



*In the Interim.* . . by Rabbi Gary Atkins

It is my hope that the High Holy Days and the Sukkot/Shmini Atzeret holidays went well for each of you. Thanks to all who made this possible.

Although our regular daily minyan will not be restarting for now, the minyanaires will gladly gather for a *yahrzeit* minyan when requested.

After the fall Holidays, it is "traditional" for rabbis to take a little time off after all the special services Iris and I will be taking two midweek "mini vacations," plus one Shabbat off (Oct 9 and 10). There will be coverage arranged!

Looking ahead, let me share several disparate activities that will be happening as we resume a new cycle of Torah Reading in the year 5782.

This is a "shemita" year in the Jewish calendar, which always will evoke a lot of discussion. It is a *mitzvah* to let the land (in Israel) rest /lie fallow every seventh year. This is the first ecological teaching that we know of. How it is done (when it is done) in Israel today will be discussed in different ways.

This is the third year of the triennial cycle of Torah readings. It has always been a little problematic to chant "hazak, hazak, v'nit'hazyk" at the conclusion of each of the five books of the Torah when we did not finish the book. Now we can do it with a whole heart!

I will be teaching a fall class on Jewish Funeral Practices and the Hevra Kadisha on three Tuesday evenings via Zoom. Plans are to send out a booklet to all congregants so that they are "prepared" when this difficult part of life intrudes in their families. Dates will be announced later.

I am sharing an interesting article that is a "insightful" teaching on Sukkot even though the holiday is past. You might enjoy reading it!

**MUSINGS: THE MOON, THE ECLIPSE, AND THE FLOOD**

There is always a full moon on the first evening of Sukkot. In fact, since seven is a Jewish mystical number, the full moon of the seventh month is absolutely appropriate for our most joyous holiday.

One year, a while ago, the first evening of Sukkot was also the occasion of a full lunar eclipse. The shadow of the earth fell across the moon, causing it to disappear from view. As the moon disappeared from view, I mentioned to Iris in jest, "What if it doesn't come back?" Scientifically we know what causes eclipses and we certainly know the moon will shortly reappear. But I could understand the fear that ancients felt when the moon, or even the sun, disappear during an eclipse. And I can understand the power of the myths the ancients invented about the moon and the sun.

Let me share one of my favorite Jewish traditions. You can call it a myth. According to the Talmud (*Hullin* 60b), originally the sun and moon were equal in size and equally gave off light. The moon complained to God, "How can two kings wear one crown?" God replied, "You are right. Shrink." So God shrunk the moon and arranged so that the moon would only reflect the light of the sun. But God felt guilty for shrinking the moon. Therefore each month on the Rosh Hodesh (the new moon), we bring a sin offering for God. God seeks atonement for the sin of shrinking the moon.

The *Zohar* takes off on this wonderful passage and gives it a gendered reading. The sun is not merely a heavenly body, but REPRESENTS the masculine aspects of reality. The moon is not merely a heavenly body but the feminine aspects of reality. By shrinking the moon, God actually caused the feminine to be diminished and the masculine to dominate. This is made even more clear by the fact that the moon merely reflects sunlight. As the *Zohar* writes, "A woman is enhanced only together with her husband." (*Zohar* I 20a) (A rather sexist statement, but we can hardly expect a thirteenth century document to reflect modern feminism.)

That brings me to the eclipse, something not mentioned in the *Zohar*. During a lunar eclipse the sun's light is blocked by the earth. The moon goes dark. It is as if this feminine voice disappears altogether. But the mood affects greatly the tides, and there is often flooding during a full moon. Flooding symbolizes water out of control, water becoming chaos. It symbolizes the world when *tofu v'vohu* (chaos) reigned and the spirit of God hovered over the waters, before God said, "Let there be light." It is the world mentioned in the book of Job, before God said, "Thus far you shall come and no further, and her shall your proud waves be stayed." (Job 38:11) When the moon is blocked, when the feminine light of the universe does not shine, it is as if chaos once again reigns.

Fortunately, this is not the end of this mythical story. The *Zohar* does speak of a day in the future when the moon and the sun, the masculine and the feminine will become equal once again. God will restore the moon to her rightful place. There is a hint of this idea already in the haftarah we chanted on the first day of Sukkot. The prophet Zechariah teaches that the day will come when there will be neither sunlight nor the cold light of the moon, but one continuous light that shines all the time.

I have often taught that myths are stories created by a community that are not literally true but still reflect deep truths. Perhaps there is a deep truth to this myth. As a community in the past women's voices became diminished. For too many generations only the voices of men were heard. Sometimes the voices of women disappeared altogether. But when that happens, chaos reigns. Today we have begun to hear the voices of both men and women equally. When that happens, the prophecy of Zechariah will come true, and a constant light will shine once again.



- Dina Weber for her help with proofreading, yahrzeits and mass mailings
- Our Jewish Book Club Musketeers - Benay Birch, Ken Cohn, and Aida Koocher
- Liz and Larry Eckman for our kitchen and bathroom supplies
- Our Temple Board for meaningful online and in-person service options and activities
- Jeff Klein for taking care of the myriad building issues
- Nadav Matthews for media support and managing our livestream services
- David Winthrop for maintaining our yahrzeit boards and Torahs
- Michael Sydney for his continued efforts on behalf of the Manchester Hebrew Cemetery
- The Singer/Sydney family for groundskeeping services and arranging pickup of our lulav/esrog sets
- John Weber for his financial acumen and continued support
- Our Kiddush Krew - Benay Birch, Renee Brenner, Ken Cohn, Josh Nathan, Merle Paltrow, Carol Pressman, Carol Sternberg & David Winthrop

- Rabbi Gary and Cantor Mark whose collaboration and voices brought us meaningful, memorable services.
- Gabbai David Winthrop whose skillful management of aliyot, Torah scrolls, setup, and materials ensured services went smoothly
- Steve Saulten for providing security
- Elana Bannerman and Karen Jacobs for orchestrating our children's services
- Rachel Fleischer for overseeing our Yom Kippur Break Fast and Sukkot Deli Dinner night



Special thanks to Charlotte and Howard Gross for donating their beautiful baby grand piano, which now graces our atrium.

### Memorial Tzedaka

Ruth Chevion in memory of Paul Scribner  
 Carol Krensky in memory of Paul Krensky  
 Celia & Mark Magovsky in memory of Simon & Bertha Magovsky  
 Celia & Mark Magovsky in memory Murray Magovsky  
 Aida Koocher in memory of Barbara Esterman  
 Aida Koocher in memory of Maurice Koocher  
 Stephen Singer in memory of Annie Siegel

Ruth Chevion in memory of Evelyn Leibowitz  
 Carol Krensky in memory of David Shaer  
 Celia & Mark Magovsky in memory of Scott David Magovsky  
 Nancy Dornier in memory of Eileen Ekman Covin  
 Aida Koocher in memory of Benjamin Esterman  
 Jacob Silberberg in memory of Ronda Carter  
 Stephen Singer in memory of Samuel Singer

### Other Donations

Iris & Rabbi Gary Atkins in memory of Jim Simpson  
 Janice & Judson Belmont – August BBQ  
 Shana Bilech & Doug Kinkenon in honor of The Veale Family  
 Renee Brenner in honor of baby Miriam Anne Veale  
 Ken Cohn & Maureen DeLeasa – Flowers & Yom Kippur Break Fast  
 Michael Davidow in honor of David Winthrop  
 Bernie Gasser  
 Jeff Klein & Michelle Rosenthal – Yom Kippur Break Fast  
 Carol & Bob Sternberg in honor of Steve Saulten  
 Amy & Mitchell Weinberg – August BBQ

Iris & Rabbi Gary Atkins in honor of Steve Saulten  
 Brian Grodman in honor of Steve Saulten  
 Renee Brenner in honor of Steve Saulten  
 Ken Cohn & Maureen DeLeasa in honor of Renee Brenner  
 Ken Cohn & Maureen DeLeasa - Sukkot Deli Dinner  
 Alan Gaby – August BBQ  
 Arlene Kershaw  
 Nancy Siegal in honor of Steve Saulten  
 Carol & Bob Sternberg – August BBQ

### In Memory of Toni Gasser

Abasco Heating & Home Service  
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 Renee Brenner  
 Ken Cohn  
 Liz & Larry Eckman  
 The Fleisher Family  
 Michael, Mara, Ethan & Lylah Fox  
 Nancy & Allen Geller  
 The Grossman Family  
 Helen R. Harrison  
 Whitney Kalmanson  
 Aida Koocher  
 Rochelle & Gary Lindner  
 Christy & Josh Nathan  
 Heidi & Eric Pound  
 Meredith Mietta & Joanne Rubin  
 Frances Shapiro  
 The Skipper Family  
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Louise Allard  
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 Ilene & Stuart Brogadir  
 Michael & Catherine Davidow  
 Lori Erlich  
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 The Freedman Family  
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 Karen & Allen Kaplan  
 The Korchman Family  
 Bertha & Ken Litvack  
 Gail Pierson  
 Niza & Rami Preis  
 Nancy & Barry Schwartz  
 Jane Silberberg  
 Pam & Alan Tran  
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 Isobel & Marc Lustig  
 The Porro Family  
 Tracy Richmond  
 The Schweiger Family  
 Roberta Silberberg  
 Carolyn Ward



# What is Tahara?

by Ruth Chevion and Jeff Klein

This is the second of three articles on the subject of Jewish responses to death.

The first article, published in the September issue of Kol Israel, talked about funeral homes in our area. To review: The Hevra Kadisha has researched local funeral homes, especially in light of the closure of Goodwin, and recommends three that are particularly open and sensitive to Jewish ritual. They are Lambert in Manchester, Petit-Roan in Suncook, Waters in Concord. We will go wherever you need us, but we ask that you consider choosing one of these three.

The third article on this subject, slated for the November issue, will go into some detail about the Hevra Kadisha, its members and its history.

Today we will discuss *tahara*.

*Tahara* means purification. It is a physical and spiritual cleansing of the deceased Jew in preparation for internment in the earth.

*Tahara* is done by men for men, and by women for women. For the most part these rituals are performed by volunteers from the Jewish community who train specifically for this purpose and who make themselves available when a Jew dies.

But what is it? What is *tahara* like?

First of all, today, *tahara* is a choice. When someone dies, the family will decide whether they want *tahara* for their person - in the same way as *bar* and *bat mitzva* is a choice, as are all the other Jewish rituals - *brit mila*, naming, marriage etc. *Tahara* is the penultimate ritual done for a Jewish person, to be followed by burial.

When there is a call for *tahara*, the Hevra Kadisha convenes in the funeral home. Four men or four women will enter the room where the *met/meta* (deceased person) awaits, covered and ready.

The process begins with a long prayer in Hebrew in which those present ask for mercy for this specific person, invoking the person's Hebrew name and the names of his or her parents, praying for a release from all bad things, for forgiveness for any sins or misdeeds, in the names of our ancestors, etc.

Observing all modesty, there follows a gentle patting with wet cloths, removing remains of bandages or signs of illness. There is a manicure and combing of hair.

A psalm is recited from the Song of Songs in which the *met/meta* is praised in particular for their physical beauty - their beautiful hair and skin and eyes, and also their good deeds in life.

Then comes the pouring of 9 *kavim* of water over the deceased person, while declaring in Hebrew, *tahar hu*, or

*tahara hi*, meaning "he is pure," or "she is pure." Technically, nine *kavim* of water is a substitute for *mikvah*. Nine *kavim* is approximately 27 quarts of water. It is poured over the person in one continuous flow from neck to feet, for which the group uses 3 buckets of warm water. As one bucket empties, the next begins.

Following the washing, the person is dried, and dressed in *tachrichim*, the white linen "equalizer" in the sense that at death, if not in life, all Jews are equal, as symbolized by the fact that they are dressed alike, except for minor differences between men's and women's outfits. Both men and women have pants, a long shirt, a jacket with a collar over the shirt, a hat, face cover and a sash. Each part of the outfit is tied with special knots. All the while that the person is being dressed, more psalms are being recited.

It's hard to describe just how clean and pure the *met/meta* looks after the white linen *tachrichim* have been put on. You would have to be there.

The kosher coffin, called an *aron*, is ready and waiting, and the person is placed inside. More psalms. Sand from Israel is sprinkled inside.

Finally, one or more members of the Hevra address the deceased in their own words. They ask for forgiveness if they have done anything wrong. The intention was to purify physically and spiritually to the satisfaction of the deceased. Please accept an apology for any errors.

The wooden lid is put in place. The coffin is wheeled out while a final prayer is said. It's a familiar one - *va y'hi binsoah ha aron va yomer Moshe...*

The Hevra members do a ritual hand washing for themselves. That's it.

The question remains, why do this? For an answer to that question, it would be best to attend Rabbi Gary's forthcoming class on this subject, date and time to be announced. Look for a notice after the holidays.

Best wishes for a shana tova, stay healthy and live long!

## Fall Gift Shop Offerings

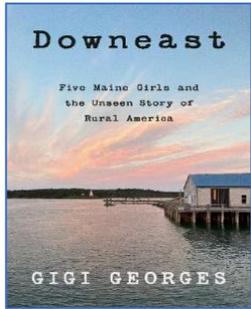


Challah Board - \$30  
Challah Cover \$30

Challah Knife \$25  
Wine glass set - \$25



**October 6, 7pm at Temple Israel.** GiGi Georges, PhD and author of "Downeast," will join us, followed by desserts and coffee!



A local New Hampshire author and a Temple Israel member, Gigi will give a talk about her new narrative nonfiction book *Downeast: Five Maine Girls and the Unseen Story of Rural America*.

Gigi holds a PhD in public policy. She has served as White House Special Assistant to the President, professor of political science at Boston College, and Program Director for the Harvard Kennedy School's Innovation Strategies Initiative.

*Downeast's* release has attracted broad notice in New England and across the United States. The book was featured on *Good Morning America* in a dedicated segment by George Stephanopoulos as the #1 nonfiction title on the

*Portland Press-Herald's* best-seller list, and as an Amazon top seller.

The product of years of research, intimate reporting and deep friendships forged over half a decade, *Downeast* follows five young women as they come of age in Washington County, Maine - the northernmost county on the Maine coast extending from the Canadian border to about an hour north of Bar Harbor. It is a stunning place and one of the most geographically isolated regions on the Eastern seaboard. All five girls know the pain and joy of life in an area whose rugged beauty and stoicism mask dwindling populations, vanishing job opportunities, and pervasive opioid addiction. As the girls reach adulthood, they discover that despite significant challenges, there is much to celebrate in "the valley of the overlooked." Their stories remind us of the value of timeless ideals: strength of family and community, reverence for nature's rule, dignity in cracked hands and muddied shoes, and the enduring power of home.

But this book is not just a hopeful story about five resilient young women. It is a broad, revelatory examination of life in rural America that counters the dominant downbeat media narrative and presents an optimistic look at the future of the American countryside whose tight-knit communities support each other with tenacity, grit, and grace.

**Questions? Please contact:**

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# October

TISHREI 25 TO CHESVAN 25



## Anniversaries

Niza & Rami Preis - Oct 10 - 47 years

Paula & Keith Veale - Oct 13 - 2 years

Kim & Leigh Musicof - Oct 22- 5 years

## Birthdays

Oct 2 - Benjamin Felder

Oct 7 - Phyllis Levine

Oct 10 - Daniel Oberlander

Oct 13 - Deborah DePasse

Oct 14 - Flynn Cohen

Oct 14 - Joshua Eli Preis

Oct 14 - Alexander Verbun

Oct 15 - Talya Baskin

Oct 19 - Celine Belanger

Oct 19 - Bernice Taube

Oct 23 - Josh Nathan

Oct 24 - Julia Kamen

Oct 24 - Madelyn Kamen

Oct 28 - Pat Biagi

Oct 28 - Quinn Paltrow-McCole

Oct 29 - Bob Sternberg

Oct 29 - Sadie Beatrice Zack

Oct 31 - Henry Biagi

Oct 31 - Gary Lindner

## October Services and Events (subject to change)

Date	Time	Description
10-01-2021	6:30pm	Erev Shabbat - light candles @ 6:08pm
10-02-2021	10:00am	Shabbat service - Bereshit
10-03-2021	9:30 am	Hebrew School
10-03-2021	1:00pm	Hanukkat Habayit (Rabbi Gary & Iris housewarming - rain or shine!)
10-08-2021	6:30pm	Erev Shabbat - light candles @ 5:56pm
10-09-2021	10am	Sat Morning Shabatone with Catered Breakfast - Noach
10-10-2021	N/A	N/A Hebrew School
10-15-2021	6:30pm	Erev Shabbat - light candles @ 5:44pm
10-16-2021	10:00am	Shabbat service - Lech Lecha
10-17-2021	9:30 am	Hebrew School
10-21-2021	6:00pm	Hebrew Happy Hour details to be provided
10-22-2021	6:30pm	Erev Shabbat - light candles @ 5:33pm
10-23-2021	10:00am	Shabbat service - Uvayera
10-24-2021	9:30 am	Hebrew School
10-29-2021	6:30pm	Erev Shabbat - light candles @ 5:23pm
10-30-2021	10:00am	Shabbat service - Chayei Sara
10-31-2021	9:30 am	Hebrew School

Rabbi Gary will be away Oct 4-8 and 17-21

## A Positive Vidui for Yom Kippur by Rabbi Gary

With so much turbulence and trauma still unfolding, let us be reminded that it's OK to give ourselves a break and also focus on the helpful ways that we are navigating these unprecedented times.

Despite a global pandemic, an unstable world and a planet hurting because of human choices, by acknowledging the good in addition to all the ways we missed the mark, let us remind ourselves of all the things that not just keep us afloat but lift us up, allow us to keep going and offer hope.

- We've Acted with dignity and grace in difficult situations
- We've Blessed
- We've Cultivated compassion
- We've Delighted good things
- We've Empathically listened and encouraged
- We've Favored fairness
- We've Gratefully acknowledged blessings
- We've Harmonized and helped others

- We've Inspired
- We've Joined
- We've Kindled kindness
- We've Laughed
- We've Matured
- We've Nurtured
- We've Offered optimism
- We've Persevered
- We've Questioned when questioning was good
- We've Respected other viewpoints
- We've Sympathized and supported
- We've Tried our best
- We've Uplifted others
- We've Volunteered
- We've Welcomed
- We've X'd out excessive actions
- We've Yearned
- We've Zoomed and connected