With each addition, beat until the ingredients are incorporated; do not over beat. Using a rubber spatula, scrape down the sides of the bowl to make sure the ingredients are well blended. Carefully spoon the batter into the cupcake liners, filling them about ¾ full. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted into the center of the cupcake comes out clean.
- Cool the cupcakes in tins for 15 minutes. Remove liners from the tins and cool completely on a wire rack.
- To make the icing:** Place the butter in a large mixing bowl, add 4 cups of the sugar, the milk and vanilla. Using an electric mixer on medium speed, beat until smooth and creamy, about 3 to 5 minutes. Gradually add the remaining sugar, 1 cup at a time, beating well after each addition, about 2 minutes, until the icing is thick enough to be of good spreading consistency. You may not need to add all the sugar. If desired, add a few drops of food coloring and mix thoroughly.
- Ice cupcakes.

Note: The vanilla buttercream used at the bakery is technically not a buttercream but an old-fashioned confectioners' sugar and butter frosting. The icing can be prepared in advance and stored in an airtight container for up to 3 days at room temperature, as it will set if chilled. Be sure to beat the icing for the precise time indicated in the recipe to achieve the desired creamy texture.

Honey and Apple Walnut Tart

FROM ROBERTA LULOV

The apples and honey make this tart the perfect dessert to bake for Rosh Hashanah.

INGREDIENTS

CRUST

1½ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cups walnuts, finely chopped
4 oz butter, at room temperature
1 egg, beaten
2 Tbsp honey
2 Tbsp granulated sugar
⅛ tsp salt

FILLING

½ cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
¼ tsp cinnamon
2 Tbsp honey, divided
3–4 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
1 Tbsp butter

GLAZE

¼ cup apricot preserves
¼ cup honey

DIRECTIONS

- To make the crust:** Place all crust ingredients in a large bowl and rub them together with your fingertips. Gather up the pieces and form the dough into a ball. Press the mixture onto the sides and bottom of a 10-inch tart pan with a removable bottom.
- For the filling:** Toast the walnuts in a 350F oven for 7 minutes, shaking the pan once or twice, until lightly browned.
- In a small bowl, immediately toss the walnuts with the cinnamon and 1 tablespoon of the honey; set aside.
- Arrange the apple slices in two circles on the pastry dough. Drizzle apple slices with the remaining honey and dot with butter.
- Bake for 45 to 50 minutes at 350F, until apples are tender. If the crust begins to brown, cover the tart with aluminum foil.
- To make the glaze:** Heat the apricot preserves and honey, stirring until combined. Strain out the solids.
- Brush the glaze on top of the apples, arrange the walnuts around the edge of tart. Slice and enjoy.



Roberta Lulov frequently prepares this Honey and Apple Walnut Tart for a sweet new year.

Mandelbrot

FROM LINDA DIAMOND

I think of my dad when I bake my mandelbrot. In the later part of his life, he loved to bake this traditional Jewish dessert.

INGREDIENTS

3 eggs, beaten
¾ cup sugar
¾ cup oil
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp vanilla
2½ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup dry-roasted pistachio nuts
1 cup dried cranberries

DIRECTIONS

- Grease a cookie sheet; set aside.
- Place all ingredients into a large mixing bowl, and combine with a wooden spoon. The mixture will get very thick when the flour is added.
- Form the batter into 2 loaves, 1-inch high and 3-inches wide, and place loaves on greased cookie sheet.
- Place the cookie sheet into a cold oven, and set to 350F.
- Bake for about 35 minutes, or until golden brown.
- Remove the cookie sheet from the oven; let sit for 5 minutes.
- Cut the mandelbrot into ½-inch slices with a serrated knife. Place slices on their side on the cookie sheet. Turn off the oven, and place the cookie sheet in the oven for a few hours or overnight. 🥰

Linda Diamond has perfected this traditional Mandelbrot recipe over the years.



AGATHA SCHVITZY IN FRIGHT AT THE JEWSEUM! INFLICTED BY LEN SCHIFF

Two days ago, Agatha Schvitzky woke up from strange dreams to discover herself in a parallel universe where everything was more Jewish! Having seen the titles of her favorite mysteries and Broadway shows transformed, she continues to explore this brave *nu* world.

This is ridiculous, thought Agatha, as well as impossible, contrived and not a little meshuga! What could be causing this? Maybe I'll find some answers in the City Art Museum.

But all she found were more questions, as she learned that even the building's stately granite walls couldn't keep out a pun.

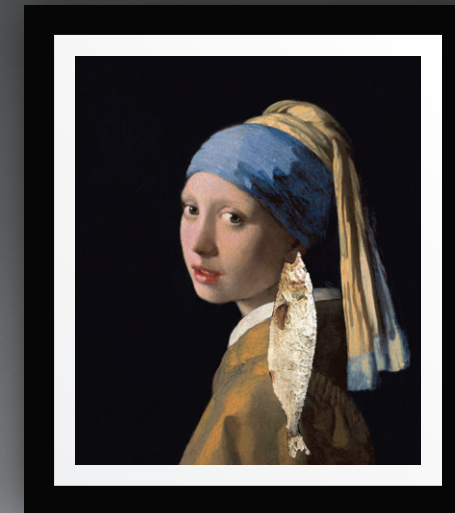
On the next two pages, you'll find seven of these suddenly Semitized works of art, along with their original titles. Based on the changes, can you figure out their new names? 🕒



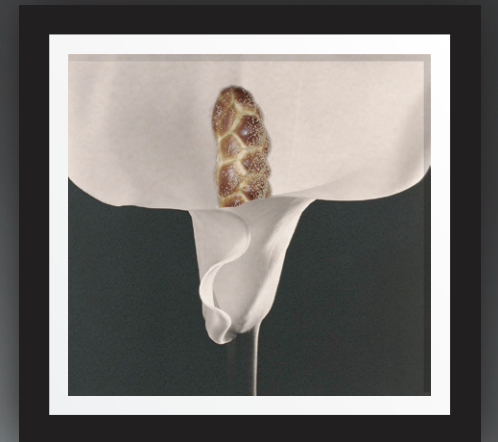
"The Birth of Venus," by Sandro Botticelli (c. 1484–1486)



"The Kiss," by Gustav Klimt (1907–1908)



"Girl with a Pearl Earring" by Johannes Vermeer (1665)



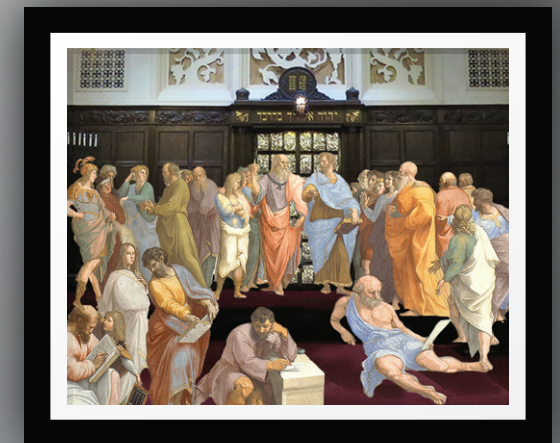
"Calla Lily," by Robert Mapplethorpe (1988)



"The Lady of Shalott," by John William Waterhouse (1888)



Arrangement in Black and Grey No. 1" aka
"Whistler's Mother," by James McNeill Whistler (1871)



"The School of Athens," by Raphael (1511)

ANSWER KEY
FROM TOP LEFT: "B'nai B'rith of Venus,"
"The Knish," "Girl with a Pearl Herring,"
"Challah Lily," "The Lady of Shabbat,"
"Whistler's Maror," "The Shul of Athens,"



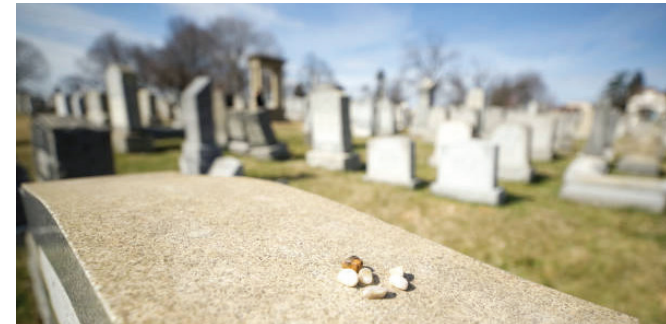
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PREPLANNING AT BETH MOSES CEMETERY



In our tradition, when saying “Happy Birthday,” people may wish their loved ones the blessing that they live to be 120 years old. Few will see this age, and everyone will one day face the reality that our earthly journey will come to an end.

The sages of the Midrash, the early interpreters of the Torah, had important wisdom for thinking about our end of days. In fact, they advise us to purchase a burial plot even while we are still alive and well. It is sometimes said that doing so will actually bless one with a long life. On a more practical level, purchasing a grave avoids a burden for a loved one. Sometimes this is a parting gift to those around us.

Our Temple Beth-El family is blessed to have its own sections of the Beth Moses Cemetery in Farmingdale. In the coming year, the purchase price for our plots will increase as we continue investing in care and upkeep of the property.

Please consider purchasing graves for your family. Plots are only available for purchase by temple members, but can be used for your extended family. Single graves are available, and there are also plots for any number of graves, including 20+. Stuart Botwinick, our executive director, is happy to tour the grounds with you.

For additional information, please contact Joy Palevsky in the main office at jpalevsky@tbegreatneck.org or 516-487-0900, ext. 110. 🇮🇱

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To my friends at Temple Beth-El
Happy Spring!

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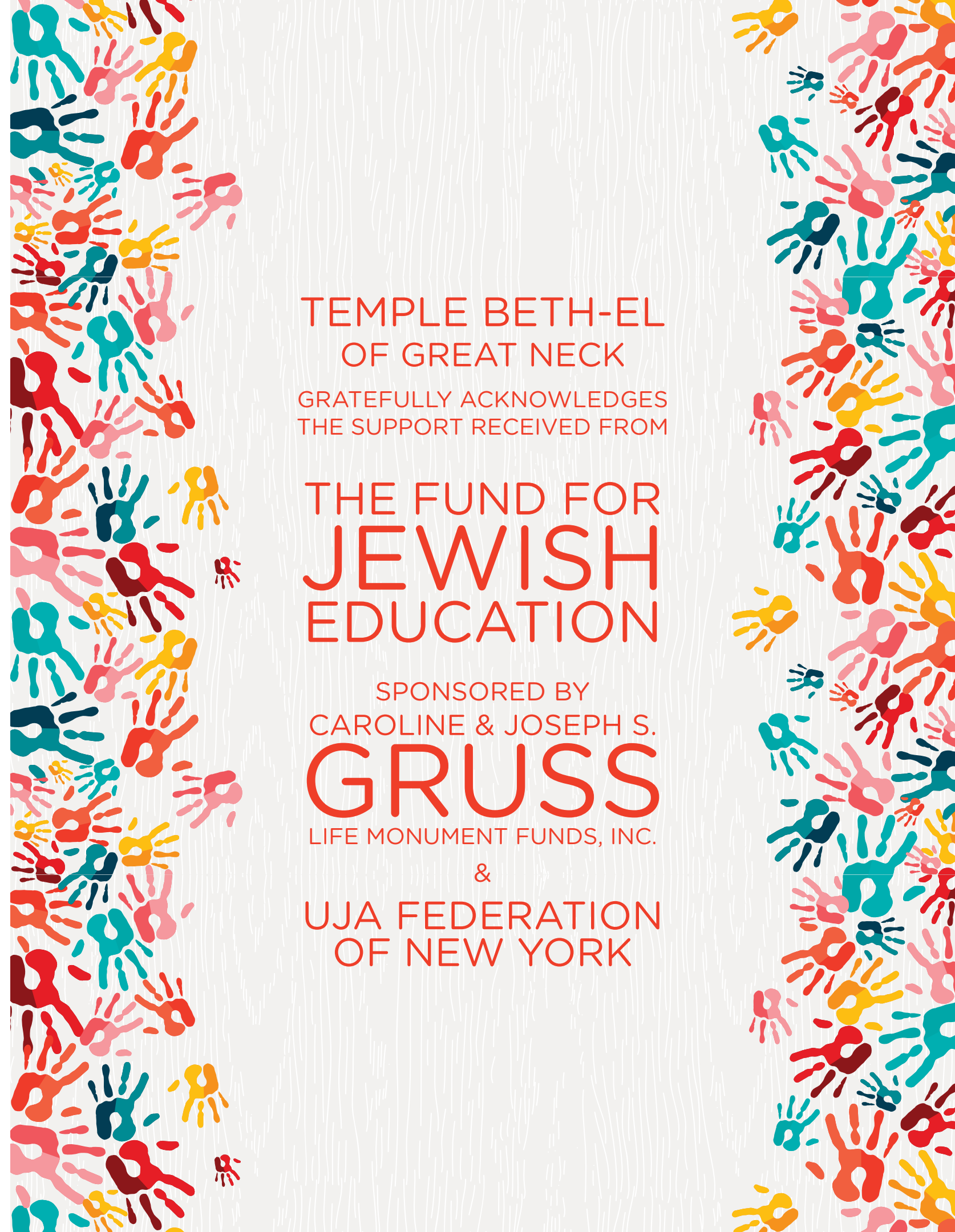
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UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

Have you received a Happy Birthday or Happy Anniversary message from the temple, heard from us for a lifecycle event—or has someone phoned to ask how you are? If not, please update your home address, phone number and email at info@tbegreatneck.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Temple Beth-El is Great Neck's **first synagogue** and the largest home to liberal Judaism in our community. **Our temple is changing lives now—and building toward a strong future.**

Today **Our Annual Campaign**, the Eternal Light Initiative (ELI), is vitally important to the synagogue, ensuring the delivery of our day-to-day programs and wide-ranging services throughout 2021–2022.

TEMPLE BETH-EL OF GREAT NECK

Who We Are



15

TriBEs have been connecting regularly, building strong bonds within our TBE community, through these small groups.



16th

century Sephardic Torah inspired this year's Torah Celebration Project.



200

K to 12th grade students are learning and growing in our Kulanu Religious School, a partnership with Temple Israel.



300+

pieces of medical equipment from our lending program will help those in need and uninsured.



500+

Chesed Caring and Kaddish calls were made to congregants facing loneliness, illness or loss. More are being made every week!



600

families from across Nassau County and Queens—and even some from out of state!—call Temple Beth-El home.



1,000s

of pounds of nutritious food were delivered to the Interfaith Food Pantry at St. Aloysius RC Church by TBE Brotherhood.



6,000+

online views of Shabbat, Havdalah and tot Shabbat services as well as adult master classes have been enjoyed since the pandemic began.

Tomorrow

What will be your legacy?

In Jewish tradition, on the Yahrzeit date (the anniversary of someone's passing), we remember and read the names of loved ones who came before us.

Beyond a Yahrzeit, we are so honored that every year TBE members pledge to be remembered for their ongoing impact, well beyond their lifetime.

A bequest is one of the easiest and most significant ways to leave a legacy. Even if you're someone of modest means, your gift can go a long way.

Naming Opportunities

Consider having your name or that of a loved one added to a temple space, a meaningful program or the title of a clergy position at TBE. A memorial, a gift to the temple, can ensure the perpetuation of our Jewish community and tie a special name to something holy and important.

Every Gift Matters

Can we count on you?

Learn more by contacting Stuart Botwinick, executive director, at 516-487-0900.