



The Jewish *Gaily Forward*

"Transcend the Ordinary"

Elul 5780 - Kislev 5781 / September 2020 - November 2020



Intentionality

By CANTOR SHARON BERNSTEIN

The Jewish calendar, as much of Judaism as a whole, is marked by distinctions: things we do at different times, in different ways, with the year sculpted into a rhythm of daily activities, Shabbat, feasts and fasts. At the head of it all is Rosh Hashanah, the diving off point, the starting block, when everything is wiped clean and begins anew.

It's not automatic, of course – no waving of a wand and magic spell. It's a multi-faceted process of sitting with ourselves, examining the past year, making amends, stitching together any torn fabric in our lives, and weaving together new hopes and dreams. Some of this feels a little complicated during this year of Covid-19. What does it mean to sit with ourselves – literally as well as metaphorically – when we've already been sitting so much?

Intentionality plays a big part. The Mishna says that if we happen to be reading the part of the Torah which contains the Sh'ma at a moment in which we are obliged to recite the Sh'ma in prayer, whether the obligation to recite the prayer is fulfilled has to do with whether we intend to fulfill it. In other words, it's partly about what we do, and partly about what we're thinking when we do it. The same action or event can take on different meaning if we choose to imbue it with different meaning. I'm not saying that we need to be more intentional this year. But in a time when we can't do things as we normally do them, we have the opportunity to think more about what we can and want to do, and how we do it.

We can use these High Holy Days combined with our unprecedented situation to try different things, and see how a new path might open a door or create insight. Or we can try thinking about something that we already do in a new way and see how that might expand or deepen our experience. We're not just entering the gates of the New Year, we're helping to create them.

L'shana Tovah M'tukah – May this coming year bring much peace, love, wholeness, health, kindness, openness, sweetness, strength, and joy to us all and to the world.

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Angels In The Zoom Age

By MARC LIPSCHUTZ



Following Rosh Hashanah prayers, two angels accompany and listen for every person to wish a friend, “L’shanah tovah tikasiv v’saichasaim. May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.” Upon hearing this traditional greeting expressed with sincerity, the angels take flight, and in best

Jewish practice present themselves as defense attorneys before the Heavenly Court, pleading that their well-wishing greeters be granted a good and sweet New Year.

Many Sha’ar Zahav congregants and friends relatedly express that their favorite activity during the Days of Awe is to personally greet loved ones and friends with traditional Rosh Hashanah good wishes. This year we will be greeting one another via Zoom, where our accompanying angels will most certainly be present, listening, and prepared to soar and petition for our benefit. Rosh Hashanah also initiates the new academic year for our Beit Sefer Phylis Mintzer religious school students. Sue Bojdak, our Director of Edu-

cation, will ensure that our children begin the New Year engaged with Torah and with Sha’ar Zahav, Jewish based-values, per our tradition. This fall we are transitioning to a volunteer teacher model.

I am delighted to disclose that among our volunteers will be our extraordinarily dedicated teachers, Ila Cherney, Andrea Guerra, and Geneva Rust-Orta, each of whom will continue to earnestly teach our children. Learning will commence on-line, and could include a hybrid of distanced outdoor activities and guided in-home projects, where the angels will assuredly be present, listening, and learning as well.

“With prudence and inclusiveness,
we hope to reopen in phases
following the secular new year.”

- Marc Lipschutz

A Reopening Task Force has convened to create a protocol for safely reopening our beloved congregational home at 290 Dolores Street. Sha’ar Zahav will adhere (Continued on Page 5)

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Recalling John Robert Lewis

By JEFFREY LEVIN

During the height of the AIDS crisis, my friend Sandy Thurman had quit her job to create AIDS Atlanta. No public officials, civic, or civil rights leaders offered her help. They slammed doors in her face. She asked if I could set up a meeting with her and John Lewis because she knew we were neighbors and we became friends.

In lieu of a simple meeting, I invited Sandy, John, and Lillian Lewis and over a dozen AIDS sufferers to a Passover Seder at my home. At appropriate moments in the ceremony, one by one, guests testified about their plight being sick with this terrible disease. They showed visible signs of illness; they were gaunt, had Kaposi's sarcoma lesions, and one had started to display dementia because the disease had attacked his brain.

When it came to the point in the service where it says, "The rock which the builders had rejected, G-d set as a cornerstone of the Temple." I asked my guests, what does it mean to be "despised, rejected men, men of sorrows and acquainted with grief" and what does it mean that despite this rejection, G-d has set you the cornerstone of G-d's Temple? One guest talked about being rejected and disowned by parents and family, how he was no longer welcome in the church he grew up in, how he could find no one to officiate at his funeral which was not far off in the future.

And then I asked that guest, "and what does it mean that despite all this rejection, you are G-d's cornerstone?" His response?



He said that this was the first time in his life he had heard that as a sick, gay man, that his life somehow mattered to anyone, especially to G-d. John Lewis again sprung to his feet. He seemed angry. He was shouting. I could feel the walls of the room shake. "Of course, you matter!" he shouted, "You matter to G-d, you matter to my wife Lillian, and you matter to me!"

For the next weeks, months, years and decades John Lewis demonstrated that the LGBT community mattered to him. May his righteous memory be for a blessing.

(For the full text of Jeff's keynote at a community memorial for John Lewis, please visit www.shaarzahav.org/JohnLewis.)

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Specifications supplied upon request.

Michael Hulton

By Martin Tannenbaum

Long before Dr. Michael Hulton finally settled in San Francisco in 1992, he had found community at Sha'ar Zahav. His journey, however, was "by the longer way."

Michael grew up in London in an English family "of German persuasion." The synagogue his parents attended had a choir and an organ, and it was so German that the Kaiser attended the dedication. But synagogue wasn't a big part of family life and with a name like Hulton (which his father had changed before Michael's birth), they did their best to blend in.

It wasn't just his Jewish background that contributed to his outsider status; Michael realized at a young age that he was gay. As luck would have it, the family business was around the corner from the Central School of Speech and Drama which made it possible for many gay thespians to meet.

Michael excelled in school, which paved the way for a "gap year" in America before entering medical school. Once in medical school, he still found time to travel widely, and, before the serious work of medicine, Michael took a job as a flight attendant with Lufthansa.

"It was the gay community's Holocaust. With AIDS, I felt a deep responsibility to do more." - Michael Hulton

Michael's subsequent move to Toronto allowed him to transition back to medicine as an anesthesia trainee and a Stanford fellowship provided him his first opportunity to live in San Francisco, where he would return several years later to deepen his practice and care for men with AIDS



and HIV. "It was the gay community's Holocaust. With AIDS, I felt a deep responsibility to do more."

Only more recently did Michael learn about his Uncle Alfred Flechtheim – a German art dealer, collector and publisher in pre-WWII Germany – whose extensive art collection was stolen by the Nazis. After six months of extensive research, Michael published a book, *Jewish, Gay & Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*, detailing his uncle's life and its parallels with his own life.

As the sole heir of his uncle's estate, Michael has pursued reparations with increasing success, although, as Michael concedes, "each payment is a saga." These reparations have given him the ability to increase his support to AIDS, medical, LGBT and Jewish organizations. And Sha'ar Zahav was the recent recipient of an exceedingly generous donation from him.

Thank you, Michael, for your values and sharing your story with our Sha'ar Zahav community.

Frank Post

Frank Post will be called to the (virtual) Torah as a bar mitzvah on October 10, 2020. Frank hopes to do something more to his liking in person at a future date.

Frank lives in San Francisco but is currently quarantining with his parents Susan and Brad, sisters Sadie and Lilah, and his three cats, Nuriya, Seraphina and Sandy, in Nevada City, California. Frank's passions include circus, reading, bike riding, playing video games, and playing tenor saxophone.

His bar mitzvah project is currently on hold due to COVID-19 but involves helping animals. Frank and his family are very thankful to Michael Lederman, Martin Tannenbaum, Paul Cohen, James Carlson, Ora Prochovnick, Sue Bojdak, Andrea Guerra, Ila Cherney, Cantor Sharon, and Rabbi Mychal for their patience, kind support, and teaching.



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NEW MEMBERS

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Coleen McKee
Alexander and Michael Rosenberg

David Sherman
Bradley and Taylor Tanner
Brandie and Sam Yelland

SHA'AR ZAHAV (president's column continued from page 2)

to best public health science and practices, as we create detailed procedures for reinitiating and maintaining a healthy environment for in-person study and prayer. With prudence and inclusiveness, we hope to reopen in phases following the secular new year.

During these Days of Repentance, I sincerely apologize to Sha'ar Zahav members and friends whom I have offended. Perhaps I did not reply to

your emails, return your telephone messages, or respond in harmony with your preferences. For all of my transgressions I am sincerely sorry. B'ezrat HaShem, with G-d's help, I pledge to do better in 5781.

L'shanah tovah tikasaivu v'saichasaimu. May all of us, all of our loved ones, and all of creation be inscribed and sealed in life for a good, sweet, healthy, and productive New Year.

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in honor of Rabbi Copeland and Cantor Bernstein

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in support of Rabbi Copeland's ongoing work for fairness and justice. "Black Lives Matter."

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in appreciation for the Zoom services during the pandemic

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in memory of Joseph Wiseman and Alan Harap

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 in memory of my parents and Sha'ar Zahav
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 in honor of the Hineni Team
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 in memory of Lenny Plotch, who was a
 second father to me and died on May 20, 2020.
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Ami Zusman
in honor of the CSZ community that has
sustained me for nearly 40 years

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in memory of Betty Elman

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in memory of Joseph Resnick and Carol Taub

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in honor of Tim Grant's conversion

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- **Thomas Miller** on receiving his J.D. degree from Stanford Law School.
- **Susan Lubeck** on her b'mitzvah on Saturday, August 15.

SHA'AR ZAHAV CONDOLENCES

MAY

- 12 Julia Medin,**
mother of Tom Medin
- 16 Mara Mamet,**
cousin of Julie and Anshel Mamet
- 22 Payah Prochovnick,**
mother of Ora Prochovnick
- 24 Betty Elman,**
mother of Steve Elman
- 26 Meg Chalmers,**
sister of Tiela Chalmers
- 29 Joe Resnick,**
uncle of Scott Kramer

JULY

- 2 Carol Taub,**
aunt of Michael Tyler
- 26 Bernice Frantz,**
mother of Rena Frantz
- 31 Mike Zimmerman,**
member of Sha'ar Zahav

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MAY

- 1 Zoom Service sponsored by
Michael Tyler and Amy Schustack**
in memory of Jack Katz

AUGUST

- 21 Zoom Service sponsored by
Jonathan Funk**
in honor of the 50th anniversary of
his bar mitzvah

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SEPTEMBER

- 1 John Golebowski
- 3 Lee Giersen
- 5 Bernard Pechter
- 6 Elliot Klein
- 18 Penny Dachinger
- 22 David Pierce
- 24 Dr. Mike Rankin
- 25 Jeffrey Lewis Cohen

OCTOBER

- 6 Jeffrey Miller
- 7 Rabbi Benjamin Marcus
- 12 Andrew Zysman
- 13 Harry Clint Biggelstone
- 18 Henry Mautner
- 18 Duane Kearns Puryear
- 24 Glenn Murray Miller
- 29 Michael Mohr

NOVEMBER

- 3 Dr. Richard Wright
- 3 Forrest Kincade
- 3 Harvey Levine
- 7 Don Albert
- 11 Bruce Apter
- 11 Sidney Rosenthal
- 16 Chuck Norton
- 17 William David Holt II
- 22 Tristano Palermino
- 23 George Mintzer
- 27 Harvey Milk

Mishkan Ga'avah: Where Pride Dwells / Edited by Rabbi Denise L. Eger

Sha'ar Zahav is well-represented in a new book titled *Mishkan Ga'avah: Where Pride Dwells*, which includes selections from Siddur Sha'ar Zahav written by Maggid Andrew Ramer, Rabbi Reuben Zellman and Kevin Johnson, z"l, as well as others. A collection of prayers, poems, liturgy and rituals for LGBTQ people, *Mishkan Ga'avah* is an exciting new publication from the Central Conference of American Rabbis, that highlights all aspects of Jewish and LGBTQ life. The book can be purchased by going to ccarpres.org



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Elul and High Holy Days 5781

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Saturday, September 12, PM
S'lichot

Friday, September 18, PM
Erev Rosh Hashanah

Saturday, September 19, AM
Rosh Hashanah - AM

Sunday, September 20, AM
Second Day Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 20, PM
Tashlich (online)

YOM KIPPUR:

Sunday, September 27, PM
Kol Nidre

Monday, September 28
Yom Kippur - multiple services

Services will be via video this year.
Reserve these dates on your calendar.

You can Register Now. Service times and Elul programs will be found on the SZ website and weekly emails.

Sha'ar Zahav High Holy Days services and events are free and open to all.
www.shaarzahav.org