

TEMPLE ISAIAH  
ישעיהו

# The Prophet

Magazine

COVID Kavanah

What Do You Pray For?

The Kavanah of Passover

Bonus: Kids' Passover  
Activity Page!

## Kavanah

2022:2



# In This Issue:

p. 3, 16

**From the President**  
*by Gary Perolman*

p. 4

**COVID Kavanah**  
*by Dennis Rapport*

p. 5

**Kids' Passover Activity Page**  
*The Ten Plagues*

p. 6

**When You Pray, What Do You Pray For?**  
*by Ken Isman*

p. 7

**Reform Movement Prayer Books**  
*by Ken Isman*

p. 8–9

**Kavanah is in the Head and the Heart**  
*by Anna Denzel*

p. 10–11

**The Kavanah of Passover Preparation**  
*by Rabbi Daniel Plotkin*

p. 12–14

**Tutoring: Meaning and Intention**  
*by Lowell Brazin, Helen Winoker,  
Ellyn Kaufman, Rudy Stoler,  
Cantor Linda Baer*

p. 15

**Legacy Giving**  
*by Shelley Engel, FSA*

p. 17

**Bits & Pieces**  
**Welcome New Members!**  
**Who's Who @ Temple Isaiah**  
*Becca Droller*

## Photo and Illustration Credits

p. 9: photo courtesy of Johannes Plenio on Unsplash; p. 10: graphics courtesy of Mohamed Hassan on Pixabay, dandelion\_tea on Pixabay, Alexander Lesnitsky on Pixabay; p. 12: graphic courtesy of chenspec; p. 13: photo courtesy of nellyaltenburger on Pixabay

*The Prophet Magazine* is the quarterly publication of Temple Isaiah, a Reform Jewish congregation in Howard County, Maryland, 12200 Scaggsville Rd., Fulton, MD 20759. Find us online at [www.templeisaiah.org](http://www.templeisaiah.org). The main office can be reached at [info@templeisaiah.org](mailto:info@templeisaiah.org) or 301.317.1101.

All articles are the property of their authors and Temple Isaiah, and may not be reproduced without written permission. Articles that originally appeared in other publications or are the property of the Union of Reform Judaism are attributed accordingly. All artwork is either original art provided by Temple Isaiah members, created by professional artists with a license purchased for use, or created by professional artists and is covered under the Creative Commons license.

Please send submission proposals to Raya Kridel, Communications Coordinator and Editor of *The Prophet Magazine*, at [Raya@templeisaiah.org](mailto:Raya@templeisaiah.org).

# From the President



## Who is wise?

As the days leading up to Passover begin to fade, I sit preparing the final agendas ending my two-year term as your President. It is now the time for me to reflect on this period of Temple Isaiah's history, our collective accomplishments, as well as goals not achieved. For me, there is no better place to look for help in doing so than *Pirkei Avot*, that Jewish text that brings together the *Ethics of our Fathers*.

I begin with the famous quote from Ben Zoma: **"Who is wise? The one who learns from everyone as it is said, 'From all who would teach me, have I gained understanding'" (Pirkei Avot 4:1).**

In my opinion, there has been no greater honor than having served as your President. I followed many Past Presidents who worked so hard, and dedicated much time, effort, and wisdom to improve and grow our beloved Temple Isaiah. My predecessor, Marshall Kohen, and those who served before him, taught me well to listen to all viewpoints, to understand that all spoke with a deep love for our *shul*, and to appreciate those who exhibit kindness and forgiveness. My rabbi, whose very nature is to love people, helped navigate me to stay on the right course. Rabbi Axler is my teacher, my partner, my confidante, and my friend, always guiding me with compassion. Our Executive Director, educators, and staff have helped me through the past two unprecedented and challenging years in our history. They have taught me that having a team of professionals working together keeps our Temple strong. Finally, from our incredible volunteers, who give of themselves so often, and in so many ways, I have learned that the act of giving truly fulfills one's life.

Akavya Ben Mahalalel used to say, **"Reflect on three things and you will not come into the grasp of sin: know where you came from; know where you are going; and [know] in whose presence you will have to make an accounting" (Pirkei Avot 3:1).** He answers that we came from a disgusting drop and we go to a place of dust..., and we make our accounting to the Holy One of Blessing.

As Reform Jews, we take the lessons of our past, keep them close to us in the present, and use them to imagine a new and exciting future. How do we envision something different and when? To whom do we listen? What path do we take? Can our past help us bring about more vibrant, engaged, and fulfilling days ahead? I have learned that as an individual and as a leader, change is a necessary and important part of life. It is no accident that former TI leaders who served so well in the past continue to embrace change and a future limited only by our own imagination. Only 25 years ago, the idea of worshipping in our own facility in Fulton was only a dream. Each step along the way has helped us see a clearer and fuller picture of our future; always changing, always improving, and we do so because as we expand sacred space, we invite more holiness.

He would say, **"It is not up to you to finish the work, yet you are not free to avoid it" (Pirkei Avot 2:16).**

These words of our ancestors are the guide for every Board of Trustees at every synagogue and I have taken them to heart. I prepared to become the TI President through not only many years of service on our Board, but also attending leadership programs in Baltimore and with the URJ. Each reminded me that leadership requires many attributes, but that modeling good conduct, inspiring curiosity, and expressing humility were at the top of the list. All of my goals were not achieved, but some were, and some seeds were planted for future Boards to help grow, if deemed meritorious. The hard work of leading helped me to appreciate that change is slow, and rightfully so. Working so closely with

...continued on page 16



# COVID *Kavanah*

by Dennis Rapport

One of the big successes of the early pandemic was High Holidays 5780. Our clergy, staff, and volunteers put together beautiful and meaningful services that surpassed anything anyone could have expected. We all gathered by our TVs or computers, experiencing an amazing substitute for our usual services. Margie and I got dressed up as if we were going to Temple, donned our *tallitot* and *kippot*, and imagined we were with our friends and fellow congregants as we were before COVID.

A year and a half later...we still tune in sometimes to Shabbat services. We attend lots of online classes, but I would be lying if I said it was the same. Saying "Shabbat Shalom" into a screen filled with postage stamp images is not the same as looking someone in the eyes and saying the same greeting. I miss the sound of voices praying and singing aloud. In short, I'm having trouble; I've got COVID *kavanah*.

The rabbis of the Talmud understood the importance of *kavanah*, translated as intention, or sense of purpose, or a special kind of concentration. The rabbis debated whether a *mitzvah* counted if it were performed haphazardly, almost by accident. For example, in Tractate Rosh Hashanah we

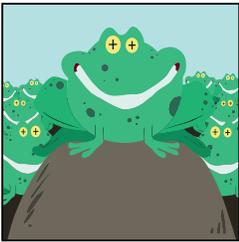
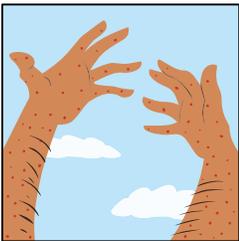
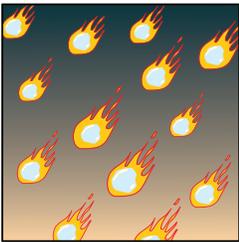
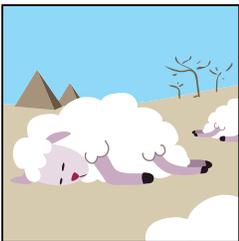
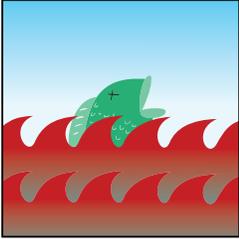
find, "the *mishna* teaches that it is sufficient that one have intent and know that he is hearing the sound of a *shofar*." That is, just hearing the *shofar* doesn't fulfill the *mitzvah*. You have to have the intention, the *kavanah*, to hear the *shofar*.

Back to true confessions. Imagine a Friday night. We're sitting at our Shabbat table and notice that it's 7:45pm. "Oh, did you want to tune into services?" one of us asks. "Sure. I'll set it up." Then we hook our laptop into our TV with an HDMI cable, settle into a couch, and watch services (with our camera off). It's mostly watching. My attention drifts. I'm a spectator. I've got COVID *Kavanah*.

Here's my antidote for COVID *Kavanah*. My resolution is to show up more — in person. I am sure that sitting in our sanctuary with the ark in front of me, with other congregants around will nurture my intention and concentration. For the programs that are offered in a hybrid mode, I'll try to come in person. Planning ahead, driving for 20 minutes, separating myself from my routine will, I'm sure, help my *kavanah*. What do you think? Want to join me? ■

# The Ten Plagues

Match them up, then name some modern plagues!



Hail and Fire

Frogs

Boils

Lice

Death of Firstborn

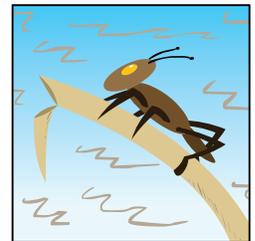
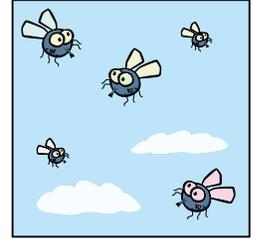
Water into Blood

Locusts

Pestilence

Diseased Livestock

Darkness



What Are Some Plagues of the Modern World?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

# When You Pray, What Do You Pray For?

by Ken Isman

*Author's Disclaimer: There is no single correct way to pray. This article is about my experience and is intended to spur the reader to think about the subject. Your conclusions may be completely different from mine.*

We all pray. We come to services and pray as a community. We pray privately in our homes, cars, and offices as we go about our daily lives. Communal prayer helps to focus the subject of prayer without being selfish, while connecting the one praying to their Jewish history, reciting the same prayers as our ancestors did thousands of years ago. Private prayer, on the other hand, invites G-d into our personal lives, strengthening our relationship with G-d and giving us hope to improve our personal situations.

But, does G-d really intervene in our personal lives? As a kid, I used to pray for G-d to intervene in my daily life. I prayed for sunny days when my baseball team was playing and for snowy days when I hadn't done my homework. Some of those prayers were answered, most were not. As I grew up, I began to believe that G-d would not intervene in our personal lives. After all, if there was some big plan for the Universe, how could changing my life based on my whims fit in with that big plan?

When I was 27, my father had a heart attack. I immediately started CPR while a friend called for the paramedics. The entire time that I was doing CPR, which seemed like 30 or 40 minutes, but was probably more like 5 or 6 until the paramedics arrived, I was praying for my father's heart to start beating again. It never did. The world lost one of its most famous fire chiefs, and I had all the evidence I needed (at the time) to conclude that G-d does not intervene in our lives and answer personal prayers.

A few years later, I started to attend services at a Reform congregation (thanks to meeting Joan). At first, I found evidence in the *Siddur* of my position. On page 152 in the *Gates of Prayer* (the blue version, see the sidebar on Reform prayer books for more of a discussion) is the meditation, "Prayer cannot bring water to parched fields, nor mend a broken bridge, nor rebuild a broken city; but prayer can water an arid soul, mend a broken heart, and rebuild

a broken will." This meditation acknowledges that praying for rain won't bring the rain, but it might help you feel stronger so that you can weather the drought. This meditation has made its way into our new prayer book as well (see page 165 of the *Mishkan T'filah*).

As I grew into the Reform movement, taking leadership positions, and helping to lead services, I started to rethink my position on whether G-d would really intervene in our personal lives. Was the fact that I met Joan and that she fell in love with me an answer to a personal prayer (or even multiple prayers)?

I listened carefully to the lyrics to an old Garth Brooks song, *Unanswered Prayers*. In the song, the singer spends his high school years praying for a specific girl to be "his." This prayer goes unanswered, and the singer goes on to have a spectacular life. The song concludes, "Some of G-d's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers."

Could this have been what I was missing in my younger years? Yes, my prayers were going unanswered, but was that because G-d knew that they really would not be right for me? Or was it that I was just praying for something that would not fit with the big plan?

And so, I've come full circle. I'm back to praying for personal items as well as praying communally with a congregation. I'm not expecting the personal prayers to all be answered, but I'm hoping they help the situation, and it does make me feel better.

The other day, I was at my doctor's office having an annual physical. I confided in my doctor that several of my family members were very sick and it was difficult for me to do the things that I need to do to take care of myself while also trying to help them. My doctor's response was to ask me who in my family was sick so that he could pray for them. I found this juxtaposition interesting, that my doctor would offer up prayers for healing for someone he did not know.

So, I have a question for you. When you pray, what do you pray for? ■

# Reform Movement Prayer Books

by Ken Isman

In the 29 years that I have been attending services regularly at Reform congregations, there have been three different prayer books that have been used. The first one that I used is called the *Gates of Prayer*. This blue bound book was first published in 1975 and is referred to affectionately in the movement as the "Gates of Blue." I liked to use it when leading services because it had ten different Friday night services and six different Saturday morning services to pick from. The service leader could pick one of these services that fit the mood they were trying to set for that service.

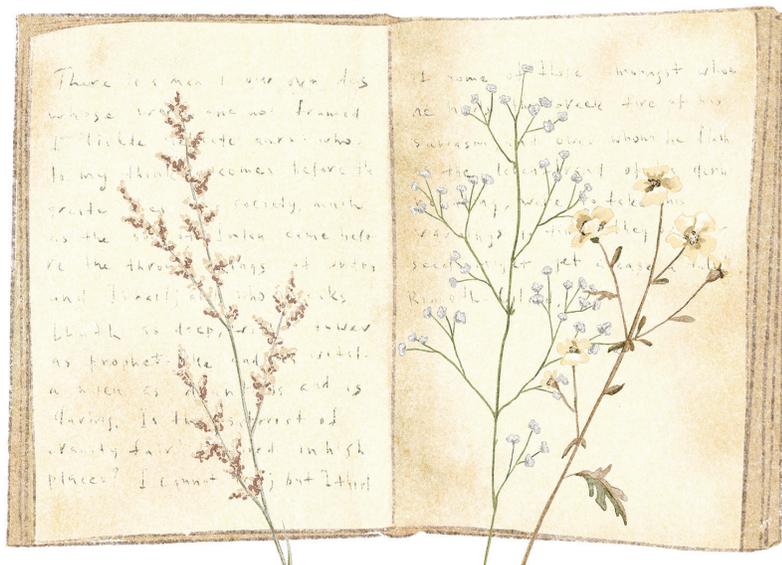
However, the *Gates of Blue* had a few drawbacks. Towards the end of the 20th Century, the language seemed out of date. Specifically, G-d was decidedly a male image, which did not fit with the more egalitarian philosophy of the Reform movement. A new prayer book was needed, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) had a committee working on writing a new one, but progress was moving slowly and people were anxious for change.

To fill the gap until they could get their new prayer book out, in 1994, the CCAR published an updated version of the *Gates of Prayer* with a gray cover that insiders call the "Gates of Gray." Technically, the book has the title, *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays*, but most people just refer to it as the *Gates of Gray*.

The *Gates of Gray* uses more comfortable language, and does not assign a gender to G-d. But the major drawback to the *Gates of Gray* is that it is only 186 pages long and does not have many options regarding different prayers and meditations. Using this prayer book can lead to stale services unless the prayer leader augments the service with additional material. But the *Gates of Gray* did its job and filled the gap until the new prayer book could be released.

In 2007, the *Mishkan T'filah* was published by the CCAR. This is a completely reimagined prayer book. Rather than have lots of different services, the prayer book has several different prayers and meditations on the same theme on a spread of two or four pages. The service leader can pick from an almost infinite combination of Hebrew and English material so that no worship service ever has to be the same as a previous one. Next time you're at services, peruse some of the readings and meditations in the *Mishkan T'filah* and see where it takes your thoughts. ■

משכן תפילה



# Kavanah

is in the

# Head

and the Heart

by Anna Denzel

*Kavanah* (כוונה) is the Hebrew word for “intention” or “intent.” It is associated with concentration and intention in Jewish prayer. The idea behind praying with *kavanah* is that you avoid distractions and set your direction of thinking on your prayer. *Kavanah* can be applied to all *mitzvot*, even to everything we do in our daily lives.

To complete the conversion journey, *kavanah* is crucial. As a Jew by choice, “intention” is the starting point. My decision was rationally and intellectually thought through. I had a plan, a list of books I needed to read, things I needed to do before I could officially call myself Jewish. But it was more than a rational intention. It involved feelings: I felt love for the community, a connection to God, and that Judaism is rooted within me.

So, my *kavanah* is an intellectual choice that is connected to deep feelings. And if I say the head is the seat of my thoughts and the heart is the seat of my feelings, then *kavanah* is in these two places.

Intention changed when I officially became Jewish. I no longer had a plan, a list of things to do. What *kavanah* means to me now on an intellectual and emotional level is that I intentionally engage with the TL community, my Jewish learning, the Torah, and prayer.

Since I don’t come from a religious family, one of the first things I had to learn was how to pray; not only the Jewish prayers in Hebrew, what they mean, or why we recite them, but to explore what prayer means to me. I bought a small notebook, one that fits in your pocket, and wrote down prayers such as the *Amidah* or the *Kaddish*. I carried it with me wherever I went. When I read poetry or came across a quote that moved me spiritually, I put it in my little *siddur*.

Now prayer sometimes comes spontaneously. I remember one time in the morning, the sun was shining through the window — a moment of peace, tranquility — a perfect moment for silent prayer. Is that praying with *kavanah*? I think so, yes. In moments like these, prayer arises in the heart, is spontaneous but conscious — in the heart first and then in the head.

A poem in my *siddur* is “For One” by Mascha Kaléko. Perhaps it is written to a lover, but to me it felt like a prayer about being drawn towards the “One.” God is “a lighthouse” that guides ‘the lyrical I’. We could read my *kavanah* into the poem. ‘The I’ made a choice that God alone is their “harbor,” and they promise to “perpetually” — intentionally — “steer” towards God. Yet there is more: God is “my love.” ‘The I’ didn’t make the decision based on rational thoughts alone, but also on love — again: the head and the heart.

Judaism has changed how I live my life, how I engage with people and my environment, how I connect with God, and myself even. It perhaps all started with praying with *kavanah*. I just didn’t know that it had a name. ■

# For One

The others are the open sea,  
The harbor's you alone.  
Trust me: sleep calmly like a stone,  
I will steer here perpetually.

The storms that struck me oft full-blown  
Left my sails empty utterly.  
The others are the colored sea,  
The harbor's you alone.

You are the lighthouse. Guide my way.  
You can, my love, sleep like a stone.  
The others ... that's just waves at play,

The harbor's you alone.

— Mascha Kaléko (1934)

The poem is translated from German is by Andreas Nolte and taken from Mascha — The poems of Mascha Kaléko, Fomite Press, 2017, page 65. It is reprinted with permission by Andreas Nolte and is available on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Mascha-Poems-Kal%C3%A9ko-Andreas-Nolte/dp/1942515928>

# The Kavanah of Passover Preparation

by Rabbi Daniel Plotkin



Every Jewish holiday has some degree of preparation. Sometimes it is relatively simple such as making sure you have enough candles and cooking oil to make it through Hanukkah. Sometimes it is more of a challenge, such as building a Sukkah. For the High Holy days, it is a profound internal preparation called *cheshbon hanefesh*, an accounting of the soul. Each of these preparations have various elements of *keva*, the standard things that need to be done, and *kavanah*, the spiritual preparation for the meaning of the holiday.

When observed in even a semi-traditional manner, no holiday has more logistical preparation than Passover. Passover has a whole separate selection of foods which require special shopping and cooking not done the rest of the year and the observance focuses on a more-complex-than-normal home observance, rather than most of the ritual aspects being done at the synagogue. For those with a more traditional observance, it may also involve a deep cleaning of one's home, changing of dishes, and a clearing out of one's pantry.

With so much to do, it would be easy to get bogged down with the details — the *keva* — of

Passover preparation. Shopping lists, recipes, to-do lists, the details of the Seder, and so much more make for a lengthy preparation. Despite so much to do, however, there is much meaning — a sense of *kavanah* — in being very intentional about the preparations for this holiday.

The origins of Passover, while told one way in the Haggadah, are also blended with ancient traditions of changing out the previous year's grain crop with the new crop about to be harvested. Additionally, it corresponds with the change of weather from the rainy season to the dry season in most of the Middle East. It was a frightening time when food stocks ran low and began to spoil, but as the new harvest spurred by the winter rains was visible and ready to be harvested.

Therefore, Passover is a time not just of celebrating our freedom and considering those who are not yet free, it is also a time of gratitude for what we have. Especially in the modern era in the United States, where food supplies seem endless, we can use the time of Passover preparation to extend gratitude for all we have.

There are traditional ways to do so, including giving to organizations that collect *tzedakah* on

behalf of those who cannot otherwise afford food for Passover. Of course, as we clean our pantries, giving appropriate food to food banks is a way to help those in need.

On the internal side, many Jewish scholars have said in various ways that as we clean out our homes of *chametz* (leavened products), that we also must clean our souls of *chametz*, understood as haughtiness or arrogance, that puffs us up. The very act of cleaning for Passover can help us with this process as we reflect on all the items in our house, both consumable and durable, that we don't really need, items that add clutter to our lives rather than meaning or utility.

When we shop for Passover, we can reflect on what we truly need or do not need. Yes, those sugary fruit gels are delicious, but instead of getting enough packages to last until Rosh HaShanah, can our resources be put to better use to help us eat healthy and help others get what they need? When shopping and cleaning, we can also reflect on how to not purchase in excess, and how eight (or seven) days of limited food options is not particularly difficult, especially given how many in our world live every day on the same foods.

The final part of finding a sense of *kavanah* — intention — in our Passover preparation is in preparing for the Seder. In practical preparation, focusing on the meaning of each food as you prepare it can help make the work feel more sacred. In the running of the actual Seder, how do you make this year not just a rote reading of the words on the page, but rather a meaningful telling of a story that is intended to inspire us to work for freedom?

In my own family we mix tradition with games, fun songs, and more to help keep everyone engaged in the Seder, while still finding the important, core meanings of the holiday. For those who need more structure, there are many different Haggadah options; one is not bound to the traditional text, and even less so to the old Maxwell House Haggadahs (created originally as a marketing tool to let Jews know Maxwell House Coffee was kosher for Passover).

While Passover preparation can be very time consuming and even expensive, it can also be an opportunity to find great meaning. Considering what puffs us up in our own lives, thinking of those who are less fortunate than ourselves, and considering the meanings of the food and the Seder as we prepare, are all ways we can imbue our preparation with meaning, and the sense of *Kavanah* that makes Passover more than the absence of bread, but invites in the presence of holiness. ■

*If you would like guidance on making your passover preparation or Seders more meaningful, engaging, or fun, please feel free to reach out to Temple Isaiah's team of clergy and educators. Rabbi Axler, Rabbi Plotkin, and Rachel Petroff Kessler are all glad to direct you to resources and discuss ideas to help you have a truly meaningful Passover holiday.*

# Tutoring: Meaning and Intention

## You Shall Teach...

The Torah teaches us in *Devarim* "Vishanatum L'Vavanecha — and you shall teach your children." Through my work as a B'nai Mitzvah tutor at Temple Isaiah, I find great meaning in helping transmit Torah to the next generation. During our time together, my students and I not only learn the text in the scroll, but also explore what it truly means to be a Jewish adult while finding meaning in our religion and culture. The students embark on a transformative experience as they master complex Hebrew and weave together their narratives in order to find their space and voice within our thousands-of-years-old tradition.

Each student brings great wisdom and character to our sessions, which is reflected on the *bimah* during their ceremony. I am in such awe of their introspection, devotion, and intentionality and I learn so much from them. This student-teacher dynamic is touched on in *Mesechet Ta'anit 7a*, when Rabbi Chanina stated, "I learn much from my teachers, more from my friends, and the most from my students" and I could not agree more with this sentiment. Getting to play a small role for this momentous occasion while building a rapport with both the students and their families has been such a blessing. I am grateful to be part of this milestone on their Jewish journey and am looking forward to celebrating many more in the years to come.

—Lowell Brazin



## Finding Meaning

The terms *kavanah* and *keva* are often spoken of together. *Kavanah* is the intent with which we do something and *keva* is the permanent, consistent things we do. I can honestly say that in 40+ years of Bar and Bat Mitzvah tutoring, my experiences with *kavanah* have been so much more meaningful than the *keva* that comes along with the routine preparations. I love building relationships with my students and watching them grow throughout the process. Even the most reticent student at the end learns much about his or herself and experiences the pride of accomplishment.

Often, we discuss the concept of *kavanah* together, especially when exploring what becoming a bar/bat mitzvah means to them. Our discussions often lead to wonderful family discussions where students learn so much about their parents and grandparents. Each student and family are different and come from different backgrounds but all are bound together through this coming-of-age tradition. It gives me great joy to not only help with the *keva*, the learning of the prayer, and Torah and Haftarah portions, but also to help students learn more about themselves and how this preparation time impacts them in so many ways.

I want to thank Temple Isaiah and Rabbi Axler for being so sensitive to the individual needs of each student and family. Also, thank you for the privilege of working with our students and bringing a little joy each week to my life.

—Helen Winoker



## How We Endure

After 50 years in the field of Jewish education, I was honored when Rabbi Plotkin asked me to become a TI B'nai Mitzvah tutor.

Working with the students at the impressionable age of 12 to help them prepare to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is like looking into a small window of their lives. I love hearing from the children about their connection to Judaism through their respective families. I have learned that some of the grandparents and great grandparents were rabbis and very involved in our faith. Others are curious how this religion has lasted for thousands of years, being as small in numbers as we are. Living in the Howard County area, the students feel that they are the minority, but when they hear how we make up less than one percent of the world population, somehow it often helps them feel that much more proud of our people and what we have endured.

I like to see the "whole child," not just the small portion we get to work with weekly and that is fascinating to me. Thanks Temple Isaiah for this terrific opportunity to help our next generation perpetuate our heritage!

*Kol tuv, All the best,*  
—Morah Ellyn Kaufman

---

## The Poetry Speaks

Biblical text and synagogue prayer have an elegant poetry, with a stunning ability to speak to learners of all ages. That's why tutoring B'nai Mitzvah students never gets boring. Every student can find something unique within the lines of a Haftarah portion or in the cadence of a prayer, a quirky way the text speaks to him or her. When I help a student to make that discovery, to find a way to understand a bit about life through a nuance in the text, it makes my day. The kids bring the text to life.

—Rudy Stoler

## From the Empty Pocket

On Friday night in December 1967, a little 13-year-old girl with trembling knees, wrinkled stockings, and an awful Twiggy haircut got up from the humongous chair on the bima, chanted the blessings and the Haftarah, and gave a forgettable speech. After the service, there was a sumptuous Oneg, (complete with rainbow cake), and a lovely luncheon the next day for the Bat Mitzvah girl and her "teenybopper" friends at the old Pimlico Hotel in Baltimore. That was my Bat Mitzvah. I found joy in being up on the bima, singing in front of the whole congregation, the exciting secular trappings, and in pleasing my parents, for a change. But there was little meaning in the experience for me. It is only in retrospect that I sense this lack. As a teen I did not yet understand that the profound beauty and meaning of our Jewish heritage was mine for the asking.

Flash forward almost three decades when I chose to become a cantor as a second career (actually, being a cantor chose me). The calling to be of service through Jewish music was always just below the surface of my awareness, even as I was learning to do this work: I led Shabbat services in junior congregation, and as a teen I facilitated a Jewish girls' group for Hadassah, taught Hebrew school, and volunteered at a Jewish nursing home doing music therapy with the residents.

As a cantor I began to tutor children for their B'nai Mitzvah. I realized that I had the penchant and the opportunity to help students to create a joyful and meaningful Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience for themselves, their families, and their community. I found that I could "pay it forward" even though my own pocket was empty. I believe the delight of our Jewish heritage can grow "organically" from the relationship between teacher and student. It is through this relationship that we can help children see that they are worthy, that they are loved, and that they belong in a most profound way.

I remember those wrinkled stockings and feeling utterly lost when I was very young. Alice Miller, a Holocaust survivor, and psychologist wrote in *The Untouched Key* that a child can overcome adversity if there is an adult who is "sympathetic witness" to that child's truth. After reading Miller's book, I decided right then and there that I would try to be a sympathetic witness to every student who walked through my door. All children need a sympathetic witness, whether it's for a bad grade on the math test, fear of speaking (never mind singing!) in front of others, or something of a more serious nature.

As a Bnai Mitzvah tutor, I make it a point to help kids learn how to assess their own progress by asking their opinion of how they think they did on a particular recitation. If improvement is needed, the student and I work together to develop steps to reach their goals. I believe this partnership enhances the students' ability and proclivity to solve problems and builds self-esteem based on real achievement.

As a most important postscript, I am deeply indebted to every one of my students. Why? Because by learning Torah, Haftarah, liturgy, and hopefully Jewish values with me, my students allow me to fulfill the mitzvah spelled out in the *Shema/V'Ahavta*, where we are charged with teaching these words to our children; words that embody the central beliefs of our Jewish faith and define who we are.

—Cantor Linda Baer





# Legacy Giving

by Shelley Engel  
Executive Director

It's hard to believe, but the High Holy Days are only a few short months away! This means that most Jewish community organizations are already in the midst of planning. At this time of year, our Jewish community renews its focus on family, passing on traditions, spiritual growth, and self-evaluation.

For more than 50 years, Temple Isaiah has been at the forefront of Jewish life, learning, and worship in Howard County. Our founders recognized the need to create a vibrant, egalitarian Temple in the fast-growing suburbs between Baltimore and Washington, DC. Temple Isaiah is centered around community, spirituality, lifelong learning, social action, and social justice. A Temple committed to the core values of Judaism, nurturing of a love of spirituality, and committed to its Temple family. All of this is what blesses us, not only with the desire to share the joys of one another's *simchas*, but also the need to ease the difficulty of our sorrows.

We have been blessed with a community that supports our Temple through member commitment, capital campaigns, and gifts. That critical help supports our day-to-day operations but does not guarantee our future. How can you leave your imprint, a legacy for the future of TI and the Jewish Community we have all worked so hard to create? We must ensure that Temple Isaiah will continue to provide for our Jewish community so that our children, grandchildren, and generations to follow will also have the privilege to worship, learn, and love at Temple Isaiah. You can make this happen through a Legacy Gift. Consider including Temple Isaiah in your will, as a beneficiary of an insurance policy or retirement fund, or talk with us about how you can ensure the future of Temple Isaiah for your children, your children's children, and beyond. With a little planning, you can make the gift of a lifetime; no gift is too small. If you haven't already done so, you can fill out the Declaration of Intent form and send it to me at the TI office. Any questions, feel free to email me at [Shelley@templeisaiah.org](mailto:Shelley@templeisaiah.org) or call any time. ■

2022:2

## Declaration of Intent

I/We intend to include a legacy gift for Temple Isaiah in my/our estate plan within the next \_\_\_\_\_ months.

I/We have already made a provision in my/our will or estate plan.

Bequest

Life Insurance beneficiary

Retirement plan beneficiary

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

Gift Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_% (optional)

### Privacy Statement

Please choose from the follow two options:

I/We prefer to remain anonymous.

To inspire and encourage others to make commitments to Temple Isaiah for the future, I/We permit my/our name(s) and images (photographs) to be included in materials. My/Our name should appear as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name(s) here

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This declaration of intent is not a legal obligation and may be changed at your discretion.

our clergy, staff, and volunteers to provide a safe, secure, and healthy space for all of us to thrive remained my primary goal. Reacting, responding, and pivoting during the COVID crisis made me even more conscious of this goal. For me, there is no greater pleasure than to see the beginning of our building expansion construction that first began during Donna Kasoff's presidency, matured during Marshall Kohen's, and will be completed during the next President's term.

He used to say, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And, if I am for myself alone, then what am I? And, if not now, when?" (Pirkei Avot 1:14).

These famous words, attributed to Rabbi Hillel, have provided guidance and solace to me over the past two years. They tell me that I should not give up on goals, even when they are unpopular or hard or untimely, but at the same time, to recognize that each member of the Board of Trustees had opinions and positions that needed to be heard and dignified. Many, many times throughout the past two years, I was more wrong than right, but the entire group led the way to a solution. This was the essence of leading the Board, recognizing and trusting in the power of the collective and appreciating that the more voices, the more chances of consensus, and thereby improving the chance of making the right decision.

My final citation is: Ben Bag Bag used to say, "Turn it, and turn it, for everything is in it. Reflect on it and grow old and gray with it. Don't turn from it, for nothing is better than it" (Pirkei Avot 5:22).

Of course, "it" is the Torah. Each year, we read the same Torah portions from the year before. We turn the pages and each time we do so, we are different; I am different. I hear the words in a different way, think of something I had not thought of before, and make new connections to the text based on new experiences. The past two years has been for me a time of learning and learning more, discovering and digging deeper. Our ancient texts are my road map and from that learning, perhaps I have gained some wisdom. But I continue to turn the page.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to our Temple Isaiah family, our lay and professional staff, and Rabbi Axler, who have put your trust in me. I am particularly grateful to all those who have led our congregation over the past 52 years and for those TI volunteers who make our community better in so many ways, from Isaiah's Gifts to Shir Isaiah, from the Care Committee to our 50+2 Anniversary committee, from Knitzvah to connectIon, from Kulanu and TIPS to Sisterhood, Men's Club and Renaissance. All of you make a difference every day! Finally, a special thanks to my wife Cathie. Being the spouse of a Temple President is not so easy, and it is only because of her support and encouragement that I have been able to give my all to Temple Isaiah. ■

*Thank you for the incredible honor you have given me.*

*Gary Perelman*

## Missed an Issue of *The Prophet*?

If you received an issue of *The Prophet* magazine and it somehow ended up in the "circular file" before you got a chance to read it, you can find it on our website on the archives page.

[templeisayah.org/the-prophet/](http://templeisayah.org/the-prophet/)





## Welcome

### New and Returning Members!

Stuart & Judith Cohen

Kevin Brown & Tracy Kogan  
Miles

Richard & Ellen Bacharach

Haley & Shaun Gutstein  
Sawyer

Irene Hantman

Gary & Rabbi Joanne Heiligman

Judith Iliff

David & Lisa Krausz  
Sebastian and Charlotte

Sara Lenas

Greg & Jodi Louer  
Jacob and Jonas

Maxwell & Mary Beth Thanouser  
Grayson and Felicity

Josh & Jessica Tzucker  
Benjamin and Ella

Lynne Warshaw

Wendy Wyman  
Michael, Eric, and Lana

Paul & Marilyn Yentis

Ira & Sheryll Ziporkin

## Who's Who @ Temple Isaiah



**Name:** Rebecca Droller

**Family:** My husband Aaron and two sons Hershel (8) and Milo (6). Hershel is in the 2nd Grade at Flora Singer Elementary School and Milo is in Kindergarten at the Maddux School.

**Hometown:** Alexandria, VA

**Something You Might Not Know About Me:** I earned my MSW from Columbia during my NYC days. I am an actively licensed clinical social worker (LCSW-C) and used to work with Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters in Boston.

**Position at Temple Isaiah:** Cantorial Soloist  
**Worked Here Since:** August 2010

**People Can Come to Me If They Need:** Anything! If I don't know the answer, I will make sure to find you someone who does! Please feel free to let me know if you have song requests for services or life cycle events as well. :)

**Why I love being at TI:** This is the most loving, supportive Jewish community I have known! I have always been so grateful to TI for giving me the honor of helping to lead services and to raise up our prayers in song! It's a dream job and Temple family, and I love it here. ■



Temple Isaiah  
12200 Scaggsville Rd.  
Fulton, MD 20759

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Columbia, MD  
Permit No. 139



## Temple Isaiah Board of Trustees 2021–22

**Gary Perolman**  
*President*

**Alex Hoffman**  
*Executive VP*

**Ken Hankin**  
*Financial VP  
and Treasurer*

**Lisa Welch**  
*Membership VP*

**Michelle Ostroff**  
*Religious VP*

**Vacant**  
*Communications VP*

**Jessica Cade**  
*Secretary*

**Morey Kogul**  
*TIPPS Representative*

**Lesley Farby**  
*Kulanu Representative*

**Joel Recht**  
*Men's Club*

**Beth Reiser**  
*Sisterhood*

**Erik Avant**  
*Trustee*

**Rob Freedman**  
*Trustee*

**Mitch Kavalsky**  
*Trustee*

**Marshall Kohen**  
*Immediate  
Past President*

*Want to know more...*

about our planned building expansion, and how  
**YOU** can be a part of Temple Isaiah's future?

Contact Executive Director Shelley Engel,  
[Shelley@templeisaiah.org](mailto:Shelley@templeisaiah.org) or call 301.317.1101.

