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# TOUR ISRAEL FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME!

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Join Rabbi Bigman and Educator/Licensed Tour Guide Zvi Levran for a virtual tour of Israel. While this will be a wonderful introduction to Israel for those who are planning to join us on our March 7-17 trip to Israel (re-scheduled from this past March), it will be of interest to any and all who would like to learn more about Israel.

Please join us from 10:30-11:30 a.m. each week:

## **Israel 101 – The Beauty and Complexity of Israel -- Sunday, June 14**

A look at the challenges, complex social issues, and positive values that make up the State of Israel. What role does military service and the external security threats play in the crystallization of the Israeli psyche? Why does Israel generate such disproportionate coverage and attention? What is the impact of our “Super Story” and how has such a small country made such a big impact? What does it mean to me and why Israel is NOT a bucket list designation but, rather, a pilgrimage.

## **An Educator’s Virtual Tour of Israel -- Sunday, June 21**

What are the interesting challenges, questions and dilemmas that underlie sites and regions in Israel – both from an historic, archeological and/or current events perspective. The virtual tour will feature both well-known and lesser known “off the beaten track” sites (for first and second timers).

## **Being Jewish in Israel – Joys, Challenges, Frustrations and Tension with Liberal Values and Democracy – and the Impact for World Jewry -- Sunday, June 28**

Evolving Jewish Identity in Israel. What is really the status and welfare of the non-Orthodox movements in Israel? Arguments about who is a Jew and how this has impacted the politicization of Judaism. What are the educational challenges for nurturing something other than Orthodox Israelis or Hebrew-speaking Philistines? How do tensions between coercive Jewish politics and democracy impact the situation, both here and abroad? (Zvi has been intimately involved with the Reform movement in Israel both locally – former President of Kehilat Kol HaNeshama in Jerusalem – and nationally, as a member of the national board of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism).

Log-in information will be sent to those who register before June 11 with Rabbi Bigman at [rabbibigman@shaarezedek.com](mailto:rabbibigman@shaarezedek.com).





## Planning for the Future of Congregational Lifelong Learning in Uncertain Times

BY MARGOT VALLES

Learning is a central component of any thriving organization. As I wrote in my annual report to the congregation,

"Learning produces endorphins. Endorphins make people feel happy. People will want to return to and invest in the place where they experience that happiness. If we want a community of engaged, active participants in Jewish and congregational life, we can build this through learning!"

Learning is central to Jewish values and identity. The Talmud reiterates that learning and acting are closely related: good learning leads to good actions. For example, in the tractate of the *Mishnah* called, *Pirkei Avot*, we find, that Rabbi Meir said, "Torah clothes [the one who studies Torah] in humility and reverence, and equips him to be righteous, pious, upright and trustworthy; it keeps him far from sin, and brings him near to merit" (6.1). Facilitating Jewish learning is a holy duty and I am grateful that I have been entrusted with it.

During these uncertain times, the question is how to best facilitate that learning? I am consulting regularly with synagogue leadership and Jewish educators around North America, working to determine the best way to continue providing high quality Jewish education for all our congregants and community safely and accessibly.

Jewish education (like so much else) will never look the same as it did before the COVID-19 outbreak. While we are mourning the loss of old ways, we are also on the cusp of the future; there is fresh impetus and freedom to experiment, innovate and try new things.

I am exploring several possible formats for religious school in the fall--I doubt very much that we will begin the year with a fully synchronous, on-site Sunday/Wednesday, face-to-face only structure, as we have had in past years. As the format for SZRS in the fall of 2020 takes shape, I will keep the congregation informed.

## SZRS Summer Virtual HAVDALAH

Zoom Link:

<https://msu.zoom.us/j/94833660216>

Meeting ID: 948 3366 0216

Password: 692660

**Sundays at 10:00 a.m.**

