Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Parashat Tzav
March 28, 2026 *** 10 Nisan, 5786

Tzav in a Nutshell
https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2858/jewish/Tzav-in-a-Nutshell.htm

The name of the Parshah, “Tzav,” means “command” and it is found in Leviticus 6:2.

G-d instructs Moses to command Aaron and his sons regarding their duties and rights as kohanim (“priests”) who offer the korbanot (animal and meal offerings) in the Sanctuary.

The fire on the altar must be kept burning at all times. In it are burned the wholly consumed ascending offering; veins of fat from the peace, sin and guilt offerings; and the “handful” separated from the meal offering.

The kohanim eat the meat of the sin and guilt offerings, and the remainder of the meal offering. The peace offering is eaten by the one who brought it, except for specified portions given to the kohen. The holy meat of the offerings must be eaten by ritually pure persons, in their designated holy place and within their specified time.

Aaron and his sons remain within the Sanctuary compound for seven days, during which Moses initiates them into the priesthood.

Shabbat Hagadol Haftarah in a Nutshell: Malachi 3:4-24
https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/6412134/jewish/Shabbat-Hagadol-Haftorah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

The haftarah begins with the word ve'arvah ("and it will be pleasant"), as the prophet foretells the time when G-d will take delight in the offerings of the Jewish people.

At that time (the era of Moshiach), there will also be swift judgment meted out against those who cheat or otherwise oppress the helpless.

G-d then asks Israel to bring their tithes to the Holy Temple, famously inviting them to test Him out, to bring their tithes and see how it will cause many blessings to shower down upon them.

This section is the concluding portion of the entire corpus of Prophets, and so Malachi issues, in G-d's name, a ringing call to "remember the Torah of Moshe My servant" even when there will be no prophets to reinforce its messages. But he then concludes by foretelling the day when prophecy will return—in the person of Elijah the Prophet, who will arrive to herald the Redemption and inspire humanity to return to G-d. May it happen soon!

Food For Thought

Violence and the Sacred by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l 5767
https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/tzav/violence-and-the-sacred/

Why sacrifices? To be sure, they have not been part of the life of Judaism since the destruction of the Second Temple, almost two thousand years ago. But why, if they are a means to an end, did God choose this end? This is, of course, one of the deepest questions in Judaism, and there are many answers. Here I want to explore just one, first given by the early fifteenth-century Jewish thinker, Rabbi Joseph Albo, in

his Sefer Halkkarim.

Albo's theory took as its starting point not sacrifices but two other questions. The first: Why after the Flood did God permit human beings to eat meat? (Gen. 9:3–5). Initially, neither human beings nor animals had been meat-eaters (Gen. 1:29–30). What caused God to, as it were, change His mind? The second: What was wrong with the first act of sacrifice, Cain's offering of "some of the fruits of the soil" (Gen. 4:3–5)? God's rejection of that offering led directly to the first murder, when Cain killed Abel. What was at stake in the difference between the offerings Cain and Abel each brought to God?

Albo believed that killing animals for food is inherently wrong. It involves taking the life of a sentient being to satisfy our needs. Cain also knew this to be true. He believed there was a strong kinship between humans and other animals. That is why he offered not an animal sacrifice, but a vegetable one. His error, according to Albo, is that he should have brought fruit, not vegetables – the highest, not the lowest, of non-meat produce. Abel, by contrast, believed that there was a qualitative difference between people and animals. Had God not told the first humans: "Rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28)? That is why Abel brought an animal sacrifice.

Once Cain saw that Abel's sacrifice had been accepted while his own was not, he reasoned thus: if God, who forbids us to kill animals for food, permits and even favours killing an animal as a sacrifice, and if, as Cain believed, there is no ultimate difference between human beings and animals, then I shall offer the highest living being as a sacrifice to God, namely my brother Abel. According to this reasoning, says

Rabbi Albo, Cain killed Abel as a human sacrifice.

That is why God permitted meat-eating after the Flood. Before the Flood, the world had been "filled with violence." Perhaps violence is an inherent part of human nature. If humanity were to be allowed to exist at all, God would have to lower His demands. Let humans kill animals, He said, rather than killing human beings – the one form of life that is not only God's creation but also in God's image. Hence the otherwise almost unintelligible sequence of verses after Noah and his family emerge on dry land:

> Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings upon it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart, "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood…" Gen. 8:20–21

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them…

> Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything…
>
> Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made humanity.
>
> Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; I allow them all to you, like green plants. But… one who sheds the blood of man – by man shall his blood be shed, for in God's image man was made. Gen. 9:3–6

According to Albo, the logic of the passage is clear. Noah

offers an animal sacrifice in thanksgiving for having survived the Flood. God sees that human beings need this way of expressing themselves. They are genetically predisposed to violence ("every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood"). If society is to survive, humans will need to be able to direct their violence towards non-human animals, whether as food or sacrificial offerings. The crucial line to be drawn is between human and non-human. The permission to kill animals is accompanied by an absolute prohibition against killing human beings, "for in the image of God has God made humanity."

It is not that God approves of killing animals, whether for sacrifice or food, but that to forbid this to human beings, given their genetic predisposition to bloodshed, is utopian. It is not for now but for the end of days. Until then, the least bad solution is to let people kill animals rather than murder their fellow humans. Animal sacrifices are a concession to human nature.[1] Sacrifices are a substitute for violence directed against humankind.

The contemporary thinker who has done most to revive this understanding is French-American literary critic and philosophical anthropologist René Girard, in such books as Violence and the Sacred, The Scapegoat, and Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World. The common denominator in sacrifices, he argues, is:

…internal violence – all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community that the sacrifices are designed to suppress. The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric. Everything else derives from that.[2]

The worst form of violence within and between societies is vengeance, "an interminable, infinitely repetitive process." This

is in line with Hillel's saying, on seeing a human skull floating on water:

> "Because you drowned others, they drowned you, and those who drowned you will in the end themselves be drowned." Mishnah Avot 2:7

There is no natural end to the cycle of retaliation and revenge. The Montagues keep killing and being killed by the Capulets. So do the Tattaglias and the Corleones, and the other feuding groups in fiction and history. It is a destructive cycle that has devastated whole communities. According to Girard, this was the problem that religious ritual was developed to resolve. The primary religious act, he says, is the sacrifice, and the primary sacrifice is the scapegoat. If tribes A and B, who have been fighting, can sacrifice a member of tribe C, then both will have sated their desire for bloodshed without inviting revenge, especially if tribe C is in no position to retaliate. Sacrifices divert the destructive energy of violent reciprocity.

Why then, if violence is embedded in human nature, are sacrifices a feature of ancient rather than modern societies? Because, argues Girard, there is another and more effective way of ending vengeance:

> Vengeance is a vicious circle whose effect on primitive societies can only be surmised. For us the circle has been broken. We owe our good fortune to one of our social institutions above all: our judicial system, which serves to deflect the menace of vengeance. The system does not suppress vengeance; rather, it effectively limits itself to a single act of reprisal, enacted by a sovereign authority specialising in this particular function. The decisions of the judiciary are invariably presented as the final word on vengeance.[3]

Girard's terminology here is not one to which we can subscribe. Justice is not vengeance. Retribution is not revenge. Revenge is inherently I-Thou, or We-Them. It is personal. Retribution is impersonal. It is no longer the Montagues versus the Capulets, but both under the impartial judgement of the law. But Girard's substantive point is correct and essential. The only effective antidote to violence is the rule of law.

Girard's theory confirms the view of Albo. Sacrifice (as with meat-eating) entered Judaism as a substitute for violence. It also helps us understand the profound insight of the Prophets that sacrifices are not ends in themselves, but part of the Torah's programme to create a world redeemed from the otherwise interminable cycle of revenge. The other part of that programme, and God's greatest desire, is a world governed by justice. That, we recall, was His first charge to Abraham, to "instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just" (Gen. 18:19).

Have we therefore moved beyond that stage in human history in which animal sacrifices have a point? Has justice become a powerful enough reality that we no longer need religious rituals to divert the violence between human beings? Sadly, the answer is no. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the Cold War, led some thinkers to argue that we had reached "the end of history." There would be no more ideologically driven wars. Instead, the world would turn to the market economy and liberal democracy.[4]

The reality was radically different. There were waves of ethnic conflict and violence in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, and Rwanda, followed by even bloodier conflicts throughout the

Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Asia. In his book The Warrior's Honour, Michael Ignatieff offered the following explanation of why this happened:

> The chief moral obstacle in the path of reconciliation is the desire for revenge. Now, revenge is commonly regarded as a low and unworthy emotion, and because it is regarded as such, its deep moral hold on people is rarely understood. But revenge – morally considered – is a desire to keep faith with the dead, to honour their memory by taking up their cause where they left off. Revenge keeps faith between generations…
>
> This cycle of intergenerational recrimination has no logical end... But it is the very impossibility of intergenerational vengeance that locks communities into the compulsion to repeat… Reconciliation has no chance against vengeance unless it respects the emotions that sustain vengeance, unless it can replace the respect entailed in vengeance with rituals in which communities once at war learn to mourn their dead together.

Michael Ignatieff, The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience (Toronto: Penguin, 2006), pp. 188–190.
Far from speaking to an age long gone and forgotten, the laws of sacrifice tell us three things as important now as then: First, violence is still part of human nature, never more dangerous than when combined with an ethic of revenge. Second, rather than denying its existence, we must find ways of redirecting it so that it does not claim yet more human sacrifices. Third, the only ultimate alternative to sacrifices, animal or human, is the one first propounded millennia ago by the Prophets of ancient Israel, few more powerfully than Amos:

> Even though you bring Me burnt offerings and offerings of grain,
> I will not accept them…
> But let justice roll down like a river,
> And righteousness like a never-failing stream. Amos 5:23–24

[1] On why God never chooses to change human nature, see Rambam, The Guide for the Perplexed, III:32. [2] Rene Girard, Violence and the Sacred (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 8. [3] Ibid., p. 15. [4] Francis Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man (New York: Free Press, 1992).

Elijah-and Santa Claus?! - Shabbat Hagadol by Robert Harris
https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/elijah-and-santa-claus/

I am certain that I am not the first to point out the similarities between the figures of Elijah the Prophet and Santa Claus…at least in the way those figures have been popularly imagined. Put simply, folklore posits that each of these figures visits individual homes on a religious holiday (Elijah—that old shikkur!—sneaks in to drink wine; Santa, nebekh, has to make do with milk and cookies!). Santa comes in through the roof, eats, distributes his presents, and then leaves; Elijah, while he leaves no presents, does leave his "presence" (!). The question I want to raise here: With no obvious role in the biblical story of the Exodus, how does Elijah manage to get in figuratively, that is—in our Passover observance?

There are numerous points of entry, including the haftarah for this week, which points to the interrelationship between Passover itself and Shabbat Hagadol. Without making a case for precedents and influences, let us note that this haftarah (Malachi 3:4–24) concludes with an explicit reference to Elijah

(vv. 23–24): “Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the LORD. He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents…” Now, I think that reconciling parents and children is a wonderful task, but that is a subject we shall leave for another day. In rabbinic interpretation, one of Elijah’s responsibilities was held to be in reconciling halachic disputes that occurred in antiquity and concerning which no resolution was ever recorded. It is one such unresolved dispute that provides us with a wonderful point of entry for Elijah into our Passover experience and his mysterious cup of wine

Some modern scholars have taken a kind of anthropological approach to note Elijah’s presence in our liturgies at particular “liminal moments.”[i] Taken from the Latin limen, or “threshold,” the term was developed by 19th and early 20th century anthropologists, such as Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, to refer to rites of passage or moments of transition that were felt to be dangerous. Jewish liturgies created for such moments thus invoked Elijah as a kind of “heavenly protector” to help the participant transition from the “before” to the “after.” A brit milah is one such type of moment (potential danger to the newborn son); Motzei Shabbat is another one (one Jewish belief holds that God takes away at the end of Shabbat, the “second soul” with which God has endowed us at the onset of Shabbat, and the fear is that God will accidentally take away our primary soul, as well).

In this context we must recognize that Passover was often an especially dangerous time for Jews. It takes place during the same season as the one in which Christians mark the crucifixion and was therefore also a time at which—until quite recently— that Christian tradition charged ancient Jews. Christians would take out the responsibility for this upon

contemporary Jews living in their midst. Pogroms would often break out during Passover/Christian Holy Week. And so, during the seder, when Jews would go see if Christians were in the vicinity, they invoked Elijah as a protector at that time, as well. Some liturgies incorporate the singing of Eliyahu ha-Navi at this time; others incorporate the tradition of reciting verses such as שְׁפֹךְ חֲמָתְךָ אֶל הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְדָעוּךָ וְעַל מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרָאוּ, "Pour out Your fury on the nations that do not know You, upon the kingdoms that do not invoke Your name" (Psalm 79:6), which is thus to be understood as what might be recited "when the coast was clear."

Returning to idea of Elijah as a mediator, we need to look at a central passage concerning God's promises to the Israelite nation while it was still suffering under Egyptian bondage:

> Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am the LORD. I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God. And you shall know that I, the LORD, am your God who freed you from the labors of the Egyptians (Exodus 6:6-7).

In various midrashim (e.g., Talmud Yerushalmi Pesahim 10:1), the sages consider this passage to be the passage of the arba leshonot ge'ulah, "four expressions of redemption," because it was felt that by means of the four verbs contained in this passage, God had promised redemption Israel four times. Now, you may recall that the Mishnah (Pesahim 10:1) ruled that a person should drink no fewer than four cups of wine during the seder (וְלֹא יִפְחֲתוּ לוֹ מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל יַיִן). Moreover, according to some authorities, this requirement was based on

the arba leshonot ge'ulah passage from the Book of Exodus. However, other Sages pointed to the verse that immediately follows this passage (Exodus 6:8) and which contains an additional "expression of redemption," והבאתי: "I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession, I the LORD." According to the logic of these sages, even though God has not yet brought the entire Jewish people into the Land, none should drink fewer than FIVE cups of wine at the seder to commemorate what were, in effect, not four but five expressions of redemption!

Now, if one thinks about a dispute such as this one, with one rabbinic position holding that one should drink no fewer than four cups, and the other position holding that one should drink no fewer than five cups, one can see that, despite the dispute, both sides agree that four cups should be drunk. And that becomes the halacha: we drink four cups of wine—and pour the fifth, but do not drink. And that fifth cup becomes the "Cup of Elijah," not because Elijah comes to each celebrating Jewish home and drinks some wine from "his" cup, but because of the role the figure of Elijah plays, according to rabbinic lore, when two groups of opposing rabbis cannot agree on what the halacha is, but know they must establish a rule to follow. And that role is established by a midrash on the verse from Malachi that we read as part of the haftorah for Shabbat Hagadol, and that I cited earlier: "Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the LORD. He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents…" (Mal. 3:23–24). In this sense, the reconciliation that Elijah is to bring about is not between literal family members, but members of the broader rabbinic family. Moreover, even the Aramaic word that is found

in the Talmud to mark such irreconcilable disputes (תיקו literally, “let it—the dispute—stand”) was taken to be an acronym for Malachi’s promise of a deliverance that would be heralded by the Prophet Elijah: תשבי יתרץ קושיות ובעיות tishbi yitaretz qushiyot u-va’ayot, “Elijah will resolve difficulties and problems.”

And now that we have traced the route through which Elijah visits our seder, I will close this essay not with additional analysis, but with a prayer: May we soon come to live in a world that merits Elijah’s arrival, a world that is marked not by strife but by amity. And may we welcome Elijah into our seder both with honest and ritualized memory of terrible experiences the Jewish people have endured, but also with the hope that one day—soon, we hope!—we may experience peace and reconciliation. *(Robert Harris is Professor of Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages at JTS)*

[i] See Lawrence A. Hoffman, Beyond the Text: a Holistic Approach to Liturgy (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 20–45 (for the role of Elijah, see pp. 24–27; on liminality, see pp. 42–43).

Shabbat Hagadol 5786 by Rabbi Rebecca Blady
https://yeshivatmaharat.org/shabbat-hagadol-5786/

This Shabbat, consider following the guidance of the RaM”A, the great Ashkenazi halachic commentator. Before Pesach, there is a custom to recite, at Shabbat mincha time, a segment of the Haggadah: from the beginning of the portion “Avadim Hayinu”—we were slaves—until “lekhaper al kol avonotenu”—to forgive all of our sins.

Recently, I reread some of this text with a group of our Hillel

Germany student leaders in the city of Leipzig. The context for our conversation was about how telling our own stories can be a valuable way to establish oneself as a leader, gather empathy and support, and bring people toward a new vision. Many of our students don't typically tell their stories in public, let alone reveal their Jewish identity at all while on campus or in their place of work. Personal storytelling, an act that can feel so intuitively baked into one of the most important and widely practiced Jewish rituals of the year, is in fact an extremely vulnerable and countercultural proposition for our students here in Germany.

The lines we focused on:

> וַאֲפִילוּ כֻּלָּנוּ חֲכָמִים כֻּלָּנוּ נְבוֹנִים כֻּלָּנוּ זְקֵנִים כֻּלָּנוּ יוֹדְעִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה
>
> מִצְוָה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם
>
> וְכָל הַמַּרְבֶּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הֲרֵי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח
>
> And even were we all wise, all intelligent, all aged and all knowledgeable in the Torah,
>
> still the command would be upon us to tell of the coming out of Egypt;
>
> and the more one tells of the coming out of Egypt, the more admirable it is.

Together with that, we studied an excerpt of the Me'or Einayim, a major Chasidic work composed of teachings by the 18th century Ukrainian Rebbe Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl. The Chernobyler Rebbe opens the excerpt with a rhetorical question: Why is the Torah full of stories? If the purpose of the Torah is to tell us Jews how to live and what to do, why bother with such narratives as the creation of the world, the family sagas of our matriarchs and patriarchs, the

plagues, and the dramatic exit from Egypt? All of that is nice, but it's not the clear instructions we'd need, theoretically, for our day-to-day lives.

In other words: What is the value of storytelling?

The Chernobyler Rebbe answers his own question:

It is certainly impossible to always speak of Torah, and one must [also] speak of regular things… And there are some souls that can be more elevated with "regular talk" than with Torah study. And this is the idea of yetziyat mitzrayim (the exodus from Egypt). It is from the expression, meitzar yam (the border of the sea)—that is to say that it is close to the shore of the sea of true wisdom. Therefore, the commandment to always talk about yetziyat mitzrayim…is not only on Passover, but even all the time.

The message: Our stories—the ones we inherit and the ones we live today—contain as much wisdom, value, and meaning as the laws that guide our daily lives. We must always engage in storytelling, even beyond the tale of the Exodus. As has been known for generations—from the writers of the Midrash, to Chasidic storytellers, to parents putting their children to bed each night—stories have the potential to move us more profoundly, perhaps more than a list of laws ever could.

So what are we to do with this minhag, this Shabbat, at a time when telling our stories seems to require more courage and emotional preparedness than we've grown used to? What are we to do at a time that seems to be evermore defined by ongoing war, violence against Jewish institutions, and perpetual uncertainty as to the security of Jews in Israel and around the world? Do we tell our stories, even as they take on a darker tone? Or do we remain quiet, seeking to spare our families, our peers and ourselves the discomfort of hearing

something unpleasant?

If the answer of the RaM"A is not enough, take the language of the Mishna, brought down in the Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 116a, which assigns us not only the task of storytelling during Leil haSeder but also suggests a a technique for doing so: "matchil big'nut um'sayem b'shevach—We begin with disgrace and conclude with glory.

Perhaps it's needless to say, but the long arc of Jewish history makes no assumption that our stories will radiate positivity. In every generation, storytelling is not just a ritual reserved for this Shabbat and for Leil haSeder next week: It's also an expression of hope. The Torah is full of stories because these are what the Jewish people turn to in times of uncertainty; our stories provide as many answers about how to live as do the generations of our halachic texts. Our esteemed teachers at Yeshivat Maharat know this well: As poskot halacha in training, we learn to listen to the story of the questioner in full, as every answer we give depends not only on the letter of the law as written but also on the specific situation, the specific time, and the specific need we are sought to address. The halachic process needs both. We need both; the stories of our past are the guides to our future.

And so this Shabbat, I invite you to begin with disgrace and conclude with glory, and even if there's little glory to be found in the story you're telling now, to see the very act of telling as an expression of hope for those who are listening.

(Rabbi Rebecca Blady is the Executive Director of Hillel Deutschland and co-founder of Base Berlin. She founded Ze Kollel, a communal learning space for in-depth, committed Jewish learning and an incubator for developing new talent and creative Europe-based teachers.)

Pesach: What Could Be So Important About Salt?

By Cantor Sierra Fox

https://truah.org/resource-types/moral-torah/

I recently asked a group of religious school students what their favorite Passover food was. Unsurprisingly, many answered with the usual suspects: matzah ball soup, chocolate-covered matzah, and so on. But a few shouted out a surprising answer: parsley dipped in salt water.

While perhaps an odd choice for a favorite Passover food, salt is indeed a culinary delight and one that receives plenty of attention in our Torah and its commentaries. Besides its place of honor on our seder table, it is a critical element of the offerings we are commanded to make.

In Leviticus 2:13, regarding the offerings brought to G-d, we read: “You shall salt your every offering of grain with salt; you shall not omit from your grain offering the salt of your covenant with G-d; with all your offerings you must offer salt.”

In this single verse, salt is mentioned four times. What could be so important about salt? The sages come up with a variety of options. Rashi tells us that on the second day of creation, G-d intended to separate the upper and lower waters, those of the heavens and the seas. Peeved, perhaps, that they were not receiving the elevated status of the upper waters, the oceans pushed back on this separation, until G-d offered the promise that they would be honored by being offered on the altar as salt and water alike. Chizkuni suggests that while grain and meat will decay, the mineral of salt endures. Tur HaAroch says the salting of the offerings is something done by “ordinary” Israelites, rather than priests, giving them some agency and connection. Ibn Ezra says it’s simply rude to offer

unsalted food as offerings: “G-d caused you to enter the covenant and made you swear that you would not offer anything which is unsalted and inedible, for that is an insult.” There’s just no excuse for bland food!

And, as we gather our materials for our Passover seders, I find myself thinking especially about the bowl of salt water, the symbol of our ancestor’s tears.

We may find ourselves inundated with a sea of sadness this year. Even as we celebrate our freedom from Egypt, we may find ourselves captive in a narrow space of hopelessness, feeling unable to escape the bonds of helplessness in the face of violence and despair. Especially as we remember our own ancestors’ journey out of Egypt, and our treatment as immigrants in that land, it feels critical to speak out for those who are now sojourners in our own lands. With ICE continuing to kidnap our immigrant neighbors, too many of whom are dying in imprisonment, we weep with their families and for the complicity of our leaders in these horrific acts of violence and discrimination.

Our immigrant families are as crucial to our communities as salt is to our offerings. They are the bedrock upon which our society runs, and they are our neighbors, whom we are commanded to love like ourselves. We may feel powerless to fight the fascist system that puts them at such risk, but like the Tur HaAroch’s commentary on salt suggests, there are always things that the “ordinary” people can do. We can push back with our money, boycotting institutions that support ICE, like Target and Signature Aviation. We can call our representatives to demand greater restrictions, reforms, or abolition of ICE. We can mobilize our local labor unions to include common good demands for immigrant protections in their collective

bargaining. We can show up for protests, provide services and food for those who feel unsafe leaving their homes, and accompany our immigrant neighbors to court visits.

In salt, we find flavor, the depth of the oceans, and deliciousness… but also tears, sadness, and pain. When we dip our spring vegetables in salt water this year, may we remember the tears of our broad, diverse communities in addition to those of our ancestors. And at the same time, may we be inspired by salt to take upon ourselves the task of protecting the immigrants in our midst. May this be the lasting element of our sacrifices: that we stood up for those in need. Ken y'hi ratzon; may it be so.

(Cantor Sierra Fox (she/her) is proud to serve as the cantor at the historic Congregation Mishkan Israel, known for its history of social justice, in Hamden, CT.)

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Yahrtzeits

Ron Weiss remembers his father Alfred Weiss on Sat. Mar. 28th
Mattye Gandel remembers her father H. Jay Messeloff on Wed. Apr. 1
Amy Cooper remembers her husband David Cooper on Fri. Apr. 3
Rebecca Cooper remembers her father David Cooper on Fri. Apr. 3