

# Temple Beth El Bulletin

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Phone:  
(805) 928-2118  
Email: TempleBethEl@verizon.net

Website:  
<http://www.TBEsantamaria.com>  
The Bulletin is emailed for free to Members and Friends of TBE.

Street address: 1501 E. Alvin Ave., Santa Maria, CA 93454  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 5217, Santa Maria, CA 93456

## Rabbi's Message ~ Dov Gottesfeld

### WILL THE REAL JEW STAND UP

Shalom to all:

The essence of Torah portion "Exodus 18-20" ("Yitro") serves as the cornerstone, and the nucleus of Judaism, which establishes, and offers a set of Guidelines for earthlings on "How To" interact with oneself, with other earthlings, and with the planet earth in order to guarantee uninterrupted existence of Life - of any kind - on the planet earth.

Once revealed, the essence of those Guidelines caused an everlasting inner conflict among the earthlings who chose to adhere to the Guidelines, which they were told, had been given to them by a God who identified Himself as "Eheyeh", but preferred to be known as the "God of their (the Israelite people) forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and as the mighty one who freed them from slavery in Egypt."



**Dov Gottesfeld**

That revelation took place at Mount Sinai, in the Sinai Desert around 1300 B.C.E. In hindsight, I am convinced that the revelation ceremony of the giving of the Guidelines (The Torah = Laws) was the first Human Rights gathering to promote the concept of three humane issues: equal rights to all, freedom of expression to all, and freedom of religion to all. However, that awesome and powerful revelation, concurrently, also triggered the birth to an everlasting conflict that began to sprout and to flourish in the minds of the earthlings and metastasized uncontrollably while mutating throughout the millenniums, infecting earthlings to the present day. This was a conflict that challenged the authenticity, the accuracy of the interpretations, the validity, and the necessity of some (or all) of the Guidelines. The conflict first irrupted between two factions: one faction which had chosen - or they believed they were chosen to lead, and set up customs and traditions by practicing the Guidelines as a - what we call today - 'religion'. Their opponents - were those who believed that the Guidelines were given equally to all to cherish and practice according to the individual's own understanding and interpretation.

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### February Schedule of Services:

Rabbi Gottesfeld (February 5th)  
Diane Borad-Mirken (February 12th)  
Anita Friedman (February 19th)  
Purim + Shabbat Rabbi Gottesfeld (February 26th)

### Educational Activities

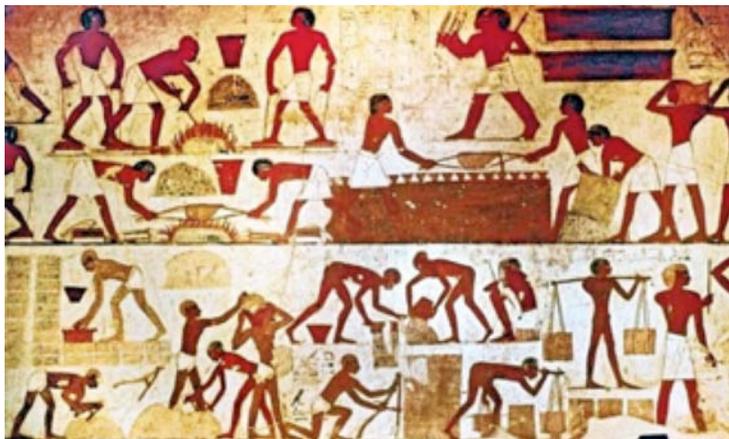
No educational activities are planned at this time due to COVID-19.

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There is an anecdote on the Giving of the Torah where God offered it to all the nations of the world at that time. However, all the nations, except the Israelites rejected the Torah when God refused to negotiate some of the terms which did not fit their life-style. However, The Israelite people said to God "Na'aseh Ve'nishma:" (עֲמַשְׁנוּ הַשְׁעֵנָה) literally: "We will do it, and we will **listen**."

The above Torah phrase is in the book of Exodus 24:7. The whole phrase reads: "He (Moses) took the Book of the Covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the Lord has said will we do, and obey." (English translation) In Hebrew that phrase reads "... עֲמַשְׁנוּ הַשְׁעֵנָה"-Na'aseh Ve'nishma' literally: "We will do it, and we will **listen**." When one reads the translation of the verb "listen" in English and in the other foreign languages into which the biblical text was translated, it becomes obvious that the verb "Nishma" – we will listen – presented a problem. In English most of the translations read: "we will be obedient", "we will obey", "will be faithful". In other languages they also have similar interpretations; others divert and translated it as a metaphor: "Will take it to heart." (In Biblical ideology the heart represents wisdom and knowledge.)

It is important to note that the phrase: "We will do it, and we will listen", had been used by other religions as a mean to degrade the Israelite people, and later Jewish people all over the world, and they pointed the finger at them calling them "non-believers", or "stiff-necked people" who deserved the wrath of God because they did not say first: "We will listen", and then "We will do". The word 'stiff' was translated incorrectly, interpreted I believe as "Stubborn", because of its meaning in the book of Proverbs where it was used as a metaphor for 'stubbornness'. Yet, that description "stiff-necked people" appears 6 more times in the Torah- four times in Exodus, and two times in Deuteronomy. First God uses it to portray the Israelite people, and then Moses accuses them of being "Stiff-necked people".



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## Board of Directors 2020-2021

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Gary Epstein, gepstein@calpoly.edu

### Vice President:

Gary Epstein, gepstein@calpoly.edu

### Treasurer:

Ron Levy, ralevy@juno.com

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Dove Okonina, dov.nat@verizon.net

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Suzanne Levy, slevy93455@gmail.com

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#### Education:

Amber Medina, amedinacasa@gmail.com.

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#### Sisterhood:

Marsha Epstein, mepstein@calpoly.edu

#### Ways & Means:

Diane Borad-Mirken,  
diane.boradmirken@mail.com

#### Sunshine Chair:

Judith Klinger, judythecutie@comcast.net

#### Social Action Chair:

David Goldstien

#### Additional Contacts:

**Rabbi:** Dov Gottesfeld

#### Bulletin Editor:

Leslie Epstein, leslicchan31@yahoo.com

#### Webmaster:

Joel David, jandidavid@yahoo.com

# Vice President's Column – Gary Epstein



On Friday, February 26th, Rabbi Gottesfeld will lead us in an abbreviated Shabbat service starting at 7:00 pm and followed by our Purim celebration. Diane will provide the music. Then we'll have a Purim Spiel followed by a reading of the Whole Magillah. Last year this was done at the temple, but this year it will be done on Zoom. On January 31st I sent out two emails to the membership asking for volunteers to take the parts in the Purim Spiel and for volunteers to read the ten chapters of the Scroll of Esther.

I am pleased to announce the arrival of a gift sculpture from Beth Emeth Synagogue in Larchmont, New York. There was a photograph of this sculpture in the January Bulletin. Our thanks go to Paul & Mary Goldiner, Mark & Karen Greene, Robert Schenkel (the sculptor), and Carl Urbant (who chose the words from verse 17 of Psalm 118).

Marian Hospital is giving COVID vaccinations to residents of Santa Barbara county above the age of 75 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Phone (805) 739-3815 to make an appointment. French Hospital is giving COVID vaccinations to residents of San Luis Obispo county above the age of 75. Appointments must be made on-line.

There is an opportunity to get a vaccination at the end of a shift if and when there is vaccine left over. Unused vaccine spoils about 5 hours after thawing and then has to be discarded. Suzanne Levy told our Board members that there is a Save-On drugstore in Orcutt which is willing to give vaccinations to people of any age if there is any unspoiled vaccine left over. This serves a new category of people called the "vaccine hunters".

Religious institutions have a good opportunity now to examine how to make the best use of scarce resources. These two vaccines are scarce resources which can go to waste if not used up during a short time interval. The ethics in treating people of different age groups as well as people with other conditions and circumstances can be a challenging subject to formulate.

As the Pandemic experts continue to discourage us from meeting other people in person and recommend that we stay at home as much as possible, you might want to try something new. How about tuning into the Brotherhood's monthly seminars? They usually occur on the morning of the first Sunday of the month on Zoom from 10:30 am to 11:30 am. Women are welcome too. Just let me know and I'll email you an invitational link.

Watching the SLO JCC program on Torahs rescued after WWII from Czechoslovakia, I learned more about the history of our Holosov Torah. It was #164th of 1,564 Torahs. I invited Rabbi Micah Hyman to write a summary of what he said about our Torah in that program. He promised to write an article for our March Bulletin.

The news on the COVID-19 virus in our two counties is confusing. On the one hand both counties have been rated at an extremely high risk level and the Stay-at-Home order was extended to February 19th. Then, on January 26th, the Stay-at-Home orders in our region of California suddenly were lifted so that restaurants and businesses could reopen for outdoor dining and other services. Now, we hear about new strains of the virus coming from the UK, Brazil, and South Africa. As these vigorous variations spread across the US we may have to tweak our vaccines. It's not impossible that we'll see something like the regular flu vaccines which are chemically tweaked every year or so to keep up with the ongoing mutations in the viruses. In the meanwhile please be careful, wear a mask, keep your social distance from strangers, and seriously consider getting yourself inoculated.

Temple Beth El has joined with other community leaders in condemning the defacement of the Jewish Fraternity House of AEPi at Cal Poly on the night of February 5<sup>th</sup>. We welcome the investigation now underway by the San Luis Obispo Police Department.

-Gary, VP of TBE

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Looking at the broader picture, I am inclined to interpret the description differently. The Israelite people, we are told, were slaves – working as builders in Egypt. They carried loads of heavy bricks and stones on their backs, and on their heads (see picture) In order to carry the bricks they needed to keep their bodies and their heads in a locked position to avoid dropping their loads. Doing this kind of work day in and day out would cause their bodies and necks to become **stiff**. Laborers were not learned people. What God was saying to Moses was, I consider, is that: “these people are still behaving like slaves-laborers, and therefore do not know how to implement my Guidelines.”

Therefore there is no surprise why they said: “Na’aseh Ve’nishma”-(“עמשנו השענו”) literally: “We will do it, and we will listen).” A slave **first does the best way** he knows to do the best job to satisfy his “owner” and then he/she goes back **to listen how well he/she had done**, and hoped for a reward.

That story is a representation of the need of people to express themselves the best they know how, and then to come back and learn to do better. That’s the essence of Na’aseh Ve’nishma’.

Remember the sons of Aaron who were burnt to death by God because they produced a “Strange Fire” on their own? Remember Korach who wanted to be a priest like Moses, and God terminated him and his tribe by opening the earth and letting the whole family be buried?

My commentary on the above quotes is as follow: Those stories were conceived and written by story tellers which concluded that if some Jews see themselves as better or more authentic Jews than other Jews there will always be a conflict between different religious factions which will lead primarily to hatred, destruction, and death not only to Jews, but to Judaism itself.

Therefore, I suggest that Jews stop deliberating by or fighting over the question: “Who is a Jew?” Instead, each earthling who – after reading those Torah’s Guidelines find them, reliable, truthful, and dependable – and ‘trusts’ that they should be adhered to because they deem them to be practical and universal, and have the potential of uniting all the earthlings who practice them, should be considered a Jew. In addition, instead of “worshipping” those Torah Guidelines, daily, how about “celebrating” those Torah Guidelines daily – each “Jew” in their own way – individually or together with other earthlings. The celebration would take place in a synagogue, at the office, in the field, on the street – everywhere on earth. That is what I trust the Israelite meant by uttering first ...”השענו” (na’aseh). “We will do it. After hearing the Torah guidelines from Moses, the Israelite people (and I assume the multi nationalities non-Jews [Erev rav] bought into that grandiose idea of living in harmony. Therefore they added: “We will listen” (עמשנו Ve’nishma’) referring to their desire to learn more, during their daily celebrations, by also exchanging ideas, knowledge, and love with other earthlings to make life even better.

You, the readers, may say I’m too optimistic and naïve. Indeed I am, and that’s what makes me get up in the mornings to face the days of my life, and keep ongoing. Wouldn’t everybody rather live that way, I wonder?

No, I did not ‘suck it out of my thumb’ (as the Jewish or Israeli expression states). A wise teacher made me aware of the concept that positivity in life can be achieved by trusting. It was the prophet Jeremiah, who right from the outset, in the beginning of his biblical account (Jer 2:2) of his encounter with the originator of those Torah Guidelines, assures the reader that the followers of His guidelines will have his continuous protection – no matter what – on account of those Israelites who were present at the Giving of the Guidelines at Mount Sinai, and following Him, trustfully, through a desolate and harsh Sinai desert for years, to a promised Land of Milk and Honey. “Thus said the Lord; I remember you (the Israelite people), the devotion of your youth, your love like a bride, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.” In other words, those who had experienced the Giving of the Torah Guidelines, and heard Moses reading them, had full trust in their potential of establishing uninterrupted existence of Life - of any kind -on the planet earth. True, there is no guarantee in the Guidelines, because only we – earthlings– **can be the guarantors**.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Dov Gottesfeld

# Bulletin Briefs

## February Anniversaries

- 1 Esmeralda & Cesar Vidales
- 14 Abby Lassen & Michael LeCover

## February Birthdays

- 12 Amber Medina
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- 23 Vicky Burg
- 28 Beth Ladin

## Zoom by telephone

We are conducting services on the internet with Zoom during the Pandemic. Here are the 3 steps for how to do it from a landline (that is, an ordinary) telephone.

1. First, you have to find out from whomever is setting up the Zoom meeting (the "host") what the code number (called the meeting ID) is for the particular meeting that you want to join. It will be an eleven digit number. Some of you may also be asked for the passcode which is TBE123.
2. Second, you have dial the following phone number: 1 669 990 6833
3. Third, you will hear a voice saying, "Welcome to Zoom. Enter your meeting ID followed by pound sign (#)"
4. That's all you have to do.
5. Sometimes the host of the meeting asks the invitees to mute themselves. There should be a mute button somewhere on the front of your telephone. Press it and then any unwanted background noises at your house (like a barking dog) will not be heard at the meeting.
6. When the meeting is over the host will end it and you can just hang up.
7. If you get a busy signal in Step #2 there are alternate phone numbers that you can use:

346 248 7799  
253 215 8782  
312 626 6799  
646 558 8656  
301 715 8592

## Brotherhood

The Temple Beth El Brotherhood met the first Sunday of the month, which this month was February 7<sup>th</sup>. While the temple is closed due to the Corona virus, we do not meet there. However, we will continue to meet virtually using Zoom. I will still be sending out articles of interest to members of the group. Any responses will be emailed to the rest for comment or interest. So please let me know if you are interested in attending our Zoom meetings and I will send you a link invitation. Our next meeting will be Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Be well,

Gary Epstein

## Sisterhood

The Temple Beth El Sisterhood normally meets the second Tuesday of the month at the Jaffa Café in Santa Maria. We will not meet as long as social distancing is in effect. The Jaffa Café is still open for takeout. If you visit on the second Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, and write TBE at the top of your order form, the temple will still get 15% of your order as a donation.

Remember that the Sisterhood runs the Temple Gift Shop. We have some new items including Havdalah candles, beautiful Seder plates and gorgeous mezuzah cases. Spread the word.

Hope we will meet again before long.

Marsha Epstein

Are you ordering a lot from Amazon these days? If so, there are two ways you can help the Temple to raise money. The first is to buy Amazon script from Mike Sachs. When you get the gift card (scrip), you can go into Amazon, enter the code on the back of the card, and Amazon will deduct from the card balance. The other way is to always use Smile.Amazon.com <<http://Smile.Amazon.com>> . Amazon will donate directly to TBE. To do this, go into smile.amazon.com <<http://smile.amazon.com>> . Choose "Temple Beth El Santa Maria" as your charity. Then be sure to always order through Smile. The Temple really appreciates your support.

TBE is now able to accept payments via Paypal on our website: [tbesantamaria.com](http://tbesantamaria.com) <<http://tbesantamaria.com>>

When using this option, you may select "Dues" or "Donations". If you wish to pay for an event (such as the Chanukah party), please select "Donation" and be sure to add a description of what it is for in the optional comment area near the top of the payment screen on Paypal. If you have any questions about how to use Paypal, contact Suzanne Levy, [slevy93455@gmail.com](mailto:slevy93455@gmail.com) or 805-934-0477.

# February Yarzheits

2/3/21	Hattie Lester Schwartz*	21	Shevat	Mother of Stephen Schwartz
2/3/21	Marcia Tunick*	21	Shevat	Wife of Art Tunick
2/3/21	Leo Schutz*	21	Shevat	Friend of Tom Geiger
2/4/21	Elmer Vincent	22	Shevat	Uncle of Kenneth L. Wolf, Brother of Betty Wolf
2/4/21	Doug Magnon			Friend of Tom Geiger
2/6/21	Hope Howard			Friend of the community
2/6/21	Sam Zuckerman*	24	Shevat	Father of Anne Berkowitz
2/7/21	Sam Berkowitz*	25	Shevat	Husband of Anne
2/8/21	William Hart			Father of Gregory Hart
2/9/21	Cirilo Medina	6	Shevat	Father of Raul Medina
2/10/21	Harry Mintzer	16	Shevat	Uncle of Marsha Epstein
2/10/21	Nathan Eschen			Grandfather of Donna Eschen
2/10/21	Nathan Weiser			Father of Sid Weiser
2/11/21	Eric Lee Levinson	9	Adar	Cousin of Niki Eschen
2/12/21	B. Jack Meltzer*	30	Shevat	Father of Lori Meltzer-Sutton
2/14/21	Marjorie Gross			Aunt of Abby Lassen
2/15/21	Harry Hayman	3	Adar	Friend of Boots & Seymour Hersh
2/15/21	Leonard Friedman	3	Adar	Friend of Boots and Seymour Hersh
2/15/21	Philip Schaefer	3	Adar	Cousin of Madeline Akronowitz
2/15/21	Beverly Jacobson			Cousin of Boots Hersh
2/15/21	Michael Gerber			Cousin of Diane Borad-Mirken
2/16/21	William Krupkin*	4	Adar	Husband of Dorothy Krupkin
2/16/21	Valerie Cohen	7	Adar	Daughter of Ed Cohen
2/17/21	Sadie Gollub	5	Adar	Aunt of Myra Wapner
2/17/21	L. Walter Herscovitz	5	Adar	Grandfather of Lori Meltzer-Sutton
2/18/21	Robert L. Cohen			Father of Edgar Cohen
2/18/21	Edith Cohen*	6	Adar	Mother of Anne Berkowitz
2/19/21	Mort Russell*	13	Adar	Husband of Rose Russell
2/19/21	Rosemary Allen	5	Adar	Sister-in-law of Tom Geiger
2/20/21	Gladys Zicherman*	20	Adar	Mother of Marsha Epstein
2/21/21	Richard Meisler			Nephew of Mike Kaver
2/23/21	Ruth Friedman	11	Adar	Mother of Arnold Stone
2/24/21	Trudy Chern*	12	Adar	Sister of Dan Davis
2/25/21	Irving Struminger	13	Adar	Father of Corinne Bernstein
2/25/21	Harold Pawlan	25	Adar	Father of Suzanne Levy
2/25/21	Betty Stein*	13	Adar	Mother of Michael Sachs
2/25/21	Bertha Goldberg*			Mother of Susan Schwartz
2/28/21	Marion A. Gabler*			Mother of Elliott Gabler

# Months of Mourning

Ilene J. Klass	Mother of Linda and Karen Goldstien	4/15/2020
Hinda Beaman	Member of TBE	6/7/2020
Adam Hill	SLO County Supervisor	8/6/2020
Megan Wolf	Niece of Ken Wolf	8/13/2020
Daivon Young	Nephew of Frank Young	8/18/2020
Renee Coe	Mother of Andi Portney	8/22/2020
Ulysses Ferrer	Cousin of Josue Medrano	8/19/2020
Janice Schrager	Mother of Michael Shrager	9/8/2020
Ruth Bader Ginsburg	Justice of the Supreme Court	9/18/2020
Walter Koch	Brother of Katherine (Hersh) Koch	10/10/20
Irwin (Irv) Boxer	Friend of Gary & Marsha Epstein	10/29/20
Lawrence Levy	Cousin of Mary Goldiner	1/21/21
Paula Peyser	Cousin of Paul Goldiner	1/24/21
Mary Oliver	Friend of many at TBE	2/3/21

# FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 TBE Board meeting (7 PM) Adult Conversational Hebrew with Joel David on Zoom (6 PM)	3	4	5 Shabbat service led by Rabbi Dov Gottesfeld on Zoom (7:30 PM)	6 Torah Discussion session with Rabbi Gottesfeld (10 AM on Zoom)  Etz Chayim children's class: Practice songs for Purim on Zoom (10:30-11:30 AM)
7 136th Brotherhood Seminar on Zoom (10 AM)	8	9 Adult Conversational Hebrew with Joel David on Zoom (6 PM)	10	11	12 Shabbat service led by Rabbi Diane Borad- Mirken on Zoom (7:30 PM)	13 Etz Chayim children's class: Practice songs for Purim on Zoom (10:30-11:30 AM)
14	15	16 Adult Conversational Hebrew with Joel David on Zoom (6 PM)	17	18	19 Shabbat service led by Anita Friedman on Zoom (7:30 PM)	20 Etz Chayim children's class: Practice songs for Purim on Zoom (10:30-11:30 AM)
21	22	23 Adult Conversational Hebrew with Joel David on Zoom (6 PM)	24	25	26 Rabbi Gottesfeld leads Purim + Shabbat service on Zoom (7:00 PM)	27 Torah Discussion session with Rabbi Gottesfeld (10 AM on Zoom)  Etz Chayim children's class: Havdalah & Sundown Songs on Zoom (5:40 PM)
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