

MEGILLAH

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RABBI'S NOTES



The first—and undoubtedly most difficult—step in thinking about any political struggle is to remember that every person involved feels pain, feels fear, loves whom and what they love, and longs for safety. As well, every plant and animal in every place wants to go on living. To start here, before story, before analysis, before blame, seems essential. Maybe getting to this first step is accomplishment enough for a moment. I made a partial list of the parties to destruction in the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

- Israelis
- Palestinians
- residents of the West Bank
- residents of Gaza
- settlers
- Jewish citizens of Israel
- Palestinian citizens of Israel
- residents of East Jerusalem
- refugees seeking sanctuary in Israel
- refugees fleeing Israeli violence
- soldiers
- militants
- children
- teachers
- doctors
- political leaders
- vegetable gardens
- citrus orchards
- birds
- bees
- house plants
- goats
- sheep
- olive trees
- wheat fields
- rivers
- aquifers

Maybe it's hard enough to think of each of these beings and to remember that they feel in common with all that feels. Maybe it's hard enough to imagine the terror that each experiences when facing harm. Maybe it is hard enough to remember that each being has had a life before being under threat. They have memories, preferences, personalities, relationships. (A stalk of wheat, maybe, but all the rest for sure.)

Maybe it's too hard to contemplate the beings on this list, and all the others who should be on it as well, without leaping immediately to who is innocent and who is guilty, to who deserves respite and who deserves destruction. I think it is probably important to get to that place of analysis and opinion in order to plan and strategize



and form alliances and endeavor to minimize further destruction and to repair what has already been damaged or destroyed.

But before we make this leap, I hope we can stop a moment to just remember that whoever is still alive is still alive, that they are breathing and reacting and feeling and thinking.

As I was making this list, I spent a weirdly long time thinking about house plants. People across all kinds of divisions like to put a plant near them, indoors or out. Even homeless people sometimes keep house plants near their tent or cardboard box. When I think of those apartment buildings that have been demolished in the 11 days previous to my writing these notes, I imagine that inside a lot of them there must have been pots of herbs or spring bulbs. This saddens me very much.



Maybe that's enough to say here. This is a starting place and not a conclusion. I have much more to say, and many of you must as well. I don't even know if we need to say everything we think to each other, all our story and analysis and blame. But whether we do or don't, I believe that it is important that we move in whatever way we move, with regard to Israel and Palestine and any other place of conflict and division, by reckoning that we share existence with all of these beings, and we have things in common. May we formulate our opinions and take our actions from that beginning place. May the world move towards peace.

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

A full Shabbat service is led by Rabbi Holub, with much singing, chanting and silence, Torah teaching and reading, blessings for healing and peace, and time for mourners to say Kaddish. You are welcome to join in on Zoom for any or all of the service from 10:30 AM until about 12:30 PM. The rabbi or members of the community give interpretations of the weekly Torah portion (see schedule below for June). Join Zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9628821372> Meeting ID: 962 882 1372; Passcode: 820822.

06/05/21	<i>Sh'lach</i>	Margaret Holub
06/12/21	<i>Korach</i>	Raven Deerwater
06/19/21	<i>Chukat</i>	Raven Deerwater
06/26/21	<i>Balak</i>	Bob Evans

TORAH STUDY

Rabbi Holub is offering weekly Torah study on the *parshah* for that week, the section of Torah read and studied each week. Join her on Thursdays in June, from noon to 1:00 PM on Zoom. Each time she will introduce a section of the *parshah* for the following Shabbat and pose a couple of questions, and then we will discuss the portion together. In June, we will journey deeper into Numbers.



Join Zoom meeting at address in item above. All are welcome. You don't have to know anything about Hebrew or Torah, and the text will be available.

ONLINE CHEVRA KADISHA CONFERENCE



★ Kavod v'Nichum • Honor & Comfort

The Chevrah Kadisha and Jewish Cemetery Conference will be held Sunday June 13th through Wednesday June 16th. It started as an annual event in 2003, and is two-and-a-half days of intense learning focused on the end-of life continuum. From visiting the sick (*bikkur cholim*), to ritual preparation of the dead for burial (*taharah*) and comforting the soul between death and burial (*shmirah*), through funeral and burial to all aspects of grief and mourning, this conference allows participants to immerse in the knowledge, resources, texts, and discussions helpful for working in their communities. The conference is usually held every year in a different North American city, but it will be

held online because of the pandemic. Last year it was hurriedly moved online, but this year it has been greatly expanded and improved.

Sponsored by Kavod v'Nichum and the Gamliel Institute, the conference was created primarily for members of Chevrot Kadisha, but the scope has grown beyond *taharah*, *shmirah*, and matters of interest to the traditional Jewish "burial society". This year there are eight plenary sessions and 48 workshop sessions that run on six concurrent tracks over four days, plus chat rooms for networking and informal Q&A, "poster sessions," and an online store/*shuk*.

A large variety of topics will be covered: basic tahara and Chevra practices, deep textual and liturgical study, women's Torah, grief counseling, end of life preparation, and much more. All the sessions are being recorded and will be made available to all who register, for later viewing.

The sessions below will give you an idea of the breadth of topics.

San Francisco Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky's **Death: What Jews Do** will trace the steps of Jewish rituals and traditions regarding death. Long Island art therapist Vivian Abrams will use photographs and gravestone rubbings to give a **Brief History of Jewish Cemeteries in North America**. Santa Fe author Rick Light will present **Taharah: Introduction and Overview**. Santa Monica Rabbi T'mimah Ickovits will describe, in **Text Study: Ma'avar Yabok, Taharah and the Divine Body**, the physical actions, such as washing, pouring, dressing... that are done during Taharah and the accompanying action in the spiritual realm. Santa Monica Rabbi Janet Madden will touch on the yearning, anguish, and deep wisdom in First Samuel in **What Gets Brought Up? The Woman of En-Dor as a Model for End of Life Care**. San Francisco performance artist Kenny Yun will lead participants into **The Theater of Story Telling (Kavod v'Nichum Misaperei Sipurim)**. Santa Fe Rabbi Zoe Van Raan will reveal that the act of "gendering" others goes against several facets of Talmudic instruction, Biblical precepts, and modern commentary in **Da Lifnay Mi Atem: Know before Whom You Stand (Genderless Taharah)**. Philadelphia Rabbi Simcha Raphael will cover **The History and Mystery of Yizkor: Wisdom from Our Ancestors**.

The conference website is much improved and is now compatible with mobile devices. It has been enhanced to include 60-second video introductions from the speakers. You can peruse the whole program and register online at the conference website <https://www.jewish-funerals.org/our-upcoming-online-conference/>



There are three options for registration:

- 1) full registration - attend as many sessions as you want
- 2) come-n-go - attend up to five sessions
- 3) single session registration (shown only when you register and is \$36 for one or two sessions)

If three or more members of the same congregation register for the full conference, there is a 20% discount.

If you have questions or would like to attend, contact Bob Evans at bobevans@boborama.net

UPDATE ON REOPENING

The process of figuring out a safe reopening continues. Many thanks to everyone who participated in our online meeting last month or who sent in responses to questions about your hopes and concerns. We have a lot of helpful feedback to consider. We are excited that the Jewish Women's Retreat will again be held in-person at River's Bend Retreat Center in Philo. River's Bend requires that every person attending be fully vaccinated. MCJC's Board is exploring possibilities for in-person High Holy Days if a spacious, well-ventilated location can be found. Work continues on setting up communication equipment and adopting practices for hybrid meetings, so that people can meet in the shul and remotely at the same time. As you undoubtedly know, public health regulations and recommendations are changing often. We will continue to follow the best medical information and to explore the options for reopening. We look forward very much to being together when it is safe to do so.

STILL ZOOMIN



MCJC continues to hold its gatherings on Zoom. In addition to Shabbat morning services at 10:30 AM, meetings and classes, and **Chai on The Coast** activities, the Wednesday morning Cup of Coffee, and the Friday evening candle-lighting go on. Zoom invitations to these gatherings are sent by email and posted on the MCJC web page. To get the invitations, let Margaret know at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. If you would like to receive the emails announcing **Chai on The Coast** activities, contact Susan Tubbesing at susan.tubbesing@gmail.com.

Cup of Coffee—every Wednesday from 10:30-11:30 AM, we pour ourselves a steaming cup and join together for a freewheeling conversation about whatever is on our minds. It continues to be surprising, inspiring, generative and fun. All are welcome.

Candle-Lighting—every Friday evening the community is invited to Margaret and Mickey's virtual Shabbat table to light candles and make Kiddush together. We start at 6:30 PM with a bit of schmooze, share news of our weeks, and wish each other Good Shabbos. We light at about 6:45 PM. It's a sweet way to bring in Shabbat together.

ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month. This month we will meet on Zoom on June 8th and 22nd. Each week we take up a theme we've selected at the prior meeting and explore it in a personal and honest way, sharing our life experiences and our present thoughts and feelings. People of all ages are most welcome. Zoom invitations to these gatherings are sent by e-mail. If somehow you missed the email, let Margaret know at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673.

MCJC JUSTICE GROUP



The Justices meet on the second Thursday of each month on Zoom. The next meeting is on Thursday, June 10th, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. If the weather is friendly, we'll meet for a walk on Big River at 3:30 PM. This will give us a chance to see each other in person and spend some social time and still get to wherever we'd like to be to zoom in for our 5:30 meeting. Look for a confirming e-mail that morning. If you would like to be on the Justice Group mailing list or attend meetings, please contact Margaret at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. *Everyone* is welcome to attend.

The JG is now supporting the work of two groups on the coast that share many of our core values, SCORE (South Coast Organizing for Radical Equity) and the Grassroots Institute.

Eight members of the JG met with members of SCORE on Monday, May 10th for an in depth look at SCORE's campaign to convince the Board of Supervisors to have an independent, third party audit of the Mendocino County Sheriff's Department. The group began in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. SCORE members investigated public protection in Mendocino County, looking into publicly available County Budget information, particularly Public Protection spending. They found a lack of available data, communications and transparency on the spending and activities of the Sheriff's Office, as well as of the demographics and management of the County Jail. Despite this lack of data, the Sheriff continues to request increased funding, and Public Protection spending continues to increase every year.

The JG group has endorsed the work of SCORE and members of the JG have written letters, emails and made phone calls to their supervisors in support of the audit. The JG is now part of the campaign, following the lead of SCORE. For more information about advocating for an audit of the Mendocino County Sheriff's Department go to <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Er3EyKxWbtQrMzhGhAXm6MGVG3OkmfN6?usp=sharing>

On Thursday, May 10th, at the regular monthly JG meeting, guests Miquette and James Thompson of SCORE spoke about their group. We first asked them to tell us a little about themselves. Miquette is a non-profit fundraiser, grant writer and board trainer. James is employed by a consulting company that works with big

companies to make web sites accessible to handicapped people. Both are highly skilled, motivated and passionate about their political work.

In addition to their campaign for an audit, members of SCORE are interested in projects addressing the following:

- educational opportunities associated with racial justice
- recognizing unconscious bias when engaging with youth
- housing insecurity
- food justice

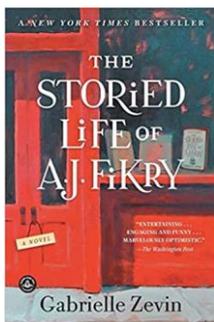
Carrie Durkee and Linda Jupiter also spoke at the May 10th meeting about their project, a way of addressing climate change, as representatives of the Grassroots Institute (<http://www.grassroots-institute.org>), a local organization seeking “progressive solutions for the common good.” As part of the American Rescue Plan Act, signed by the president in March, the City of Fort Bragg will receive \$1.5 million and Mendocino County will receive \$17 million. The GRI is asking the city to set aside \$100,000 and the county to set aside \$2 million for the following:

- Installation of solar panels on municipal buildings
- Installation of additional electric charging stations for cars
- Transition to electric vehicles for public transportation in collaboration with the MTA



Durkee asked the Justice Group for an endorsement and asked individual members to support their work by writing to city council members and members of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors to support their proposal. The Justice Group has endorsed the GRI initiative. To sign the petition in support of GRI's recommendations, go to <https://forms.gle/oxXuRpyMqfFpVGCXA>

BOOK GROUP



We meet Monday June 21st at 2:00 PM on Zoom to discuss *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* by Gabrielle Zevin. A. J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. The unlikely romantic hero is a middle-aged man living alone after the death of his wife, his independent bookstore is failing, and now his prized possession—a rare collection of Poe poems—has been stolen. Slowly but surely, he is isolating himself from all the people of Alice Island, a summer retreat off the coast of Massachusetts, and even the books in his store have stopped holding pleasure for him. These days, he can only see the book trade as a sign of a world that is changing too rapidly. But when a mysterious package appears at the bookstore, its unexpected arrival gives sets off a series of encounters and events that helps the grumpy widower rediscover the joy in personal connections. Zevin's book is a love letter to the joys of reading, an irresistible affirmation of why we read, and why we love.

Order a copy of the book from Gallery Bookshop and request a 10% discount as a book club member. Please contact Fran at franbschwartz@gmail.com for a Zoom invitation.

MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:30 PM, these days on ZOOM. The June meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 23rd. If you wish to attend part of the meeting, please contact board member Susan Tubbesing at 962-0565, or susan.tubbesing@gmail.com, and efforts will be made to patch you in.



NEWSLETTER THANK YOU

Big thanks to dobbie sommer for preparing the May *Megillah* for mailing. If you volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, you can do it at your kitchen table, or another spot of your choosing, in about two hours. This *mitzvah* imparts such a sense of accomplishment that you'll wonder why you haven't done it before. Please contact Sarah at 962-0565 or sarah.nathe@gmail.com

MEGILLAH SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Mendocino *Megillah* is published in three formats: hardcopy, emailed PDF, and online. You can subscribe to the hardcopy version and have it mailed to you or receive it by email. The online *Megillah* is posted on the newsletter page of the MCJC website: 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. If you choose not to be a contributing member of MCJC, we request a \$25 annual fee for the *Megillah* hardcopy or email.

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Everyone who lives on the Mendocino Coast, and desires to be one, is a member of MCJC. The MCJC Board of Directors has a goal of having every household become CONTRIBUTING members in 2021. We have contributing memberships at four levels: Regular, Limited Income, Fair Share, and Family. For more information, see the annual letter on the MCJC website at <https://www.mcjc.org/membership-and-donations>. Please mail your donations to MCJC, Box 291, Little River, CA 95456, or use PayPal on the MCJC website. When you make a donation in memory or honor of someone, an acknowledgment card will be sent to the individual or family. Please include the name and mailing address. Contact Donna Montag at montag@mcn.org

EDITORIAL POLICY

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MCJC Board & Useful Numbers (* = board member)

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