



Shir Notes

The Official Newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami Volume 23, Number 4, April 2025. Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

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Events of the Month

Shabbat services at de Toledo High School and on Zoom and Livestream

Saturday, April 5 10:30 am
Birthday Shabbat

Saturday, April 26 10:30 am
Anniversary Shabbat

Around the Rabbi's Tisch via Zoom

Thursdays, April 3, 17, and 24
7:30 pm See flyer for more information.

Shabbat Torah Study Saturday, April 19, 10:30 am at Schroeders'

Stan Schroeder leads our monthly study and discussion session. See flyer for more information.



1st seder: Saturday, April 12
2nd seder: Sunday, April 13
Yizkor: Sunday, April 20
Editor's note: See my Passover poem on page 9.



Visit our website:
www.shirami.com

Rabbi's Column



Passover is a time when Jewish communities around the world gather to remember the Exodus from Egypt, a story of oppression and liberation that has been retold for generations. However, the significance of this story extends far beyond the past. While we commemorate the slavery of the Israelites, it is crucial to acknowledge that slavery is not just an ancient horror—it exists today, even in places we might not expect. From human trafficking to domestic servitude, modern slavery persists in various forms, including in affluent communities in the United States. Recognizing these injustices is essential to ensuring that Passover remains not just a historical commemoration, but a call to action.

One of the most disturbing forms of modern slavery is the exploitation of domestic workers, many of whom are immigrants brought to the United States under false promises of fair wages and safe employment. In wealthy neighborhoods of Los Angeles, New York, and other major cities, some maids, nannies, and caregivers are subjected to conditions eerily similar to slavery. There have been cases where wealthy homeowners deprive domestic workers of their salaries, take away their passports or visas, and threaten them with deportation if they try to leave or seek help. These individuals are often isolated, overworked, and forced into silence by fear.

Such conditions mirror the oppression described in the Passover story. The Israelites were forced into labor under Pharaoh, unable to escape or advocate for themselves. Today, victims of domestic servitude suffer a similar fate, working long hours under inhumane conditions with little hope for freedom. The very holiday that celebrates liberation should compel us to recognize and fight against these ongoing injustices.

Beyond domestic servitude, human trafficking remains a widespread issue in the United States. Many victims, particularly young women and children, are trafficked for labor or sexual exploitation, often hidden in plain sight. They are coerced through threats, debt bondage, or manipulation, just as ancient slaves were controlled by their masters. According to estimates from the Polaris Project, thousands of people in the U.S. are trapped in forced labor, exploited in industries such as agriculture, construction, and hospitality. The oppression of these individuals reflects the suffering endured by the Israelites in Egypt, reminding us that the fight for freedom is far from over.

Passover commands us not just to remember the past but to act in the present. The Haggadah states, *"In every generation, a person must see themselves as if they had personally come out of Egypt."* This means we must not only empathize with our ancestors' suffering but also recognize and confront modern forms of slavery. Supporting organizations that fight human trafficking, advocating for stronger labor laws, and raising awareness about exploitation are all ways to honor the spirit of Passover.

If the story of Exodus teaches us anything, it is that freedom is sacred and must be fought for. As we retell the story of liberation each year, we must commit to breaking the chains of those who still live in bondage today.

Rabbi David Vorspan See the Chametz sale flyer to "sell" yours this year.

President's Report

Shalom,



First, a **Happy Pesach** to our Shir Ami Family. Every Pesach I can look back at the holiday through the years and with different eyes each time. When I was a young child, Pesach began a few days before with grating horseradish at the direction of my Paw-Paw. Of course, it had to be done outdoors because my Nana would not have it done in her kitchen. So, there we were, grating away, teary-eyed, with my Paw-Paw saying that the tears were to "*Zecher L'tziyat Mitzrayim*." My Paw-Paw would lead the Seder from the children's table, with my Paw-Paw's nephew on his right and my brother and I on his left (my Paw-Paw had no sons) and then my sisters and cousins filling out the table.

My mother and my aunt took advantage of that seating as they were able to sneak an olive or carrot without my Paw-Paw noticing. Of course, in those days, no one thought anything of a child having a little Manischewitz wine. Throughout the Seder we would try to get a glance into Elijah's Cup to see if there was less wine than the last time we looked. Then came the food, starting with my Aunt Phyllis' homemade Gefilte fish and followed by my mother's chicken soup with matzah balls which were sinkers, more often than floaters, because that's the way we liked them. Then the brisket and the chicken (which had already relinquished its flavor to the soup) and my Uncle Harry's potato kugel. I'm sure there were some vegetables, but at that age, I avoided them.

After the meal, all the children started searching for the Afikomen that my Paw-Paw had hidden. I can still look back on how getting a quarter for the Afikomen was a great deal! Then the men would finish the Seder while the women were in the kitchen and then we started on the songs in the middle of the Haggadah. I especially recall my father singing *Adir Hu*, hoping someday I would have a voice like his. And then the next night we would do it all over again.

Then there were the years when I wasn't at home, and while in the Navy, sometimes a local Jewish family would offer to host Jewish personnel from the Navy Base. When I was stationed at the Panama Canal, I was the Jewish Lay Leader which meant making sure the commissary had matzah, gefilte fish and other holiday foods, and I also was in charge of setting up a community Seder for 160 people. (That also involved driving through streets of Panama City in a pickup truck loaded down with 40 frozen Empire Kosher Chickens). Other years, I celebrated with my family on the East Coast, where I went to school. I saw how everyone celebrated the holiday the same, but always with a little difference.

Now I conduct the Seder from the children's table, except there are no more children, but they still won't let me at the adult table. But as an adult among adults, I have found that the Haggadah I remembered as a child as being the complete story of Pesach, is now merely a jumping off point for greater understanding now that other sources are available.

Whereas my Paw-Paw used to study the week before Pesach with various books, including selections from the Talmud, I go online. And instead of searching for the Afikomen, I am hiding it. And instead of feeling rich with a quarter, I was paying out some long green. At our last family Seder, with no one under 21, my nieces and nephew decided they would hide the Afikomen and let the adults search for it. And they would still be searching if my nieces and nephew didn't feel sorry for them and let loose with the "you're getting warmer," or "you are freezing." I hope that I am still enjoying Pesach as much as my Paw-Paw did. And I hope that you enjoy Pesach as well as you ever did.

But as you prepare for Pesach, we still have **Shabbat Services** this month, with a Tisch or two sprinkled in, plus our **Shabbat/Torah Study session**.

April is also the month where we can look forward to activities in the spring.

Looking toward the future, next month, **Mother's Day** will be upon us so you had better start now so we can provide **\$10 Target Gift Cards** for the mothers in the domestic violence shelters.

In June we will be having our annual walk around except this year it will be **A Walk Around Leon and Andrea Nachenberg's House**. Don't ask why, just show up and walk. Also, in June we are looking at having a **garage sale**, so whatever you can find during your spring cleaning may be someone else's idea of a real treasure.

And looking way, way far in the future, I am pleased to announce that we have secured the services of Cantorial Soloist **Ayana Haviv** for our High Holy Day Services in September.

As always, if you have any questions or want to provide your input, please feel free to email me at JDPistol@aol.com.

Shalom and Happy Passover,
Jordan Pistol, President



DONATIONS

Congregation Shir Ami wishes to acknowledge the following donations:

Yahrzeits

Sheilah Hart for Richard Hart, Joeseeph Lipman, and Belle Lipman
Rae and Armand Wazana

Birthdays

Neil Hattem (73)
Aaron Brenner (43) (by Bonnie and Rabbi David Vorspan)

Anniversaries

Paula and Lou Loomis (52)
Rae and Armand Wazana (58)

Other

Samantha Gort in memory of her grandfather Jerry Gort
Janet and Richard Kirshbaum in memory of
Lew Silverman
Phyllis and Stan Schroeder in memory of Lew Silverman

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

Sylvia Hockmeyer.....	4/5
Joan Easley.....	4/5
Lee Dollins.....	4/16
Carol Altshiller.....	4/17
Jerry Zatz.....	4/20
Pat Michaelson.....	4/22
Ed Orens.....	4/23
Marcie Spetner.....	4/25
Ellie Zatz.....	4/28

Our Condolences



We regret to inform the congregational family of the passing of: our member **Lew Silverman**.
May God comfort his wife **Claire** and her family during this time of their bereavement.

See my poem on page 8. Stan Schroeder

Congregational News

Get well wishes *rafuah schleimah* to:

Phyllis Schroeder
Sheilah Hart
Helga Unkeless



May they be blessed with a complete recovery in body and spirit.



Congregation Shir Ami Tribute Cards

Our **Tribute Card Coordinator** will send your cards celebrating *simchas* and conveying your get-well and condolence messages.

Call **Helga Unkeless** at (818) 340-5751 or (preferably). email Helgaunkeless@yahoo.com

Minimum donation of \$5 per card is appreciated.



That was Elijah. He's stuck on the 405.

Social Action Committee

Remember we are collecting **\$10 Target gift cards** for **JFS HOPE Domestic Violence Project for Mother's Day**. These cards are given to mothers and their children who often use them for basic necessities. You will be able to donate the Target gift cards by mailing them to

Becky Finlay

17643 Miranda St.
Encino, CA 91316.

Or give them to a Committee member at our Services. Call Becky at (747) 998-3804 for more information.



On Sunday, June 8th, instead of a **Walk Around Lake Balboa** we will have a **Walk Around Leon and Andrea Nachenberg's House**. All funds will be given to the **Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkin-**

son's Research that Michael started in 2000. It will be at 10 o'clock. The Walk will be followed by a dairy potluck lunch at their house. We will gather in the backyard before we start the Walk, If it is too hot, we will walk in the Northridge mall (close to the house). See the flyer attached.

There will be a Social Action Committee meeting open to all at the Nachenberg home at 11 am on Friday, April 4th.

For those of you who are fasting for the Passover Fast of the Firstborn Thursday, April 10, may it be an easy fast.

Thanks to Rabbi and Bonnie and all who have supported our Committee in our ongoing Mitzvah projects. We wish you a Happy Passover. May you enjoy this family holiday in good health and with much love.

Becky Finkay

Social Action Committee Vice President



Remembering Member Barbara Grubman z"l

She wrote **Seder for One, Please**

I published it in 2020 Stan Schroeder

At first I felt a bit weird, as I sat down for my "solo seder." I had in hand a two page *haggadah* called "*The Ten Minute Seder Haggadah*" by **Rabbi Yonah Bookstein**, which was a blessing as I read it, sipped my small glass of wine, and asked and answered the Four Questions. I reclined on my pillow as I looked out my window at a peaceful site – a tall hill with trees, flowers, and shrubs.

I sang *Dayeinu* and there was no one to say "You can't carry a tune." Then I talked about and enjoyed, as the Torah tells us, the story of the four types of kids. Soon came the brisk horseradish with the lettuce called the *maror*.

I ended my seder for one with the meal that had been prepared for me and took the fourth sip of wine. Next year in Jerusalem, but even if I can't get there it will be in Southern California.

When my "seder for one" came to an end, I looked in a mirror and said, "See you next year," as I smiled at my image.

Excerpt from The Ten Minute Seder Haggadah

1. *What's up with the matzah?* 2. *What's the deal with horseradish?* 3. *What's with the dipping of the herbs?* 4. *What's this whole chilling at the table business?*

PARTICIPANTS SAY TOGETHER

We were slaves in Egypt. God took us out with awesome miracles. Had God not taken us out of Egypt, then what? We, and our children, and grandchildren would still be slaves in Egypt! So, even if we were all great Torah scholars, we would still have to tell about the Exodus from Egypt. The more we talk about this the better - but God I'm short on time!

LEADER

The Torah reflects upon four types of kids: One Wise, One Evil, One Simple, and One Who Doesn't Know How To Ask. GUIDE the wise one through the obligations of Passover. TELL the Evil One, we need you to be part of our people. EXPLAIN to the Simple One, "with a strong hand God brought us out of Egypt." ENGAGE the one who doesn't know how to ask, make that child feel comfortable, and tell them about the Exodus.

Rabbi Yonah Bookstein, co-founder with his wife **Rachel**, of **Pico Shul**, is Alevy Family Rabbi in Community Outreach and Director of Shabbat Tent. He has worked with Jewish communities across the globe inspiring a rebirth in Jewish communal life.

It's Not Just Another Movie

by Lou Loomis

The documentary film **October 8** is not just another Jewish movie about the October 7 massacre of innocent Israelis by the Islamic terror organization Hamas. In fact, this movie was independently financed by actress **Debra Messing** and some of her closest friends — when mainstream Hollywood production companies rejected her request to produce a film that explains what actually happened on October 7 and what led up to those events.



Veteran documentary filmmaker (and *October 8* director) **Wendy Sachs** chronicled the production and financing difficulties. The backstory of how difficult it was to make this film is fascinating, *October 8* stands alone as an expose' on the Hamas group and other Islamic terror organizations and, sadly, countries, who want to destroy and conquer the entire western world..I have seen other holocaust movies and documentaries which are quite moving. They are must-see films, and my personal list includes ***The Sorrow and the Pity***, the ***Diary of Anne Frank***, ***Escape from Sobibor***, ***Playing for Time***, and others. But *October 8* is today's news. It shockingly exposes a hidden antisemitism that is just as sinister as during the Nazi era. This is not some nutcase's conspiracy theory, but an actual situation we all must face.

Shir Notes readers are well-informed on this issue, thanks to Editor **Stan Schroeder** and Rabbi **David Vorspan**, both outspoken on the dangers facing today's Jews, worldwide. Both are important voices in our community, and offer smart, logical reasons for keeping unity as a shield against Jew-hatred. Both are approachable and willing to speak out. I urge everyone to take advantage of our two wonderful leaders with questions and even fears.

As further emphasis, the *October 8* movie shows actual footage of today's hatred against Jews. The movie does not show film footage of some of the worst violence that took place on the 7th in Israel. And for that reason, I strongly recommend everyone see Debra Messing's documentary. It is something we all need to be aware of and discuss with family, friends, and community.

Every frame, every action and documented event shown in the movie is worth one's time. Shout-outs are also due to those who helped make the film possible (besides actress Messing), as well as the Laemmle and AMC Theatre chains, whose executives chose to show this film while other movie chains would not.



Debra Messing



Wendy Sachs

Biography of the Month - Bob Dylan

by Stan Schroeder

Bob Dylan was awarded the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature, generating much controversy about the award, and about Dylan himself. I obtained much of the information for this bio (mostly about his Judaism) from two sources: an article in *Jewish Life* magazine by **Ilan Preskovsky**, a South African freelance writer, that is also on the Aish Hatorah website, and a *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (JTA) article by **Gabe Friedman**, an Editorial Assistant in New York.



Born **Robert Allen Zimmerman** May 24, 1941 to, by all accounts, a fairly observant Jewish family, Dylan had a decidedly Jewish upbringing as part of the tight-knit, small Jewish communities of Duluth and Hibbing, Minnesota, growing up in a kosher home and even attending the religious-Zionist summer camp, Camp Herzl. He had his bar mitzvah at Agudath Achim, an orthodox synagogue in Hibbing in 1954.

After graduating high school where he became enamored with the rock and roll musical genre, Zimmerman moved to Minneapolis in 1959 and enrolled at the University of Minnesota. He performed at a coffeehouse a few blocks from campus and became involved in the nearby Dinkytown folk music circuit. He began introducing himself as Bob Dylan, choosing the spelling after reading some poems by **Dylan Thomas**. The next year he dropped out of school and officially changed his name. In 1961 he travelled to New York City to perform there and visit his idol, **Woody Guthrie**, who was seriously ill with Huntington's disease.

Dylan's religious trajectory has been interesting, to say the least. Dylan became a born-again Christian in the late 1970s. He participated in bible study classes at the Vineyard School of Discipleship in Reseda. After releasing a couple of polarizing gospel music albums, he returned to his Jewish roots in the '80s. In recent decades he has even participated in holiday services at Orthodox Chabad synagogues.

Not too long after releasing the last of his Christian music albums in the early '80s, Dylan made an extremely Jewish statement: he held his eldest son **Jesse's** bar mitzvah at the Western Wall. Jesse, born to Dylan's first wife **Sara Lownds**, went on to become a music video director.

Just after his son's bar mitzvah at the Kotel — and a year after Israel's controversial first Lebanon War — Dylan released the song *Neighborhood Bully* on his 1983 album *Infidels*. In what is arguably one of

the most pro-Jewish rock songs ever recorded, Dylan describes Israel as an "exiled man" who is unfairly labeled a bully for fending off constant attacks from his neighbors. One verse goes: "*Well the neighborhood bully, he's just one man/His enemies say he's on their land/They got him outnumbered a million to one/He got no place to escape to, no place to run/He's the neighborhood bully.*"

After his mysterious "return" to Judaism, Dylan studied with Chabad rabbis in the 1980s. His appearance on the Chabad telethon fundraiser in 1989 wasn't his first endorsement of the movement (or his first telethon cameo) — but it might have been his Jewiest. A yarmulke-clad Dylan accompanied songwriter **Peter Himmelman** (his Jewish son-in-law) and **Harry Dean Stanton** on harmonica as the group played "*Hava Nagila*."



Since the early '80s and his public embracing of his Jewish roots, more and more stories have also come out about both Dylan's Jewish ties and his restless, lifelong search for spirituality that sometimes butted heads with the hedonistic rock and roll lifestyle. And yet, for all of his mistrust of organized religion, and for all of his bohemian "freewheeling" nature, there is something about Judaism that has called to him time and time again over the years.

In particular, he has been greatly influenced by a number of rabbis, whose openness, warmth, and great emphasis on the spiritual and mystical sides of Judaism, have clearly struck home with the former Mr. Zimmerman. In particular, he formed a deep connection with **Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld z"l**, Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Shor Yoshuv, when Dylan, along with fellow Jewish bohemian poet **Alan Ginsberg**, attended a *sheva brochas* for an old friend at Rabbi Friefeld's yeshiva in New York. So taken was Dylan with both the Rabbi and the Yeshiva that he came very close to actually buying a place near the Yeshiva and was quoted as saying, when visiting Rabbi Friefeld on a particularly cold New York's winter night, "It may be dark and snowy outside, but inside that house, it's so light."

Alas, he never quite went that far and his Judaism has remained but one (very big) part of an unquestionably complex spiritual identity. But when you consider just how much in flux the very concept of Jewish identity is in our modern world, there's something profoundly fitting about one of our foremost cultural icons being so "complicatedly Jewish" himself.

Passover 5785

by Stan Schroeder

At the Passover *seder* we ask *Ma Nishtanah* ... why is this night different from all others? Our *hagaddah* answers:



“This night is different from all other nights: because we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Because we were brought forth from there by God with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Because we are thankful and because it is our duty to keep the commitment to freedom ever present in our memories and in our lives. So that we will always remember and never forget.”



We then go on to explain the *matzah*, the bitter herbs, and the other laws and customs of this holiday celebrated by Jews around the world. We tell the story of the exodus from Egypt

(*mitzrayim*, the narrow place) as if we were there, because we are told that we were all liberated, we all experienced the wilderness and the journey to the Promised Land.



This year let us also ask why this year is different from all others. This year is different because we will soon celebrate the 77th birthday of the State of Israel. The State of Israel is the Promised Land of our day. Seventy seven years ago, April 19, 1943, the Warsaw ghetto uprising began after German troops and police entered the ghetto to deport its surviving inhabitants. **Mordecai Anielewicz** and his small band of barely armed Jews fought over 2000 well armed Nazi troops until May 16. Anielewicz and most of his remaining fighters died in the final days. A kibbutz near the border with Gaza was renamed *Yad Mordecai* (hand of Mordecai) in his honor.

On May 14, 1948 **David Ben Gurion** proclaimed the State in accordance with the United Nations partition plan adopted November 1947. The date on the Hebrew calendar was the 5th of Iyar, and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* (Independence Day) is celebrated that date unless it falls on a Friday (advanced to the 3rd), Saturday (advanced to the 4th), or Monday (delayed to the 6th). This year it falls on Thursday, May 1.

Over the next few days following the proclamation of the State over 20,000 troops from Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt invaded the newly formed Jewish State. The War of Independence was fought in three phases, separated by periods of truce. The third phase

ended July 20, 1949. During 1949 Israel signed separate armistice agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria (the four countries bordering Israel).

From the ashes of the ghettos and concentration and death camps of World War II, and the courage of the pioneers of the State, arose the modern thriving State of Israel today. The promises of the Biblical God of Israel and the British following the World War I League of Nations Mandate were kept in our time. While it is true Israel still has enemies bent upon her destruction, we pray this Passover for a resolution of the conflicts, *L'shana ha'ba-ah b'Yerushalayim*, next year in Jerusalem with *Shalom l'kol*, peace for all!

This Year we also celebrate the 58th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem at the conclusion of the Six Day War June 10, 1967, the 28th of Iyar on the Hebrew calendar. That day the Old City of Jerusalem, ruled by the Jordanians since the War of Independence, was captured by the Israel Defense Force. The day is called *Yom Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem Day) and this year falls on Monday, May 26. Let us also pray that as we were liberated from slavery some 3500 years ago, that we enter an era of peace and prosperity for Israel and its neighbors.

See my poem *Exodus: My Journey from "Egypt"* on page 9.



Warsaw Ghetto May, 1943



Israel Declaration of Independence May, 1948



IDF paratroopers at Western Wall June, 1967

LIFE AFTER LIFE

We're all companions on this path called life;
Each encountering difficulties, misery, strife.
Along the way we must suffer a loved one's death,
For at some point we all draw that one last breath.

We all seek the same simple answers -
Is life only a succession of cancers?
Are events probabilistically random?
Or do certain phenomena occur in tandem?

Do all human beings have immortal souls?
Should eternity in heaven be one of our goals?
Is our universe a part of some divine plan
Created for the pleasure of a species called man?

Is it ashes to ashes and dust to dust?
Are there holy writings we really can trust?
We can study in depth what's known as history
Without a clue to solving the real mystery.

Perhaps we can capture this moment in time;
Gaze through the curtain for insight sublime.
See our loved one's life as a perfect reflection,
Giving Light to our path's current direction.

Perhaps we can truly recapture the spark;
Make a difference to others more in the dark.
Use the life left to us, the most precious gift,
To give those less fortunate a personal lift.

Lew Silverman was a teacher and coach,
Effort and teamwork were his approach.
Lew and I were born the same year,
Sports and sportsmanship to us were dear.

His family was central in his busy life –
Proud of them all, with Claire as his wife.
We at Shir Ami were family, too.
Now, it's up to us to follow through.

Stan Schroeder
March 3, 2025



World Jewish Congress

by Shayne Marine

The World Zionist Congress is the only democratic body with representatives of all of World Jewry: all countries, all streams. Our movement is represented by the political party Mercaz in the WZC. I'm proud to be the Captain for MERCAZ USA. In online elections for the Congress every five years, Diaspora Jews like us have a vote. Our next election is in the spring.

The results of elections to the Congress decide who controls the Jewish Agency and KKL/JNF, and how their billions of dollars are spent each year. These are the Jewish world's largest philanthropies, and your vote for the Zionist Congress determines what they do and how they spend their money.

These funds shape our community and Israel. It delivers funds for Conservative/Masorti congregations like our own and organizations like Ramah, USY, Sisterhoods, Men's Clubs, and more.

In Israel, it helps those who were hardest hit on October 7 and ensures that our hostages and their families are taken care of through the Israeli government's Hostages and Hostages Family Directorate, now under the auspices of the WZO.

It builds bridges between the Diaspora and Israel by ensuring our communities and Ramah camps continue to receive amazing *shlichim* (young Israelis) and *shinshinim* (Israeli high school graduates who defer military service for a year) through the Jewish Agency.

Your vote in this election ensures our community and like-minded communities around the world have a hand on the steering wheel for these funds.

It secures our movement in Israel and helps make sure EVERY Jew from EVERY stream is treated equally in Israel.

If you ever felt like you wanted a voice over in Israel, this is your chance. All it will cost you is 5 minutes of your time and \$5 to vote. **YOU CAN SIGN UP TO 5 PEOPLE ON ONE CREDIT CARD.**

Thank you,

Shayne Marine
Mercaz Team Captain



Elections will be held from March 10 to May 4.

Exodus: My Journey from "Egypt"

by Stan Schroeder

In Egypt the Pharaohs reigned supreme
Where earlier Joseph interpreted a Pharaoh's
dream.

A famine was avoided by storing grain
So food was available in years without rain.

But Joseph was forgotten, as is often the case,
In the years after a significant event takes place.
Israelites in Egypt were forced to be slaves,
Oppressed with hard labor until laid in their
graves.

Pharaoh then orders his kingdom's midwives,
"Newborn Israelite boys, take their lives!"
Moses is saved and raised as though royal,
And to his ancestral people he is loyal.

In the wilderness he is tending his flock.
And sees this bush burning next to a rock.
The bush isn't consumed and that seems odd;
But you never know what to expect from God.

God tells Moses He expects him to lead,
Relate to the Pharaoh, God's people must be
freed.

Pharaoh consented on plague number ten;
The Israelites left in haste, 600,000 men.

Pharaoh sent soldiers soon to give chase;
It looked as if the Israelites would lose the race.
But God parted the waters of the Sea of Reeds,
Then drowned the Egyptians upon their steeds.

Forty years of wandering to accept God's Laws;
The Israelites overcame their many flaws.
It took the birth of a new generation,
To enter the Promised Land and become a nation.

That journey to freedom included me too,
And each of you who is proud being a Jew.
We must shape this journey in our day and age,
And learn what God wrote on our unique page.

Every Step I Take is a Blessing

Passover 5785

On Passover we make blessings for matzah and wine.
We read psalms and pray for dew.
At the seder we are told to recline;
Once again we relive our story anew.

We were freed from Mitzrayim, a Narrow Place;
In our time we have our own nation.
Though we realize the problems we daily face,
We marvel at the wonders of Creation.

Bitterness and prejudice still exist;
Mass murder and terror make news.
Social and fiscal issues too many to list,
And too many scoundrels to accuse.

Yet here I am blessed with long life,
Though many my age have died.
Doubly blessed with a wonderful wife,
A home with peace and joy inside.



Chag kasher v'sameach
A happy and kosher holiday

I know my life comes with my own task
With a special connection to Jews.
There are my own questions I need to ask
And a path only I can choose.

One step at a time is given to me,
My time is daily compressing.
Thanks to those before who set us free.
Every step I take is a blessing.

At the seder we tell our story with zeal
As if we made that journey in haste.
We eat symbolic foods at our meal
And celebrate freedom with each taste.

Just as from slavery we once were freed,
From this virus we'll develop immunity,
Recognize those who now meet each need
Of our blessed Shir Ami community.

Stan Schroeder



Shop at Ralphs - Earn Money for Shir Ami

by Maralyn Soifer

Here is an easy way to earn money for our Temple. We are now officially a **Ralphs' community agency**. All you have to do is follow these simple instructions to help earn money for Congregation Shir Ami.



1. If you don't have a Ralphs' rewards card already, go to the store or go to website **www.ralphs.com** and select **Order a Ralphs reward card**.
2. Once you have your card, go to the website: **www.ralphs.com** and select **Create an account**
3. If you have an account, your email address is your account ID. If you forgot your password, select **Forgot your password?** and you will receive an email with instructions to reset it. Follow the instructions to enter your email address and create a new password.
4. If you already have a Ralphs' reward card and an account, you will see Account Summary when you login. You can change to our Temple by clicking on **Edit** within **Community Rewards**.

You can do a search for Congregation Shir Ami by putting in the number **92785**. Our congregation will pop up and click on the button next to the name. Click on the button that saves the changes.

5. You should also check the bottom of your receipt when you shop. It should say "**At your request, Ralph's is donating to CONGREGATION SHIR AMI**".

Make sure that the clerk swipes your card each time you shop. Verify that your receipt shows a contribution to Congregation Shir Ami at the bottom.

Important Note: All participants must confirm their selection annually starting in September. On or after September 1, sign into your account and reconfirm Community Rewards selection.

Congregation Shir Ami
P.O. Box 6353
Woodland Hills, CA 91365



Congregation Shir Ami
Contract for the Sale of Hametz

Know ye that I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi David Vorspan to act in my place and stead, and in my behalf to sell all Hametz possessed by me (knowingly or unknowingly) as defined by The Torah and Rabbinic Law (e.g. Hametz, doubt of Hametz, and all kinds of Hametz mixtures). Also Hametz that tends to harden and to adhere to a surface of inside of pans, pots or cooking and usable utensils, and all kinds of animals that have been eating Hametz or mixtures thereof. And to lease all places wherein the Hametz owned by me may be found.

Rabbi David Vorspan has the full right to sell and to lease by transactions, as he deems fit and proper and for such time which he believes necessary in accordance with all detailed terms and detailed forms, as explained in the general authorization contract which have been given this year to Rabbi David Vorspan to sell the Hametz.

This general authorization is made a part of this agreement. Also do I hereby give the said Rabbi David Vorspan full power and authority to appoint a substitute in his stead with full power to sell and to lease as provided herein. The above given power is in conformity with all Torah, Rabbinical regulations and laws, and also in accordance with the laws of the State of California and of the United States.

And to this I hereby affix my signature on this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Signature _____

Address _____ City _____

Please note additional locations (summer home, cottage, work place) where Hametz might be located:

***Please return this form to Rabbi Vorspan, 22320 Philiprimm St., Woodland Hills, CA 91367
or scan and email to vorspan2@att.net***

“Around the Rabbi’s Tisch” on Zoom April 3, 17, and 24 at 7:30 pm



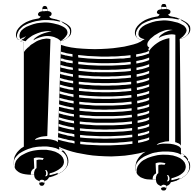
This popular Shir Ami educational continues its Spring semester. Come join us for our weekly discussion of Rabbi Vorspan’s selected topics of Jewish interest.

We discuss Jewish texts and current events as they relate to Jewish values and our lives as Jews. This is a unique opportunity to learn and share in an informal format.

This semester we will again hold our sessions on Zoom. The link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86440082040?pwd=bG4venRKTW9lVzhwVWVSRGgraEFJdz09>

Meeting ID: 864 4008 2040 Password: 677588

Saturday April 19, 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study at Schroeder home



This is the 11th season of Shabbat study sessions one Saturday morning a month at 10:30. We discuss the weekly Torah portion, the Shabbat prayers that are included in our Contemporary service, and various subjects relevant to Conservative Judaism.



Our next session will be April 18. This is the 7th day of Passover. We will discuss the holiday and it’s observance from biblical times to the present and in different cultures throughout the world.

This session will be held at the Schroeder home, 8450 Winnetka Ave. #14. Call Stan at (818) 718-7466 or email stanpacbell@gmail.com for more information.

**Congregation Shir Ami Schedule of Shabbat Services 2025
at de Toledo High School, Zoom, and Livestream www.shirami.com**

If you want to be added to our email list, please send an email to stanpacbell@gmail.com and you will receive ongoing information.

Saturday 10:30 am unless otherwise noted

January 2025

Saturday, January 4 - Birthday, Consecration of Officers
Saturday, January 25 - Anniversary, Linen Shabbat

February 2025

Saturday, February 1 - Birthday
Saturday, February 15 - Anniversary

March 2025

Saturday, March 1 - Birthday
Saturday, March 15 - Anniversary

April 2025

Saturday, April 5 - Birthday
Saturday, April 26 - Anniversary

May 2025

Saturday, May 10 - Birthday
Saturday, May 24 - Anniversary

June 2025

Saturday, June 7 - Birthday
Saturday, June 21 - Anniversary



David Vorspan
Rabbi



Jordan Pistol
President

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86440082040?pwd=bG4venRKTW9IVzhwVWVSRGgraEFJdz09>

Meeting ID: 864 4008 2040 Password: 677588

If you would like more information about our congregation please visit our website at www.shirami.com

Let's go for a Walk Around the Nachenbergs' Lake Balboa is History!

Join Congregation Shir Ami's Social Action Committee on **Sunday, June 8th at 10:00 am.**

All proceeds go to Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research

Leon and Andrea Nachenberg live at
19533 Citronia St.
Northridge, CA 91324
Phone (818) 885-6736

The **Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research** started in 2000 and has provided funds for necessary research. 100 % of our donations will go to this worthy organization.



Minimum donation: \$10 per person, NO MAXIMUM! Following the walk, a brunch will be provided by our Social Action Committee near the lake. Please bring vegetarian salad, side dish, or dessert to share, and remember to wear your Mitzvah Patrol shirt.

Sit-down activities are available for those who don't walk. Call **Becky Finlay** at (747) 998-3804 . Sign up by returning this tear-off with your check for \$10 (or more) per person to Congregation Shir Ami, P.O. Box 6353, Woodland Hills, CA 91365. Make check payable to **Congregation Shir Ami.**

Total Donation \$ _____

Donation Amount: \$10 [] \$18 [] \$36 []

Walker Names: Brunch (y/n)

\$72 [] Other []

1. _____

Phone no. _____

2. _____

Number of participants _____

3. _____

I will bring: Salad [] Dessert [] Side dish []

4. _____