



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

Commentary on the death of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Abihu, in this week's Torah portion, Sh'mini, often leave me feeling unfulfilled. The text tells us that Nadav and Abihu, priests in their own right, sons of the High Priest, Aaron, offered alien fire, not commanded by God, on the altar. Their act results in their sudden death, being struck down with fire from heaven by God. The Torah tells us that after their death, their father Aaron falls silent. The rabbis wrestle with the character of these two men and their father's reaction.



Four times, Torah mentions the deaths of Nadav and Abihu and each time mentions the strange fire they offered, but makes no other judgment on their character. It seems that aside from this one misstep, the two are considered righteous. Moses attempts to comfort his brother by indicating that God has said, "Through those near to Me I show Myself holy, and gain glory before all the people" (Lev. 10:3). In one midrash (rabbinic legend), Moses offers comfort to his brother by telling him that it was specifically through his sons' death that the Mishkan, the portable wilderness sanctuary was made holy, not unlike the relics of saints in the Catholic tradition that add to the holiness of particular places. Some commentators say that when Aaron falls silent, it is his acceptance of the divine decree. For me, this interpretation is hardly satisfactory. How could Aaron be comforted by knowing that the Mishkan was holier because of his sons' deaths? That interpretation fits well with the philosophy that everything happens for a reason, a philosophy that has rarely worked for me.

There are many things that befall us that seem to be without reason, whose higher purpose I cannot find. Instead, it seems to me that Aaron is dumbfounded by the death of his sons. He is incapable of offering any response, which is why he falls silent. He does not accept what has happened; he simply cannot muster words to react to it. Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, guides us by saying that we cannot answer the question of why bad things happen to good people, but we can ask ourselves, "What do I do when bad things happen to good people?" The challenge before Aaron – and before us – is to figure out how to move forward, even when the world seems unjust and unfair. It is in our response to the situation that we might find comfort and might find God.

April Zoom Link Registration

Register now to receive April Shabbat worship and Torah Study links.

We are now using **April** Zoom links for Shabbat worship and Torah Study.

- To register for **Friday night worship**, [click here](#).
- To register for **Torah Study** on Saturdays, [click here](#).
- To register for **Saturday morning worship**, [click here](#).
- To register for **Wednesday morning minyan**, [click here](#).

Registrations close at noon on Fridays. Zoom links will be sent by 4:00 PM on Fridays to all who have registered by the deadline. *We cannot send Zoom links after 4:00 PM on Fridays.*

Read more about our service and our siddur (prayer book) [here](#).

Worship Schedule

Friday, April 9

Shabbat Family Worship 6:00 PM

Thank you to board member Sylvia Most for making announcements.
Thank you to Ziza Kaback and her family for lighting our Shabbat candles.

Register to receive the **Friday Night Shabbat Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

Saturday, April 10

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Torah study using *The Mussar Torah Commentary* continues--but you don't need to own a copy. Read more [here](#), under the "Torah Study" heading.

Register to receive the **Torah Study** Zoom link, [here](#).

Shabbat Morning Worship 10:30 AM

Mazal tov to Ziza Kaback, child of Holly Christensen and Russell Kaback, who will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday.

Thank you to board member Mike Levine for making our board presentations.

Register to receive the **Shabbat Morning Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

Wednesday, April 14

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM

Led by congregant Daniel Oppenheim.

Register to receive the **Wednesday Morning Minyan** Zoom link, [here](#).

Notable Upcoming Services

Shabbat Together, Statewide Kabbalat Service, April 16, 5:30 PM (see below FMI)
Seated Shalom Yoga with Ashley Flowers, April 17, 10:30 AM (see below for FMI)
Sabina Petrucci Bat Mitzvah, Saturday, May 1, 10:30 AM

Please remember to return your borrowed Passover haggadot to Bet Ha'am by **Friday, April 9**. Please contact chris@bethaam.org with questions.



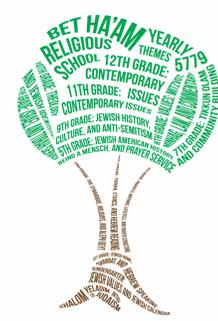
Religious School on Zoom

Sunday, April 11

K'tanim, Shalom Yeladim, & Grades 1-9
(Morning & Evening School)

What's Happening?

Join us for Family Services (Yom Ha'atzmaut theme!) on Friday and Ziza's Bat Mitzvah (Mazal tov!) on Saturday.



Counting the Omer:

If you'd like to participate in a community Facebook of counting the Omer, email Sam a photo of the appropriate number of animals, objects, or symbols to have it posted for the corresponding day of the Omer count. (Today is the 4th day.)

If you are interested in enrolling a child or teaching at religious school, email Sam at sam@bethaam.org.

Shabbat Together - Statewide Service

Friday, April 16, 5:30 PM

Shabbat, Together, with Rabbi Erica Asch and Rabbinical Fellow Sara Blumenthal in Conjunction with the Center for Small Town Jewish Life

NOTE: This program will take the place of Bet Ha'am's regularly scheduled Friday night worship service.

Join Rabbi Erica Asch of Temple Beth El, Augusta, and rabbinical fellow Sara Blumenthal for a celebratory spring Kabbalat Shabbat. Now that the clocks have sprung forward, the Center for Small Town Jewish life is thrilled to offer Kabbalat Shabbat services once again. It's a beautiful way to welcome in the day of rest as a statewide community.

[Register Here for Shabbat Together](#)

Seated Shalom Yoga with Ashley

Saturday, April 17, 10:30 AM

Seated Shalom Yoga with Ashley Flowers

NOTE: This program will take the place of Bet Ha'am's regularly scheduled Saturday morning worship service.

Join yoga teacher and Bet Ha'am member, Ashley Flowers, for a morning of gentle chair yoga in place of our regularly scheduled worship. Through gentle stretching, and breathing we will explore how we can use the foundation of our body to connect to the beauty of Torah.

The 19th century Chassidic Rebbe Sfat Emet teaches that everything in the human form hints to divine inner worlds and that the physical body is the doorway to spiritual realities. With Torah study and yoga practice we open the doorways of our body, mind, heart, and soul to ever-deepening inner worlds.

No experience with yoga required. Set yourself up at home with a chair (ideally with no arms) and comfortable clothes you can move in. Use your regular Zoom link for April Saturday morning worship to access class. If you have not already registered to receive the April links, please see the box near the top of this email for instructions on how to register. To read more about Ashley and her philosophy on yoga visit <https://www.ashleyflowersyoga.com/about/>

Racial Justice Program

Thursday, April 22, 7:00 PM

**Justice In Our Backyard:
A conversation with DeRay Mckesson**

Join us for a very special evening of racial justice learning. Activist, educator, and author DeRay Mckesson will share his

journey from middle school math teacher to acclaimed civil rights leader and social justice advocate. DeRay will also talk about the transformational work he is doing with his organization, Campaign Zero.

Campaign Zero is a project of the non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, WeTheProtesters. Campaign Zero supports the analysis of policing practices across the country, research to identify effective solutions to end police violence, technical assistance to organizers leading police accountability campaigns and the development of model legislation and advocacy to end police violence nationwide.



Read more about DeRay McKesson [here](#).

Space is limited for this program. Registration closes on April 21 at 12:00 noon. Zoom links will be sent by 4:30 PM on Wednesday, April 21.

Register for Justice in Our Backyard

Save the Date !

A DRAMATIC AFFAIR

A VIRTUAL EVENING WITH MAINE DRAMATISTS

CONGREGATION BET HA'AM
MAY 1, 2021 AT 8PM

FEATURING PLAYS BY
Brent Askari
Bess Welden
Monica Wood

BROUGHT TO LIFE BY
Mad Horse Theater Company

ASL Interpreting Provided



BETHAAM.ORG/GALA

PURCHASE TICKETS TODAY FOR OUR ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME RAFFLE

Our famous Adventure of a Lifetime Raffle is a playful way to expand the fundraising power of "A Dramatic Affair." Wishing on your dreams helps secure an enduring future for Bet Ha'am. We hope you will play along!

Tickets are \$100 each and only 150 tickets will be sold. One winner will be chosen by drawing to select from our two prize categories, each valued at \$5,000. You can:

Travel the World – Got pent up travel desires? When the time comes to act on them confer with our travel mavens to create the trip of your dreams.

or

Feather Your Nest – Use your winnings to enhance your home or life. Be fanciful or practical. We encourage you to shop local!

**Register to Attend. Buy Raffle Tickets. Join the Host Committee.
Make a Contribution.**

Now's the time to join **A Dramatic Affair Host Committee!**

The generous support of our hosts lays the foundation to ensure A Dramatic Affair is a successful and profitable event. For a \$250 fully tax deductible donation you will be named and thanked on our host list which will appear in the Bet Ha'am weekly email, email blasts, and the digital event program. You will receive two household admission links for A Dramatic Affair so you can share one with family or friends.

Click the button below to join the host committee. For more information, contact story@bethaam.org.

Join the Host Committee

New this year!

This year we are also offering the opportunity to promote your business while you support this event through advertising. Click the button below to learn more.

Purchase Advertising for the Event

"A DRAMATIC AFFAIR" TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE

Bet Ha'am's annual spring gala is coming on May 1st!

We have lined up 3 outstanding writers to share their work with us over Zoom. Those of you who attended last year remember this fantastic fundraiser, and this year we have made it even better by adding a dramatic component with plays by three well-known local playwrights: Brent Askari, Bess Welden, and Monica Wood. The plays will be brought to life by the talented artists at Mad Horse Theater Company. ASL interpreting will be provided.

**Register to Attend. Buy Raffle Tickets. Join the Host Committee.
Make a Contribution.**

A DRAMATIC AFFAIR SPOTLIGHT

BRENT ASKARI is a Persian-American writer and actor. He recently won the 2019 National New Play Network Smith Prize For Political Drama for his upcoming play *The Refugees*. He has had plays produced at or developed by Ensemble Studio Theatre LA, Vital Theatre, Melrose Theatre, The 78th Street Theatre, The Boston Theatre Marathon, New American Theatre, The Drilling Company, Choice Theatricals, Penobscot Theatre Company, Swarthmore College, Eastern Connecticut State University, and the College of Southern Nevada. Brent has also been a finalist for the Actor's Theatre of Louisville's Heideman Award, the Reva Shiner Comedy Award, and the Mountain Playhouse International Comedy Playwriting Contest. He was part of HBO's New Writers



Project and has written screenplays for Paramount Pictures, Marvel Films, and MTV. Brent is a National New Play Network affiliate artist, an affiliate artist with Portland Stage Company, and a member of Mad Horse Theatre Company. He is currently working on a new commission for Barrington Stage Company.

Solar Energy Fundraiser

Support Local Maine Solar, Lower Your CMP Bill and Raise Money for Bet Ha'am

Bet Ha'am was recently contacted about a new fundraising initiative involving congregants who may be interested in community solar. PowerMarket is an operator of multiple community solar energy farms on the east coast including one located in Baldwin, Maine that is currently looking for "subscribers." Subscribers are self-designated CMP customers who wish to buy a portion of their electricity from a community solar farm. The electricity is sold at a discount and produced with a lower carbon footprint.



The initiative presented provides that PowerMarket and Darrell Cooper of Energy Audits Ltd. will donate \$150 to Bet Ha'am for each subscriber who signs up using the promo code "Bet Ha'am." There is no upfront cost to sign up, subscribers typically save about 10% on their CMP bill, and they can cancel at any time on 60 days' notice.

You can obtain more information, and if interested become a subscriber through the PowerMarket/Baldwin Community Solar project website at: <https://account.powermarket.io/bethaam.html>.

If you have questions about the donation to Bet Ha'am, please contact Mark Stone at lmstone@lmstone.com

Ongoing Programs

Shabbat Candle Lighting

Please consider signing up to be a candle lighter at an upcoming Zoom Friday night service. You may choose to do this in memory of a loved one for whom you're observing yahrzeit, in honor of a celebration in your life, or just because you want to engage in this ritual. You can read more from Rabbi Saks [here](#); learn the candle lighting blessing [here](#) (on track 420); and find the words [here](#).



Candle Lighting Sign-Up

Stone Soup

Stone Soup is a Shabbat gift to our congregants. Read all about it [here](#) (on the Stone Soup tab). Many thanks to those who have donated to support Stone Soup.

This week's soup will be tomato jalapeño. Ingredients include onions, celery, carrots, spinach, jalapeño, tomato, veggie stock, herbs, and spices. Thanks, Chef Chris!



B'Yachad | Together

Come relax and talk virtually with your Bet Ha'am community before Friday Shabbat services! We will meet every Friday except the second Friday of the month when there is a 6:00 PM Family Shabbat

service. [Read more here](#). [Register here](#). Please contact congregant [Alan Davis](#) with questions.



TV and Movie Discussion Group

Please join congregants Melissa Montefel and Wendy Hayes, co-facilitators, for a discussion group about Jewish-themed movies and shows. The group meets at 7:00 PM for fun, talk, and insights. Please email [Wendy](#) for the login or with questions or suggestions for future movies.

April 14:

Crossing Delancy

A contemporary New York comedy about Isabella, a single independent woman who is caught in a romance quandry when her grandmother hires a Jewish matchmaker to find her a husband. Amazon Prime

April 28:

The Present

On his wedding anniversary, Yusef and his young daughter set out in the West Bank to buy his wife a gift. Between soldiers, segregated roads and checkpoints, how easy would it be to go shopping? NetFlix

June 9:

Shtisel

A Haredi family living in an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Jerusalem reckons with love, loss and the doldrums of daily life. We'll be discussing all three seasons of Shtisel available on NetFlix so we're giving you plenty of time!



Curbside Library Borrowing

Although the building remains closed, you may borrow a book from our wonderful library using curbside pick up. Read more on our [library page](#).

So Much Going on in Our Community!

We are fortunate to be in a community where there is so much going on Jewishly that we cannot possibly list all of the happenings here. Please check out the websites listed below for all kinds of activities – movement, art, spirituality, books, movies, Jewish education, and more. Bet Ha'am often co-sponsors programs with these community leaders.

ALL STAR MUSICAL YOM HA'ATZMAUT CELEBRATION

Presented by the JCA's Cantor Kurt Messerschmidt Memorial Fund

Sunday, April 11, 3:00 PM

Free! Advanced registration required by Sunday April 11 at 12:00 noon to receive the Zoom link.



Join Jewish Rock Radio for a celebration of Israel Independence Day featuring Israeli superstar, David Broza, Josh Nelson, Chava Mirel, Nefesh Mountain, Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, Rick Recht, Shimon Smith, Laurie Akers, Rabbi Lisa Silverstein, teens and college students from Israel and special guest leaders including Dan Shapiro (Former US Ambassador to Israel), Rabbi Eric Fingerhut (President and CEO of JFNA), and more!

[Register here](#)

National Council of Jewish Women, Southern Maine Section Scholarship Program

Deadline is Friday, April 16



The Southern Maine section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) awards college scholarships to young Jewish men and women from Maine. Scholarships are awarded to high school seniors and undergraduate college students primarily on the basis of financial need with consideration for academic achievement and Jewish as well as general community involvement. In addition to need-based awards the Selma Gleit Memorial Scholarship for Women in STEM is presented to a Jewish female high school senior or college student who has demonstrated excellence and commitment in science, technology, engineering and/or math, without consideration of need.

Visit www.ncjwmaine.org to complete applications online or to download copies. Look under the "what we do" "local" "community service" tabs. High school guidance offices and synagogues have NCJW scholarship applications available as well. Complete applications and supporting documents must be received by **Friday, April 16, 2021**. Please contact Susan Gladstein, Scholarship Chair, at 954-559-0221 or sgladstein23@gmail.com if you have any questions or need an application.

Maine Jewish Museum Virtual Art Auction 2021 Preview Starts: Sunday, April 18, 2021 Auction Bidding Opens: April 25th until May 9, 2021

Please join us for The Maine Jewish Museum's first ever online art auction generously curated by the founders of Barridoff Galleries, Annette and Rob Elowitz. Rob and Annette are back and better than ever and have gathered a varied and exciting roster of many of Maine's finest artists. Proceeds from the MJM Art Auction will help financially support the museum's mission of celebrating and honoring the contributions and diversity of Maine's Jewish community. Through exhibits, programming, and dialogue the Museum seeks to build bridges of appreciation and understanding with people of all backgrounds. We are tremendously excited to have reopened the Museum after the fire last May forced us to close for 9 full months while the building was entirely restored from top to bottom. While we are still limited by COVID-19 regarding the number of people that can visit us in person, through this MJM Art Auction, we can reach all of you virtually.



Auction link and more information can be found at [here](#).

[Jewish
Community
Alliance of
Southern Maine](#)

[Center for Small
Town Jewish
Life](#)

[Southern Maine
Jewish
Cemetery
Association](#)

[Maine Jewish
Museum](#)

[Levey Day
School](#)

[Maine Jewish
Film Festival](#)

Donate to Bet Ha'am

Please consider donating in any amount to Congregation Bet Ha'am--with your help, we can close the budget gap! We are grateful for your support.

[Donate Now](#)

Congregation Bet Ha'am | 81 Westbrook Street, South Portland, ME 04106

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