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## RABBI'S NOTES



I'm still in the after-bliss of Yom Kippur--hopefully for the rest of the year, or at least until Pesach. It was so beautiful to look at your beloved faces and listen to your voices in song and prayer. It's my favorite day of the year, what can I say?

There were a zillion sweet moments for me, one of them I've been happily mulling: in the beginning of the morning service it is customary to study a little bit of text. You say a blessing and then learn a little bit of something traditional, often a bit of Talmud. In fact, in a traditional minyan, I believe you study the same passages every morning! We don't usually include this piece on Shabbat morning, but during the High Holy Days we often do. So on Yom Kippur morning we said the *bracha* for Torah study, and then I gave you the annual quiz: "These are the deeds without measure whose reward is also without measure. A person eats the fruit of them in this world and enjoys continual fruit in the world to come" (You know them, I am sure: honoring parents, doing deeds of lovingkindness, attending the house of study, welcoming guests, caring for the sick, celebrating with "couples in love," accompanying the dead, praying with intention, bringing peace between one person and another. And the study of Torah is equal to them all [Shabbat 127a]).

This year I had asked Fran, a member of our heroic Bikkur Cholim (caring for the sick) team, to say a word about this particular "deed without measure." Fran gave a nice little talk about the kinds of needs people often have when they are ill or incapacitated--meals (cooked, schlepped, maybe delivered from the Mitzvah Freezer), visits, rides, locally and over-the-hill--and some of the ways the team is trying to meet these more efficiently, with a congregant questionnaire, the [mealtrain.com](http://mealtrain.com) app, and more. She finished up by urging people who haven't yet filled out the questionnaire to pick up a form. Was it on the kitchen table or on the bench in the foyer? [It's in the foyer AND in the kitchen on the south wall.]

I was laughing a little bit inside because we had said the blessing for Torah study and then were dealing with administrative details like the location of a form. And then it hit me: this IS Torah study! This is the real thing. We are studying how to be a community.

I've been thinking ever since about how hard we have all studied the mitzvah of caring for sick people over the years. There is the great lofty value of doing so, and there is the rubber meeting the road in those details:



- How do we get info out that someone is ill without spreading news that they might prefer remain private?
- How long can we provide food or rides for someone?
- How do we accommodate special diets?
- How do we offer as much support to someone that not many people know (or, a harder case, someone who has a difficult personality) as we do to someone connected to many?
- What if someone is poor and they really need money? Can we help this way? How? How much?
- What if someone is really in a fix and they need EVERYTHING? How do we figure out what part of that everything we can take on?
- Do we wait for people to ask for help they need, or do we reach out and offer?
- How much do we expect spouses, children, and close friends to do the work of caring, and what do we do when they don't?

- How can we respond to changes in someone's situation, keep folks up-to-date with needs, make schedules, see that tasks get done without making this a full-time job for a few volunteers? (with a Mitzvah Freezer! And [mealtrain.com](http://mealtrain.com)! And a questionnaire!)

These questions, and others like them, have been the subject of many conversations, meetings, board discussions, articles and texts read, and queries to other congregations. They've led to many plans and just as many revisions over the years. They've generated the occasional complaint and the very rare crisis. And so we keep learning.

You know that old refrain, "Ain't gonna study war no more?" I used to wonder about the word "study." Why not, "Ain't gonna go to war no more"? But I understand more and more that, if you're going to undertake something (not war, please), you need to figure out how to do it, and then figure out how to undo what you figured out wrong the first time, and then how to roll with changes in the situation, and then how to evaluate how you're doing, and then how to do it better. You need to study.



Years ago Mickey and I met a fabulous family from Prague, now our beloved friends. The first time they visited us, Ivka and I were washing dishes. She spoke very little English and she was trying laboriously to ask me why we used the method we did--sponges versus a rag, two sinks, one with soapy water. I encouraged her to save her linguistic struggle for something more interesting, but she replied adamantly, "No! This is exactly what we should be talking about. It is important." It was a good piece of Torah for me to learn: we spend a lot of time doing dishes, and clean dishes are important, so the way we do them is worthy of study.

If I ever officiated at your wedding, you probably heard a little speech from me about writing the text of your *ketubah* (the marriage contract, which, in a Jewish wedding, is where the vows are exchanged.) I always urge couples to have a conversation in which they each ask the other, "What do you need from me in our marriage?" and then take notes. I've done weddings in which the *ketubah* included, "We will not bake with raisins" or "We will always wear seat belts" or "We will have sex by mutual agreement only."

I believe in the Torah of details. More importantly, the Torah believes in the Torah of details. The Torah itself tells you where in a camp to place the latrine, what kinds of birds are permissible to eat, and my favorite--the different kinds of skin sores. The Talmud takes this interest in details to glorious heights; there are 42 pages about what to do if two people both say that a shirt is theirs (Baba Metzia chapter one). The literature of details continues to the present day.

As we leave the bliss of the Holy of Holies and go into a new year, we have a lot to study, always. How to be a community, how to be a friend, how to care for whomever needs caring for, how to rest and renew. "Blessed is the Holy One Who gave us the sacred obligation to busy ourselves with words of Torah." Indeed!

## SIMCHAT TORAH!

Speaking of Torah, we will celebrate Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah on Monday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 5:30 to about 8:30 PM at the shul. We begin by praying for rain, beating willows on the ground, and pouring water while reciting the beautiful *geshem* prayer. The prayer introduces the following phrase to be recited in the Amidah prayer until Passover, *masheev ha'rua'ch u'moreed hagashem*, "Who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall." It is delayed until Shemini Atzeret because it should not be invoked when fine weather is needed to enable us to dwell in the *sukkah* (Talmud, Sukkah 28b).

We conclude the festive season by reading the end of the Torah and rolling her right back to her beginning, all with music and dancing and food and *freulichkeit*. The Klezmishpoche band is already practicing Jewish and



international dance tunes for our Torah-dancing joy. As we've done for many years, we'll eat / beat / rock / roll on the following schedule (all times estimates except for the first one):

- 5:30 -- eat a simple dinner (you don't need to bring anything);
- 6:00 -- beat the willows and pray for rain!
- 6:30 -- rock out with our Torah scrolls to the sounds of our beloved band;
- 7:30 -- read the end of the Torah, roll back to the beginning, and start over with the creation of the world!

This is an especially joyful Simchat Torah because this year we complete a seven-year cycle of Torah reading! In our shul we read one aliyah each week: in year one we read the first aliyah of each Torah portion, in the second year the second Aliyah, and so on. This year we will have completed the whole Torah (twice, so far!) in this fashion.

This is the joyful finale to the whole High Holy Day season. We begin in introspection and end in frolic and festivity. This final festival is a great one for people of all ages. Bring the little ones! And the big ones!

*Ruth Rosenblum and S.A. Ephraim invite all to join them*

*As their son, Yoel Briar,  
is called to the Torah as Bar Mitzvah*

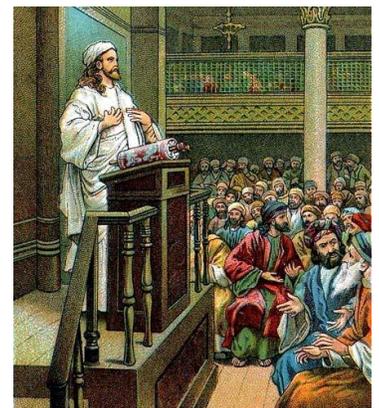


*Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 10:30 AM  
Caspar Community Center  
Kiddush to follow the service.*

### **SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES**

Shabbat morning services are held every Saturday morning of the year from 10:30 AM until about 12:30 PM. People are welcome to come for any part of the service. Members of the community often give the *davar Torah* ("word of Torah"), an interpretation (*drash*) of the weekly Torah portion. The services are led each week by Rabbi Holub, except when she is out of town. The *drash* schedule for October is below.

10/06/18	Bereshit	Yoel Ephraim
10/13/18	Naoach	Fran Schwartz
10/20/18	Lech-Lecha	Mina Cohen
10/27/18	Vayera	Raven Deerwater



## KABBALAT SHABBAT



On October 26<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate with Marnie and Ron Press in Mendocino. Please call them at 937-1905 to RSVP and get directions. On November 16<sup>th</sup> we will meet at the home of Claire Ellis and Chuck Greenberg in Little River.

If you would like to host a gathering in 2019, the calendar is still open. Please contact Mina at 937-1319 or [mcohen@mcn.org](mailto:mcohen@mcn.org).

All gatherings begin at 6:00 PM on the fourth Friday of the month, and include a short service with a vegetarian potluck following.

## MCJC JUSTICE GROUP

The Justice Group will meet in October on the third Thursday instead of the usual second Thursday: October 18, 5:30-7:30 PM at the shul. We have several things cooking: work on immigration issues and money bail reform. At the September meeting, we reached a number of decisions:



- We will continue following bail reform and become involved in advocacy when it becomes an issue again. In 2019 bail bonds organizations will try to get a proposition on the ballot to nullify the law. There could also be law suits by negatively affected parties that try for injunctions. The law that passed is flawed and not what the ACLU envisioned. It is a step in the right direction, but needs to be made closer to the original bill.
- We will continue to support the ACLU.
- We will explore ideas about a project that expresses our outrage regarding the internment camps in the United States today.
- We will encourage voting—in all elections at whatever level. Indifference is dangerous!
- We will continue to support the Citizen Scholarship Project in 2019.

### *Update on 2018 Citizen Scholarship Project:*

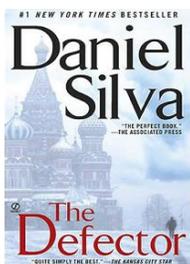
- Fourteen scholarships have been awarded to date.
- Four more students have passed their interview and are well on their way to becoming citizens.
- Anne Thomas' fall class is filling up with new students eager to improve their English skills and study for the USCIS exam.

We are also planning a field trip to the Gualala Native Arts Expo to meet and learn from local Pomo people, on Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. It is possible that there will be an earlier Shabbat service that morning to make it possible for many MCJC folks to travel together. Look for details to come.

## ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders' Conversation meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 3:00-5:00 PM at the shul. (When we switch to Daylight Savings Time, November 4<sup>th</sup>, we will meet a half-hour earlier, from 2:30-4:30 PM, so that people won't have to drive home in the dark.) Topics to be announced.

## BOOK GROUP



The book group will meet Friday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM (please note change of day, for October only) to discuss Daniel Silva's *The Defector*. Grigori Bulganov once saved Gabriel Allon's life in Moscow and Allon always repays his debts. So when Bulganov, a defector and former Russian intelligence officer, vanishes from London, Allon gathers his team of operatives to go after those responsible. British intelligence is sure he was a double agent all along, but Allon knows better. In the days to come, Allon and his team find themselves in a deadly duel of nerve and wits with one of the world's most ruthless men, the murderous Russian oligarch and arms dealer Ivan Kharkov. The novel moves from a quiet mews in

London, to the shores of Lake Como, to the glittering streets of Geneva and Zurich, and, finally, to a heart-stopping climax in the snowbound birch forests of Russia.

The group generally meets at 2:00 PM on the third Monday of the month. Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 for information. Gallery Bookstore offers 10% off your purchases if you belong to the book club.

### **MCJC BOARD MEETING**

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:30 PM at the shul. The October meeting will be on the 30<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to attend, please leave a message on the phone at the shul, 964-6146.

### **THANKS FOR MAILING THE NEWSLETTER**

We are grateful to Daryl Goldman and Jeanette Nichols, friends from far away, for preparing the September newsletter for mailing. We hope they come back soon! If you volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, you can do it at home, or another spot of your choosing, in about two hours. Please contact Sarah at 962-0565 or [sarah.nathe@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nathe@gmail.com).

### **NEW ONLINE MEGILLAH**

The MCJC Megillah is now available in a new format suitable for online viewing. The new format will adapt itself to any screen size, *including smartphones*. It is posted on the MCJC website on the newsletter page <https://www.mcjc.org/newsletter>

### **MEGILLAH SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The Mendocino *Megillah* is published in three formats: hardcopy, emailed PDF, and online web page. You can subscribe to the hardcopy version and have it mailed to you, you can subscribe to the email PDF/ online version, or you can receive both. The *Megillah* is posted on the MCJC website [www.mcjc.org/newsletter](http://www.mcjc.org/newsletter).

Any information on changes in mailing address, changes in email address, and changes in email notifications should be sent to Sarah Nathe at [sarah.nathe@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nathe@gmail.com). If you choose not to be a contributing member of MCJC, we request a \$25 annual fee for the *Megillah* hardcopy or email.

### **GREAT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS**



Sally Welty; Claire Ellis & Chuck Greenberg; Henrietta Steiniger; Susan Gross; Les Reichek & Rima Lieben; Marinela Miclea; Linda Jupiter; Bob Evans; Lew Mermelstein; Ceril Lisbon; Sasha Graham & Colin Drake; Sydelle Lapidus; Laura Goldman & Dennak Murphy; Cecile Cutler; Margaret Kane & Rick Frey; Dr David Schiff; Ron & Marnie Press; Dorothy Salant; Jonathan & Annette Lehan; Bob Schlosser & Dawn Hofberg; Carol & Jerry Greenberg; Claire Zwerling; Joy & Marty Lancaster; Lynne Spillinger

To the Adele Saxe Tzedekah Fund: Benna Kolinsky & Danny Mandelbaum; Mark & Deena Zarin; Fran & Roger Schwartz in memory of Polly Green.

To the Ella Russell Bikkur Cholim Fund: Benna Kolinsky & Danny Mandelbaum; Mark & Deena Zarin.

Phoebe Graubard in memory of her parents; Shira Lee in blessed memory of her father, Jerry Pollak; Benna Kolinsky & Danny Mandelbaum in honor of MCJC's Board of Directors.

Fran Danoff with many thanks and in honor of the Women's Retreat team: Rabbi Margaret Holub, Harriet Bye, Ellen Robin & Ronite Gluck--"You are wonderful! L'Shana Tova."

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE BUILDING

More than 120 families helped us reach, and surpass, our Capital Campaign goal of \$75,000. We are deeply grateful for this response, which enabled us to re-roof and paint our beloved shul in time for the new year. In the waning hours and minutes of the campaign, we received contributions we want to acknowledge from Herman Seidell; Claire Ellis & Chuck Greenberg; and the Shapiro family in loving memory of Michael Shapiro. We appreciate the generosity of all contributors, whenever they pitched in.

The Capital Campaign may be history, but the needs of our community live on. MCJC has several special funds: Bikkur Cholim, caring for the sick; the Adele Saxe Tzedakah Fund for emergency and one-time needs; the Judith Meisel Education Fund; and the Building Fund, to cover the cost of routine building repairs and maintenance. We encourage your donations to any of these funds throughout the year.

## CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP IN MCJC

Everyone who lives on the Mendocino Coast, and desires to be a member of MCJC, is one. The MCJC Board has set a goal of having every household become CONTRIBUTING members in 2018. We have memberships at Regular, Limited Income, and Family levels, as well as any level possible for you. Please mail your donations to MCJC, Box 291, Little River, CA 95456, or use PayPal on the MCJC website.

When you contribute in memory or honor of someone, an acknowledgment card will be sent to the individual or family. Please include their name and mailing address. Contact Donna Montag at [montag@mcn.org](mailto:montag@mcn.org)

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The *Mendocino Megillah* is published monthly. The deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month before publication. The editor will include all appropriate material, space permitting, with the exception of copyrighted material lacking the permission of the author. Divergent opinions are welcome. Material printed in the *Megillah* does not necessarily represent the policy or opinions of the MCJC Board of Directors.

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\* = board member

