

Cantorial Notes

April 2018

When asked what a Mitzvah is, a person might say that it is a good deed, but a good deed is something that a person chooses to do, but is not obligated to do. A Mitzvah, on the other hand, is something we are commanded to do. We know that there are 613 mitzvot given to us, by G*d, in the Torah. Some are moral and some ethical. For instance, we are commanded to “love your neighbor as yourself,” or “be kind to the stranger.” Other commandments we observe are Ba'al Tashchit, “do not destroy or waste.” It is considered to be central to a Jewish environmental ethic. Recycling or reducing your carbon footprint might be a great way to observe this mitzvah. Tza'ar ba'alei chayim, the suffering of living creatures; this commandment bans causing unnecessary cruelty to animals. A way to observe this commandment might be to become a vegan or be sure to treat all animals with care and compassion. Bikur cholim, visiting the sick; how often do you hear a familiar name mentioned during Mi Shebeirach and say, I should give that person a call? I know I do, but don't always remember to follow through. I returned a call to a friend that hasn't been in synagogue in a while. She told me how much a conversation with a friend means to her. Lending a helping hand and being there for each other are acts of kindness, and are much more than a good deed. It's a Mitzvah, our sacred duty, so be sure to reach out to someone you haven't seen in a while. The feeling you get from that connection, is like G*d smiling in your heart, and the person you called has a smile on his or her face.

On Friday, April 27, Leslie Merwin and the Temple Emanu-El Choir will be helping lead our Shabbat music. Hope you'll join us.

Thank you to our March and April Torah readers: Hannah Winograd, Jo-el Fernandez, and Sean Bendick.

B'shir,
Sherry