

beth shalom  
auckland new zealand  
בית שלום



**April 2020**

*Nisan~Iyar 5780*

**Teruah**



*A strong, vibrant community with a spiritual heart  
embracing Jewish life and its diversity.*

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# Our Board members

Affiliated with the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ)

Charities Commission Registration Number CC29542

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**Sue Berman 022 051 3589**

**Service times are Fridays at 6:30pm and Saturdays at 10am but services are suspended for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

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Opinions expressed in Teruah do not necessarily represent the views of Beth Shalom Board of Management.

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# Coming up in April

- Beth Shalom office will be closed for the duration of the COVID-19 lockdown period but phone messages and emails will continue to be actioned. Both Christine and Debbie will be working from home.
- Keep checking your emails for official messages from community groups - **Gmail users check your Updates folder as well.**
- **Although Friday night and Saturday morning services,** Pesach services, and the Seder, are cancelled, Shabbat Services online via [Zoom](#) will be available. Check your emails for access.
- The Auckland Jewish Community Yom HaShoah and Yom HaZikaron commemorative observances are cancelled.

**A reminder about our prayers for healing; if you would like our home prayer group to pray for healing for you or for someone close to you please advise the office.**



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# From the President ...

Buenos Dias, Amigos.

What a difference a few weeks makes.... When I left New Zealand at the end of last month, I had very little idea where the world would head. It is a time of uncertainty everywhere. And it doesn't matter if you are hunkered down in beautiful Aotearoa, in a city in the US or Europe, or in the Andes mountains of South America, we all need to heed the warnings and stay away from others in order to minimize the spread of the virus.

Beth Shalom has, once again, proven to be a beacon that lights the way for all of us. With the changing circumstances, the leaders of our community have done everything possible to continue to meet the needs of so many of our members. From providing Pesach product delivery and pick up in record time, to mobilising the Community Care network to check in on members who are most in need, to offering services first via web and now via Zoom or YouTube.

While the office and temple are closed for the next 4 weeks, you are certainly not alone. There is always someone to talk to, someone to reach out to, if you need it. The always amazing Chris Shiller is the point person for Community Care/Senior Outreach. She can be reached at [shiller@orcon.net.nz](mailto:shiller@orcon.net.nz) // phone 09 473 8488 // mobile 0211774934. The greater Auckland Jewish community is working together to make sure that everyone has a lifeline, a safety net. We are all in this together and looking out for each other as well as ourselves is paramount.

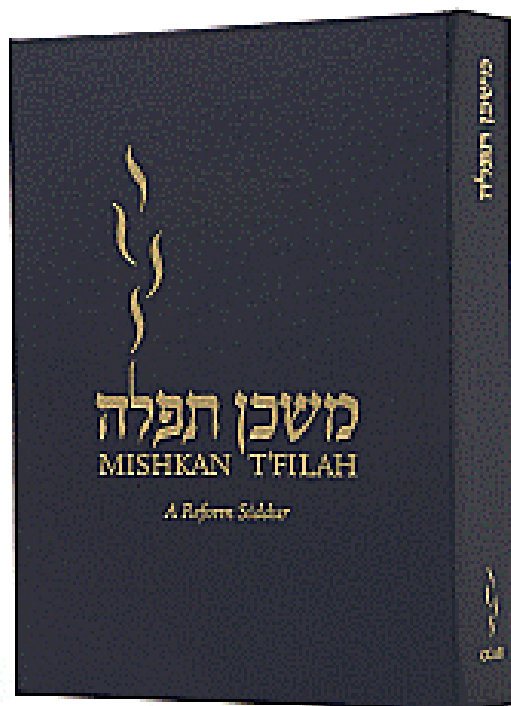
I cannot thank the Board enough for going beyond the call of duty, especially Ali, who has taken over the mantle of President until the AGM can be rescheduled.

I wish you all a good Pesach, however you are able to celebrate. Be safe and be kind to each other. I hope with all my heart that my next message is from the other side of this looking glass.

B'shalom,

Debbie

**COVID-19: Now that New Zealand is on Level 4 lockdown, we cannot offer our livestream services from Beth Shalom but will be offering links for a Beth Shalom Zoom service on a Friday night as from 3 April. On a Saturday, Temple Sinai have invited us to attend their virtual morning Zoom service. Links to this service and links to other virtual services in Australia will be sent out and posted on our website and our Facebook page.**



## Prayer for Healing Group

A group of Beth Shalom members has commenced, to think of and pray for individuals in our community, who are in need of healing.

The idea is that this group is not an organised group or minyan. Simply, caring people who, when made aware of the need, help healing with the power of prayer.

And that families in distress might receive comfort from the knowledge that this is taking place.

Caring for the unwell is part of being a community.

For those interested, I can supply articles: "The Jewish Way in Healing", and some scientific research on the positive power of prayer in healing.

If you wish to be part of this group

Or, if you know of someone who is unwell that would appreciate our prayer

Please contact Leon Goldwater or Christine O'Brien at shul office

Leon: [ldgoldwater@gmail.com](mailto:ldgoldwater@gmail.com) 020 403 88054

Christine: [office@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:office@bethshalom.org.nz) 524 4139



## Multiple Blessings Abrahamic Interfaith event



On Sunday 8 March 41 women (17 Christian, 9 Muslim, 13 Jewish and 2 Japanese) participated in an interfaith event visiting St Peter's Anglican Church in Onehunga, the Ponsonby Mosque and our very own Beth Shalom. Naomi Johnson, together with Jenny Janif from the Muslim Community, Gael Keren from the Astor Foundation and Petra Zalesky from the Onehunga Anglican Church, put this event together with the aim of giving women an experience of going to sacred spaces they were unfamiliar with and meeting women from other faiths whom they might never have met otherwise. We know that we can break down barriers by meeting others and learning about other religions. We can see what we have in common rather than focussing on what is different.



At each sacred space there was a short introductory talk on the faith followed by a tour of the space and a taste of festive foods. We enjoyed hot cross buns at the Church, we learnt how to break a fast at the Mosque with dates and other delicious food and at Beth Shalom we made believe it was Pesach and tasted charain made by Chris Shiller using Lenny Bloksberg's home-grown horse radish, charoet made by Naomi on matzo and macaroons made by Barbara Hill.





Thanks to the Astor Foundation we could hire a bus. Naomi asked for participants to sit next to someone they didn't know on the bus which everyone did. The levels of noise from all the chatter was heart-warming.

The event was a total success with the main criticism being that we needed to allow more time at each sacred space as it became too rushed.

This was the first time there had been this type of event and clearly it needs to be repeated in the future..

A Radio NZ Journalist from the programme Voices came along with us and made the following 12 minute programme.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/voices/audio/2018738640/a-bus-ride-to-bust-stereotypes-around-different-faiths>

While some of the facts in the article are incorrect, it nevertheless records the spirit of the initiative very well as you can hear from the comments made by the participants.



## Purim Blog

by [Habonim Dror](#) | Mar 9, 2020 | [Blog](#)

Purim is a confusing chag. Like many chaggim, it's when we remember a story from our collective past, and like many other Jewish stories it includes a pretty substantial amount of suffering. But why on Purim, remembering a time when Haman literally wanted "to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day," do we celebrate like no other time in the Jewish Calendar? Is it because we survived, we made it out the other side? It could be, but then why don't we celebrate like that on all the other chaggim that celebrate our liberation? Or even on Shabbat when we literally reflect on the existence of literally everything, we celebrate existing.



I read a great reflection that said the reason Purim is different is because Purim is when we grew up and owned our Judaism. Purim isn't just about connecting to the Jews of the past, it's about us, it's about connecting to the Jews of today.

One early Halachic authority (Halachot Gedolot, end of Hilchot Megillah) says: "Purim is greater than the day on which the Torah was given." Purim is the day that we took the Torah. And when we take ownership, everything becomes different.

The next thing to say would be about how we can reflect on this and understand it in our current lives. Staying in the spirit of Purim of course, we could talk about how important it is to celebrate, feast and party (in a responsible and healthy way), celebrating each other and the things we have in life. Alternatively, we could talk about tzedakah and the act of giving generously and without question, as on Purim if you are asked for tzedakah you must give without any further questions.

However, I'm going to focus on the idea of taking ownership. Firstly, what does it even mean to take ownership of being Jewish? At least for me, I was born Jewish, grew up Jewish, I clearly am Jewish so what more do I need? I believe we need to do what the Jewish people did in the story of Purim and take ownership over our Judaism. Be active and make thought out decisions about your Judaism. This will look different for everyone, but should be meaningful and important. If it isn't then perhaps something is missing. In today's world it can be harder and harder to work out exactly what that is. But in Judaism there are always people to help you work that out. Find a Kehila, a community, to help you find meaning, and discover how to take ownership over your Judaism.

For me that very clearly has been growing up in Habonim Dror. My experience in the movement not only helped me shape my Jewish Identity but helped me find meaning in my Judaism. It's not obvious for me to be an active Jew, having grown up in a country with 7,000 Jews (Aotearoa New Zealand) before moving to the UK, and been given many opportunities to go down other paths. But after 15 years in Habonim Dror (or my whole life if you count being born on a movement Kibbutz) there is nothing that can be more obvious.

Not only do I feel it is my responsibility to be constantly growing as a Jew, but to help other do so too. Now is a great time to understand how to do so, whether it's through Habonim Dror, or another meaningful connection.

Chag Purim Sameach, enjoy the celebrations and be safe and responsible in doing so, you all deserve to be celebrated and remind your friends and family they do too!

- Adi Rothman Berman, Bogeret

# EDUCATION

## Beth Shalom Sunday/ Hebrew School

Beth Shalom is now a virtual experience. Everything we know and love about our community has now had to be converted into an online experience.

Community means caring for each other, so our responsibility is to stay connected so try to call, text or email our classmates. If you need contact details for your classmates please text -027 765 3677 or [educator@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:educator@bethshalom.org.nz). And I will help you.



We also need to continue our learning. I had a virtual class last week with Goldie at the shul and that link is still available if you all want to go and see it. (It was sent to you via email).

We cannot do that again because I am staying at home. So, I am going to send you some links for you to do some work at home.

I will send you some more opportunities via email. If any congregants have young children who they want to be added to our email list please let me know at [educator@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:educator@bethshalom.org.nz)

Parents and students please feel free to call or email me. I am happy to help.

I divided this up into classes, but it is appropriate for most kids, if you want to skip something just click on what you want to watch.

**Tefillot -Shema Explained** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9geXjErjvfw>

**Parshat Shavou Vayikra with Bimbam.** They have lots of videos which are well done.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG0D3FUFkHw>

**Pre school Kita Aleph Shabbat Preparation**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucEIPOxR-bs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MXib3FH3f4>



**Passover Story told by kids** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xiBvZQuKZY>

**Kita Bet (everyone can practice this especially if you are the youngest at your seder)**

**The four questions for the seder-**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn3FNA4Ar40>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdvF91JSoyg> (practice your Hebrew reading)

**KITA GIMMEL (Pesach songs and dance)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0qsy32Hk4s>

**More Hebrew songs to practice for the seder**

**Bar/ Bat Mitzva class**

**Ashrei Practice** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwAdQKlaDPY>

In these difficult times I encourage you all to join in and sing the mishabarach, the prayer for healing which we sing each week in shul.

**Mishabarach with Debbie Friedman** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0qsy32Hk4s>

**Introduction to Judaism will meet again this week at 1.30pm. Please contact me if you would like to be a part of it: [educator@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:educator@bethshalom.org.nz) We are going to keep doing it on Zoom.**

**Pesach Story by Maccabeats** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmthKpnTHYQ>

Debbie Miller, Education Co-ordinator at Beth Shalom

027 765 3677 or 09 579 7715 or 09-524-4139

## Ritcom Reports ...

We know these are anxious times for us all. We hope this article from My Jewish Learning provides support and that you will find some good ideas to help you. Remember Beth Shalom and particularly Community Care is here to help. Do not hesitate to call the office if you need assistance or support.



While we can't attend services and drop off tzedakah as we usually do, we can as an alternative drop off cans in the supermarket food donation boxes or make online money donations to Women's Refuge or the City Mission or charity of your choice.

*Spiritual Well-Being in Times of Crisis*

*Seven "postures for the spirit" to cultivate peace in difficult moments.*

**BY RABBI ZACH FREDMAN**

Human beings are fashioned with many profound capacities: for acts of profound love and service, the ability to heal and recover from terrible brokenness, the imagination and intuition that can create a world of profound creativity and possibility. And yet, most often, we ignore our own gifts. We choose simple pleasures, food and money, over the hard work of meditation, self-sacrifice, and social repair.

The following seven states are postures for the spirit. Just as the body strikes a pose, the flow of blood modulates, the organs and muscles are transformed by the heart opener or the back bend, so too when the spirit takes a posture, various aspects of our being are exercised and rejuvenated. Reside in each posture for three minutes per day. Extend the duration of the posture as your skillset grows.

One more thing, and it's important. Every emotion and feeling, even the ones we deem uncomfortable, even painful – when we welcome them into our being, like messengers riding the wind, when we meet them with grace – every feeling can be a posture of prayer. When we shun and avoid and refuse prostration, the opportunity for prayer turns into suffering.

## **Anxiety**

We are beings composed of water. As the moon moves the tides, so too we are affected by forces outside ourselves. We are connected by a network of wireless wires and phones. In an instant, millions of us have seen the same image, heard the same story – how could we possibly be immune to the anxiety of our species shaking?

When the anxiety comes to you, welcome it into your being with peace. If you flee from it, you will be chased. Feel it's shaking quality, it's fine disturbance of your halo. Now shake out your arms, and your legs and your toes, and roll your head around. Put the vibrations into song. Let the feeling which is causing your heart to tremble go out through your lips, your vocal chords. Shout if you need to.

## **Fear**

Fear is a posture of humility. You are a tiny nothing, and there is little you have control over. Give language to your fear. Share it with a friend. *I'm afraid of getting sick. I'm afraid of my parents getting sick. I'm afraid of dying. I'm afraid of being in the hospital. I'm afraid of not receiving care. I'm afraid we'll turn on each other. I'm afraid it will not end.*

When fear is welcomed, it is transmuted into awe. The God that creates all the beauties of the world is made whole by the aspect of God that is in death, disease, destruction, regeneration. Can we look upon the that power with the feeling of awe? Sickness and healing, death and life – we can't praise only the good. To be whole is to face God with love (for the good) and awe (for the next to good).

## **Suffering & Compassion**

There is profound suffering in the world. We go about most days by forgetting the suffering of these distant and near others. But this weighs on our spirit, and contributes to our general anxiety and unhappiness.

Feel into the suffering of those who your heart goes out to. Those who are sick, those with loved ones who are sick. Let your compassion extend to those you don't know, those who are far from you. Let your compassion swell. A cave beside the ocean overflowing. As you breathe in, take their suffering into you. As you breathe out give them your light and love.

## **Joy**

Do what brings you joy. The work that takes your mind away from you: watercolors, violins, mobiles, pies, books. You'll have some time to yourself. Strike up a new hobby.

Spirit is not a casual or homogeneous substance. In some of the saddest moments, at a shiva after someone has died, joy and laughter can be the best medicine. Joy rises up out of rootedness and gratitude. Do things that root you, and shout your thank you's for the little pleasures that abound. Let joy surprise you. When she comes, run with her.

## **Trust/Faith**

Trust that we are in good hands. The world is composed in twos: light and dark, life and death, love and fear, sickness and healing – but the good outweighs the next to good by just a little bit. The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. We evolve, we heal, we grow. These are signs of the inherent goodness of the world.

Relinquish your sense of control, and allow yourself to reside in the heart of a divinity that is good, cares for you and loves you, blesses you in ways you can't see or imagine. Stop holding it all together. You're not the one holding it all together any way. Be in the bosom of the beloved. Rest there a while.

## **Impermanence**

This too shall pass. Everything. Like a mandala made of painted sand, millions and millions of grains, wrecked by a child, blown by a breath. The first time Moses meets God at the burning bush he asks, what is your name? God answers, I will be what I will be. *Ehyeh*. The four letters of the name composed of an imbalanced jumble of was, is, will be. God is the all, nothing more or less, composed of all of us, within her, through her, our living and dying, her life.

Breathe in, breathe out. Let go of everything you know. None of it will remain for very long. This is not the mindset we inhabit most of our lives. But it's a part of us, at our core. Stalks of grain blowing in the wind. The bed of reeds in still water.

## **Connection**

Though the spiritual figures and traditions harp on it all the time, there's nothing like a crisis to teach you – we're connected. What if we chose to live our lives, move through the world, make our decisions as if we were representatives, servants of something far larger than our individual bodies?

Feel how connected you are to all the people of the world, your friends, the people you don't like, the plants and animals and stars and planets. You are God's magic trick. A spark, a shard, a soul, something planted at the core of your being that connects you eternally to every living thing. Feel the beauty of that ineffable thing we are, that cannot help but invite love, and peace, and joy.



# Beth Shalom Community Care 2020

Hi Everyone, What troublesome times we are having. Just a quick reminder, we are here to help where and when we can. All visiting is suspended of course, but our Telephone Tree is coming into its own. If you have not heard from us, but would like to, please let us know. If you know of anyone who is perhaps lonely or unwell, please advise us so we can make contact with them. In times like this a friendly voice can be a comfort, as can a card (postal services are considered essential). Again if you know of anyone who would benefit from either of these types of contact, we can only help if we are told about them.

All of you, please, please take care and **heed the rules**. They are for all of our benefit. There are many wonderful people out there, putting themselves 'in the line of fire' so as to speak, (our great team member Chris among them) and we need to be fair to them.

There is a great slogan going around from these 'angels' -

**"We came out for you, please stay home for us'.**

Best wishes from Lita and the Community Care Team

**Contact: Chris Shiller 021 177 4934 [shiller@orcon.net.nz](mailto:shiller@orcon.net.nz)**

## **Pandemic Prayer**

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those who are the most vulnerable.

May we, who have the luxury of working from home

Respect and support those who must choose between preserving their health and paying the rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when schools are closed

Remember those who have no options.

May we, who have to cancel our trips

Remember those who have no place to go.

May we who settle in for quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us find ways to be kind, be supportive, be accepting, be aware and find ways to look after each other and our neighbours.

# Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society

I had in mind that I would be writing a very different post for Teruah this month with a reflection on the Shabbaton and a reference to seasons, stories, and continuity through tradition in reference to Pesach.

Of course we did not have the Shabbaton gathering - a preventive call made before the state of emergency was declared - with a clear sense of the impending crisis growing. One of the activities I was working on with Debbie Miller was a session that invited participants to think creatively about the way they would express themselves [outside of the traditional routine] on different Jewish holidays in a way which honoured the meaning of the holiday. With Pesach at our doorstep and our inability to gather for Seder in person this is a real opportunity to apply this thinking. If we don't have access to all the seder plate traditional ingredients, what might we use to supplement them and why?

In these times, more than ever, we need to be flexible and adaptive

I need to talk about what might be a very difficult situation for our community during this lockdown period - the State of Emergency COVID-19 rules on funerals. There is no capacity for there to be any gathering of people. This means that we will need to rely on the services of professional Funeral Directors and cemetery staff to take care of the body and attend to burial or cremation process during lockdown.

We will work to provide a funeral service meeting the ritual requirements and consolation to the bereaved using mechanisms such as Skype, Zoom or other e-connections.

If someone you are with is dying, we can offer resources to read psalms or in the process of Viddui, should that be requested.

Rabbi Dean has been kindly supporting me through some of the questions raised over the period concerning tahara and burial. He reminded me - "Dina d'malchuta dina" - the law of the land is the law. We do what the Government needs us to do, and most importantly the safety of the living is paramount. This is a selfless time. A time where we have to give up some things for the greater collective good.

Our care for and of each other as best we can is crucial. The B&B will continue to support the community through this time to the best of our capacity.

Sue Berman, President

Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society

# New books for the Library

Two recently published books are now in our library.

Both books can be found in the Biography section. Judith Marks, Librarian.

