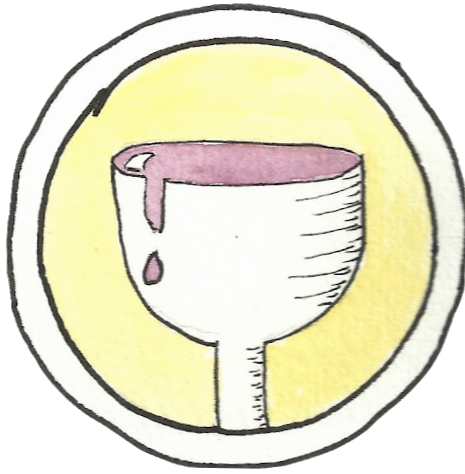
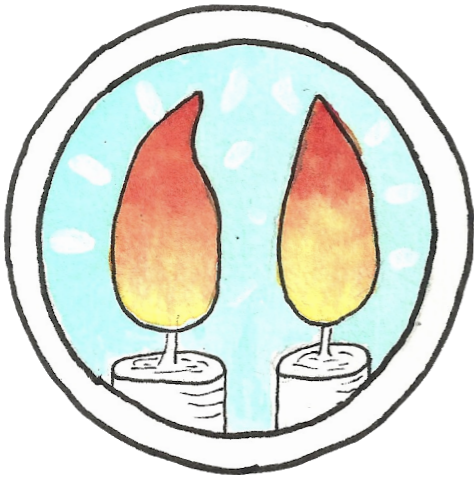


Congregation Beth Israel



Shabbat

companion

Shabbat Companion: Shabbat Behar/Bechukotai - **Shabbat Bamidbar**

Dear wonderful CBI Community,

While we cannot join together in prayer and to schmooze at Kiddush, we offer this bi-weekly Shabbat companion as a token, a representation of our shared values and love for one another, to be read and used on Shabbat so that we may feel connected to each other on our holy day.

We will email this out to print at home, but you can also pick up a copy (safely) outside CBI on Shabbat - if you miss your walks to shul.

We'd like to sincerely thank our initial contributors in this first edition: Rabbi Cohen, Maharat Victoria Sutton, Aryeh Canter and Ariela Yomtovian , Liora Brosbe, Lea Lassman, Matty Lichtenstein and Judy Massarano. We'd also like to thank Lauren Schuchart for the bespoke art on the front cover -
Thank You!

**This edition is specifically dedicated in honor of: Janice MacMillan,
Leslie Valas & Alan Finkelstein**

Our next edition will be our Shavuot Companion - if you'd like to contribute please get in touch!

Shabbat Shalom!
Melissa Nathan & Naama Sadan

Edited by: Rona Teitelman

Easy Cinnamon Crumble - By Lea Lassman

“For Leslie and Alan, who invited us for Shabbat lunch and shared their home with us”

2 eggs

½ cup maple syrup

2 tbsp liquid coconut oil

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

1 ½ cups almond flour

1 tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

1 tsp cinnamon

¾ tsp nutmeg

Cinnamon Crumble

1 ¼ tbsp almond flour

1 ½ tbsp coconut sugar

½ tsp cinnamon

1 tbsp coconut oil

Optional: chocolate chips

1

Preheat oven to 375F. Grease a mini muffin tin with coconut oil.

2

In a medium sized bowl, whisk together the eggs, maple syrup, coconut oil, and vanilla extract until smooth.

3

Add in the almond flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Stir until well combined.

4

Pour batter into greased mini muffin tin, about ¾ high.

5

For the crumble, in a small bowl, mix together the 4 ingredients. Sprinkle a little onto each muffin top.

6

Bake for 15 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean. Allow muffins to cool. Enjoy!

What Relevance Does Shemitah have to Covid19?

by Rabbi Yonatan Cohen

Though the Israelites were no longer standing at Sinai, our Torah portion begins by stating that the Mitzvah of Shemitah, the requirement to release the land, was already given at Sinai. The rabbis explain that Shemitah is being used by the Torah as paradigmatic – just as this commandment was already fully explained to Moses in Sinai, so too all of Torah's commandments were fully given and explicated to Moses at Sinai.

This answer seems slightly incomplete. After all, the Torah could have made this very point with ANY commandment. Why was it important for the Torah to specifically draw our attention to the fact that Shemitah, in all its finer details, was already given at Sinai?

Perhaps we can draw some insight from the opening of Psalm 126:1:

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יְקֹזֵק אֶת שְׂיִבַּת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים

“A song of ascents. When the Lord returns the returnees to Zion, we were like dreamers”.

In this Psalm, the returnees to Zion speak of their return in the present tense but of their dreams in past tense – “When the Lord returns” – present! – “we were” past! – like dreamers.

The simple explanation is that when we return to Zion we will be like dreamers, meaning: our return will feel like a dream. However this closer reading of the interplay of the present and past tense suggest that while the return is happening now, the dreams began long ago. In other words, the returnees are making a powerful claim: We are returning now, only because we dreamed of this moment previously. It is our very dreams, from the past, that are now bringing us home.

We can think of Shemitah being taught at Sinai in a similar vein.

The people standing at Mt. Sinai were recently freed slaves. They still had to cross a desert. They still had to conquer the land. Countless obstacles laid before them. I would bet that none of them believed that the day would ever come when they would own their own land or that they would ever benefit from its produce and fruit. Needless

to say, none of them could have imagined a time when they would relinquish the land and allow for a Sabbatical year.

Already at Mt. Sinai, the Torah planted these seeds. Already at Sinai, the Torah forced the Israelites to see what eventually would be and begin to envision a more idealized society. Shemitah belongs at Sinai because Sinai – with a desert still before us – is where we need to begin to dream.

This teaching is also hinted by Lecha Dodi's description of God's creation of the world:

יִסֹּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תְּחִלָּה

“Last in deed, first in thought”

Though the world began in chaos, already at that moment, God envisioned the order and rest brought by Shabbat. Indeed, Shabbat was created last (“last in deed”) but it was the very first thing God had envisioned for this world (“first in thought”).

During these dark times, we too stand at Mt. Sinai, with a desert before us. Like refugees, we are struggling to find our way home. Like the Creator, we see a world in utter chaos.

Our tradition teaches us: Now is the time to discuss Shemitah in all its finer details. Now is the time to begin to dream. Now is the time to envision our very last deed.

What home or community or world do we envision returning to after Covid19?

What have we done to start planning and planting for that world?

So Good to See You! Zoom & Shehechianu

by Maharat Victoria Sutton

The daily *Mishnah* class completed *Mishnah Berakhot* this past week - *yasher koach* to all the participants! Much of the learning felt practical and timely as we reimagine our prayer practice, and I wanted to share one such relevant example. Among the blessings for a whole host of situations and experiences, the last chapter (*Mishnah Berakhot* 9:3) discusses the blessing of *Shehechianu* on a new item of clothing or a new home. The *Gemara* extends this to a situation where one experiences something “anew”, namely, seeing someone who one hasn’t seen in a significant amount of time: “R. Yehoshua ben Levi said : Who sees their friend after thirty days says, “*Baruch....Shehechianu vikiyimanu vhiyigianu lazeman hazeh* (Who has kept us in life, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season).” After twelve months one says, “Blessed... Who revives the dead. (*Bavli Berakhot* 58b)”

The discussion of *Shehechianu* on seeing someone after a long period of absence has been renewed after months of shelter in place and quarantine measures in Jewish communities across the globe. In our current reality, with video chats and Zoom gatherings that connect us, would one still say *Shehechianu* if they hadn’t seen each other in person (IRL if you will) in more than 30 days? What is the reason behind this *shehechianu*? And is seeing someone on Zoom really like seeing them for this purpose? The *Shulchan Arukh* (OC 225:1) explains that one recites *Shehechianu* after this long absence for a friend who “is very dear to them and one is happy to see them”. The blessing expresses gratitude to God for the heightened joy and warmth of friendship one experiences in these reunions. Does a virtual connection produce the same experience and require a *Shehechianu*?

In some ways, this is not a new question. Since the advent of regular mail correspondence, then telephone, radio and more recently video, poskim have raised the question as to how these various virtual media that keep us connected function with respect to *Shehechianu*.

R. Ovadiah Yosef (*Yehave Da’at* 4:17), discusses whether one should say *Shehechianu* when seeing someone after 30 days on a live video (TV) broadcast. Although he cites an opinion that a phone call or live TV broadcast would qualify as it provides a feeling of connection and puts one's mind at ease to know the other person is doing well, R. Ovadia does not agree that those situations would call for *Shehechianu* and is also concerned about a doubtful blessing in vain. R. Ovadiah concludes there,

“we do not add to what the rabbis said, who use the language of seeing, when one sees their friend with their own eyes, and is happy in being (physically) near to them.”

If one holds that a video reunion does not call for *Shehechyanu*, one might then extend this logic to saying *Shehechyanu* on seeing someone after 30 days in person, even if one had seen them on Zoom. There are various rulings being discussed in communities which have begun to reopen. For example, R. Avraham Stav in Israel writes, “It is clear that a virtual meeting does not exempt from blessing on a real meeting (*mifgash mammashi*)... as no one writes that one shouldn’t bless on seeing a sovereign or the sea or a grave (in person) if they had seen it in a live broadcast within the last 30 days. And how much more so in our discussion.” R. Stav emphasizes the importance of this *Shehechyanu* in our days given the heightened level of gratitude and joy on these reunions when so many have been restricted from seeing loved ones under the threat of the pandemic.

Beyond a halakhic ruling (which was not the intention of this write-up), learning these sources help provide language and platform to consider how we as individuals and as a community relate to these questions of connection and relationship. Do Zoom meetings and virtual gatherings bring joy and the warmth of friendship? Do regular phone calls provide companionship and peace of mind? Is there any replacement in human experience for being with someone in person? Or for seeing their smiling (unmasked) face up close, or for giving them a hug?

May we continue to feel the joy and loving embrace of friends and community through the means and media safely available to us.

Parashat Behar-Bechukotai
by Aryeh Canter & Ariela Yomtovian

This week's parsha describes an economic system that grinds to a halt. People stop working, rent goes unpaid and everyone celebrates the abundance of gifts that G'd has given us with their local communities. Sounds familiar, eh?

The previous Lubavitch Rebbe taught us that we need to see the weekly Torah portion as living with the times, a spiritual newspaper of sorts. This is so true in our covid world.

The portion opens by describing the practice of *shemita*, an economic and social reset. G'd tells us that when we enter the land we work for 6 years, then on the seventh we give the land a rest. We don't plant, we don't till. We simply exist.

O but what shall we eat? G'd predicts this question and comforts us with the knowledge that we'll have abundance in the years before to help us through a time of intentional economic downturn.

But how do we translate a seven year, land of Israel based, economic practice with a sudden forced shemita?

I honestly have no idea. Previous classes I've taught on this subject have led to discussions of rent free lifestyle, making our skills, love and care for each other *hefker* (ownerless) just as the fields of Israel are *hefker* in the seventh year. I've discussed permaculture and perennial gardens for food, and storage of goods for years to come. But none of those seem to be the lesson we need to connect to in this moment of struggle.

But here we are, Parshat Behar in the middle of a global economic shutdown. What I can say is that I bless that we see this not just as a struggle, but also as a blessing. That the forced *shemita* we live in helps us see the abundance we have in our lives. To show the world how we can rest once every seven days, AND once every seven years.

Our Sages teach us that we were exiled from the Land because we didn't respect it and we broke shemita. We now have an opportunity to make a *tikun* (fixing) and gain the skills we desperately need to start practicing *shemita* once again. Good Shabbos.

Ode on a Hot Water Urn (with sincere apologies to John Keats)

by Judy Massarano

"In honor of Janice MacMillan"

Thou matron of percolation,
Thou inviter of silence and slow time,
Shul historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

What happy child mixes cocoa or sugary tea about thy shape,
What men and maidens meet here? What elders love to confide?
What calm pursuit? What struggle to escape musaf?
Without pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

...O Great Welcomer! Fair attitude! with no brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
But with simple stainless steel;
Thou, silent form, dost greet us every Shabbat and weekday class as well
As doth eternity: Hot Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of the qahal
a friend to all, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is true kindness, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Black Ink / Blank Parchment
by Liora Brosbe

From:  **JEWISH
STUDIO
PROJECT**
www.jewishstudioproject.org

Rav Abraham Isaac Kook, Gold From the Land of Israel

When we think about a Torah scroll, we usually only consider the letters themselves, written in black ink. Yet, the Talmud rules that every letter in a Torah scroll must be completely surrounded by parchment.... In other words, the white parchment around the letters is an integral part of the Torah; without it, the Torah scroll is disqualified....



During this time of pandemic we might picture each of us as letters and the blank space as the distance we keep between ourselves. What effect does this space have?

I think of this as the Jewish expression of a Yin/Yang symbol. The dark spaces are the things that are hard about the pandemic and SIP. The blank space, the parchment, is the positives. Just as Rav Kook says, neither can exist without the other. Thank you to JSP for giving me the chance to learn and create art (and so I could share it here).

Corn Kugel

by Matty Lichtenstein

“This is for all the meals I wish I could be sharing with my wonderful CBI friends!”

Ingredients:

- 2 (15 oz) cans creamed corn
- ½ cup canola oil
- ¼ cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- ¾ cup flour/meal
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¾ cup almond milk (or other parve milk, or regular milk if you prefer dairy)

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x13-inch casserole dish.
2. In a bowl combine all the ingredients EXCEPT the corn. Mix to combine and then add the corn.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared casserole.
4. Bake uncovered for 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until browned.

A Siddur Stroll

by Judy Massarano

“To all of the children of any age, who want/need more time outdoors”

Hello, all! When you take walks, you can look for examples of really kind and healthy behavior, called middot (*middot tovot*) or very beautiful things in nature, examples of G-d’s chesed/kindness to us. An example might be someone being kind to their pet, or seeing a flower. It might also represent a Jewish value, something we feel is very important to us, our people, and our world.

The Siddur and TaNaKh have ways to mark some of these special sights!


Next to each one I include a modified blessing or Biblical phrase to recite, or the name of the Jewish value to “call out.” I might suggest using the list in conjunction with the PJ Library Kindness cards for older children.



There are 49 items to look for, to get you all the way to Shavuot if you find one each day.

Happy strolling!


♥Judy Massarano




What is Seen	Value	Blessing/Phrase	Transliteration	Translation
A flower	P'liah / Wonder	מֶה-רַבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ ה'-- כָּל־מַחֲמָה עָשִׂיתָ, מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ קִינְיָנְךָ	Ma rabu ma'asecha, A-donai, kulam b'chochma asita, malah ha'aretz kinyanecha!	How many are Your deeds HaShem, all You've made with wisdom - the Earth is full of Your creations! (Psalms 104:24)
A budding fruit tree during Nisan (see notes below*)	P'liah / Wonder	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֲ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁלֹא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמְךָ כָּל־מִין וּבְרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְהֵנוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם	Baruch Ah'tah A'do'nai, Ch'lo'hei'nu Meh'lech ha'oh'lahm, sheh'loh chee'sar b'oh'lah'mo keh'loom, so'vah'ra vo b'ree-yoht toh'voht v'ee'la'noht to'vot lei'ha'noht ba'hem b'nei ah'dahm.	Blessed are You, A'donai our Gd, Ruler of the Universe, Who has made nothing lacking in the world, and created in it goodly creatures and goodly trees to give humanity pleasure.
A dog on a leash (with a human taking care of it by giving it "outside time")	Tza'ar ba'alei chayim/treating animals with respect and kindness	צַעַר בַּעֲלֵי חַיִּים		
A cat in a window that looks healthy	Tza'ar ba'alei chayim/treating animals with respect/ kindness	צַעַר בַּעֲלֵי חַיִּים		
A child and adult smiling (both)	Simcha/Joy!			

A perfect bug 	P'liah/Wonder			
A garden that looks taken-care of (making them & you happy)	Shmirat ha'Adama/ Caring for the Earth +Simcha/Joy!			

What is Seen	Value	Blessing/Phrase	Transliteration	Translation
A person wearing a mask for safety	Sh'mirat haGuf/ Caring for the Body			
An electric vehicle (better for the Earth)	Sh'mirat ha'Adama/ Caring for the Earth			
A chalk rainbow on the sidewalk 	Simcha/Joy! and/or Hope/Tikvah			
A rainbow sign in a house window 	Simcha/Joy! and/or Hope/Tikvah			
A mail carrier	Hakarat HaTov/ Gratitude			
A mail truck	Hakarat HaTov/ Gratitude			
A delivery person	Hakarat HaTov/ Gratitude			

What is Seen	Value	Blessing/Phrase	Transliteration	Translation
Sunshine/sunrise / sunset	P'liah/Wonder	ברוך...יוצר אור וברא חשך. עשה שלום וברא את הכל	Yotzer Ohr u'voreh Choshech, Oseh Shalom u'vorey eht haKol	...Who forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates all things.
A person yawning	Hakarat HaTov/Gratitude	ברוך... המעביר שנה מעיני ותנומה מעפעפי.	Baruch...Ha'ma'a vir sheyna meh'eynai ut'numa meh'ahfahpai.	Thank you to the One who wipes sleep and slumber from my eyes.
A snail	P'liah/Wonder			
A teenager who looks grumpy	Empat'ya/Empat hy	ברוך... מתיר אסורים	Baruch... Matir Asurim	Blessed are You, the One Who frees the bound
A person walking alone 	Sh'mirat haGuf			
A person doing stretches	Sh'mirat haGuf	ברוך... זוקף כפופים	Baruch...Zoqef q'fufim	Blessed are You, the One Who straightens the bent
A person carrying a ball	Simcha/Joy!			

What is Seen	Value	Blessing/Phrase	Transliteration	Translation
A person carrying a child	Ahava/Love + B'tichut/Safety			
An ambulance or fire truck or police car 	B'tichut/Safety			
A hug 🤗	Ahava/Love			
A door with a mezuzah	Peoplehood/Ami'ut	ברוך שעשני ישראל	Baruch....She'as ani Yisrael*	Thank you Gd... for making me part of the Jewish People!
A welcome sign	Hachnasat Orchim/Welcoming Guests			
Ants	P'liah/Wonder			
A fly	P'liah/Wonder			

What is Seen	Value	Blessing/Phrase	Transliteration	Translation
2 people on bikes 	Sh'mirat haGuf			
2 women walking 	Sh'mirat haGuf			
A person with backpack and shoes on	Hakarat HaTov/Gratitude	ברוך... העושה לי כל צרכי	Barukh...HaOseh li kol tzohrki	Thank You to the One who provides for my every need.**
Two people talking in a friendly way	friendship/cherut , rey'ut			
A delivery truck	Hakarat HaTov/Gratitude			
A squirrel	Saqranut/Curiosity			
A bicyclist 	Sh'mirat haGuf/ + Sh'mirat ha'Adama			

What is Seen	Value	Blessing/Phrase	Transliteration	Translation
A jogger	Sh'mirat haGuf	בָּרוּךְ... הַמְכִין מִצְעָדֵי גִבּוֹר	Barukh... Ha'meychin mitz'ah'dei gahver	Translation: Blessed are You...Who prepares the steps of humanity
A hopscotch or other sidewalk game	Simcha/Joy!			
A quiet street for 30 seconds	Shalva/Serenity			
A butterfly 🦋	P'liah/Wonder			
A quiet street for 1 whole minute	Shalva/Serenity			
A teenager who looks cheerful	Seyver Panim Yahfot/Greeting others cheerfully			
A hummingbird	P'liah/Wonder			

What is Seen	Value	Blessing/Phrase	Transliteration	Translation
A green leaf 🌿	P'liah/Wonder			
A brown leaf 🍂	Acceptance/ Kabbalah	לְכֹל זְמַן וְעַתָּה לְכֹל-חֶפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם	Lakol z'man v'eyt l'chol cheyfetz tachat ha'Shamayim	To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under Heaven (Ecclesiastes 3:1)
A puffy cloud	P'liah/Wonder	לַעֲשֵׂה הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּתַבּוּנָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד	L'oseh haShamayim bee'tvunah, Ki L'olam Chasdo!	To the One that with deep understanding made the Heavens, for Gd's lovingkindness endures forever.
A person yawning	Hakarat HaTov/Gratitude	בָּרוּךְ... הַמַּעֲבִיר שְׁנָה מֵעֵינַי וְתַנּוּמָה מֵעַפְעָפִי.	Baruch...Ha'ma'a vir sheyna meh'eynai ut'numa meh'ahfahpai.	Thank you to the One who wipes sleep and slumber from my eyes.
A flight of stairs	Tikvah/Hope	בֶּן אָדָם עֲלֵה לְמַעַל עֲלֵה!	Ben adahm, aleh l'ma'alah, aleh!	Oh human, rise up ever higher! (from a poem by Rav Kook)
A garden hose	Hakarat HaTov/Gratitude	וּשְׁאֲבֹתֶם מַיִם בְּשִׂשׂוֹן מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה	U'shavtem mayim b'sasson mi'mynay hayeshua	And you shall draw water in joy from the wells of salvation!
An inviting gate or door to your own home	Hakarat HaTov/Gratitude	פָּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי-צֶדֶק אֲבֹא-בָם אוֹדָה	Pitchu li sha'arey tzedek, avoh vahm, odeh Y-ah	Open for me the gates of righteousness, I

		וְיָ-כֵן		will enter them, I will thank Gd! (from the Hallel)
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*When one sees blossoming fruit trees for the first time during the month of Nissan, one should say this blessing. It is said just once a year—the first time the tree is seen. If one did not see the trees blossoming until the month of Iyar, it is permitted to say the blessing.¹ In Australia and other countries of the southern hemisphere, where the trees blossom during the months of Elul and Tishrei, the blessing can be said at that time.²

FOOTNOTES

1. Seder Birchos ha-Nehenin 13:14; Ketzos ha-Shulchan 66:9; Badei ha-Shulchan 69:18.
2. Nit'ei Gavriel, quoting Minchat Yitzchak 10:16.

**This blessing is associated with having a pair of shoes, which was/is a very big deal for safety and status
(<https://www.ou.org/community/tefillah/tefillah-tips-birchot-hashachar-v/>)

***<https://morethodoxy.org/2009/06/29/goodbye-shelo-asani-god-didnt-make-me-a-hello-sheasani-yisrael-god-made-me-a-yisrael-rabbi-asher-lopatin/>