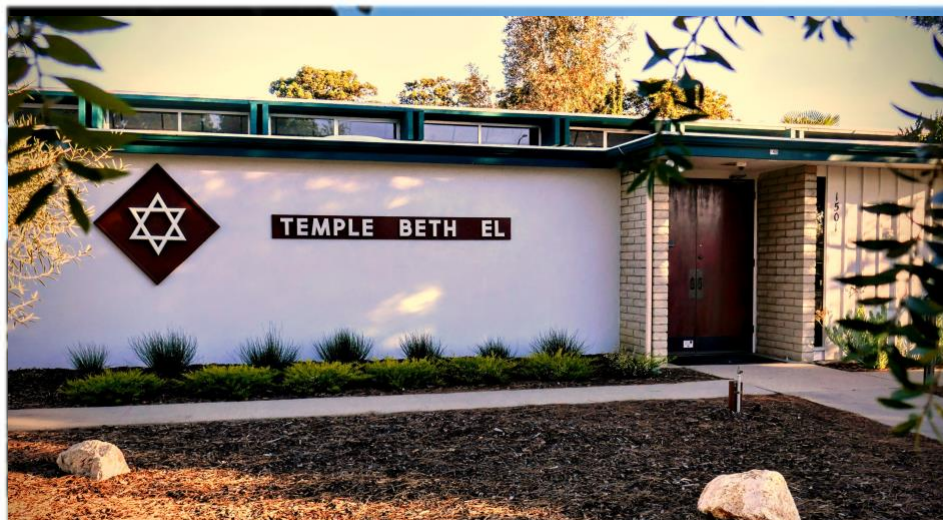


Temple Beth El Bulletin

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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 - Jonathan Kohan

Over the past few weeks, I've dedicated my weekly online study time to studying Maimonides' Laws of Teshuvah. Without attempting a formal synthesis of this treatise, I'd like to share some ideas that I find particularly relevant, and I believe in more than one respect that they anticipate the developments of modern psychotherapy by a little less than a millennium.

An etymological analysis of the word teshuvah (תשובה), which is often translated as "repentance," brings it closer to the concept of return. The difference is subtle but key: while repentance is primarily an emotional state that is, to a certain extent, involuntary, returning implies a movement, a behavior.

Return to where? To what? To whom? Regardless of what we consider the path from which we have strayed, the important thing is precisely to return and reconnect with something that, although perhaps never truly there, was considered lost. Judaism defines this reunion as a return to ethics and spirituality; reconciliation with G-d, with one's neighbor, and, fundamentally, with oneself.



Jonathan Kohan

One of the most detailed and profound analyses of teshuvah is that undertaken by Maimonides in his work Mishneh Torah. In its ten chapters, the Sepharad sage's treatise on this process is paradigmatic for understanding the subject.

Maimonides explains that in biblical times, the transgressions of the Israelites were expiated through three elements: sacrifices, the verbal confession that accompanied the offering, and teshuvah, understood as repentance and modification of negative behavior. However, the destruction of the Great Temple left this last component as the only form of atonement in Judaism.

It is true that teshuvah does not exempt one from the legally imposed penalty for committing a transgression. But the fact that it lacks legal validity doesn't make it a solely religious process. On the contrary, according to Maimonides' philosophy, teshuvah is a system of personal growth that includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects.

Continued on Page 2

September Schedule of Services:

September 5th Josué Medrano (7:30 PM)
September 12th Josué Medrano (7:30 PM)
September 19th Diane Borad-Mirken (7:30 PM)
September 26th Anita Friedman (7:30 PM)

Educational Activities

Etz Chaim Children's Religious School 10 AM

Continued from Page 1

As a true Aristotelian, Maimonides is more realistic than idealistic, and distinguishes between a perfect teshuvah, which involves avoiding transgression in the future, and a slightly earthlier teshuvah, which values effort even if it eventually falls into the ever-tempting repetition. Ultimately, it's not that most of us are decidedly good or bad, but rather that we oscillate day after day between doing what we want and what we should.

A warning: if the reader is reading this looking for some kind of universal formula for achieving redemption, don't waste your time and abandon the task. Maimonides recognizes that there is no single way to do teshuvah; rather, each person is different and needs to find their own methods of repentance. For some, it will mean publicly admitting the transgression, for others, practicing tzedakah. Some will withdraw from worldly life to reflect, and others will find in fasting the key to rectifying mistakes. Each according to their own history and struggles, the shared goal is to be more ethical and happier.

Thrown into life in society with no other weapons than a handful of teachings that our parents and teachers tried to instill in us, we try to make sure that the good things we do outweigh the not-so-good ones, or at least that the mistakes we make are not so serious and, as far as possible, that they are not always the same.

Rabbi Jonathan Kohan

Schedule for High Holidays

Erev Rosh Hashanah	Monday, September 22	7 PM
Rosh Hashanah I	Tuesday, September 23	10 AM
Tashlich on Harford Pier at Port San Luis		4 PM
Rosh Hashanah II	Wednesday, September 24	10 AM
Shabbat Shuvah	Friday, September 26	7:30 PM
Kever Avot Santa Maria Cemetery	Sunday, September 28	11 AM
Kol Nidre	Wednesday, October 1	7 PM
Yom Kippur	Thursday, October 2	
Morning Service		10 AM
Afternoon Service		4:30 PM
Yizkor		5:30 PM
Ne'ileh		6 PM
Havdalah		6:30 PM
Break-the-Fast		Sundown

TBE Board of Directors for 2025-2026

President: Juan Raúl Medina

Co-Vice Presidents: Frank Young & Gary Epstein

Treasurer: Ron Levy

Executive Secretary: Open
(Stand-in secretary: Amber Medina)

Past President: Frank Young

Brotherhood: Michael LeCover

Buildings & Grounds Co-Chairs: Ken Wolf,
Sid Goldstien, & Joel Basurto

Education: Amber Medina

Membership: Josué Medrano

Acting Religious Practices Director: Anita Friedman

Sisterhood: Marsha Epstein

Ways & Means: Diane Borad-Mirken

Trees for Israel: Alyshia Brunk

Social Action Chair: David Goldstien

Sunshine Chair: Open

Rabbi: Stand-in Jonathan Kohan

Bulletin Editor: Leslie Epstein

President's Column – Raúl Medina



Shalom everyone.

Good things happened this month, we had Rabbi Mehlman lead a beautiful Shabbat service, a Torah study the next day which was very successful in attendance, and we hope to see him back more often. Special thanks to Sid Goldstein, and those who were involved with the carpet cleaning. Please don't forget to write down your name if you want to participate in high holidays services and break the fast.

Sincerely,
Raúl Medina

Bulletin Briefs

September Anniversaries

6 Jeff & Andi Portney

September Birthdays

2 Zoe Romero
13 Levi Medina
15 Joel Basurto
17 Barbara Sachs
19 James McCready
20 Ed Cohen
21 Sarah Gelpi Deack
22 Maurecia Mercado

Donations

In honor of Seymour Hersh's 99th birthday
from Andi and Jeff Portney

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 discusión 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 sumergirnos 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 meeting will be held on Sunday, September 7th, 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.

Gary Epstein

Sisterhood

Shalom Friends,

Our Sisterhood Dinner is this coming Tuesday, September 9th at La Villa, owned by our own members, Maria and Guillermo Aguilar. We gather there at 6PM.

Please let me know if you will be joining us. My phone number is (805) 478-1463. Please text or call me to RSVP. The restaurant is located at 1115 W. Main St. Santa Maria. (It is in a mini shopping mall on the right-hand side of the street just before reaching Blosser.)

Hope to see you there.

Diane

September Yarzheits

9/1/25	Richard Hirsch, Rabbi	8	Elul	Cousin of Seymour Hersh
9/2/25	Anne Price			Mother of Edgar Cohen
9/2/25	Benjamin Bakst	19	Elul	Cousin of Gary Epstein
9/2/25	Pam Gollub	9	Elul	Niece of Myra Wapner
9/2/25	Saul Tunick*	9	Elul	Son of Marcia and Art Tunick
9/3/25	Abraham Hersh Lubin*			Father of Jerry Lubin
9/4/25	Betty Fetzter			Friend of Gary & Marsha Epstein
9/4/25	Lil Klempfner			Sister of Seymour Hersh
9/5/25	Josephine Gollub	12	Elul	Aunt of Myra Wapner
9/6/25	Anna Stahl*			Mother of Sid Stahl
9/7/25	Joseph Ben-Moshe			Father of Ilana David
9/10/25	Raye Linden*			Wife of Sidney Linden
9/11/25	Jack E. Portney	18	Elul	Father of Jeff Portney
9/12/25	Emil Schafer			Cousin of Gary Epstein
9/12/25	Adelyn (Addy) Raich	19	Elul	Wife of Rabbi Abraham Raich
9/13/25	Leonard Gaon			Husband of Bernice Gaon
9/14/25	Norman Rosen	21	Elul	Cousin of Boots Hersh
9/15/25	Joseph Friedman			Husband of Marilyn Friedman
9/17/25	Phyllis Green			Wife of Barry Green
9/19/25	Charlie Drucker			Stepfather of Diane Borad-Mirken
9/19/25	Ellis Kram			Father of Marilyn Friedman
9/19/25	Louise Nemerson*	18	Elul	Daughter of Annette and Arthur Silverfarb
9/19/25	Daniel Eli Stone	26	Elul	Grandson of Rita and Arnold Stone
9/23/25	Shadi Olevi Nourani*	1	Tishri	Mother of Dan Nourani*
9/25/25	Hy Spivack*	21	Elul	Father of Niki Eschen
9/25/25	Marcella Steinberg	5	Tishri	Mother of Mindy Downum
9/26/25	Muriel Levy			Mother of Ron Levy
9/26/25	Kurt Sondermann	18	Tishri	Great-cousin of Ken Wolf
9/28/25	Martin Friedman	20	Tishri	Father of Anita Friedman

Months of Mourning

Beverly Lassen	Mother of Abby Lassen	1/22/25
Carolyn Koepke	Cousin of Gary Epstein	1/25/25
Philip Fetzter	Friend of Gary and Marsha	2/21/25
Mario Chavez	Uncle of Josue Medrano	2/24/25
Joyce Spezman Margolin	Friend of Diane Borad-Mirken	4/4/25
Len Akronowitz	Father of Dove Okonina	4/7/25

Three Dimensions of Humanity

By Rabbi Benzion C. Kaganoff

Part Two of Three Parts

The second element of our three-dimensional scheme, prayer, offers one possibility.

Prayer proclaims that man is not alone in this world. There is a great Power which rules over us, a power Who, in His infinity, incorporates every striving and every aspiration of finite humanity. Man, however, must learn to pray properly. If we do not pray in the right way, then we have missed the entire meaning of prayer and shall have failed to communicate with our God. Here, again, the genius of Judaism expressed itself. The word prayer comes from the Latin *precare*, which means to beg, to ask. Many of us, unfortunately, look upon prayer only as occasion for asking things of God, for making promises to Him in return for gifts which we expect from the Almighty. The Hebrew word for prayer is *t'filah*, and it expresses a higher motivation. It is derived from the word *his-palel*, which means to judge oneself. This is the true purpose of prayer. Rather than an occasion for us to seek favors from God, prayer is the opportunity for us to judge and examine ourselves before Him, to see whether we, by our conduct, have measured up to the standards set up by God and by His law. Once we attain this higher concept of prayer, we can come to realize that faith is reciprocal, that while we rely upon God and His goodness, we must endeavor to prove to Him that He can rely upon us and upon our loyalty to Him. This, then, is the second dimension of humanity, that through prayer – the right kind of prayer – we measure our own spiritual stature and come to understand that we are never alone in this world.

Coming soon: The third dimension of humanity...

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 TBE Board of Directors Meeting (7 PM)	3	4	5 Josué Medrano will lead Shabbat service (7:30 PM)	6 Raúl Medina leads Shabbat service (9:30 AM) Also: Amber Medina leads the Etz Chaim Children's School (10 AM)
7 Brotherhood Breakfast (9 AM)	8	9 Sisterhood Dinner (6 PM)	10	11	12 Josué Medrano will lead Shabbat service (7:30 PM)	13 Raúl Medina leads Shabbat service (9:30 AM) Also: Amber Medina leads the Etz Chaim Children's School (10 AM)
14	15	16	17	18	19 Diane Borad-Mirken will lead Shabbat service (7:30 PM)	20 Raúl Medina leads the Shabbat service (9:30 AM) Also: Amber Medina leads the Etz Chaim Children's School (10 AM)
21	22 Erev Rosh Hashanah (7 PM))	23 Rosh Hashanah I (10 AM) Also: Tashlich at Harford Pier at Port San Luis (4 PM)	24 Rosh Hashanah (10 AM)	25	26 Anita Friedman leads Shabbat Shuvah service (7:30 PM)	27 Raúl Medina leads Shabbat service & Torah study (9:30 AM) Also: Amber Medina leads the Etz Chaim Children's School (10 AM)
28 Kever Avot at Santa Maria Cemetery (11 AM)	29	30				