

Temple Beth Torah

April 2020 Bulletin

T-B-Tea PARTY, Tuesday, April 7, 11:00 AM

Log in to ZOOM on Tuesday, April 7 at 11:00 AM to see your TBT friends. Bring a cup of tea or other beverage and a snack if you like, and schmooze together the day before Passover. Stay safe and stay connected!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/342896504>

Meeting ID: 342 896 504

PASSWORD: LATKES4ALL

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,342896504# US (Houston)

+16699006833,,342896504# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston) +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) +1 253 215 8782 US

+1 301 715 8592 US +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 342 896 504

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/abUUaYFCMV>

TBT PASSOVER SEDER - ZOOM STYLE

Wednesday, April 8 - 6:00 PM

Temple Beth Torah is inviting you to a ZOOM Passover Seder with Rabbi Dan Gordon and Cantor Vadim Tunitsky. The Rabbi and Cantor will hit the highlights with music and stories as we enjoy our four cups together, taste the ceremonial foods and pray together about celebrating IN PERSON next year. The seder is scheduled to be about one hour so people can enjoy their seder meals together after the Passover service.

Join Zoom Meeting. Click on this link to join the Passover Seder at 6pm this Wednesday, April 8.

<https://zoom.us/j/525712752>

Meeting ID: 525 712 752

It will then ask you for the PASSWORD and enter: LATKES4ALL

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ZOOM into TBT:

We can stay connected on Shabbat and for other programs while remaining safe. Thanks to the magic of technology, Temple Beth Torah will host a short Shabbat gathering beginning at 7 PM each Friday evening as well as other virtual events. It is easier than you think...but a learning experience for all of us. You can access with a computer, tablet or cell phone.

By clicking on the link under "Join the Zoom Meeting" you will be connected to the TBT service or event. Rabbi Dan Gordon is the host. If you have a camera on your device, we'll be able to see you, too, and you're free to turn on or off the video. You will be able to have your microphone muted to eliminate distracting noises that may be in your home, and unmuted when invited by the host. We are having great attendance at our 7pm Shabbat services and our other zoom programs. Don't miss out!!

CELEBRATE SHABBAT EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT AT 7:00 pm WITH RABBI DAN GORDON, CANTOR VADIM TUNITSKY AND YOUR TBT FRIENDS

You will receive email updates each week regarding how to log on with the zoom meeting link and the password. Current password for all TBT programs requiring a password is **LATKES4ALL**. Please check your TBT email just before the start of Shabbat service or other programs to make sure the password has not changed and have the Password ready to enter. Any questions can be sent to Stacey at admin@tbthumble.org

ADULT EDUCATION - TORCH CLASS, Sundays at 10:00 AM

TORCH Rabbi Yaakov Wolbe leads a discussion of **Pirke Avot** (Ethics of the Fathers). All meeting will be through zoom. Below is the link to Zoom. Any questions please contact Dan Kullman at dkullman@tbthumble.org

Join Zoom Meeting , Click on this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/9619409880>

Meeting ID: 961 940 9880

ADULT EDUCATION - BOOK DISCUSSION, Sundays at 11:30 AM

Welcome to an open discussion of our next book, Holy Rascals by Rabbi Rami Shapiro. Please contact Susan Pollard at spollard@tbthumble.org if you have any questions. The Book discussion group will be meeting through zoom. Following is the zoom meeting ID and the link to the meeting. This will be the same link for the Month of April.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/181660119?pwd=RXk2NC82eS9GbVY0cHh2WWxlaktUdz09>

Meeting ID: 181 660 119

PASSWORD: JUST1!

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A Moment in Mitzrayim

As we enter the Passover season, this year, there is little on anybody's mind other than the virus that has affected our lives. We are about to celebrate our freedom as a people; yet most of us are not feeling very free right now. In order to keep ourselves and others safe, we are confined by social distancing. The restaurants, theaters, gyms, sporting events and other places where we normally gather are closed. Even houses of worship, like Temple Beth Torah, are not meeting in our usual places. We are, for the most part, stuck at home, limiting all physical contact with others.

This is not our first experience with confining limitations. Over 3000 years ago, we were enslaved, and then freed, from the land called Egypt. In Hebrew, Egypt is "*Mitzrayim*," which also translates to "narrow places." Egypt, during the time when Hebrews were slaves, was quite narrow, and not just in geography. It was a time and a place of narrow-mindedness and fear, when people could be considered property and a Pharaoh could impose a death sentence on babies. After hundreds of years of confinement, the Torah teaches that G-D redeemed us from bondage as we were freed from slavery to begin our journey to the Promised Land.

Today, our lives are narrow again. We are confined, but not oppressed. We are limited, but we can go beyond our limitations. As much as we are isolated from others, we are almost unlimited because technology helps us find ways of connecting. We've had people "attend" Friday night Shabbat services who ordinarily are unable to come due to distance, driving issues or other limitations. And of course, some may feel left out because they are not yet comfortable with the technology. We must find ways around the limitations to be together even while we are safe in our own homes.

It's also a time to remember the difference between narrow spaces and narrow minds. Tyrants, like Pharaoh, are not the only enemies of freedom. We have seen in our lifetime acts of heroism and acts of selfishness that remind us how to follow the most basic precepts of Torah. Multiple places in Torah, including the Holiness Code (Leviticus 19) we are commanded to "love your neighbor as yourself" and "treat the stranger living among you as a native, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Even when isolated in our homes, we must remember the needs of others. We saw this dramatically when our community suffered from Hurricane Harvey. People went out of their way to help those in need, whether it was with physical labor or monetary contributions. With today's virus, we must be protective of others with our *physical* distance, while striving to remain close enough to care. Rather than pushing into a supermarket line to grab that last roll of toilet paper, we must graciously allow generous space that honors other people's needs. Rather than pushing competitive agendas and denigrating other viewpoints, we must find ways to unify toward common goals.

It is tradition to prepare for Passover by cleaning out our homes of all *chametz*, or products that contain leavening that causes bread to rise. The rabbis compared *chametz* to the ego; what causes bread to rise is a metaphor for how people are susceptible to puffing up our own egos, our own viewpoints, our own sense of right. This year's Passover might be the cleanest ever. As we wash our hands over and over again, perhaps we can also concentrate on washing away attitudes that limit our ability to treat others the way we wish to be treated. As we open our doors for Elijah, let's open our hearts to a unified way to share the world.

And the narrow places we inhabit will open up to freedom.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Dan Gordon

TORAH PORTIONS for April 2020

Compiled by Rabbi Dan Gordon

April 3-4, 2020 Tzav Leviticus 6:1-8:36

Tzav means "command." This portion deals with the offerings that Aaron and his sons are ordered to give to G-d. Aaron and his sons are ordained in the sanctuary, and there is no indication in Tzav that they disobey G-d in any way. Is a Jewish endorsement of vegetarianism implied in this Torah portion? Why does Jewish tradition forbid the eating of blood? This commandment refers back to Genesis; after the Flood, G-d instructed Noah and his sons regarding eating meat. When meat became permitted, the blood, or "life source" was forbidden as a way of acknowledging that the animal sacrificed its life for us.

April 10-11, 2020 Special Passover Reading, Exodus 12:21-51

This Torah portion recounts the night in which G-d partnered with the Angel of Death to bring the tenth and final plague upon the Egyptians: the slaying of the first born. The Israelites are instructed to place lamb's blood over their doorposts so that the Egyptian children will suffer the same fate that Pharaoh had given to the Hebrew children. We are taught to remember this night for all time and recount the story of when G-d redeemed us from bondage and brought us to freedom.

April 17-18, 2020 Shemini Leviticus 9:1-11:47

Immediately after their seven days of inauguration into the priesthood, Aaron and his sons begin to serve in their new capacity. The two elder sons, Nadav and Avihu, offer "a strange fire before G-d, which He commanded them not." Because of this strange fire, the two are consumed by the fire and die. Aaron remains silent. There is much discussion about why they died, and some commentaries claim the sons went beyond their roles as priests. This Torah portion also contains the laws regarding kashrut, and which animals are permitted and forbidden to be eaten.

April 24-25, 2020 Tazria-Metzora Leviticus 12:1-15:33 (double portion)

This portion deals with ritual impurity, particularly skin afflictions such as leprosy. It becomes the duties of the priests to determine and diagnose potential leprosy. When a person is afflicted, there are particular rituals the priest employs to help them regain ritual purity and return to the camp. Discussions of this Torah portion can help us relate to the importance of purity, as well as how to regain a pure state when we are "infected" by physical, spiritual or emotional "intruders." While the first part of this double portion deals with impurity, Metzora teaches about how to purify. This is a good lesson following Passover to remember to how observing Passover helped us purify our homes; now it's time to and continue the year with a purity of our souls.

SIMCHAS IN APRIL:

Birthdays

2 Neil Davis
3 Owen Brawn
7 Paige Nossal
8 Carole Curtis
10 Shannon Ellsworth
11 Dylan Daniels
12 Debbie Swaim
12 Shayna Ellsworth
17 Gail Ambrose
17 Daniella Pilman
17 Lia Pilman
19 Jenna Bleiberg
20 Steve Smith
23 Dan Gordon
25 Howard Tobin
25 Leah Ramirez
27 Dany Pilman
29 Sydney Daniels

Anniversaries

Yahrzeits in April:

The following names will be read each week during July to acknowledge those who have passed away who were connected with our community. If there are mistakes or omissions, please e-mail the temple at admin@tbthumble.org or leave a message at 281-446-5611.

*Milton Rackmil, Ida Glaser, Hubert Keith, Leslee Davis, Rose Gennett, Isador Gennett,
Buddy Rambo, Ronnie Rubin, Lloyd Gordon, Marilyn Chelnick Morgan, Abraham Eidelhoch,
Lisa Ann Wellner, Mike Mandell, Miriam Israel, Maxine Callner, Benjamin Hirsch,
Harry Babendure, Mark Summer, John B Hall, Harry Shadrin, Frances Sussman, Eva Wellner, Nora
Stapleton*

TBT Donate a Brick Campaign:

A wonderful way to honor a birth, marriage, or special occasion as well as remember someone special. Please visit the website at www.tbthumble.org to download the form.