



# Beth Shalom Weekly Update

Thursday, December 1, 2022 to Wednesday, December 7, 2022  
Hazzan Lance H. Tapper, Hon DMus Shabbat Parashat Vayetzei

Shabbat Service December 2, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.

## SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday Evening 7:30 pm

## SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

The Beth Shalom office will now be open on Wednesdays and Fridays. Erica will work from home on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our office phone and email will continue to be attended to Tuesdays through Fridays.

9:00a-4:00p Tuesday-Friday  
562.941.8744  
[bswoffice@verizon.net](mailto:bswoffice@verizon.net)

## YAHARZEIT

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If you know of someone who is ill, had surgery, or just needs a call now and then, please let us know so we can reach out. Thank you.

HAPPY  
*Anniversary*

Alita & Jim Sevin  
December 7  
37 Years

## Clergy Schedule

Virtual Services: [www.facebook.com/bethshalomofwhittier](https://www.facebook.com/bethshalomofwhittier)

*\*Services and events are once again open to in person attendance with proof of vaccination and a mask. Services will continue to broadcast on Facebook simultaneously for those who cannot attend in person.*

**December 2--7:25 pm--Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--**Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

**December 9--7:25 pm--Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--**Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

**December 16--7:25 pm--Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--**Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

**December 23--Shabbat Hanukkah--6:55pm--Prelude; 7:00 pm Service--**Shabbat Hanukkah Service in the sanctuary--Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

**December 30--7:30 Service--**Rabbi Kenneth Milhandler

**2022 Jewish Book Festival**  
see flyer on page 3.

**Beth Shalom Services:** We are now open for in person services. Vaccinated people with proof may attend in person. Masks are required in accordance with the current LA County Public Health Dept. guidelines. All others may watch on our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**. When there is a livestream taking place, you can click on it and watch. If you are not yet comfortable coming to services in person, please tune in virtually and feel free to leave a message of greeting to others who are watching.

**Directions for viewing livestream services:** If you are a current Facebook subscriber, you need only to go to our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**, to view these announcements and videos. If you are not a current Facebook subscriber, you need to go to [www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and sign up with a username and password and then you can access our page at that point. Always log in 5 minutes ahead of the video start time.

**Rose Hills Cemetery Plots:** If you want to do your family the mitzvah of pre-planning, please call the office. They can give you information as to what gravesites are available and what steps to take to secure your plot(s). Plots are \$3500 each.

**Book Club:** The next Book Club will be meeting on Tuesday, December 6, at 12:30 pm. to read and discuss "The Bookwoman's Daughter" by Kim Michael Richardson. Everyone is welcome to join even if only to listen.

**PayPal Donations:** Paypal donations welcome: [bswoffice@verizon.net](mailto:bswoffice@verizon.net)

**Simcha Sharing** Let the office know of your good news and we will share it in the next weekly. Weddings ★ Births

**Tribute Cards:** To send a Tribute Card, please contact Michelle Hess. Her e-mail is: [michelleh3532@gmail.com](mailto:michelleh3532@gmail.com)

## Deception

Torah Portion: Vayetzei  
Torah Reading: Genesis 28:10 - 32:3  
Haftarah Reading: Hosea 12:13 - 14:10

By Rabbi Elliot Dorff, PhD, posted on November 15, 2015

"Jacob kept Laban the Aramean in the dark, not telling him that he was fleeing, and fled with all that he had." ([Genesis 31:20](#))

As the Torah presents this situation, Jacob needed to deceive Laban because his experience with Laban indicated that Laban was not an honest man. Laban had, after all, deceived Jacob in giving him Leah as his wife instead of Rachel, and then, as Jacob says later to Laban, "You changed my wages time and again" ([Genesis 31:41](#)). Furthermore, Laban had no sense of justice, for "Had not the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, been with me, you would have sent me away empty-handed. But God took notice of my plight and the toil of my hands, and He gave judgment last night" ([Genesis 31:42](#)). As Jacob presents the situation, he treated Laban as Laban had treated him, deception for deception, tit for tat, what the Rabbis will later describe approvingly as *midah k'neged midah*, measure for measure, asserting that God Himself metes out justice in that way (B. [Sanhedrin 90a](#) and often in *Midrash Rabbah*) and the Torah says that we should as well, "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise" ([Exodus 21:24-25](#)).

(Continued on page 2)

And yet, we are – or should be – at least a little disturbed by Jacob's actions here. As the English saying has it, "Do two wrongs make a right?" And surely what Jacob did here is wrong on at least two counts. First, the Torah itself demands "Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against your countryman" ([Leviticus 19:18](#)). Jacob is clearly taking vengeance here, and even though it may seem justified, given Laban's past behavior, and even a warranted act of self-defense, it is not what we Jews are supposed to do.

Furthermore, deceiving someone else is also wrong. Thus the Torah itself demands, "Keep far from a lie" ([Exodus 23:7](#)), and "You shall not defraud your fellow" ([Leviticus 19:13](#)). The Rabbis later extend these commandments, the first in the context of court procedures and the second in the context of business, to how we speak to one another and interact with each other. When the Torah, in the passage cited at the beginning of this commentary, talks of keeping Laban in the dark, as the new Jewish Publication Society translation has it, the actual Hebrew words are that "Jacob stole Laban's heart." In the Torah, the heart is the seat of thought, not the seat of emotions, as it is in modern English usage. (The kidneys are the seat of emotions in the Bible.) As a result, it is not surprising that the Rabbis later describe deception by a related phrase, *g'naivat da'at*, stealing the mind of another. Maimonides later codifies the Talmud's discussion of such deception as follows:

It is forbidden for a person to conduct himself with smooth speech and deception, and he should not be [saying] one thing with his mouth and [thinking] another in his heart, but rather his inside should be like his outside. And it is forbidden to steal the mind of people, even of a non-Jew. How so? He should not sell a non-Jew non-kosher meat claiming that it is kosher...and he should not urge his friend to eat at his home when he knows that he cannot eat [there then]... (M.T. Laws of Ethics [*De'ot*] 2:6)

Jacob, of course, found himself in a hostile environment, and in such environments, including defensive wars and other forms of self-defense, deception may be warranted to attain the larger goal of self-preservation. The same applies to competitive sports, where hiding the ball and other such deceptive maneuvers are accepted practice and therefore allowed in that specific context. The Rabbis recognized that maintaining a person's dignity is also a critical value (e.g., B. [Berakhot 19b](#)), so in some cases when we think negatively about a person but nobody needs to know that for a practical reason, we should either remain silent about our opinion or guild the lily a bit.

The general Jewish requirement, though, is that we be honest in both our dealings with each other and in how we speak to and about each other. There are exceptions to this rule, including those listed above, but in general the duty of honesty applies. This involves not only the obligation to refrain from lying to one another, but also the duty to refrain from deceiving one another. May we reach the ideal that the Jewish tradition sets up for us – that what we say is also what we think, and that what we do does not intentionally deceive anyone.

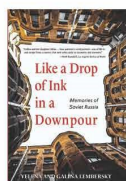
Shabbat shalom.

*Scroll down to see flyer on page 3.*

**Memorial Plaques:** We have brought all of the memorial plaques into our office, from the storage unit. If you would like a family member's plaque, please contact the office and let us know the name on the plaque. We will find it and arrange for you to pick it up. If you know of anyone who might have had loved one's plaques on our memorial board, please let them know that they are available to be picked up.

# 2022 JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 23 - DECEMBER 10



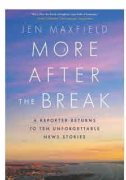
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23**

**10:00 A.M.**

**YELENA LEMBERSKY**

*Like a Drop of Ink in a Downpour*

Temple Shalom of Ontario



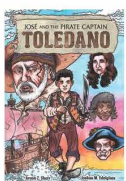
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25**

**7:30 P.M.**

**JEN MAXFIELD**

*More After the Break*

On Zoom



**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30**

**3:00 P.M.**

**JOSHUA EDELGLASS & ARNON SHORR**

*José and the Pirate Captain Toledano*

On Zoom



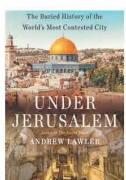
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1**

**7:30 P.M.**

**BENEDETTA JASMINE GUETTA**

*Cooking alla Giudia*

Temple Beth David



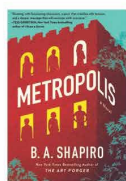
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6**

**4:00 P.M.**

**ANDREW LAWLER**

*Under Jerusalem*

Temple Ami Shalom



**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9**

**10:00 A.M.**

**B.A. SHAPIRO**

*Metropolis*

Altadena Town & Country Club



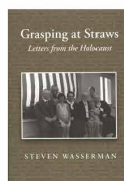
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13**

**10:00 A.M.**

**SARAH SASSOON**

*Shoham's Bangle*

On Zoom | Watch party at Jewish Federation



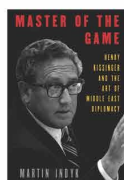
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13**

**4:00 P.M.**

**STEVEN WASSERMAN**

*Grasping at Straws*

University of La Verne



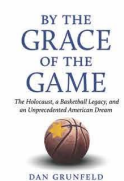
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15**

**7:30 P.M.**

**MARTIN INDYK**

*Master of the Game*

On Zoom



**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19**

**7:30 P.M.**

**DAN GRUNFELD**

*By the Grace of the Game*

Temple Beth Israel of Pomona



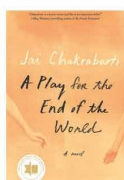
**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3**

**7:30 P.M.**

**LANA MELMAN**

*Artists Under Fire*

Monrovia Public Library



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4**

**4:00 P.M.**

**JAI CHAKRABARTI**

*A Play for the End of the World*

Temple Sinai of Glendale



**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10**

**7:30 P.M.**

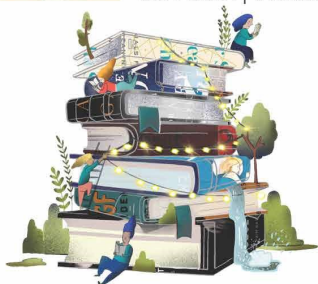
**DAVID SIPRESS**

*What's So Funny?*

Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center

**ALL IN-PERSON EVENTS WILL ALSO BE  
AVAILABLE VIA ZOOM**

To register, visit [www.jewishsgpv.org](http://www.jewishsgpv.org)



114A W. Lime Ave. | Monrovia, CA 91016  
626.445.0810 | [www.jewishsgpv.org](http://www.jewishsgpv.org)