



Agudas Achim Congregation

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July 2022 / Tammuz-Av 5782

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

Sometimes even the Rabbi doesn't know what to say.

Those who know me a little better personally will know that I usually have a way of finding the words. Rabbis are schmoozers; it's in our proverbial DNA. We tease and weave threads of meaning out of the most frayed of circumstances. But at other times, I am reminded of the words of the Psalmist: '*Lecha dumya tehilah*' - 'to You, silence is praise' (Ps. 65:1).

It is hard to find the words right now; even harder to find the right words. I dare speak for many of us that we find ourselves overwhelmed, devastated and enraged by the recent loss of Roe v. Wade. We can all think deeply about abortion; have complex, contradictory, nuanced thoughts on what constitutes life, personhood and sanctity. Still, even in its usual pluriformity, Jewish Law is clear: a woman's or pregnant person's access to safe and legal pregnancy termination is a religious requirement as per Halakhah (Jewish Law). Our religious freedom as a Jewish community is violated by the loss of Roe v. Wade.

I have written, preached and podcasted extensively on reproductive justice and you can find those sermons on the synagogue website. Right now, I do

not have more ponderings or opinions to add. I just want to sit with you, our congregation, a center of Jewish life and values in Iowa, and meet you in your shock, sadness, fear and anger. I want to be with you in this moment, as your rabbi, but also as a mother and wife, whose very bodily autonomy has also been violated by this ruling. The dust has not yet settled on this calamity; it is too early to tell what the complex consequences might be, but it is within reason to be deeply concerned for the state and soul of our country.

'Shomea tefilah odecha kol basar yavo'u' – the Psalm follows on in verse 2. 'All flesh [as in

humanity] comes to You in prayer.' This verse is so poignant to our present moment. Do we read it prescriptively or descriptively? If the first, religion becomes triumphalist and coercive, God forbid. This is the relentless march of totalitarian fundamentalisms that we are seeing rise in this country and around the world. Must *all* humanity come to God in prayer?

Really? Isn't that the kind of coercion that Jews have been resisting for hundreds of years, if not millennia?

Even with doubt and scepticism, we can engage in sacred acts of connection that feel deep and real without having to abdicate the critical mind. Our Judaism is what can heal; we all possess the threads that can weave a new and kinder story for this country.

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FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

However, if we read the verse descriptively, the picture shifts, like a beautiful kaleidoscope. It's not about 'what should be' or 'what is normative', but rather a description of a deep inner life; a gentle universalism that transcends artificial divisions of ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, orientation or race. It shifts to a focus of accessibility and inclusivity: perhaps the Divine truly manifests Herself when any human being, at their own free will, can approach the Divine on our own terms. That is an entirely different religious project.

No brief Bulletin article can unpack the complexity and woe of our current moment. But, we can speak through metaphors so that each of us can find our own interpretation and weave our own threads of meaning. What we are seeing today is a clash of these two different worldviews; of coercion and superiority versus universalism and inclusivity. Perhaps to some of us (or even many of us!), religion is the cause of so much hurt. But I also know religion can be the source of so much healing.

We must trust that the sacred project of Judaism and of local Jewish community is a life-giving one, worth investing in. With every good local cause we support, the food bank we donate to, every mitzvah we perform, we are affirming life and dignity. When we march in Pride as we have done for the last number of years, we are proclaiming unto the world that – yes! You are welcome here and beloved, holy and safe, no matter your gender identity or preference. When we create moments of Jewish joy and connection for grownups and youth, like last Shavu'ot in the Park, we signal that we are relevant and resilient and we have something unique to offer. When we build our minyan and sing together and worship together, we teach that even with doubt and scepticism, we can engage in sacred acts of connection that feel deep and real without having to abdicate the critical mind. Our Judaism is what can heal; we all possess

the threads that can weave a new and kinder story for this country.

Verse 8 of the same Psalm presents us with another poignant image: '*Mashbiach she'on yamim, she'on galeihem*' – 'who stills the raging seas, the raging waves...'

We find the raging seas all around us. The deep, ancestral wisdom of our Judaism teaches us to both agitate and reflect at once. We are in a liminal space, awash with our emotions, balancing on the edge of a knife. We can pause and breathe and meditate (or pray) for the right words to be found amidst the silence. We can seek inspiration in mutual aid, in tradition, in community and in text to help us figure out next steps. We have communal structures and organizations, whether it is T'ruah, the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights or the Religious Action Center or the National Council of Jewish Women or Rabbis for Reproductive Justice (of which I am a signatory) to help us fight the good fight. But it is also good to remind ourselves that in the silence; in the pause, there is wisdom and healing before we seek out those next steps. Take good care of yourself; find ways to recharge yourself spiritually and morally. Light Shabbat candles. Go for a walk with a friend. Celebrate nature. Pray, read, journal, stretch, touch and love. To live virtuously and vibrantly is the best form of resistance.

As often attributed to Philo of Alexandria: 'be kind, for everyone is fighting a hard battle.' We will overcome, step by step, as our people always have—it is the genius of the Jewish experience.

Wishing you a summer of activism, justice, kindness, mercy, healing and rest. My family and I are off for our annual July vacation as I continue my COVID recovery, and I hope to see you in August, with new zeal and zest and new things to say.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Janice Weiner

As we wind up the first year of this board, not only has it been another roller coaster for our community with the virus, but we are also dealing with unprecedented headwinds in our state and country with respect to rights and our democracy itself. We have seen the Establishment Clause – meant to provide a firewall between “church” and state – seriously eroded. And it is a fact that, in a sobering first, a fundamental constitutional right has been taken away. Iowans experienced that twice within the span of a week, based on rulings from the Iowa Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Where does that put us, a community of co-religionists? These are tough times. Inflation is high and we continue to do battle with the virus, though I am grateful that the “littles” – children under 5 – can finally, finally be vaccinated. Those of us with small children are exhaling for the first time in well over two years as shots go into arms.

Are we otherwise just left adrift in these turbulent seas? I think not. We work on our internal house by continuing to build and rebuild community. And we reach out to others in the larger community to help

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others and build that community as well, via Tikkun Olam – we give, we help, we contribute.

I also think that – regardless of your political leaning – when we engage and endeavor to make a difference in society, it makes a statement.

Something astonishing happened here in Johnson County – in Iowa City – in the June 7 primary. There has been no (as in zero) Jewish representation in

the state legislature for nearly 30 years. Now there will be three: two in the house of representatives – Adam Zabner, HD 90 and Elinor Levin, HD 89 (whom I’ve urged to join the congregation); and one in the state senate – me, SD45 – all from Iowa City. Zero to three. Representation matters. We, both individually and as a collective, will make a difference and bear a responsibility for the larger

community and for this state. This congregation can be proud of its civic spirit and dedication. We are standing up, we are voting, we are representing – and we have a voice. That matters, perhaps more now than ever.

FAIR SHARE FORMS

After some delays, your FY22/23 Fair Share forms are being mailed this week. Please be on the lookout for them to arrive in your mailbox, and before they slip your mind, or get lost in your piles of mail, just fill it out and return it right away! The

synagogue depends on you. There are no major changes to the form or to fees this year. Alternatively, we will accept email pledges from you – just put your pertinent information in an email to administrator@agudasachimic.org.

SERMONETTE SH'LACH LECHA

Rabbi Hugenholtz

Sermonette: Fringes

My dear brothers, sisters, holy siblings,

This is, admittedly rushed. I am still working on a frustratingly slow COVID recovery as well as healing my broken arm. There is also the joy of a Bat Mitzvah I do not wish to diminish. Yet, here we find ourselves on the eve when *Roe v. Wade* was struck down and I feel compelled to bring you the wisdom and succour of our tradition.

Like many of you, I am still reeling. There is only so much dissonance the human brain can absorb at any given moment and more wisdom (and rage) may filter through the recesses of our consciousness in days to come. I have spoken excessively on reproductive rights before; I have sermonized, taught, podcasted and protested. Yet, here we are.

My approach in this moment is more oblique. I would like to look at a perspective that delves deeper; that looks at the underpinnings of why these rights are so important; the notion of universal personhood and equality of all living, breathing human beings, so enshrined in our tradition. Including human beings with biological reproductive capacities.

This week's Torah portion is *Sh'lach Lecha*. It is famous for many things; most of all the story of the twelve spies exploring the land but *Hadassah* will teach us more about that tomorrow. It is also famous for the passage in chapter 15 that tells us to attach fringes to the corners of our garments; *tzitzit*.

It seems strange to dwell on this right now. Why is this important? It's a mitzvah I love, for sure. But it's not a mitzvah that has been the 'constitutional

birthright' of every Jewish woman. While the Torah is not gender-specific about who gets to wear this symbol of our call to be a kingdom of priests and holy nation; this paradoxical symbol of dignified royalty and radical equality, it is the later sources of the Mishnah, Talmud and Halakhic Codes that are very gender-specific. Women are exempt. An exemption turned into a prohibition. And a prohibition turned into a taboo. I remember my heart pounding in my chest when I shopped for my first tallit. It felt circumscribed and suspect. I, like

many other Jewish women, have been judged, challenged negatively and condemned for wearing *tzitzit*; for wanting to fulfil this mitzvah on my own terms, out of love for my covenant and Creator. And I, too, have explored every possible source and interpretation for my sense of obligation.

To me, my tallit symbolizes my equal citizenship of our

covenant-people; my reclaiming of a constitutional right that was implicitly there for me but explicitly denied me. It is a symbol of me fusing the worlds of bodily autonomy and the deep conviction of religious obligation. It is my profoundest right. It is a stark reminder of my personhood.

What we do next, dear ones, I don't know yet. We mourn and then we organize. We come together, is what I know, and build sacred spaces of safety where we elevate the personhood of all women and people with uteruses. We affirm their position in the great covenant of this nation. We shine our example relentlessly when the darkness gathers round. Because when it comes to humanity and equality, the God of Israel tolerates no compromises.

None of us are free until all of us are free.

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EMBODYING ELUL: PSALM 27 AS YOGA PRACTICE

Psalm 27 is traditionally read each day during Elul, the Jewish lunar month preceding the High Holy Days. Join Yoga teacher and cantorial soloist Lea Haravon Collins as we engage in this ancient tradition with a new twist (literally!). In this five-session immersive experience, we will meet weekly during the month of Elul to explore the Psalm's themes of strength, comfort, gratitude, petitioning and waiting through text study and Yoga postures.

We will come away from each gathering with a simple movement practice which can be coupled with a daily reading of Psalm 27 or used as you like

Dates: Consecutive Sundays August 21 - September 18, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: Agudas Achim Congregation, 401 E Oakdale Blvd. Coralville

to help you to prepare for the approaching Days of Awe.

No previous Yoga or Psalm-reading experience necessary! Join us for as many sessions as you like. Everyone, including and especially curious skeptics with tight hamstrings, is welcome.

Dates: Consecutive Sundays August 21 - September 18, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: Agudas Achim

Congregation, 401 E Oakdale Blvd. Coralville
Bring: Yoga mat, large towel or blanket. A notebook for journaling is recommended but not necessary.

To register: rsvp@agudasachimic.org

For more information: leslea-collins@outlook.com

SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

[Streaming link for all Shabbat services on Zoom](#)

Korach <i>(Numbers 16:1-18:32)</i>	Friday, July 1 Saturday, July 2	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Chukkat <i>(Numbers 19:1-22:1)</i>	Friday, July 8 Saturday, July 9	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Balak <i>(Numbers 22:2-25:9)</i>	Friday, July 15 Saturday, July 16	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Pinchas <i>(Numbers 25:10-30:1)</i>	Friday, July 22 Saturday, July 23	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Matot-Masei <i>(Numbers 30:2-36:13)</i>	Friday, July 29 Saturday, July 30	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem

WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

The Book Group will meet via Zoom on Wednesday, July 27 at 1:00 p.m.
[Contact the office](#) for more information.

YIDDISH STUDY GROUP

The Yiddish Study Group meets Mondays and Fridays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom.
[Contact the office](#) for more information.

MEMBER INFORMATION SURVEY

All services at Agudas Achim rely on members of the congregation to perform religious duties such as reading from the Torah or a Haftarah, performing the blessings before and after the Torah reading (Aliyah) as well as many other ways of participation. These duties rely on obtaining information about our members. Therefore, we wish to develop a database that will include this information. [Click here](#) to access a survey that will help the Rabbi, the Gabbai, and the ritual committee to organize smooth running services. Please help us by filling out the survey.

ISRAEL DRUMMER AT JAZZ FEST

A Tel Aviv jazz drummer and his trio are coming to the 2022 Iowa City Jazz Festival and will be playing Saturday July 2 at 2:00 p.m. at the festival's main stage. The Yogev Shetrit Trio features Moshe Elmakias – Piano, Noam Tanzer – Bass, and Yogev Shetrit – Drums & Composition.

WARM UP AMERICA



Warm Up America will meet on Sundays, July 10 & 24, and Aug. 14 & 28, 2022, 10:30a.m. - noon in the social hall. We'll be masked and vacc'd, per protocol. We welcome schmoozers.

We're looking for people who can crochet the borders for our afghans. No experience required -- we even teach right- and left-handed crochet, knitting, and assembling our afghans.

We have several boxes of new synthetic yarn available, and would welcome help making our 7" x 9" rectangles for future afghans.

AUGUST SERVICE SCHEDULE

Dear congregants,

Recognizing our congregation's different needs and risk profiles during the pandemic, we are using the month of August as an experimental roll-out for different types of services.

There are four types of services: Zoom-only, hybrid-with-masks (as normal), hybrid where masking is optional and outdoors where masking is optional.

We will also be doing an outdoor service at a park (location TBD) later in August.

These different styles of worship and gathering will allow us to find a style that fits each of us best and we look forward to receiving your feedback.

August:

(This consists of four types of services: 1. Hybrid, masks required, 2. Hybrid, masks optional, 3. Zoom-only, 4. Outdoors (at synagogue or offsite))

Weekend 1

Friday, Aug. 5 (Conservative): **Zoom only**: cozy Kabbalat Shabbat (at home or in your garden)

Saturday, Aug. 6 (Reform): **mask-optional indoors at synagogue**

Weekend 2

Friday, Aug. 12 (Reform): **outdoors on synagogue patio**, connected to romantic Tu b'Av ('Jewish Day of Love') theme

Saturday, Aug. 13 (Conservative): **hybrid, masks required**

Weekend 3

Friday, Aug. 19 (Reform): **hybrid, masks required**

Saturday, Aug. 20 (Conservative): **Zoom only**: cozy Shacharit Shabbat (at home or in your garden)

Weekend 4

Friday, Aug. 26 (Reform): **outdoors at off-site location TBD (special service)**

Saturday, Aug. 27 (Conservative): **hybrid, masks optional**

JULY 2022

Fri	1	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Sat	2	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun	3	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM
Mon	4	Office Closed - Happy 4th!	
		Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Fri	8	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Sat	9	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun	10	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Warm-Up America	10:30 AM
		Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM
Mon	11	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Thur	14	Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Fri	15	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM

Sat	16	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun	17	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM
Mon	18	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Wed	20	Ritual Committee	7:30 PM
Fri	22	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Sat	23	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun	24	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Warm-Up America	10:30 AM
		Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM
Mon	25	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Wed	27	Free Lunch	11:30 AM
		Book Group	1:00 PM
Fri	29	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Sat	30	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun	31	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM

DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Judy & Gary Galluzzo: In memory of Joseph Bernstein

Julia Gelfand & David Lang: In honor of Rabbi Hugenholtz for Miriam's memorial service

Jonathan & Pamela Sabin: In memory of Howard A. Sabin

Steven & Debbie Singer: In memory of Simon Pava

CEMETERY FUND

Sam & Marj Kuperman: In memory of Steven Frankel

Peter & Brenda Landweber

Paul Robin: In memory of Herman D. Robin

GENERAL FUND

Jody & Janie Braverman: In memory of David Braverman, Ellie Breggin, Corky Miller & Moshe David Richman

Kathleen Jacobs

Linda Kerber: In memory of Max Kerber

PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Eric & Jennifer Michaels: In memory of David Michaels

SAFETY FUND

Gary & Mindy Russell: In memory of Frank Friedland & Sidney Lenett

TIKUN OLAM FUND

Richard & Judy Hurtig: In memory of Irving Warren

JULY YAHRZEITS

Estelle Altschul	Florence Helen Gessner	Rose "Rae" Levin	Bill Sackter
Norman Altschul	Denise Guédon	Jared Levy	Nina Sawyer
Jelena Laneeva Bardach	Richard Jacobs	Jack Madison	Mildred Schapira
David Owen Berg	Daniel Joseph	Meir Markovitz	Katherine Schor
Robert "Bob" Braverman	Morris Isadore Kaufman	David Nadler	Beulah Smith
Morris L. Breggin	Max Kerber	Joe Pava	Jules Ben Standig
Maurice Broad	Hilda Kessler Gilbert	Annie Addison Picard	Kalman "Sunny" Sunshine
Elizabeth Potter Brown	Jack Klein	Sebastien Isaac Picard	Arthur Wallace
Jennifer Clinton	Irwin Kline	David Pitzele	Frances Wieseneck
Charlotte Dobie	Dan Kubby	Rose Portman	Beatrice Willner
Ethel Eisen	Miriam Kubby	Marian Prager	
Gerald Engman	Esther Kunik	Lauren Reece Flaum	

MEETING WITH RABBI HUGENHOLTZ

[We've set up a Calendly link here](#) for setting up meetings automatically with Rabbi Hugenholtz. We are reserving Wednesday and Thursday from 4-6 for B-Mitzvah meetings specifically, but feel free to schedule a meeting with her if you'd like. **Note that the rabbi is gone for July for her annual leave.**

STAFF

Rabbi	Esther Hugenholtz	Office Secretary	John Wertz
Administrator	Karen Brady	Custodian	Amos Kiche
Principal	Sonja Spear		

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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