

MARCH 2015 BULLETIN Adar/Nisan 5775



CONGREGATION SHIR AMI

4529 Malabar Ave.
Castro Valley, CA 94546
Email: Info@CongShirAmi.org
Web: www.CongShirAmi.org

Congregation Shir Ami in Castro Valley is an intimate, intergenerational Reform Jewish Community that welcomes interfaith families.
Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism

Event Calendar You can find up-to-the-minute event details at Shir Ami's website, www.congshirami.org

Sun.	Mar.	1	9/10:30	am	Sunday School: Hebrew School, 9-10:30; Religious School, 10:30-12:30
Thu.	Mar.	5	7:00	pm	Board of Directors Meeting at Shir Ami, all are welcome
Fri.	Mar.	6	7:00	pm	Purim Shabbat Service with Rabbi Benj Fried
Sat.	Mar.	7	3:30	pm	Purim Fun and a Movie with Rabbi Benj Fried. Join us for a brief text study about Purim followed by a screening of "For Your Consideration," a 2006 Christopher Guest movie that touches on some themes of the holiday but is mostly fun and humorous.
Sat.	Mar.	7	7:30	pm	Men's Event and Havdallah with Rabbi Benj Fried. The men's group will come together for a Havdallah service followed by a **Super** activity. Benj promises it will be a must attend event!
Sun.	Mar.	8	9:00	am	9:00-10:15 Hebrew School
Sun.	Mar.	8	10:30	am	10:30-12:30 Purim Carnival at Religious School, includes Ice Cream Social and Mitzvah Project
Sun.	Mar.	8	10:30	am	Tot Talk , families with children under 5 years old will join the school Purim Carnival-- FREE
Tue.	Mar.	10	7:00	pm	Shir Ami's 50th Anniversary Celebration Planning Meeting at Shir Ami RSVP to events@congshirami.org
Fri.- Sun	Mar.	13- 15			Shabbaton, Los Gatos. Go to Shabbaton for details and registration.
Sun.	Mar.	15			NO SCHOOL
Wed.	Mar.	18	7:30	pm	Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood, Hosted by Valerie Goldman, Helene Paz and Sharon Golembo. Look for details in your email update.
Fri.	Mar.	20	7:30	pm	Shabbat Service with Rabbi Benj Fried
Sat.	Mar.	21	3:30	pm	Introduction to Leviticus with Rabbi Benj Fried
Sat.	Mar.	21	4:30	pm	Visionary Jewish Leadership with Rabbi Benj Fried
Sun.	Mar.	22	9/10:30	am	Sunday School: Hebrew School, 9-10:30; Religious School, 10:30-12:30
Sat.	Mar.	28	9:00	am	Introduction to Judaism , ongoing class (all are welcome) with Diana Zankowsky
Sun.	Mar.	29			NO SCHOOL
Sat.	Apr.	4	4:30	pm	Community Passover Seder with Rabbi Benj Fried, held at Eden United Church. Reservations required. Email events@CongShirAmi.org

President's Message

Dear Shir Ami Community,

I want to thank Jeremy Templeton for writing a great column for last month's bulletin. I hope you all took a few minutes to read it. I will be having other guest authors once in a while and if you are interested in writing something for this column please let me know.

Most likely, many of you have heard me say that I don't know how to pray. I am always wondering what is going on inside of people's heads during the silent part of the Amidah. And I wonder to whom do you pray if you are not so sure about God!

During a Shabbat service a few months ago, Rabbi Benj read a blessing before the *Kaddish* that struck me as so very beautiful. It was called "A Memorial Prayer" and it is from Naomi Levy's book *Talking to God*. It was beautiful to me because it was written in contemporary language. It was a prayer that I could see myself saying. I decided to buy the book.

Wow! I read the book from cover to cover. Maybe I'm getting it now. Praying, or "talking to God", helps me to become better acquainted with my soul, or whatever you want to call that inner voice. It is helping me to take time to look inside myself to understand things. It is giving me the

desire, strength, and the courage to repair my relationship with my mom.

Naomi Levy says in the book:

Prayer alters us. It awakens us. Our eyes begin to notice beauty where we used to see nothing. Our hearts begin to feel compassion where we used to feel nothing. Our priorities shift. As we talk to God, we receive the encouragement to live up to the potential inside us. Soon we start to see beyond ourselves into the world that is waiting for our help.

So for me, talking to God not only helps me to be more introspective, but it also is helping me to be more compassionate towards my mom. I get it that she did the best she could as a mom just like I am trying to do the best I can.

What does prayer mean to you?

L' Shalom,
Harriet



Harriet Skelly, President
President@CongShirAmi.org

A note from the editor: Gabi and Olivia are teens at Shir Ami who are putting together a cookbook of recipes from congregation members for their confirmation project. Can you help?

Cookbook from the Confirmation Class

We need your help! Please provide us with family-friendly recipes that you love to cook with your kids. Or easy recipes that you just love to cook!

Please send your recipes to us by March 15th. Include a reason why you chose the recipe and what makes it special to you.

You may print it out or send it to our emails.

Gabi Keil: cookbook@congsHIRami.org

Olivia Brackin: cookbook@congsHIRami.org



Rabbinic Interns' Page

Benj Fried
Shir Ami's March Bulletin Article

Hot and Cold Anger

As we enter the month of March, we come upon the closing sections of the book of Exodus. While these chapters are laden with repetitious recitation of law and redundant intricate instructions for the Tabernacle, a lot of really important things in the story of the Israelites happen in these parts of the Torah. One of them is the notorious Golden Calf incident. While Moses is up on the mountain, receiving revelation from God, the people lose heart and faith and call on Aaron to construct a god to exist among them, because they feel abandoned.

After this catastrophe has happened, God is incredibly angry. In fact God is so angry that God tells Moses that God would like to destroy the people and simply exalt Moses. Moses, with some of the greatest *chutzpadik* in the Bible tells God that God cannot do this, for it would give God a horrible reputation. God has to be satisfied with the people as they are. Instead of castigating Moses for his insolence, God actually agrees with Moses and speaks one of the most beautiful lines in the Bible: *Adonai, Adonai El rachum v'chanum erech apayim v'rav chesed v'emet*. "Adonai, Adonai is full of mercy and compassion, slow to anger, full of kindness and truth. Keeping kindness unto thousands; forgiving iniquity, sin, transgression, and pardoning" (Exodus 34:6-7).

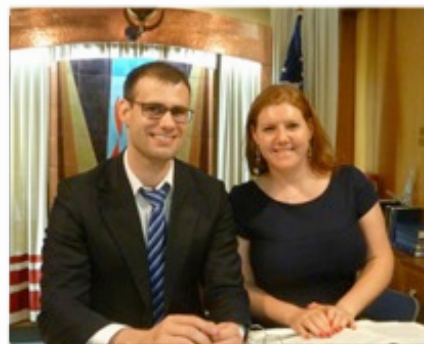
This expression is commonly referred to as the 13 Attributes, as it describes thirteen ways in which God is merciful. God gives this sentence to Moses to keep in his back pocket and use whenever God gets angry. Indeed, Moses has to use it after the incident with the spies in the book of Numbers. It is the secret key that he can use in order to talk God off the ledge and prevent God from doing something that God will regret. It is for this reason that we recite these words in particular on the High Holy Days, the time when we hope to ease God's anger and stop God from punishing us out of hot rage.

The 13 Attributes text provides a fascinating insight not only into the psychology of God (as portrayed in the Torah) but also into our own lives. God gives Moses the key to bring God back from the heat of anger not to make Godself not feel angry, but to change the kind of anger that God feels. It seems that there are two kinds of anger: hot anger and cold anger. Hot anger is short-lived, intense, and has the potential to be incredibly destructive. It is the kind of anger that makes people say things they don't mean, act out of

character, and even commit violence against others. It is the kind of anger that turns peaceful protest into riots and violent looting. In order for ourselves to be the best people we can be, we have to do our best to purge ourselves of hot anger.

Does that mean we eliminate anger from ourselves entirely? I believe not. Hot anger might be destructive, but anger can also do good in the world. Anger is what motivates people who see the problems in the world that is try to create the world that could be. There are plenty of things to be angry about in our world: crushing poverty, environmental destruction, corporate greed: the list is endless. The key to making anger less destructive and more constructive is to do what God asks Moses to do for God: create a way to talk oneself back from hot anger. Turn that hot anger into cold anger—the kind of anger that is useful in changing the world. How does one do this? Oftentimes allowing for time and space from what makes us feel angry can help us gain the perspective we need to not lash out in hot anger. Talking out our anger can also help us to feel heard and less alone. Ultimately, the important thing to realize that in order for us to become our best selves, we should not seek to remove the feeling of anger entirely, but to channel it in the best way we can.

Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried



Rabbinic Interns, 2014-1015

Benj Fried rabbi.benj@congshirami.org
Julie Bressler rabbi.julie@congshirami.org

Adult Ed/Lifelong Learning

Adult Learning w/ Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried, March 7 & 21

Saturday, March 7,

3:30 pm, Purim Fun and a Movie:

Join us for a brief text study about Purim followed by a screening of "For Your Consideration," a 2006 Christopher Guest movie that touches on some themes of the holiday but is mostly fun and humorous.

7:30 pm, Havdallah and a Men's Group Event

The men's group will come together for a Havdallah service followed by a ****Super**** activity. Benj promises it will be a "must attend" event!

Saturday, March 21

3:30 pm, Introduction to Leviticus

Leviticus has a terrible reputation among the Jewish people, but it is essential to who we are as a people. Come study a little bit of text, look at the structure of the book and see how it can be relatable to our lives.

4:30 pm, Visionary Jewish Leadership

This event is open to everyone in our community, but we especially invite members of the Board and anyone who holds leadership positions to this study session. We will look at local Jewish institutions that are doing new and exciting things and learn from their vision and ideas.

Introduction to Judaism

The Introduction to Judaism class met in mid-February. We discussed Purim by hearing a summary of the Megillah, by looking at pictures of beautifully illustrated Megillot and by learning about the customs of the holiday.

Our next meeting is March 28. We will meet at Congregation Shir Ami at 9 am.

We will study the holiday of Passover/Pesach. Please read Chapter 6 as the text for class. Throughout the school year, we meet only once per month, intentionally on a Saturday when the rabbinic interns are not in town. We have one scheduled date left on our calendar, April 11th.

Next month we will also discuss any additional dates to be scheduled for this class. Dates may have to change; check the congregational calendar at www.congshirami.org for the

There is no cost for the class except for the purchase of the required text: "Every Person's Guide to Judaism" by Stephen J. Einstein and Lydia Kukoff. If you haven't yet attended but want to join, please email Diana (religion@congshirami.org) with any questions and to confirm your attendance.

Spring 2015 Book Club Selection: *My Promised Land* by Ari Shavit

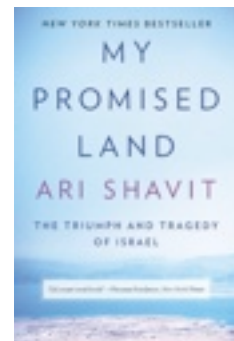
Discussion to be held during Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler's April 24-26 visit

"Spellbinding."—*The Economist*

"One of the most nuanced and challenging books written on Israel in years . . . [The] book's real power: On an issue so prone to polemic, Mr. Shavit offers candor."—*The Wall Street Journal*

"A tour de force."—*Jewish Journal*

"Reads like a love story and a thriller at once."—*Dwight Garner, The New York Times*



Ari Shavit draws on interviews, historical documents, private diaries, and letters, and his own family's story to illuminate the pivotal moments of the Zionist century. He tells a riveting narrative in *My Promised Land* that is larger than the sum of its parts: it is both personal and national, both deeply human and of profound historical dimension.

Details to Follow



School Notes

On February 1st, Diana led the whole school (including parents) through a Tu Bishvat Seder. We sampled seventeen gifts from the trees. Children colored in their hagadahs and read parts out loud. We then socialized during the potluck. Children also planted parsley and made a gift for the birds. They stuffed a toilet paper roll with items birds can use to make nests.

A special thank you to Harriet, Milt and Pat for buying all the food items, Diana for leading two separate seders on Saturday and Sunday, and to Bonnie for organizing and gathering the project supplies.

Purim Mitzvah Project, March 8



Congregation Shir Ami Purim Mitzvah Project

Help Shir Ami to support our community and fulfill a Purim tradition. Our upcoming Mitzvah project will be assembling gift bags of personal care items for those in need.

Items needed: toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, wash cloths, combs, disposable razors, men's socks, soft granola bars, water bottles, lotion, shampoo, conditioner.

Please bring your donations as soon as possible but no later than the morning of Sunday, March 8th.

Children will put bags together at Hebrew & Religious School Purim Carnival on **Sunday, March 8th**.

Tot Talk

Tot Talk is a free program, meeting monthly, for families with children under age 5. Tot Talk is an opportunity for families to enjoy a Jewish connection in a fun atmosphere.

On Sunday, March 8, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm, Tot Talk will join the religious school as participants at the Purim Carnival. There will be booths with fun games and activities, a mitzvah project for people in need (see previous article) and an ice cream social.



School Notes, continued.

Purim Carniaval, March 8

Congregation Shir Ami

Purim Carniaval



Sunday March 8, 2015

10:30 am to 12:30 pm

(Hebrew School 9:00 to 10:15 am)

**Come join the fun with booths and an
ice cream social!**

**Please bring donations
for the Mitzvah Project
and toys your child no
longer wants. We will
have a toy exchange
instead of prizes.**



Community Information

Shir Ami's 50th Anniversary Planning Meeting

Please plan to attend our first planning meeting of Shir Ami's 50th Anniversary celebration. We'd like your input, ideas, suggestions and assistance.

Shir Ami, Tuesday, March 10, 7 pm

We will form committees to make this a meaningful and special celebration.

RSVP to events@congsHIRami.org if you're able to attend. If you are unable to attend, but would like to be part of the planning and on a committee, also RSVP so we can count you in!

Jewish Meditation Group

Next meeting: **Wednesday, March 25, 7:30 pm**

A group for the practice of Jewish meditation and spirituality. Relax, center yourself, and connect with the divine spark within! Held at Congregation Shir Ami the fourth Wednesday of each month. Includes guided and silent meditation, chanting, and sometimes movement. One hour long. No meditation or religious experience necessary. \$5 donation requested of non-members; free to members. Led by Julie Greenfield. Contact Meditation@CongShirAmi.org

Alamo Women's Club: Author's Faire Breakfast

Wednesday March 4 at Round Hill Country Club to raise money for local charities. Please join us for this delightful morning featuring a panel of seven local authors who will discuss their writing journey and do readings from their books. Danville author, Penny Warner will moderate. To make a reservation please contact Phyllis Clark at ClarkPhyllis@Comcast.net or call 925 939-4814.

Toastmasters at Shir Ami

Develop and hone your communication skills at Toastmasters. We meet at Shir Ami on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month from 7:15 to 8:45 pm. Open Houses on Mar. 26th and April 30th. Join us for some fun!

Behind Enemy Lines: An Evening with Mrs. Marthe Cohn, Holocaust Survivor and French Spy

Wednesday, March 18, 7 pm

Venue: Berkeley City Club

Sponsored by Chabad East Bay

[Click here](#) for information or to Purchase Tickets or email yferris@gmail.com

Marthe Cohn was a member of the intelligence service of the French First Army. She traveled throughout the countryside, posing as a young German nurse who was desperately trying to obtain word of a fictional fiancé. Risking death every time she did so, she approached German troops, learned where they were going next and then alerted Allied commanders.

At the age of eighty, Marthe Cohn was awarded France's highest military honor, the Médaille Militaire, Now at the age of 94, she tells the tale of an ordinary human being who, under extraordinary circumstances, became the hero her country needed her to be.

T'ai Chi Chih/Qi Gong

Free introductory class at the Castro Valley Library Tuesday, March 17 from 5-6pm. Then continue with a 12 week class with David Schulberg. (Drop-ins are welcome). For more information [see the flier](#) in this month's bulletin and/or contact David.Schulberg@comcast.net.

Cookbook from the Confirmation Class

The confirmation class is creating a Shir Ami cookbook. We need your help! Please provide us with family-friendly recipes that you love to cook with your kids. Or easy recipes that you just love to cook!

Please send your recipes to us by March 15th. Include a reason why you chose the recipe and what makes it special to you.

You may print it out or send it to our emails.

Gabi Keil: cookbook@congsHIRami.org

Olivia Brackin: cookbook@congsHIRami.org

Community Passover Seder, April 4

Congregation Shir Ami
Community-Wide Passover Seder
Saturday, April 4th, 2015, 4:30 PM

Eden Church, 21455 Birch Street, off Grove Way, Hayward, 94541

Reserve by April 1st to events@CongShirAmi or evite



Shir Ami will be retelling the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery and their redemption.

The Evening Service will feature Passover songs and will be led by Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried

A festive kosher-style Holiday meal will be served. Vegetarian option available, please indicate your choice on your RSVP.

Pre-event Charge: Shir Ami Members \$25; Member Children (12 and under) Free
Adult Non-Members \$35; Non-member children (age 12 and under) \$10
Family tables for 8 are available

No charge to military personnel. No Shir Ami member will be turned away because of inability to pay. Additional contributions to defray costs are appreciated.

Charges at the Door: Shir Ami members: \$30; Non-Members: \$40

Seating is limited ~ please return the form below with your check by April 1st

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

No. _____ adult Shir Ami members..... @ \$25 each = \$ _____

No. _____ Shir Ami Member Children age 12 and under (free)

No. _____ adult non-Shir Ami members @ \$35 each = \$ _____

No. _____ non-member children age 12 & under..... @ \$10 each = \$ _____

Additional donation to help defray costs (Thank you!)..... = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Your Reservation is made by check, payable to Congregation Shir Ami, mailed to:

Congregation Shir Ami

ATTN: Community Passover Seder

4529 Malabar Ave, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Yahrzeits

March 2015 Yahrzeit List (as of 2/22/15)

March 6, 2015

Bobbie Clark,	sister of Marci Loss
Esther Cooper,	aunt of Ann Blank
Harold Dombrower	father of Jan Dombrower
Clara Finlay,	mother of Todd Finlay
Dalton Gautreaux,	uncle of Toni Schulberg,
Miriam Levine,	mother of Hillie Levine
Florence Lewis,	mother of Peter Lewis
Elsie Maas,	grandmother of Toni Schulberg
Joslyn Miner,	former member of Shir Ami, and wife of Syd Miner, past president of Shir Ami
Ingrid Weinberg,	long time founding member of Shir Ami
Matthew Zankowsky,	father of Fred Zankowsky

March 20, 2015

Shirley Cooperman,	cousin of Melanie Einbund
Faye Felgoise,	aunt of Melanie Einbund
James Finlay,	father of Todd Finlay
Matt Ganz,	long-time active member and former president of Shir Ami, and husband of Judy Ganz
May Ganz,	former member and mother-in-law of Judy Ganz
Sam Ganz,	former member and father-in-law of Judy Ganz
Jean Skelly,	mother of Bruce Skelly
Stella Small,	grandmother of Toni Schulberg
Sylvia Weingarton,	aunt of Stan Heimowitz
Edna Vanous,	long time active member of Shir Ami

Kaddish List (those who have died during the past 11 months)

Beatrice Dombrower,	mother of Jan Dombrower
Lorraine Golembo,	step-mother of Sharon Golembo
Harry Yoseph Mitchell,	brother of Helen Markus

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh

UPCOMING ROSH CHODESH-

Wednesday, March 18, at 7:30

- To be hosted by Valerie Goldman, Helene Paz and Sharon Golembo, we will bring in the month of Nisan
- Check your email for more information as we near the 18th



For more information on
Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh,
contact Jan Dombrower
Sisterhood@CongShirAmi.org

ROSH CHODESH RETREAT RECAP

Our 19th Annual Sisterhood Retreat weekend was held February 20-22 at the beautiful San Damiano Retreat Center.

The retreat theme, *Reflect and Connect*, was experienced throughout the weekend in many different ways. The 25 participants embraced the love, thoughtfulness and joy of both planned and unplanned activities. The joy peaked as we rolled with laughter during Saturday evening's skit. Soon to follow were tears of compassion as our sister, Jan Dombrower, received unexpected news of the death of her mother.

We are privileged to be part of this extraordinary community of loving, supportive women who know the true meaning of *reflect and connect*.

Donations: October 2014 through January 2015

October, 2014

David Moll & Mary Upp	High Holidays
Norma O'Brien	High Holidays
Schulberg Family	Yizkor for High Holidays
Druker Family	Yizkor for High Holidays
Cary Nasatir	Yizkor for High Holidays
Mark Frank Lewis	Yizkor for High Holidays
Raquel Sapper	Yizkor for High Holidays
M.Lipsett & D. Levine	In memory of Rose Levine
Rosenthal/Carmack Family	Acknowledgement of Death

November, 2014

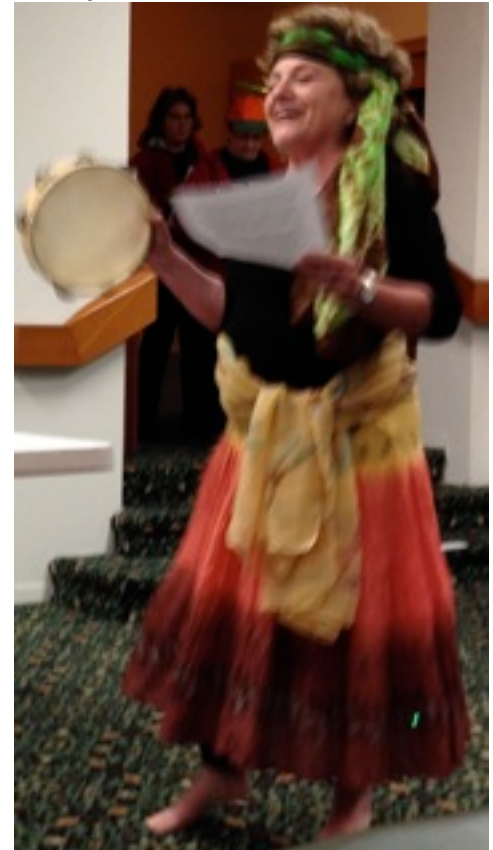
Melanie and Nate Einbund	Yahrzeit
Druker Family	Yahrzeit

December, 2014

Marion Kramer	Memory of Jan Okoniewski
Tyler Dean	Inmemory of Larry Dean
Marlene Balmforth	Honoring parents, Ann & Sam Blank
Sharon Golembo	Yahrzeit
Barbara Finkle	Donation

January, 2015

Sisterhood	In memory of Sharon Golembo's step-mother, Lorraine Golembo
Sisterhood	In memory of Harry Yoseph Mitchell, brother of Helen Markus
Jan Dombrower	Yahrzeit of Harold Dombrower and Syd Kramer



An Introduction to T'ai Chi Chih/Qi Gong



Tuesday, March 17, 2015
5 pm to 6 pm

Castro Valley Library
3600 Norbridge Avenue
Castro Valley, CA 94546

Join us for an introduction to T'ai Chi Chih taught by David Schulberg, an accredited instructor who has taught at adult schools in Castro Valley, San Lorenzo, and Hayward.

T'ai Chi Chih is based on the ancient Chinese principles of Qi Gong, which aligns and coordinates breath and body movements to access the energy within. Rather than a martial art, it is an internally focused movement and meditation exercise that does not require a particular level of fitness to participate. You can even do T'ai Chi Chih seated.

This free sample class is open to teens, adults, and seniors.

Following this free class, I will be teaching a 12 week series at Shir Ami starting on Tuesday March 24th from 5 to 6:30. The cost will be \$5 per class for Shir Ami members & \$10 per class for non-Shir Ami members.

(david.schulberg@comcast.net)