

“A Journey to the Center of the Torah”

There are 305,805 letters in the Torah. Given this, the middle point occurred several weeks ago in parashat Tzav in Leviticus 11:42 in the form of the letter vav in the words Gachon, meaning belly. This is a section pertaining to the laws of kashrut where we are forbidden to eat anything that crawls on its belly, like a bug or a reptile or a snake. While there is a certain irony of the middle letter of the Torah being found in the middle of a word referring to the mid-section of an animal, it is not very inspiring.

Perhaps, a better question to ask is one Rabbi Akiva does in the Talmud (Nedarim 30b), “what is the heart of the Torah?” The verse that immediately comes to mind is from this week’s Torah portion Acharei Mot-Kedoshim, Leviticus:19:18: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Only a handful of chapters from the actual middle of the Torah, this is the verse that best captures the essence of the Torah.

Interestingly, the verse is not about God, but about our treatment of one another. The Golden Rule does not require religion at all to fulfill, only a commitment to our fellow human beings. So, it’s off by a few verses, in my book this has got to be the center of the Torah. After all, if religion is not fundamentally about how we treat one another, what is it for? There are 305,805 letters in the Torah, all of them with the express purpose of getting us to love our neighbor as ourself. The rest is commentary, now go and study.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Alex

Shiva

- Yoav Ehrenhalt
- Grete Glick
- Roy Post
- Max Zelikman

Sheloshim

- Marsha Grass
- Francziska Kowal
- Renata Lefcourt
- Stuart Peck
- Hannah St. Cyr
- Elinor Tepper

Yahrzeits

Bernhard Badt	Marjorie S. Green	Beatrice Stein
Ann Boness	Ida Greenfeld	Samuel Treger
Doris Lenobel Brody	Julia Kanner	Aron Tsypenyuk
Abraham Cohn	Barney Kaufman	Victor Wagner
Samuel Cohen	Jeno Klein	Rae Weiner
Elizabeth Eisner	Ida Lawrence	Estelle Weitzner
Lester Frank	Ida Leberman	Leo Wolpin
Patricia Kroh Freudenheim	Solomon Leberman	
Helene Frost	Samuel Meyers	
Elizabeth Einer	Samuel Moscato	
Judith S. Goldberg	Aron Resnikoff	
Barbara Goldstein	Joyce P. Robinson	
Joseph Gevirtzman	John Schierlitz	
	Meyer Serota	

In Memoriam

Erev Shabbat Service  
B’nai Mitzvah of Levi and Brenna Fagin  
Friday, May 9, 2025/12 Iyar, 5785  
7:00 pm



Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein  
Cantor Arlene Frank  
Executive Director Joanne Marquisee  
Community Religious School Director Rabbi Einav Symons  
President Todd Sugarman

**CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM**  
In Person Events & Virtual Services

**Saturday May 10th**

10:45 am Shabbat Morning Service and Kiddush Luncheon-offsite  
5:30 pm Bar Mitzvah of Archie Levin

**Sunday May 11th**

NO CRS  
Happy Mother’s Day!!!

**Monday May 12th**

Office Closed

**Tuesday May 13th**

4:00 pm Chiavetta’s Chicken BBQ  
6:00 pm Tikkun Olam Committee Meeting

**Wednesday May 14th**

7:00 pm Mussar Class

**Thursday May 15th**

7:00 pm Buffalo Corner Reading Series via Zoom, Boxcast, Facebook and Youtube

**Friday May 16th**

7:00 pm Sisterhood Shabbat  
7:00 pm Erev Shabbat Service and via Boxcast, Facebook and YouTube  
8:00 pm Oneg Shabbat sponsored by the Men’s Group

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**The Passover Haggadah Project** is now open to participants. Join the Worship Committee and a subcommittee of the Adult Education Committee, the Passover Haggadah Committee, to write our very own CSS Passover Haggadah for next year’s Seder. If you are interested in participating in the Passover Haggadah Project, please email Joanne Marquisee at joanne.marquisee@gmail.com

**The Buffalo Corner Reading Series** led by Gunilla Kester will be on Thursday, May 15th at 7:00 pm. Join us either in person or via Zoom for an Open Community Read.

**The New York State Defensive Driving Class** will be on Saturday, June 21st from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. The class will save you 10% on your liability, collision, and no-fault insurance for three years. The cost for temple members will be \$30 and \$35 for non-members. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Shir Shalom. To register, please contact Bruce Corris at corrisb@hotmail.com. The deadline to register is June 10th.

**The Philadelphia Trip** organized by Scenic Excursions will be from July 7th to July 10th. Please see Debra Fine for questions. Join us and see some Jewish sites led by Rabbi Alex. The deadline for reserving a spot for \$100 is on May 20th.

**The Annual Congregational Meeting** will be on Tuesday, May 20th at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be led by President Todd Sugarman where we will listen to the Annual Reports, present the President’s Award to Barry Radlin, Temple Council, and elect new Board of Trustees Members.

**Our Mission Statement, as a congregation, is to be a welcoming community and to enhance all aspects of Jewish life.**

The Board of Trustees of Congregation Shir Shalom  
COMMITMENT STATEMENT

We, the Board of Trustees, pledge to unite and to enrich the lives of our congregation.

We will proceed in our commitment to Congregation Shir Shalom, to create an inclusive and open environment for the entire congregation.

Rabbi-Alex Lazarus-Klein  
Cantor-Arlene Frank  
Executive Director-Joanne Marquisee  
Community Religious School Director-Rabbi Einav Symons  
President-Todd Sugarman  
VP Administration-David Safir  
VP Membership-Tara Karch Cross  
VP Finance-Joe Glickman  
VP Worship-Shari Jo Reich  
VP Education-Marina Finkelstein  
Treasurer-Larry Posses  
Secretary-Evie Weinstein  
Women of Shir Shalom Representative-Amy O'Donnell  
Men's Group Representative-Daniel Kester  
Family Engagement Coordinator– Jessica Cunningham  
Rabbi Emeritus-Irwin A. Tanenbaum, D.D.  
Immediate Past President-Bruce Corris

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Andrew Abramowitz	Marina Finkelstein	Mark Kneitingner	Todd Sugarman
Aliza Berger	Elliot Gabelnick	Amy O'Donnell	Sheila Bernard-Tucker
Linda Bergman	Joseph Glickman	Larry Posses	Evie Weinstein
Keith Birzon	Dianne Gordon	David Safir	Betsy Zappia
Bruce Corris	Kirstie Henry	Michael Schwartz	
Micky Farber	Tara Karch Cross	Rebecca Shaw	

**Prayer for those who lead our congregation**

O God, this congregation has honored us with the task of leading them,  
and of serving You with them.  
May we strive to be fit for this sacred task.  
May we lead well and may we serve well.  
May we hear the quiet as well as the active voices,  
and may we heed the call and follow the paths of what we,  
after honest searching, feel to be the right things to do.  
May we listen to each other, and may we listen to You,  
as all of us together make this synagogue a *kehillah kedusha*, a Holy place.

**Congregation Shir Shalom is Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism and Reconstructing Judaism.**