

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

May 14 - 21, 2009

20 - 27 Iyar, 5769



Candle lighting time 8:08 p.m.
Friday May 15

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 p.m.
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 a.m.

Parashat Behar/Bechukotai (Torah commentary on pg. 2)

Annual: Leviticus 25:1 - 27:34 (Etz Hayim, p. 738)

Triennial: Leviticus 25:39 - 26:46 (Etz Hayim, p. 744)

Haftarah: Jeremiah 16:19 - 17:14 (Etz Hayim, p. 763)



We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Alan Kirsh, Viola Schwartz, Jack Finkelstein, Jessica Koplin, Lise Dayan, Amy Schwartz, Ashley Goodrich and Debra Cohen

and a Happy Anniversary to:

Sheila & David Elkon, Elsie & Israel Benn and Carol & Alan Schwaber

This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Mary Divinsky, Ann Goldman, Berl Rubel, David Van Ollefen, Ida Schwartz, Leah Frolich, Joseph Schwartz, Hyman Adler, Nathan Shapiro, Henry Nirenstein, Norma Oliner, Gladys Annes, Samuel Barnett, Edith Theresa Becker, Rebecca Dreizin, Ellis Goodrich, Sol Kent, Rosalie Torch, Lillian Katz, and Rose Levin

Last day of Sunday School

Awards * swimming * games * picnic

Sunday May 17 10:30 - 12:30

at the Cohen's home 102 Howard Oaks Dr.



**Plan to join us for the Teen Class Shabbat
And confirmation of Molly Bayme, Josh Cohen,
Matthew Schwartz and Ellen Ziesenhene**

Friday May 22

Make your reservations now for dinner



**Ellen and Joe Finkelstein invite you to join them for the
simcha of their son Will's Bar Mitzvah**

Friday May 29 6:15 p.m.

Saturday May 30 9:00 a.m. *

*Shabbat morning services will begin at 9:0 because it is Shavuot



Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday May 31 – 4:00 p.m.

Minutes from last year's meeting were mailed out last summer. If you cannot find your copy & would like us to email you another please contact Addie at the CSI office.

MAZEL TOY TO OUR COLLEGE GRADUATES!!



Jacob Elkon ([University of Michigan](#)) and Ben Katz ([University of Georgia](#))

AND OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES!

Hannah Toland and Rachel Schlesinger

Don't forget the CSI Gift Shop for all your gift needs.
weddings graduations* housewarming gifts* *birthdays*
anniversaries * B'nai Mitzvahs



Parashat Behar/Bechukotai



*This week's commentary was written by Rabbi Elliot Dorff
Rector and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at American Jewish
University*

These sentences are the basis for Rabbi Akiva's ruling that if two men in a desert have enough water to keep only one of them alive, the possessor of the water may drink it all rather than share it and condemn both to die of thirst, for your brother can live by your side only if you yourself are alive (B. *Bava Metzia* 62a). This sets an important limit on our efforts to help others. We must first guarantee our own life and then that of our family before we reach out to help others.

This is not the lesson of Jewish tradition alone. I remember well what I was taught when training to become a water life saver in the American Red Cross course at Camp Ramah: "Throw, tow, row, go." That is, you should not immediately jump into the water to save someone who is drowning, for that method subjects you to the greatest degree of danger. Instead, you should first throw out to the person an inflated ring or something else that the person can use to help him or her float on the water while you contact others to help. If that is not possible, throw the person a rope so that you can tow him or her onto shore. (This is more dangerous than the first method because you might get pulled into the water while trying to pull the drowning person to dry land.) If that is not possible, row a boat out to the person to rescue him or her. Only as a last resort do you swim out to the person to try to save him or her.

So your life comes first. We dare not forget, however, that we also have a duty to rescue people at risk. Leviticus 19:16 states: "You shall not stand idly by the blood of your brother; I am the Lord." The Talmud understands this verse to require efforts to help someone in distress, such as a drowning person or someone accosted by highway robbers (B. *Sanhedrin*

73a). One surely may and should seek the help of others in the rescue attempt, and one should not endanger one's own life any more than necessary, but one has the duty to do what one can to save the life of someone else.

This stands in sharp contrast to American law and practice. The Common Law imposes no duty to rescue. In fact, until about fifteen years ago, if you tried to help someone in distress and something untoward happened to that person, you could be sued. Now virtually all states have passed "Good Samaritan" laws to protect a rescuer from being sued if the victim is harmed in the process of the attempted rescue. Only four states, however, impose a duty to intervene in the first place (namely, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin), and failure to do so - or to call the police or other potential helpers - is a misdemeanor that results in minimal punishment (a fine of not more than \$100 in Vermont). Probably the most egregious example of this American stance is the Kitty Genovese case on March 13, 1964, when, according to a *New York Times* article published two weeks later, 38 people in her Kew Gardens apartment complex heard her screams and did nothing to stop her rape and murder. The article is almost certainly inaccurate, but the incident came to symbolize "the bystander effect" and its attendant diffusion of responsibility. "I didn't want to get involved," the *New York Times* reporter heard from many of the neighbors he interviewed.

Jewish law demands that we get involved. And the duty to rescue today applies not only to people drowning or accosted by others. It applies to many of our friends and neighbors who have lost their job, their livelihood, and sometimes their homes as well. I serve as Co-Chair of the Los Angeles Federation's Task Force on Serving the Vulnerable. Los Angeles is clearly not alone in seeing the roles of the starving and the homeless multiply geometrically in the last twelve months. Some of the very people who used to contribute to Sova, the food pantry run by Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, are now its clients. Jewish Vocational Service in Los Angeles now has a two-month waiting period for people seeking jobs to meet with a counselor; as a result, it has made available at its sites Parnassah Works, a software program that job seekers can use on their own while they wait for professionals to help them. Along with the loss of jobs comes not only food deprivation, but also loss of dignity and, all too often, family violence, as adults take out their frustrations on their children and each other. Thus mental health services are just as important as provisions for keeping life and limb together, for the former often has a direct link on the latter.

There is another, specifically Jewish aspect of rescue that is affecting us in our time. Many families who have been active participants in our synagogues, schools, youth groups, and camps no longer have the money to continue these important parts of their Jewish lives. All of these institutions critically need help in offering scholarships for the children and fee reductions for the adults who need them in order to continue their Jewish education and communal participation. Nothing less than the future of the Jewish tradition and the Jewish people is at stake.

In this economic environment, the Jewish tradition's duty to rescue is all the more compelling and urgent. We are not only giving people food, clothing, housing, and jobs when we provide those things; we are preserving their dignity and literally saving their lives. We are not only providing financial aid for those who need it to continue their Jewish lives; we are supporting the Jewish future. Yes, our own lives and those of our families come first, but in these times of economic distress we must reevaluate what we really need and then extend to others what they need to eat, sleep, work, and live - and, in the case of Jews, to live Jewishly.

In this situation, the concentric circles that the Jewish tradition mandates through this week's lesson that your own life comes first is absolutely critical in making our decisions of whom to help and how. We must first sustain the lives and Jewish participation of ourselves and our family; then of the local Jewish community; then of the larger Jewish community; and then of the non-Jewish community. The famous words of Hillel in Mishnah Avot (*Ethics of the*

Fathers) 1:14 are perhaps more important in guiding us today than they ever have in the past:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
If I am for myself alone, what am I?
And if not now, when?

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**For other commentaries on this week's Torah portion check out these sites:**

[Aish.com](http://Aish.com)

[ISJL Taste of Torah](http://ISJL.TasteofTorah)

[JTS](http://JTS)

[MyJewishLearning.com](http://MyJewishLearning.com)

[USCJ Torah Sparks](http://USCJTorahSparks)  
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Interested in participating more in Shabbat service?

Lead a portion of services

Read Torah

Chant the Haftarah

Call Rabbi Bat-Or and she will help you make it happen.

Congregation Sha'arey Israel make a little extra money

1. visit www.goodsearch.com for your online searches. This won't cost you anything but CSI makes a penny each time to search

2. for all your online shopping needs go to csimacon.org and click on our Amazon.com link.

every time you



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Quick links:

[CSI Macon Online](#)

[United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism \(USCJ\)](#)

[JTS Podcast - this week's Parsha](#)

[Audio Siddur](#)

[Global Jewish News Service](#)

[Israeli News Broadcast – in English](#)

[Crash Course in Jewish History](#)

[The Jewish Ethicist](#)

[The Jewish Women's Archive](#)

[Hadassah](#)

[Synagogue 3000](#)

[Learn through USCJ online](#)

[AJU - Walking with God series](#)

[The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum](#)

For the children (or the young at heart):

[Torah Portion Coloring Pages](#)

[Babaganews Torah Parasha of the week movie](#)