



The Temple Beth El Bulletin is published monthly according to the Gregorian calendar.

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## Rabbi's Message - Dov Gottesfeld

**Shalom to all:**

### **The Story of Esther: A Timeless Message for Today's Jewish World**

The story of **Esther** is not just an ancient tale of Jewish survival—it carries deep meaning for Jews today. Though we live in a different world, the challenges Esther and Mordechai faced—antisemitism, identity struggles, and moral responsibility—are still very much relevant. The lessons of the Megillat Esther can help us navigate modern life as Jews in a complex and often uncertain world.

Haman's decree to destroy the Jews is an all-too-familiar theme in Jewish history. Throughout the centuries, from the Inquisition to the Holocaust, the Jewish people have faced threats of annihilation, discrimination, and persecution. Today, we still see rising antisemitism across the world—in hate crimes, rhetoric, and violence against Jewish communities.



**Dov Gottesfeld**

Esther's story teaches us that silence is not an option. Like Mordechai and Esther, we must have the courage to stand up, speak out, and fight against hatred and intolerance. Whether through education, activism, or supporting Jewish communities, we must take action to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

Esther's Jewish identity was initially hidden. She lived in the Persian palace, surrounded by wealth, comfort, and power. Yet, when the time came, she embraced her heritage and risked everything to save her people.

Many Jews today live in secular societies where assimilation is a major challenge. It is easy to blend in, to downplay our Jewishness, to avoid difficult conversations. But Esther's story reminds us that our Jewish identity is not something to hide—it is something to embrace and be proud of. Even in a world where faith and tradition can feel inconvenient, we must hold onto our roots, our values, and our connection to our people.

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### **March Schedule of Services:**

March 7th Anita Friedman (7:30 PM)  
March 14th Rabbi Dov Gottesfeld (7:30 PM)  
March 21st Josué Medrano (7:30 PM)  
March 28th Josué Medrano (7:30 PM)

### **Educational Activities**

Etz Chaim Children's Religious School 9:30-10 AM

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One of the most powerful aspects of the Purim story is how the Jewish people came together. When faced with danger, they fasted, prayed, and stood in solidarity. Their collective strength led to their survival.

Today, Jewish unity is just as important. Despite differences in denomination, background, or level of observance, we are one people. When we stand together—whether to support Israel, defend against antisemitism, or strengthen Jewish education—we are stronger. Purim reminds us that we thrive not only as individuals, but as a community.

One of the most unique aspects of the Book of Esther is that God's name is never mentioned. Unlike other biblical stories where miracles are clear, the events of Purim unfold in a way that seems natural—yet, looking back, we see that God was orchestrating everything.

Many Jews today struggle with faith, wondering, “Where is God in the modern world?” The lesson of Esther is that even when God's presence is not obvious, He is still guiding us. Sometimes, His work is behind the scenes, in the right opportunities, in unexpected blessings, in moments of resilience and survival. Purim teaches us to trust that even in the darkest times, we are never truly alone.

Mordechai's words to Esther—“Who knows if you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14)—are a message for every Jew today. Each of us has a purpose, a reason we are here. Whether we are leaders, educators, activists, parents, or simply individuals trying to live with integrity, we have a role to play in the story of the Jewish people.

Perhaps we are here to inspire the next generation, to fight injustice, to strengthen Jewish communities, or to build bridges with others. The key is recognizing that we are not here by accident—we have been placed here “for such a time as this.”

The story of Esther is not just about what happened in ancient Persia—it is about how we live today. It challenges us to be proud Jews, to stand up against hate, to strengthen our communities, and to recognize our purpose.

As we celebrate Purim, we remember that no matter the challenges we face, our history is one of survival, resilience, and faith. Just as Esther and Mordechai played their part in saving the Jewish people, we must do the same in our own time.

May we all have the courage of Esther, the wisdom of Mordechai, and the faith to know that even when God seems hidden, He is always guiding us.

**Chag Purim Sameach!** 🥰🥰

Rabbi Dov Gottesfeld

## TBE Board of Directors for 2024-2025

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# President's Column – Guest Columnist Anita Friedman

## **Hebrew Lesson:**

### **Shoresh: Finding your Hebrew Roots**

This is not a genealogy article about your Jewish family roots; it is an etymology article about Hebrew word roots and how they can help you understand more Hebrew. First, keep in mind some of the ways Hebrew and English differ.

Most English verbs have one basic form (present tense) that anyone writing a word list or dictionary would use. Examples are walk, go, speak, read, write, rule, prophesy, and dedicate. If other forms of the verb are irregular, the dictionary routinely provides them. Hebrew is not so simple. For example, *malach* means *he ruled* (or *reigned* or *was king*) and *yimloch* means *he will rule*. Although the two words sound unrelated to each other, they have the three-letter Hebrew root *mem-lamed-chaf* in common. This root is called a *shoresh* (plural *sharashim*) meaning *root*.

Since this shoresh is not pronounceable by itself (try pronouncing *mlch*), most Modern Hebrew dictionaries list the verb under its third person masculine singular past tense, e.g., *halach* he walked. This is generally the *shoresh* with vowel markings added. If you look up the verb *reign* in an English-Hebrew dictionary, you will find *malach* - *he reigned*. It would be up to you to find or know the other forms of that verb.

When you can find the shoresh of a Hebrew word, you can better comprehend it and learn related words as well. So how do you go about finding these roots in a particular word? One method is to learn the words well enough to recognize the shoresh, an ambitious proposal when it's not a regular verb in the third person masculine singular.

Another method is to use the book *Roots: A Hebrew-English Word List*. If you want the root of a particular Hebrew word, look it up in the Hebrew index and find the page reference for the shoresh. Or you if you want the Hebrew equivalent root of an English word, use the English index to find the page for the shoresh. If you already know the shoresh, go directly to it in Hebrew alphabetical order. Be advised that the root is given in the same third person masculine singular past tense as in a dictionary. With the root you will find entries for 3 – 15 related verbs, nouns, adjectives, and idioms derived from it.

Let's try the word *Diber* - *He spoke*. This yields: *davar* - *word* or *thing*, *dovayr* a *spokesman*, *da-b'ran* a *talkative person*, *daberet* - *loquaciousness*, *hidbir* - *he controlled*, *hidbarah* - *control*, and some more tenuously related words such as *midbar desert* or *wilderness*.

Another example is *Tzachak* - *He laughed*. From this we get: *tz'chok* *laughter*; *bat-tzachak* - *smile* (literally *daughter of a laugh*), *matzchik* - *funny*, and *Yitzchak* - *Isaac*. You may remember from your Torah reading that Isaac was named for the word for laughter because Abraham and Sarah laughed at the idea they would have a child in their old age.

If you're interested in roots for Torah study, another source is the *Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew*. In addition to simple etymology, the author uses a complex system beyond the scope of this article. You can use the simple etymology in two ways. If you find a word in the Torah or Psalms and can determine the shoresh, look it up to find related words and references. Or, if you already have a root and are curious where the word occurs in the Bible, the entry for that root will point you to several references.

For example, you recently learned the word for *evening* – *erev* in Hebrew class. First look it up in *Roots*, using the Hebrew spelling in the Hebrew index, *evening* in the English index, or *ayin-resh-vet* in the root section. There you will find two different roots (and meanings) for the word. The one closest to *evening* is *it became dark*. A sample of derived words, besides *erev*, includes: *ma-arav* *the west* (i.e., from where the sun sets) and *m'orav* *mixed* (as in day and night). □

When you turn to the *Etymological Dictionary*, you will find the definitions *mix substances with no change in character* and *penetrate with foreign matter*. This is likely for *mixed* but less so for *evening*. References #5 – evening, mixed shades of light (Gen. 1:5 and Gen 19:1) and #6 – twilight (Ex 12:6) are plausible. The Hebrew in Reference 5 is simply *erev*. The Hebrew in reference 6 is *bayn ha-arbam* literally *between the evenings*, an evocative way to say *twilight* (or *afternoon* in another translation). The other references are more metaphorical or based on other meanings of that shoresh.

Knowing the shoresh is the first step. Each root belongs to one or more verb patterns or *binyanim*. What these patterns are and how words are built from the *sharashim* and *binyanim* is the subject of another article.

Sources: 1) *Hebrew & English Dictionary*. Bantam. 2) *Roots: A Hebrew-English Word-List* Mordechai Kamrat and Edwin Samuel. 3) *Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew*. Matityahu Clark. 4) Roger Talbot – personal communication.

**By Anita Friedman**

# Bulletin Briefs

## March Anniversaries

26 Lori & Bill Sutton

## March Birthdays

9 Gloria Aguilar  
15 Ilana David  
27 Izbeth Basurto  
28 Manning Semiatin  
29 Alyshia Brunk

## Donations

In memory of Sheila Sales by Andi and Jeff Portney

### A Message from Diane Borad-Mirken

Hello Friends. On March 11<sup>th</sup>, (the second Tuesday of the month as usual), we (the Sisterhood & our guests) will be meeting at Ming Dynasty. They have a wonderful Chinese Buffet dinner. We meet at 6PM. The restaurant is located at 2011 S. Broadway in Santa Maria. Turn into the parking lot at the Western Village light. Ming Dynasty is on the right. We have room for a couple more people. Let me know if you want to join us. Also, for those of you that are attending to bring your checkbooks. I will have the scrip box with me. Please RSVP by replying to this email or by calling or texting me at (805) 478-1463. Shalom, Diane

## Sisterhood

Diane Borad-Mirken has taken on the job of organizing our Sisterhood meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. Our March dinner will take place on Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM, at the Ming Dynasty Chinese Restaurant which is known for its wonderful buffet. The address is 2011 S. Broadway (Turn into the parking lot at the Western Village light. The restaurant is on the right.) Everyone is invited; bring friends along. Please RSVP to Diane: (805) 478-1463 so we know how many to expect.

**Marsha Epstein**

### Weekly Torah Portion Discussions and Shabbat services at Temple Beth El for TBE members whose main language is Spanish.

The Spanish-speaking portion of our membership meets just about every Saturday morning at the temple starting at 9:30 am. We use a Spanish/Hebrew prayer book and hold a Shabbat service and a discussion of the weekly portion in Spanish. We are not a separate group from the temple (TBE) membership but are members of it whose main language is Spanish and feel that this space creates for us a comfortable way to immerse ourselves in the study of the Torah. Everyone is welcome to join with us, even the English speaking who are striving to learn Spanish as well as our Jewish heritage. We are pleased that we have a space to accommodate our needs and we thank the Board of Directors who encouraged this. The leader of our group is Raul Medina (805) 922-4171 or (805) 868-8153).

Discusiones semanales de la porcion de la Tora y servicios de Shabat en el Templo Beth El para los miembros de TBE cuyo idioma principal es el español. Los miembros de habla hispana de nuestra sinagoga se reune casi todos los sabados por la mañana en el templo a partir de las 9:30 am. Usamos un libro de Rezos en espanol / hebreo y celebramos un servicio de Shabat y una discusion de la porcion semana en español. No somos un grupo separado de la sinagoga (TBE), sino que somos miembros de el cuyo idioma principal es el español y sentimos que este espacio crea para nosotros una manera comoda de sumergimos en el estudio de la Tora. Todos son bienvenidos a unirse a nosotros, incluso los de habla inglesa que se esfuerzan por aprender espanol, asi como nuestra herencia judia. Nos complace tener un espacio para acomodar nuestras necesidades y agradecemos a la Junta Directiva que permita esto. Para mas información comunicarse con Raúl Medina al 805-868-8153.

## Brotherhood

The next Brotherhood breakfast & seminar meeting will be held on Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 AM at the Temple. Join us for our famous breakfast of lox and bagels, eggs, muffins and extras.

As usual, I will send out articles of interest to members of the group. Our seminar conversations have been lively, interesting, and informative and all interested people, men and women, are welcome to join us and participate in our open 184<sup>th</sup> Seminar.

**Gary Epstein**

## March Yarzheits

3/4/35	William Krupkin*	4	Adar	Husband of Dorothy Krupkin
3/2/25	Paul Appel*	7	Adar	Father of Susan Appel Dempsey
3/2/25	Mary Ann Canter			Cousin of Gary Epstein
3/2/25	Arturo Cervantes			Father of Ana Medrano
3/2/25	Lou Meyer*			Husband of Tibbie Meyer
3/3/25	Leonard Friedman	3	Adar	Friend of Boots and Seymour Hersh
3/3/25	Philip Schaefer	3	Adar	Cousin of Madeline Akronowitz
3/4/25	Fannie Simon*			Mother of Nancy Evans
3/5/25	Sadie Gollub	5	Adar	Aunt of Myra Wapner
3/5/25	L. Walter Herscovitz	5	Adar	Father of Lyn Meltzer
3/6/25	Bertha Berkowitz	22	Adar	Aunt of Gary Epstein
3/6/25	Edith Zuckerman Cohen*	6	Adar	Mother of Anne Berkowitz
3/7/25	George Hersh	9	Adar	Brother of Seymour Hersh
3/7/25	Al J. Levinson*			Husband of Betty Levinson
3/7/25	Meyer Meltzer			Grandfather of Lori Meltzer-Sutton
3/9/25	Harry Kaplan	28	Adar	Past-president and founding member of TBE
3/10/25	Judy Eschen*			Mother of Donna
3/11/25	Ruth Friedman	11	Adar	Mother of Arnold Stone
3/12/25	Ben Bycher*			Husband of Evie Bycher
3/12/25	Trudy Chern*	12	Adar	Sister of Dan Davis
3/13/25	Betty Stein*	13	Adar	Mother of Michael Sachs
3/13/25	Irving Struminger	13	Adar	Father of Corinne Bernstein
3/14/25	Stanley Ratner	28	Adar I	Cousin of Marsha Epstein
3/16/25	Chaya Rifkin	4	Nisan	Great Aunt of Eric Berge
3/17/25	Al Perlman*	17	Adar	Husband of Rosalind Perlman
3/18/25	Leah Akronowitz	18	Adar	Aunt of Len Akronowitz
3/19/25	Steven Stone*	19	Adar	Son of Rita and Arnold Stone
3/20/25	Elizabeth Friedman	20	Adar	Aunt of Arnold Stone
3/22/25	Sion Nasser Nourani*	22	Adar	Brother of Dan Nourani*
3/23/25	Bud Schenck*			Husband of Niki Eschen
3/26/25	Gertrude Jackaway*	26	Adar	Mother of Lorraine Pregozen
3/26/25	Sandy Zuckerbraun	16	Adar II	Husband of Ruth
3/28/25	Dominga Trujillo			Mother of Stella Perez
3/29/25	Joe Davis*			
3/30/25	Denise Abb	1	Nisan	Cousin of Marsha Epstein
3/30/25	Alvin Lewis	1	Nisan	Father of Steve Lewis
3/30/25	Moshe Karim Nourani*	1	Nisan	Brother of Dan Nourani*
3/31/25	Sheila Sales			Wife of Michael Sales
3/31/25	Art Tunick*	27	Adar	Husband of Marcia Tunick

## Months of Mourning

Mel Kalish	Husband of Esther	7/30/24
Willis Oren Wagner	Father of Randy Wagner	8/30/24
Phyllis Green	Wife of Barry Green	9/17/24
Beverly Lassen	Mother of Abby Lassen	1/22/25
Carolyn Koepke	Cousin of Gary Epstein	1/25/25

# March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Raúl Medina leads Shabbat service & Torah study (1 PM)
2 Brotherhood Breakfast (9 AM)	3	4 TBE Board Meeting (7 PM)	5	6	7 Anita Friedman will lead Shabbat service (7:30 PM)	8 Raúl Medina leads Shabbat service & Torah study (1:00 PM)
9	10	11 Sisterhood's dinner at Ming Dynasty (6 PM)	12	13 Raúl Medina leads Purim festival with Megillah reading in Spanish (6:30 PM)	14 Rabbi Gottesfeld leads Purim festival with Megillah reading in English & Shabbat service (Potluck 6 PM)	15 Rabbi Dov Gottesfeld leads Torah discussion (10:30 AM)
16	17	18	19	20	21 Josué Medrano leads Shabbat service (7:30 PM)	22 Raúl Medina leads Shabbat service & Torah study (9:30 AM) Amber Medina leads the Etz Chaim class at 10:00 AM
23	24	25	26	27	28 Josué Medrano leads Shabbat service (7:30 PM)	29 Raúl Medina leads Shabbat service & Torah study (9:30 AM) Amber Medina leads the Etz Chaim class at 10:00 AM
30	31					