Celebrating our 69th year

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FROM THE RABBI’S STUDY
Rabbi Jonah Layman

SHAVUOT AMIDST A PANDEMIC

Over 3,000 years ago our Israelite ancestors left Egypt and began their march toward the Promised Land. On the first day of the third month they arrived at Mt. Sinai. Moses was commanded by God to prepare the Israelites for God’s revelation. They had to become ritually clean – husbands and wives needed to be separated – and they needed to keep a distance from that holy mountain. On the sixth day of the month, the mountain shook; there was thunder and lightning; shofars blasted; and God spoke the 10 commandments. The entire community of Israel thus experienced the revelation of God at Mt. Sinai.

Every year since then, on the sixth day of the month of Sivan, Jews celebrate the holiday of Shavuot as the season of the giving of the Torah to commemorate that awesome event. We spend the first night of the holiday in study sessions to relive the experience of receiving the Torah; we go to shul and read that section from the Torah that describes that remarkable event; and we eat dairy food because the sweetness of the blintzes remind us of the sweetness of the Torah.

But will we be able to come together for Shavuot? That still is as yet unknown. As of now Gov. Hogan’s mandate of limiting ourselves to groups of less than 10 is in force until the end of April. Will that mandate continue through May? Will the effects of the virus have cleared enough to allow us to gather again? It is unclear. However, what is clear is how strong our community is. Just as Israel came together as one to receive the Torah, we have come together to strengthen one another and support one another.

Our Chesed committee is still quite active ensuring that you stay connected and receive the support you need. We helped over a dozen of our members receive a seder meal last month, and many of our members called one another to stay connected. If you need support, please don’t hesitate to contact me so that we can help you.

We have provided our services and classes by live-stream and ZOOM so that you could still be spiritually and intellectually uplifted. I have been impressed by the numbers of our members who have taken advantage of the technology. We will continue to do this as long as is necessary so that we can fulfill our desire to pray and to learn.

Our community has shown that we can endure. We have shown that we can be resourceful and that despite the overwhelming devastation of the virus, we have remained resilient and strong. Let us, this Shavuot, proclaim again with one voice that we will continue to find strength and inspiration from the Torah. May we continue to stay strong and healthy. Rabbi Jonah Layman

This doesn’t mean today what it meant to me, and probably you, and most everyone growing up. Of course, today it is the way we communicate in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, not the sound a race car makes around a track or the sound of a rocket heading into space. It is a way to communicate, but it’s also more than that. We can communicate by phone, email, text, or good ole fashioned letter/note writing. Zoom allows us to be with each other, even when we can’t be with each other (physically). It allowed families and friends to “be at the seder together,” to have a happy hour with friends in your living room rather than your local bar or restaurant, AND...

It has allowed us, members of Shaare Tefila, to feel like a community again. I think those of us who have “zoomed in” to a class or a meeting or, recently, were able to “attend” our Holocaust Memorial service and Rita Rubinstein’s captivating story of her experiences and her survival, felt that sense of community. Those experiences allowed us to be a community and to be together, despite the distance.

Rabbi Layman announced at the “Zoom” minyan on Tuesday, April 21, requested by Ira Kolmaister so he could say Kaddish for his father, that Shaare Tefila’s religious committee decided to have evening minyanim again, 7 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays – by Zoom.* I thought it fascinating and quite telling that at the end of the Holocaust Memorial service and at the end of minyan on April 21, most people stayed on; they didn’t “leave meeting” when the event ended, but lingered, adding comments, poignant and uplifting poems, and just chatting, albeit briefly.

So, thank you Ira, the religious committee, Rita, and Rabbi Layman for giving us more opportunities to Zoom in and be together as a community. It was a good feeling.

*I, personally, will notify Jeff Savage, a high school classmate of mine (who also happens to share my birthdate) and, although I never realized it before, May Savage’s son. May, a very sweet, ever upbeat woman, who was a steady presence at Shaare Tefila, died April 14, 2020, of Covid-19. There was a 2-hour Zoom shiva facilitated by Congregation Beth Evergreen in Evergreen, Colorado, where May’s daughter, Cindy, and family, are members, according to an article in Jeff’s local newspaper in California, The Press Democrat.
Due to the order by Governor Hogan to stay at home and limit the number of people at any gathering, the programming originally planned in person for the month of May has been canceled. There will be ways you can come together with online programming through Zoom, including the classes with Rabbi Layman that are listed below.

- Join Rabbi Layman for one of these ongoing classes:
  - Torah: Fridays – 9:30 am-10:30 am
  - Talmud: Sundays - 9:30 am-10:30 am
  - Prayer Book Hebrew: Sundays – 10:30 am-11:30 am
  - Check In and Study: Wednesdays – 11:00 am-Noon
- Stream our Shabbat services at 6 pm Friday evenings & 9:30 am Saturday mornings, using this link. You can also join the Friday evening service by Zoom here
- Begin getting ready for Shavuot (begins on the evening of May 28 & concludes at sundown on May 30) with these sources:
  - Shavuot 101 from My Jewish Learning
  - Recipes for the holiday on kosher.com
  - The Israel Museum in Jerusalem has a virtual tour here.

On April 19 Morah Mara Lansky held a virtual Gan Katan session. A great time was had by all who ‘attended’! Earlier in the month, Mara sent a Pesach craft to all families with young children; a photo example is below. There will be a virtual Mini Minyan & another Gan Katan coming up in May too!

B’NAI MITZVAH AT SHAARE TEFILA

Elliott Ian Goldstein will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Shabbat May 2, Parshat Acharei Mot - Kedoshim

Elliott Ian Goldstein is a proud sixth grade student at Rosa Parks Middle School in Olney. He loves spending time with his friends. His favorite classes are math, technology and design. When he is out of school, Elliott loves to play and watch soccer, particularly his favorite English Premier League team, Tottenham Hotspur. Elliott also loves dogs, so his mitzvah project is doing volunteer work at the Montgomery County Humane Society in a program where he will read to dogs who have not yet found their forever homes. He will combine his compassion and his love of animals to give back to those who need the most care. Elliott and his family joined Shaare Tefila when he was eight, and he feels so lucky to have made such wonderful friends and to have such a great support system.

Our last Shabbat dinner of the year is scheduled for June 12, the annual BBQ and Board Installation. We are working on creative ways to make sure we can celebrate our community at this event so be sure to stay tuned!

L’Shalom,
Babette
Since the onset of shelter-in-place mandates, each day there is counting: numbers of those infected or dead, measures of “PPE” lacking and sought, ventilators being shipped or not, amount and kind of tests required before a cohesive plan can be constructed to re-enter our lives. At home, we count paper products, days we can go before needing to re-order food or enter a grocery store, how many minutes before cabin fever sets in or a child asks for the ‘X’ time when he can have a playdate again....

I am likewise counting, in Jewish time – Counting the Omer. A blessing is said every evening, followed by the appropriate day of the count, then the number of the weeks thus far counted. The daily count is but part of the ritual; each day provides an opportunity to do spiritual practice. This year my focus is what it takes to cultivate a wise heart*.

In Pirkei Avot, Ben Zoma writes, “Who is wise? One who learns from every person.” Each day of the Omer count I begin with this teaching and see where it leads me. From my cousin Miriam, teaching online to college math students while caregiving for her elder mother whom she moved in to live with her, I learn gevurah sheh b’chesed, strength in lovingkindness. While self-checking out at Giant, an employee comes over, wipes down my cart, asks me if I am in need of toilet paper because a shipment is about to be put on the shelf; she offers to go bring me a package. I thank her for showing up to work and in the spirit of zirutz, enthusiasm and kindness. My brother-in-law chef Michael, spends his days cooking now for those without food - having lost jobs - just as he has. He embodies nedivut and rachamim, generosity and compassion. All healthcare workers, public servants of all stripes risking their health for us and our loved ones, all show ametz lev, courage and achatruyt, responsibility. When I approach my Omer practice with zehirut, mindfulness, there is abundant learning to inform my heart every day.

Long ago our ancestors left slavery in Egypt and entered a wilderness of uncertainty that tested their spiritual mettle. So too this pandemic tests ours. While we cannot know its duration, I want this time “to count” spiritually. Tikkun Atsmi (Repair of Self) in the service of Tikkun Olam. (Repair of the World.) “Teach us to number our days so that we may attain a heart of wisdom.” (Psalm 90)

* I am Counting the Omer with The Mussar Institute.
You can check it out at https://mussarinstitute.org/omer-learning-program/
Dear Shaare Tefila Community,

Thank you so much for your support, kindness and generosity as I became a Bar Mitzvah. You all helped make it meaningful and special. It was so important that we were all together, especially now that we all have to be separate.

Sincerely,
Jacob Nathan Lansky
Our Minyan serves the Olney community every day of the year. Communal prayer is held mornings (Shabbat at 9:30 am, Sunday at 8:45 am, and Monday and Thursday at 8:00 am) and weekday evenings (Sunday – Thursday 7:30 pm) and Friday at 6:00 pm. We depend on our membership support to deliver these services, and people are asked to accept their responsibility to attend in the evening on a rotational basis. All members are encouraged to join in prayer as often as possible. The upcoming schedule is below, with the name of each week’s captain in bold. Please fulfil your Shaare Tefila responsibility even if there is a Minyan in a house of mourning. If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend the evening minyan during your assigned week, we ask that you informally switch with another member and inform your Captain. We will also welcome advance information about vacation plans and can adjust your assignment accordingly. Occasionally, we change the time on legal holidays. Your Minyan Captain will contact you if there is any change.

May 3 - 7  
Team #11  
Betsy Morgenstern  
301-236-4258  
betsybab@aol.com  
Perry Sandler Co-Captain  
Ellie Alpert  
Joseph & Judith Bass  
Betsy Colbert  
Joel & Sandra Friedman  
Adam & Rachel Glaser  
Sylvia Glaser  
Phil Goldman  
Shelley Rochester  
Mel Kornspan  
Gary & Stacy Levine  
Joel & Phyllis Lowinger  
Shira Lowinger  
Stacey Lynch  
Joe & Andi Manchester  
Gary Morgenstern  
Barry Polisar  
Ben & Elissa Wolf

May 10 - 14  
Team #12  
Marlene Sandberg  
301-602-7435  
marlene.sandberg@gmail.com  
Allen Wright Co-Captain  
Ami & Rita Frydman  
Lee & Lisa Hedgepeth  
Les & Arlynne Klein  
Valerie & Ira Kolmaister  
Jay & Freda Krosnick  
Andrew Sandberg  
Howard & Amy Schwartz  
Sandy Stein  
Jill Steinberg

May 17 - 21  
Team #13  
Michael Gross 301-681-0861  
grossesq@aol.com  
Richard & Wendy Abraham  
Ellen Beebe  
Eric & Melissa Druxman  
Barry & Karen James  
Mark & Karen Kaufman  
Adam & Stephanie Krantz  
Bettyann Lansky  
Josh Lansky  
Eric & Lori Marshall  
Shawn & Heather Miller  
Marilyn Pontell  
Joyce Torchinsky  
David & Laura Torchinsky

(Team 13 Continued)  
Fred & Meryl Trachtman  
Jeffrey Winkler & Stacey Relkin Winkler

May 24 - 28  
Team #1  
Al Kliman 301-438-1588  
alkliman@comcast.net  
Julian Leidman Co-Captain  
Daniel & Lisa Akman  
Morris & Christie Berman  
Jay & Joyce Feinstein  
Hal & Rebecca Fero  
Barbara Fink  
Sharon Fried  
Jay Hagler  
Marc & Tanya Heyison  
George & Marilyn Kessler  
Ken & Karen Lefler  
Karen Leighton  
Mark & Shelley Levitt  
Carl Sabath & Susan Rubenstein  
Marvin Schneider  
Alan & Beverly Weinstein
As I write this, we are beginning week four of our physical distancing. I have found myself reflecting on a phrase that Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the schools in Reggio Emilia coined, a “nostalgia for the future.” This concept sums up my feelings perfectly. Looking forward, instead of backwards, with a sense of yearning for the comfort of the familiar. And the regular company of all the people I hold dear.

The situation we are in is new for each and every one of us, and it is a difficult time for our families, businesses and country. We are facing dilemmas that are unlike any we have faced before.

It's ironic in some ways that our intention for this year is gathering. We have spent almost two years now talking about the importance of gathering, how we gather and the human need to gather. Yet it is this connection to other people which right now is being limited. It's tough on people to be separated, but what I know for sure is that people want and need to be together. In that regard, we are proposing several strategies to stay connected over this break. We see each other every day via teleconference for class meetings, Shabbat activities, mindfulness practices and more.

I want to share the words from Luca Vecchi, mayor of Reggio Emilia:

"We will create a network of volunteers to help the elderly and families with children that need support at home with handling being at home for such a long time. This is a big challenge, but we will cope and come out of it. We will not lose our relationship confidence, our determination, and we will not lose the knowledge we have that will guide us in coping with this virus. And the most important thing is to stay in relations with others in ways that are available as this is the way by which the virus will disappear."

They have created an identity of citizenship, and these words truly show what it means to live by your identity and values. We strive to follow their example. Although we cannot be together, we must still be there for each other any way we can.

In Reggio Emilia they believe that in every moment, regardless how bleak, there is an opportunity. We are choosing to grasp at this idea. The opportunity we have is to show that even when classes are postponed, the culture and values of our school continue.

Wishing everyone health and happiness.

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NEED ASSISTANCE?

If you need any help at all, please don’t hesitate to reach out to Rabbi Layman.

If a family member or another congregant is hospitalized or needs help from the Shaare Tefila Community, please notify the office or Rabbi Layman as soon as possible.

(301) 593-3410
rjlayman@shaaretefila.org

DONATE A BOOK FOR USE AT SERVICES

Please consider donating a book in memory of or in honor of a loved one or in recognition of a special life event.

Contact Jonathan Cohen in the office.

Siddur $54
Machzor $36
Large Type Machzor $54
REMEMBERING MAY SAVAGE
CONTRIBUTOR: SAUL COHEN

May Savage, who passed away on April 13, 2020, was an active member of our community into her 90s. May loved to attend Shabbat and holiday services when she lived independently in her Silver Spring home. In recent years, May moved to assisted living, but continued to avidly read all the Shul’s newsletters and of course, continued to make donations. Before moving to assisted living, May was very active in both civic and Jewish organizations, frequently driving herself to meetings and luncheons.

Sherry and I got to know May on a more personal level when we traveled together to Shaare Tefila for services, programs and dinners. She loved to speak about her “famous” family, her years living in Michigan and the District of Columbia, the early years at Shaare Tefila, her life with her dear husband, Norton, and her work with civic organizations. Just a couple of her involvements were with the National Council of Jewish Women and the Hillandale Citizens Association. Perhaps, May received inspiration from her mother, Anna Shulman, the “Queen of H Street.” This became a one-woman show about the entertaining and true life story of Anna Shulman, a Russian-Jewish immigrant and H Street shopkeeper during the Great Depression. Anna founded the Hebrew Sheltering Society to house recent immigrants and led the Sisterhood for Ezras Israel Synagogue at Eighth and I Streets.

May loved to watch political shows on TV and was reluctant to speak on the telephone on Sunday mornings when all the national political TV shows were on. May had many stories to share including the badminton tournaments with Norton, who was president of the Montgomery County Badminton Club and played the game for more than 50 years. In 1993 Norton won the gold medal at the Senior Olympics. Norton continued to play in the U.S. Senior National Badminton Championships into his 80s.

May and Norton were married for 68 years. Their children are David, Jeffrey (Maxine Cohen), Cynthia (Steve Mains) and the late Robert Savage. They had one granddaughter, Sonya.

Whether we were discussing national, local and synagogue politics or our families, May was friendly, encouraging and funny. She always had Shaare Tefila on her mind and always wanted to know how to make the community better. I will always remember May as an intelligent and friendly person. She always had the best interest of Shaare Tefila on her mind and in her heart. I will miss speaking with her and hearing her stories. May her memory be a blessing for us all.

Rabbi Layman
Shaare Tefila Congregation
16620 Georgia Avenue
Olney, MD 20832

Dear Rabbi Layman,

On behalf of Olney Help and all the people in the community we serve, please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your donations to benefit our pantry in March 2020.

In this time of increased uncertainty and demand, Olney Help continues to deliver food gift cards and provide financial assistance to those in need with some modifications to keep our clients and volunteers safe. We are providing additional food support for families with school age children until schools open again.

Since all our donation sites are closed, we are not asking for food donations until things settle down. But we would welcome grocery store gift cards for food and financial donations so that we can help all the additional families needing assistance during these trying times. We are seeing a significant increase in requests for emergency financial assistance.

Your continued support is very much appreciated and needed during this time. We cannot overstate your vital role in helping Olney Help accomplish our mission to assist individuals and families in need with the short-term emergency assistance of food and financial aid.

Thanks so much,

Ruth Fulbert
Food Chairman
Olney Help
TRIBUTES
March 1, 2020 - March 31, 2020

Andrea Z. Tilles
Memorial Chesed Fund
In Honor Of:
  Jacob Lansky's Bar Mitzvah
  Alan & Adriana Sandler
  Chesed Committee
  Audrey Haber
  Marvin Roth
  Diane Kieval
  Gershon Kieval
  Gilda Kuritzky's 90th Birthday
  Gershon & Diane Kieval
  Paul Tilles' Retirement
  Gershon & Diane Kieval
  George Kessler's 90th Birthday
  Ira & Ethel Levine
  Sylvia Potash's Birthday
  Ira & Ethel Levine
  Jay Hagler's Birthday
  Ira & Ethel Levine

In Memory Of:
  Sigmund Liberman
  Alan & Adriana Sandler
  Charlotte Potosky
  Larry & Ellie Alpert
  Julian Leidman
  Thelma Sachs
  Audrey Haber
  Stanley Rosen
  Charlotte Shapiro
  Shirley Zarny
  David & Rhona Byer
  Maurice Potosky
  Gershon & Diane Kieval

In Memory Of:
  Lawrence Cornfield
  Syde Levinson
  Ami & Rita Frydman
  Samuel Valinsky
  Andrew & Marlene Sandberg
  M. Sidney Silberman
  Anne Golfer
  Paul Vigneri
  Bernice Kisliuk
  Anna Vigneri
  Bernice Kisliuk
  Phyllis Byer
  David & Rhona Byer
  Father and Aunt
  Egon & Inge Guttmann
  Lillian Kessler
  George & Marilyn Kessler
  Sigmund Liberman
  Hinda Exler
  Judy Bresler
  Stanley & Joan Weiss
  Stephen & Janet Teller
  Frederick Swartz
  Ila Swartz
  Frances Hagler
  Jay & Rita Hagler
  Arnold Hagler
  Jay & Rita Hagler
  Abraham Levine
  Judith Beiser
  Shirley Zarny
  Judy Bresler
  Adam Lilling
  Kathleen & Victoria Lilling
  Goldie Jaffe
  Ken & Karen Lefler
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  May Savage
  Ralph Shapiro
  May Savage
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  David & Florence Polinsky
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  David & Florence Polinsky
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  Myron & Bernice Goldstein
  Rosalie Goldman
  Philip Goldman
  Philip Aronson
  Rita Lehr
  David Leidman
  Roanne Leidman
  Sylvia Portman
  Ronald & Joan Portman
  Rose Friedman
  Ruth Kaufman
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  Eva Saltz
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  Ada Rice
  Zelick & Carol Waganheim
  Helen Bomberg
  Zisel & Lydia Sansanowicz
  Irving & Janet Torchinsky
  David & Laura Torchinsky

Machzor Dedication
In Memory Of:
  Joseph Newhouse
  Anna & Jason Zuckerman

Martin S. Halpern Adult Education Fund
In Memory Of:
  Al Shanker
  Carl Sabath & Susan Rubenstein

Nathan Rubinstein
Youth Fund
In Honor Of:
  Ira Kolmaister, Blue Yarmulka
  of the Year Award
  Rita Rubinstein
  Jack & Bess Teller's 55th Wedding Anniversary
  Ronald & Gayle Miller

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
In Honor Of:
  Rabbi Jonah Layman
  George & Marilyn Kessler
  David & Florence Polinsky
  Nina Gurman

BUILDING FUND
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  Sigmund Liberman
  Norman & Joan Gurevich

D. JOSEPH WILLIAMOWSKY
Scholar in Residence Fund
In Memory Of:
  Stanley Weisman
  Leah Weisman

GENERAL FUND
In Honor Of:
  Jacob Lanky becoming a Bar Mitzvah
  Jack & Bess Teller
  Rita Hagler's Retirement
  Jack & Bess Teller

THE SHOFAR
A page to color
for your enjoyment

Chag Sameach
Happy Shavuot