



THE PUP TENT

Congregation Beth Jacob's Monthly Newsletter

August, 2020

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

All regularly scheduled meetings, Shabbat services, group activities, and social events have been canceled or postponed until further notice, in view of the current coronavirus pandemic. **Watch this space for updates on when our synagogue building will be reopened and scheduled meetings and events will resume.**

SHABBAT!



During the time when Shabbat services are suspended, a "Virtual Shabbat Service," with links to essential blessings, prayers and songs, as well as Rabbi Silverman's weekly message/sermon, is being published in the Weekly Update. CBJ has also been conducting Shabbat services via **Zoom**, a teleconferencing computer application. See the "CBJ Weekly Update" for information on how to connect to these services using Zoom.

If you do not currently receive the "Weekly Update," please send an email message to Judith Sherman at judith.sherman@gmail.com, and she will be happy to add you to the distribution list.

"From Generation to Generation" UTube Video Showing the History of CBJ Created by Michael Cohen

In preparation for the Plymouth 400 celebration, Michael Cohen, a great-grandson of one of the founding families of CBJ, has produced a beautiful UTube video showing CBJ's history. [To see this exceptional video, click here.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2q1OjSCEmg&feature=youtu.be) (or copy and paste this link into your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2q1OjSCEmg&feature=youtu.be>) This will make you proud to be a member of the CBJ family!



Rabbi Silverman's Sermon on June 26, 2020

Everyone gathered here right now is affected by the coronavirus pandemic. I want to divide my message this evening into three parts, beginning with some ideas that I hope will bring a degree of calm and comfort during this trying time. Then, I'd like to move to some practical ideas and then put everything into a Jewish context, since we are, after all, Jews.

(#1) Let's begin by listing some of our worries that are only made worse by this pandemic: We have elderly loved ones that we are concerned about, or we are elders in our own right. We have children we are worried about. (Don't we always worry about our children?) Maybe the camp they expected to go to closed down for the summer; and what will the new school-year look like for them when September comes around. And then there are the High Holidays.

In our isolation, we've already been separated from so many of our friends. Our synagogue has shut down until we-don't-know- when; events we had planned to go to are cancelled or postponed. People are afraid to get together for a weekly card game, etc. The Red Sox are going to play, so they say, but we won't be able to go to a game. What can a fan do?

And there's more: The stock market is in a state of flux. You might be panicked because you see your retirement savings evaporating. Let me offer you this: I see you; I feel you and I acknowledge the depth of your concerns.

What's a person to do? I know I am not able to predict the future, I can only say, I'm not entirely sure. But I have what may be some helpful thoughts that I keep in my own mind.

Stop for a moment, just sit and take an accounting of where you are, not your physical space, but where you are in your thoughts and how you really feel. Be honest with yourself: Tell yourself the truth about what most concerns you. Accept where you are emotionally right now. Sit, breathe, accept your own feelings – whatever they may be, even if they are ever changing. Also know this – you are not alone. Thousands of us, maybe millions, are experiencing these same feelings.

(#2): Work With the Fear you have. A few weeks ago I told a short story from the teachings of Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav (1772-1810). He said: The whole world is a very narrow bridge; the important thing is not to make yourself afraid.

We are on that narrow bridge right now. On either side is the abyss: We certainly don't want to go there. We can never be sure of what tomorrow will bring. Uncertain about the present: Who is contagious? What should I cancel?

Rebbe Nachman's "narrow bridge" wisdom has often been mistranslated as "don't be afraid" – but that is not what he says. The Hebrew means: "Don't make yourself afraid." That's not the same as "don't be afraid." Rebbe Nachman acknowledges that fear exists. He teaches that we should not make it worse by adding fear upon fear ourselves. What does that "fear upon fear" mean?

It's the kind of thinking we do without even realizing it. It's when we allow the stories in our mind to take us into the land of "what if's." It's when we dwell upon our fear, saying "What if" this happens and "What if" that happens. How will I ever survive it?

In this way, our brains increase our anxiety, going from one to ten in a split second. A certain amount of fear and concern is necessary for our survival. Too much, though, can be unhealthy. Doctors and scientists have

learned that excessive negative thinking can affect healthy brain function. These times call for clear-thinking and good decision making. To do that we need our brains to be healthy!

It is important to begin to notice when we are telling ourselves a story about the future that we do not yet know. If we can stop ourselves from doing this, we can decrease our anxiety and fear.

Stay with what you know now. Be prepared! Take what actions you need to be safe and make plans for yourself and your loved ones and your close friends. Don't make yourself more afraid more than you probably are.

Now to the practical: Be a blessing to yourself and other people in your home, or in your circle: wash your hands with soap and water a lot and for more than 20 seconds. And away from home, wash your hands going out and coming in; and wear a mask!

(#3) Here's the last of the three topics we consider today: Where are we as Jews with all of this? What is the Jewish context? We have an obligation to observe the mitzvah of piku'ach nefesh – the principle in Jewish law that the preservation of human life overrides virtually any other religious rule. While it is true that our primary obligation as Jews is to preserve life – in this case via hand washing and social distancing, as your rabbi, I have to consider the psychological ramifications that befall those who find themselves forced into isolation, not because they are ill, but because their daily activities that they were used to are now closed off to them. The preservation of what has become important to them matters too. Depression, fear and anxiety can run rampant when we no longer live with the routine and orderly life that we have become used to.

Human contact is important for all people. There are those who struggle on a daily basis with depression. Mental health is as important as physical health. Depressed people frequently will themselves into physical illness, and they become more and more depressed as they self-isolate.

It's up to us to let those individuals know that we understand how hard it is. But we will keep meeting, even if we can't kiss or shake hands. If we're wearing a mask we can greet one another by saying hello and smiling with both our eyes. We can nod our head or offer an elbow bump, whichever you like best.

I mentioned at the beginning of my talk to consider and accept the truth about where you are emotionally, and to work to not build more fear upon the fear you already have. Above all, know that we are abundantly blessed to have each right now in this time of uncertainty.

As a congregation, we are small, but we are strong; you, our members and friends, are determined and capable of doing great things for each other and your families and your friends. We may struggle, and we shall prevail and come out stronger for it in the long run!

You may contact Rabbi Silverman by phone (508-746-0010) or by email at (rabbilawrence@gmail.com).



The Following Yahrzeits Will be Observed in August:

(A memorial candle should be lit on the preceding evening.)

August 2020

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Evelyn Bookman | 15 Israel Dezorets |
| 1 Louis K. Kaplow | 16 Albert Finkelstein |
| 1 Mary Kaplowitz | 16 Adeline Keller |
| 1 Devorah S Hector | 18 Bessie "Billie" Ginsburg |
| 2 Elizabeth Epstein | 18 Benjamin Righter |
| 2 Jacob S. Shiff | 19 Milton Geller |
| 3 Jack Bernard | 19 Phyllis Bell O'Connor |
| 5 Abraham Sherman | 20 Barnett Portnoy |
| 5 Minnie Steinberg | 20 Betty Simon |
| 6 Gunnar Carlson | 22 Albert Rosenberg |
| 6 Martyrs of Mazeikiai | 22 Esther Russo |
| 7 Hyman Sheff | 22 Michael B. Shuman |
| 9 Lillian Gilbert | 24 Hymen W. Bell |
| 9 Alter Greenspoon | 24 Judah Wise |
| 9 Morris Stern | 26 Marion Glansberg |
| 10 Anna Wolfe | 26 Lilyan E. Kabelsky |
| 11 Douglas Worthman | 27 Charlotte Helen Resnick |
| 12 Frank Breslow | 11/26/2019 13 |
| 12 Alexander Finkelstein | 27 Charles Wertheimer |
| 12 Seymour Kraus | 28 Morris Teles |
| 12 Mollie Swartz | 29 Leonard Freed |
| 13 Harold Samuel Finer | 30 Sarah D. Barron |
| 14 Gertrude B. Klasky | 31 Sylvia Krenis |
| 14 Freda Rebecca Robinson | |
| 15 Julius Cooper | |

May their memories be for a blessing and live forever in the hearts of all who knew and loved them.



Congregation Beth Jacob gratefully acknowledges receipt of the following donations:

Yahrzeit Fund:

Allan & Judith Sherman - in memory of Allan's mother, Ruth Putnam Sherman
Richard & Linda Rothstein - in memory of Linda's mother, Frances Strauch
Jonathan Russo - in memory of his father, Ray Russo

General Fund:

Paula & Joseph Keller - in memory of Ruth Arons

The Passing of Iconic Comedy Writer, Carl Reiner



Carl Reiner, who died on June 30th at 98, was the rare untortured genius of comedy, his career a story of laughter and camaraderie, of innovation and triumph and affection. Reiner's persona was so warm and approachable — everyone's friend or favourite uncle — that you could forget that he was an architect of modern comedy, a "North Star," in the words of Billy Crystal.

As a writer and director, he mastered a genial, but sophisticated brand of humour that Steve Martin, Jerry Seinfeld and others emulated. As an actor, he was the ideal straight man for such manic performers as Mel Brooks and Sid Caesar and dependably funny on his own. As an all-around talent, he helped perfect two standard television formats — sketch and situation comedy.

A son of Jewish immigrants, he was born in 1922 in New York City, and raised in a three-room apartment. He loved to mimic voices and tell jokes, and, after high school, attended drama school. He then joined a small theatre group. "It was a terrific experience, but I wasn't getting any money for it," he told the Akron Beacon Journal in 1963. "I got uppity one day — after all, the audience was paying from 22 to 88 cents for admission — and I demanded to be paid. They settled for \$1 a performance and I ... became their highest-priced actor."

He was one of show business' best-liked men. The tall, bald Reiner was a welcome face on the small and silver screens: In Caesar's 1950s troupe, as the snarling, toupee-wearing Alan Brady of "The Dick Van Dyke Show" and in such films as "The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming" and "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World."

[To read an article that appeared on the website of New Zealand's TV Channel 1 on June 29th, click here.](#)

Carl Reiner brought many hours of laughter and joy to countless viewers around the world. He was a true mensch. May his memory forever abide as a blessing.

Recipe of the Month:



Jordan Marsh Blueberry Muffins

Makes 12 regular or 24 mini muffins

Who remembers the deliciousness of Jordan Marsh's beloved blueberry muffins? Many recipes have circulated over the years, but none that capture the true taste. This does.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1¼ cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup buttermilk* (see note below)
- 1 pint (2 cups) fresh or frozen wild blueberries
- Extra sugar (for sprinkling)

***Substitute for buttermilk:** (No buttermilk? No problem! Mix 1/2 cup milk with 1/2 Tablespoon of lemon juice or white vinegar. Stir and let stand for 5 minutes. You can also use plain yogurt.

Instructions:

1. Slide a rack in the middle of the oven. Set the oven at 375 degrees. Line a regular muffin pan or 2 mini pans with paper liners.
2. In a bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt.
3. In an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, if you have one (or use the whisk), cream the butter and sugar until light. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, until the batter is smooth. Blend in the vanilla. Add the flour mixture to the batter alternately with the buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour, mixing only until incorporated. Do not overmix or the muffins will be tough.
4. Remove the bowl from the mixer stand. Fold in the blueberries.
5. Scoop or spoon the batter into the liners; if making regular-size muffins, one regular ice cream scoop makes a perfect size. Sprinkle the tops with sugar.
6. Bake regular muffins for 30 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through baking, or until well-risen and golden. Bake minis for 15 minutes, checking after 10 minutes, or until golden.
7. Keep muffins loosely covered at room temperature on the day they are baked.



Laughter Corner

There are endless stories relating to the foolish logic of the residents of Chelm, a town in Poland. Here is yet another example of Chelm humor.

Just Out Of Reach

Everyone in Chelm was scandalized: A thief had broken into the synagogue and made off with the poorbox. The Council of Seven immediately convened, and after some deliberation they arrived at a unanimous decision: A new poorbox would be installed, but suspended close to the ceiling so that no thief would ever be able to reach it.

But the moment the shammes [synagogue caretaker] heard about the decision he raised a new problem. "It is true that the box will be safe from thieves," he declared, "but it will also be out of reach of the charitable."

The Council of Seven held another hurried meeting, and once again the wisdom of Chelm prevailed. It was decreed that a stairway be built to the poorbox so that the charitable might easily reach it.

Editor's Note: "The Pup Tent" is a monthly publication that, under normal conditions, provides a condensed summary of CBJ news, including the monthly Calendar, upcoming Yahrzeit dates, and acknowledgments of donations that have been received. The "CBJ Weekly Update" is our weekly email newsletter that includes full details about upcoming events, as well as information about the weekly Torah reading portion and helpful links to various resources. **To subscribe to the CBJ Weekly Update, please contact me at judith.sherman@gmail.com.** Thank you!

Judith Sherman, Editor, "The Pup Tent" and "CBJ Weekly Update"