

KEREN OR

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THE NEWSLETTER OF OR SHALOM קרן אור

Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, Vancouver, B.C. orshalom.bc.ca Shevat/Adar I/Adar II 5760 February/March 2000

**Shevat/Adar I/Adar II 5760
February/March 2000**

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GOD'S NAME IS THE BREATH OF LIFE

By Rabbi David Mivasair

One of the most profound words in any language is the Hebrew name of God, the awesome, ineffable four-lettered name written *Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey*. Embodying the Hebrew root of Being, transcending and unifying past, present, and future, it may best be understood as Martin Buber translated it in his German version of the Torah: Was-Is-Will Be. The name *YHVH* evokes both the All of Being and the One which makes all be. As Reb Arthur Waskow teaches, the *YHVH* name is all breath, all semi-vowels. *YHVH* is the Breath of Life.

In Moshe Rabbeinu's first encounter with the Holy Presence at the burning bush, he asked how to tell the Israelite slaves who it was who sent him. Out of the flame he heard, "*YHVH . . . zeh shemi le-olam* — this is my name forever." (Ex. 3:15)

Raising the holy sparks from beneath the surface more than 200 years ago, the Baal Shem Tov used this verse to give over a great insight into God-language. "*Le-olam*" means "forever"; it also means "for the world". The Baal Shem Tov taught us that "*zeh shemi le-olam*" also means, "This is my name for the world." The Hasidic sefer *Or ha-Me'ir* brings out the Baal Shem's teaching: "Even though the name *YHVH* holds the true essence of the One who makes All of Being be, even this name which we call and use to grasp the Essence, the name *YHVH*, is only '*le-olam*' — for this world — only so that human beings may

THE REB SITE

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have a name to call You and to draw forth Your influence upon us. Certainly, You transcend all naming."

Language itself both conveys meaning and obscures full understanding. To be conscious of our own religious processes, we need to be aware of the effect language has on us. Too often, our inevitably

limited God-language stands in the way of a deeper understanding and truer relationship with the All of Being. We may not need language at all in order to experience the presence of the Divine. The most sublime experience is often in silence and impossible to put into words. Yet, as creatures of this world, we need language to conceptualize, to hold onto, and to share with each other our sense of the Holy. By being aware, as the Baal Shem Tov was, that language, even the ineffable four-lettered name, is but a vessel or a tool for our use we can avoid becoming trapped by the limitations inherently present in any religious language.

Several times in every traditional davvening, the *kaddish* comes to remind us to lift our sense of the true essence of God "*le-eila min kol birchata ve-shirata . . . de-amiran be-alma* — far beyond any words, praises and songs that can be said in this world." Knowing that "*zeh shemi le-olam*" — words are needed only because of our humanness in this world — may the words of our mouths never hold us back from the deepest meditations of our hearts.



PURIM PARTY
MONDAY,
MARCH 20
Details, Page 2

DUST OFF YOUR GRAGGER FOR PURIM MARCH 20

By Rabbi David Mivasair

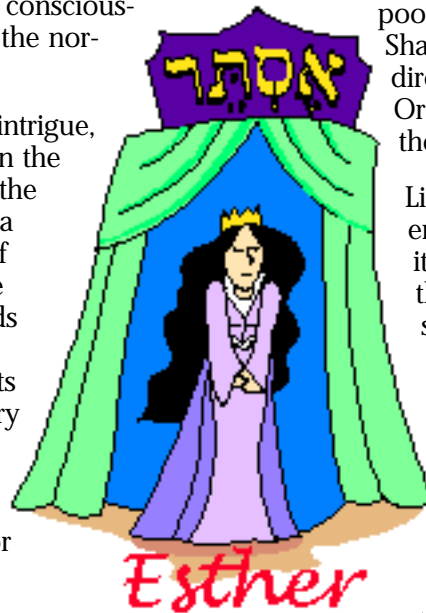
Purim is the wildest time of the Jewish year. The full moon of Adar launches a day of feasting and merrymaking, of completely letting go — a time of changing identities, of altered consciousness, of breaking bounds, of flipping the normal on its head.

Purim celebrates the biblical story of intrigue, treachery, courage and triumph told in the Megillat Esther. It's a mitzvah to hear the Megilla each year. Or Shalom's Megilla reading will begin at 7 on the night of Purim, Monday, March 20. During the reading, we'll have a Purimshpiel. Kids and adults will come in costume and bring noisemakers of all kinds and lots of refreshments, liquid and solid. Barry Rabinowitz is organizing this year's celebration. Leave him a message at 872-1614 if you'd like to help plan the Purim shpiel, read the megilla, or in any other way.

The mitzvot for Purim are right in the Megilla itself (9:22): "Make them into days of feasting and gladness, a time for sending portions to one another and gifts to the poor."

"Feasting and gladness" begin bigtime on Purim night, with eating and drinking — getting drunk is strongly encouraged for those who don't find it a problem.

"Sending portions" is *mishloah manot* or *shalah manos* -- delivering cookies, especially hamentashen, fruits, sweets, nuts, even small bottles of wine to friends to spread the joy of the holiday. It's a lovely mitzvah that everyone should do for at least two personal friends.



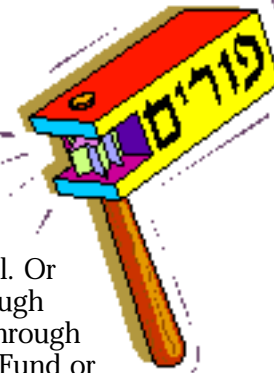
"Gifts to the poor" is *matanot le-eyonim* -- to enable them to enjoy the holiday and ease their lives in general. The mitzvah is to give at least enough so that two

poor people can have a meal. Or Shalomniks can do this through direct, face-to-face giving, through Or Shalom's Eastside Food Fund or the Jewish Food Bank (257-5151).

Like all Jewish holidays, Purim has many layers of meaning for our times. On the surface, it's a celebration of the continued survival of the Jews, a reflection on being precariously scattered among the peoples of the world, at times faced with mortal enemies, and still managing to come through it all.

Purim is also about the struggle against all the contemporary Hamans of this world, demagogues and bullies, large and small. It's about ending male domination and exploitation of women and the oppression of ethnic minorities, both so prevalent in the story of Queen Esther.

On another level, Purim is all about changing identities, putting on masks and taking off our everyday masks, revealing what is usually concealed, and concealing what is usually revealed. Queen Esther — her very name is curiously close to *hester*, hidden — hid her true self until the moment was right to be revealed. Even God is hidden and revealed in this story — just as God is hidden and revealed in the real world. God is never mentioned in the Megilla. Yet we sense God's presence in the unfolding drama, concealed behind a veil, everpresent throughout. Purim is a lesson in when to put on the mask, when to look through the veils.



ANNUAL RETREAT AND FAMILY GET-AWAY PLANNED FOR MAY 19-22

It's not too early to mark your calendars for Or Shalom's annual retreat and family get-away. Once again, it will take place on the Victoria Day weekend (May 19-22) at Camp Hope, located about 1.5-2 hours east of Vancouver near Hope.

Our retreat offers a relaxed time to davven, learn and schmooze with old friends, as well as meet new people in comfortable accommodations and a scenic locale. There will be Shabbat services, workshops, music, study and discussion, special programs, kids' activities, hiking, sports, and soaking in the famous Camp Hope hot tub. The vegetarian food is delicious.

But we need your help to ensure the retreat's success. We need volunteers to assist with the program, children's activities, publicity, registration, etc.

We will be holding the first meeting of the organizing committee at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 7, at 4234 West 9th Ave. I invite anyone who is interested to attend this important meeting. If you can't come but want to help plan the retreat, please give me a call or send an e-mail. Be sure to watch our website, and check out the next issue of Keren Or for further details.

— Marty Puterman
224-6754 marty@coe.ubc.ca

By Alan Morinis

Adam va-Adamah, the Jewish initiative for the environment in B.C., invites you to a Jewish eco-ethics retreat -- with Rabbi David Seidenberg, Rabbi David Mivasair, Alan Morinis and others Feb. 18-20 at the Sea-to-Sky Retreat Centre near Whistler.

Judaism emphasizes the deep and rich connections that link all species of Creation and the complex, beautiful planet we are blessed to inhabit. Despite this legacy of teachings, Jews and our Jewish community are only just now awakening to our role in addressing the environmental crisis. For us as Jews, caring for the environment is a challenge with a deeply religious and moral dimension.

This retreat is the first of its kind to be held locally. We will celebrate Shabbat together, and will explore Jewish teachings and tradition that can guide our response to the needs of the environment and its inhabitants. Mind and body, heart and soul, we will engage with our tradition and with each other to discover how we as Jews can respond to the suffering that environmental degradation causes, and how we can work Jewishly toward re-establishing environmental integrity.



Linda Dayan Frimer

The goal of the retreat is to help us as individuals learn and grow so we can affirm and fulfil the call of our tradition to safeguard the interdependent web of Creation.

Space is very limited, so reserve now by calling Frank at 872-1614. Two nights accommodation, vegetarian meals and all programs is \$136 for the weekend.

BID EARLY AND OFTEN AT THE CYBER AUCTION FEB. 14-MARCH 6

By Steve Lipari

What's the connection between Or Shalom, the Vancouver Grizzlies, The Vancouver Film School and the trendy Internet auction scene? They'll all come together when Or Shalom holds an online charity auction with Clickabid (www.clickabid.com) from Feb. 14 to March 6.

The cyber auction will feature an impressive collection of items, including tickets to Grizzlies basketball games, a seasons' pass to the Vancouver Symphony, and a weekend get-away at a Victoria bed-and-breakfast. Other items include classes at the prestigious Vancouver Film School, jewelry and art objects, and a round of golf.

"We have amassed a fantastic collection of items for auction. The Or Shalom cyber auction represents a great way for online shoppers to get great deals on tickets, travel and even software while supporting our community," said Micha Menczer, Or Shalom co-chair.

To take part in the auction, online shoppers simply point their net browser to the Clickabid site between Feb. 14 and March 6 and select the Or Shalom auction. Shoppers can read descriptions and view pho-

tographs of selected items. The current bid and closing date are also displayed. Shoppers can e-mail questions about the items, and Or Shalom will promptly reply. When ready, the shopper enters a bid, which the website registers. On the closing date, the highest bidder is informed by e-mail. Or Shalom will arrange shipping with the buyer.

A volunteer committee, headed by Steve Lipari and Alan Morinis and including Ellen Hamer, Bat-Ami Segal, Al Pasternak, Fran Ritch, Ruth Tovim, and Michelle Pante, with help from Avi Dolgin, has been working on the project since last summer. Money raised from the auction will be used for Or Shalom's visiting scholar fund and for the general budget. Items for sale are still being accepted, and additional volunteers are needed to help with running and marketing the auction.

Please have a look at the items for sale, and bid often! Also consider passing the information on to others on your e-mail list to let them know about this unusual shopping opportunity.

For information, contact Steve Lipari at 875-9846 or e-mail steve_lipari@mit.alum.edu



LARGE TURNOUT SHARES VIEWS ON RENEWING OUR VISION

By Dodie Katzenstein

More than 60 people braved a wet, windy night on Jan. 16 to attend a community meeting at Or Shalom on the topic of Renewing our Vision.

The program began with a musical welcome by Nomi Fenson and a meditation by Mel Kaushansky. Micha Menczer, co-chair of the Or Shalom Board of Directors, introduced the meeting with a reminder that Or Shalom is “not a building, a Board or a rabbi. It’s our members who make this community what it is.”

Micha explained that the Board plans to host several community meetings this year to discuss how Or Shalom can continue its development as a participatory, creative spiritual community while responding to the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse membership.

Reb Hillel Goelman presented an overview of the evolution of the Jewish Renewal movement, beginning with the work of Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi in the 1960s to the present network of Renewal communities throughout North America. He noted that the close affiliation of the early Renewal movement with the '60s climate of social action formed the basic principles which continue to inform Renewal today. Reb Hillel characterized those principles as a commitment to deeper spirituality, to authentic Jewish tradition, and to applying that tradition in the modern world, especially in terms of the Jewish obligation to social responsibility (*tikkun olam*, or repairing the world).

Reb Hillel also provided a brief history, aided by notes from Or Shalom’s unofficial historian Harley Rothstein, of the community’s development in Vancouver. His comments traced the growth of Or Shalom from a small Shabbat gathering in the home of Rabbi Daniel and Hanna Siegel in 1979, through its growing membership, moves to increasingly larger accommodations, and acquisition of a permanent home and full-time rabbi.

Reb David Mivasair, followed by long-time community member Gloria Levi and a newer member, Moshe Renert, then offered individual perspectives on their involvement with Jewish Renewal and with Or Shalom. The remainder of the evening was devoted to an energetic discussion by members about the future challenges and opportunities for Or Shalom.



Or Shalom co-chair Micha Menczer.

A key theme of the evening focused on creating avenues to pass on the experience and knowledge of members who have been active leaders in the past to those who will assume leadership roles in the future. Other themes generated during the discussion include:

- maintaining the participation of our “sages” —those members active in the earlier development of Or Shalom.
- creating a truly welcoming environment for newer members.
- providing avenues for deeper spiritual growth
- finding ways to attract, and keep, the involvement of families with young children
- developing programs to meet the needs of youth

The Board of Directors will consider how to use the ideas expressed during the meeting, as well as written comments provided by several members, in its future planning. Dates for other community meetings will be announced in *Keren Or*, by e-mail and on the website. Members are also encouraged to sign the activity lists posted in the lobby, or to contact any Board member, for information about getting more involved in the Or Shalom community.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MEETING:

“In many ways, Jewish Renewal is what Judaism has always been doing. What’s special in Renewal is our willingness to commit to exploration — to our continual evolution, growth and development. We recognize that we are not going to get THE [only] answer to how to live a religious life. What is also unique to Jewish Renewal is our celebration of diversity and difference, and our respect and honoring of the wisdom of each one of us.” (Reb David Mivasair)

COMMUNITY MEETING

"[In the early years of Or Shalom] I always felt I learned something new on Shabbat. I always came away uplifted. And if I asked someone to help with something, no one ever said 'No.' We had rancorous meetings, but there was always openness and respect for each other. It was the inspiration of many people who gave me my drive and energy. Now some people who created a critical mass in the early years have drifted away." (Gloria Levi)

"We must make sure that relying on e-mail doesn't sacrifice personal contact. It's important to keep the face-to-face relationships that promote better understanding between members." (Roma Katz)

"As a secular Israeli, I was attracted to Or Shalom because it was egalitarian, inclusive, humanistic. But Or Shalom has changed even in my [four years] here. I feel uneasy with Jewish Renewal, because I feel my Jewish part is not strong enough — I'm not sure what to renew from! We need guidance from our sages, but our sages have disappeared. Are we a synagogue for beginners only? Our tradition must come from education. We must grow in depth as well as numbers." (Moshe Renert)

"What made [the early community] work was that we honoured the centuries-old wisdom of the Jewish tradition while at the same time honouring our own creativity and insight as individuals." (Harley Rothstein, notes read to the meeting)

"At first, I was waiting for Or Shalom to make me feel Jewish. Then I started to work on committees, on the Board, running the garage sale. If you want to feel like a part of the community, get involved! Participate!" (Bat-Ami Segal)

"We can only find answers to these questions by sharing our individual meaningful stories — our



Martha Barker speaks to the community meeting held Jan. 16 at the Bayit.

own shafts of sunlight — not by focusing on 'This is the way things were.' From that tapestry, we can find ideas for the future. The main thing that draws me here is finding creative ways of sharing experiences, fostering each person's growth along an individual path." (Cecil Hershler)

"When the pioneering is done, we need new pioneers. Our history is still being made." (Micha Menczer)

'We need guidance from our sages, but our sages have disappeared. Are we a synagogue for beginners only? Our tradition must come from education. We must grow in depth as well as numbers.'

— Moshe Renert

Other comments:

"Or Shalom gives me a way to integrate tradition with something more profoundly personal."

"Jewish Renewal combines the influence of western science and human rights with the mystical, esoteric tradition within Judaism."

"Where are the children?"

"I returned to Judaism after 30 years. I've found unconditional acceptance, love, kindness and healing."

"It's still not that easy a community to enter."

"I learned everything I know about Judaism here."

"Or Shalom is my family. Thank you."

MY DREAM: HANDYDARTS FOR ISRAELI, PALESTINIAN DISABLED

By Myer Grinshpan

Ever since arriving in Vancouver nearly three years ago, I have been fortunate in meeting many wonderful people and many have been from Or Shalom. I have seen many wonderful things here that local people may not realize as being special.

I have decided to share an idea with my chaverim in Or Shalom in the hope of getting your help to do *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) about a very important problem in Israel where I believe we can make a difference — transportation for the disabled.

On Jan. 9, I attended the lecture by Rabbi Rachel Sabath, who reminded us that one of the most important responsibilities Jews undertake is *tikkun olam*. I decided that now was the time to share with chaverim in Or Shalom my own dream and making it into a reality.



Without a car, I have been privileged to ride buses and the SkyTrain in Burnaby, Vancouver and suburbs. I have been amazed by the great care of people with respect to the disabled, both young and old. Seats are reserved on buses for the elderly and special ramps on buses ensure ease of access for disabled in wheelchairs. Bus drivers show compassion and patience for disabled Vancouverites from all walks of life.

One Sunday morning while waiting for a bus I was pleasantly surprised to find an incredible innovation of the transit system called handyDART. I noticed that a van was transporting disabled people, children, teenagers, young adults and older people who were in wheelchairs.

As described by the regional transit agency, TransLink, "HandyDART is our shared-ride, custom transit system, operated by private agencies throughout the Lower Mainland. Lift-equipped vans provide door-to-door transportation for passengers in wheelchairs and others with disabilities that restrict mobility."

Here is where I need the help of Or Shalom members and all fellow Vancouverites. Israel and the West Bank and Gaza need this desperately. Vancouver with its track record can be very helpful in helping Israeli and Palestinian society face the problem of the disabled.

Here is a summary of the current Israeli situation. There are thousands of disabled Israelis (Arabs, Druze, Christians and Jews), some due to their physical make-up, but the majority are either war veterans, victims of terrorism, or accidents of various causes. Currently, disabled Israeli soldiers get a subsidized, well-equipped

car, if they are able to drive, provided by the ministry of defence. Victims of terrorism (Jews and non-Jews) get compensation and privileges to help them become mobile and independent. This is wonderful for many disabled but it doesn't cover all victims or veterans.

Many disabled cannot drive and it then becomes the burden of family members to help them in their mobility.

The major problem is that Israeli buses are not equipped for the handicapped. Whoever has been on Egged or Dan buses in Israel knows what I mean. No provision is made for the handicapped or the elderly. There are many reasons that probably explain it but none can justify the lack of facilities on buses. Buses in Israel simply cannot be used by handicapped people confined to wheelchairs.

What is the solution in the short-term to make life for these handicapped Israelis and Palestinians more bearable? Vans like the handyDART vehicles. This would be a tremendous help for all disabled in the Middle East. TransLink (formerly BC Transit) has the expertise and the track record which can help the disabled in Israel and Palestine.

I would like to ask all chaverim to help me solve this very serious problem of the disabled:

- 1) Contacts with TransLink to share their expertise with Israel.
- 2) People willing to contact B.C. residents who would be willing to help in acquiring some handyDART vans for use in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza.
- 3) Do a comparative study of how best B.C. knowhow can be adapted to help Israelis and Palestinians solve this very crucial problem within their societies.
- 4) Networking of B.C. organizations for the handicapped with Israeli organizations that deal with the handicapped.
- 5) Formation of a Vancouver "Friends for the disabled in the Middle East." There is a branch in Toronto called Canadian Friends of Israeli War Veterans but it deals exclusively with Israeli soldiers and not the handicapped. The Israel organization that they support is called *Havad lmon hachayal* (The Committee for the Soldier). They help young Israeli army recruits and also some immobilized Israeli soldiers but not the civilian handicapped population.

I would like to hear your feedback on how we can all contribute in making this dream a reality. I believe this could be a very important contribution of B.C. society in helping to improve the conditions of the disabled and also foster co-operation among Israelis and Palestinians, thus also promoting the cause of peace. Please e-mail me at mbentzvi@hotmail.com

MORE ENERGY NEEDED FOR FAMILY KABBALAT SHABBAT

By Celia Brauer

Every month, Reb David officiates at a Family Kabbalat Shabbat at the Shul. With the help of the kids present, we light the candles, and then David tells a story relating to the week's Parsha. Then we all sing and dance and get in the mood for the veggie potluck dishes that everyone brings. After the Shabbat meal, we gather around one of the tables to sing *zmirot* (Shabbat songs).

The evening is very warm, informal and friendly. However, attendance over the months has been up and down, and as a result it is sometimes touch and go as to whether the event will even happen. Those who come regularly would like to support Reb David in his efforts at bringing community members together. We would like to know if anyone else is interested in coming, but they are not attending for a certain reason.



Is it the word "Family" that puts some people off? Is it the time, or the idea of a random potluck? Or are people just too tired after a long week of work and *tsuris*? Strangely enough, many of those who attend also seem tired when they arrive, but most leave the evening with a warm feeling of Shabbat and community.

The next Family Kabbalat Shabbat services and potluck dinners are scheduled for Feb. 25 and March 31.

We would like some input from those who are interested so we can make this wonderful event serve a larger community. Please call me at 874-4118 or e-mail celia_bee@hotmail.com with your suggestions.

OR SHALOM HOSTS FREE LOAN SOCIETY

Once again synagogues throughout North America will host Jewish Free Loan Societies on Shabbat Mishpatim on Feb. 5, for it is on this Shabbat that the Torah portion teaches us that when loans are given to those in need, interest must not be charged.

In Vancouver, it is the Hebrew Assistance Association (HAA) which provides this service. Currently HAA has more than \$600,000 circulating

in the form of interest-free loans, and it is on Shabbat Mishpatim that we hear about their very valuable work.

Hebrew Assistance has had the full co-operation of all congregations for many years and shuls where sermons are given will be devoted that week to discussion of the mitzvah of providing free loans. In fact, Maimonides writes of this practice as the highest form of charity.

We will be having a member of Board of Directors of Hebrew Assistance speak to us on this very special Shabbat and invite you to come and hear about the wonderful work that this organization does in our community.

VOLUNTEERS FOR COMMUNITY SEDER

A community seder for Pesach is important to many members of our community as well as many visitors. It provides a lovely way to come together and celebrate Pesach, one of the peak experiences of the Jewish year. We will have a community Pesach this year only if several dedicated members of the community volunteer to organize and lead it.

Reb David and others will be happy to help with advice and guidance, but cannot be directly involved. If you want there to be a community seder, please volunteer to help organize and lead it. Call Reb David by March 1.

ECO-SPIRITUAL TOUR TO ISRAEL

It is still possible to register for the Eco-Spiritual tour of Israel, sponsored by Kibbutz Lotan and led by Rabbi Arthur Waskow and Phyllis Berman, which will include climbing "Har Moshe/Jubal Musa/Mt. Moses" in the Sinai on Shavuot.

This "Journey to Revelation Anew" will include visits to key centres and teachers of eco-Judaism, to Safed and Jewish-renewal shamanic leaders in northern Israel, to grassroots peacemakers (Jewish and Muslim), and to women leading a renewal of Judaism that includes women. The Journey will begin from JFK Airport in New York on June 4 and return June 20.

The cost of the trip will be \$ 1,545 US (not including incidentals like border-crossing fees, visa to Jordan, and tips) plus airfare. The El Al flight, New York-Tel Aviv return, is \$860 US (plus tax). You make your own arrangements for getting to JFK on time for that flight.

Register by sending \$300 deposit per seat to Desert Sojourn, 6711 Lincoln Drive, Philadelphia PA 19119.

By Riki Dayan

PARASHAT VAYISHLACH: NOV. 27, 1999

My Dvar Torah is about Yaacov and Esav meeting each other. I have decided to focus on forgiveness and *tshuvah* (repentance). This means a lot to me because when my brothers and I fight, it doesn't feel right. I sometimes wonder how to get along again if we've hurt each other.

First of all, I used to think that Esav was the bad person and Yaacov was the good person. But when I looked closer into the text I realized that maybe Yaacov wasn't so perfect after all. I started to ask myself: "If Yaacov had done nothing wrong, why was he so afraid of meeting Esav?" A few weeks ago in parshah Toldot, Yaacov steals Esav's birthright and tricks his father, Itzhak, into giving Yaacov the blessing that should have gone to Esav. It was not OK to steal these things. In the 10 Commandments it says that you shouldn't lie and that you must respect your parents. Yaacov lied. When you lie to someone you aren't respecting them. This means Yaacov broke two laws from the 10 Commandments and, in doing so, he hurt his father and his brother. I can see why Yaacov was afraid of meeting Esav. Twenty-one years earlier, after Yaacov stole from Esav, Esav was so hurt that he threatened to kill Yaacov. Yaacov must have known deep inside he had done something wrong. I think that when someone does something wrong, they should say they are sorry — they should do *tshuvah*.

So what happens in today's parshah? Yaacov gave Esav lots of presents so he wouldn't be mad or angry. When they did meet, Yaacov talked to Esav as if he were on a higher level. But he was not on a higher level; they were brothers. Yaacov even called himself a servant and Esav a lord. Yaacov was appeasing Esav. But why? I don't think that Yaacov was stupid. If he really thought that Esav was going to kill him I don't think that he would have stuck around, or at least he would have gone out last to greet Esav. I think that Yaacov knew deep inside that he had wronged Esav and was feeling badly about it. When Yaacov struggles with the angel, I think that he was fighting with himself, trying to come to terms with what he did to Esav. But Yaacov never talks to Esav about it. Is this the way to do *tshuvah*? Did Yaacov even ask for forgiveness? I don't think he did — the Torah never says he did.

In this story, two people have something between them that stops them from being close. And it's not two strangers — it's two brothers. What must two

people do to become close again, to repair the hurt when one person has wronged another? Rambam says that there are four stages of *tshuvah*. First the person must realize that he or she has done something wrong; second, he/she needs to understand the impact on the person and must ask the person he/she hurt for forgiveness; third, he/she must try to repair the harm they caused. The highest stage of *tshuvah* is when the person is given the opportunity to repeat the same wrong and chooses not to repeat. Yaacov had opportunities to do the first three stages. He didn't do any of them. From what I see in the parshah, Yaacov and Esav do not really talk about the hurt between them. They meet as if the great hurt never really happened, and then move on separately in their lives.

Does Yaacov have even more of a responsibility to do *tshuvah* because they are siblings? I can't find an answer in any commentary about this. I think he does. This is not how I would want my relationships with my siblings to be.

And because it is his brother, does Esav have a responsibility to encourage Yaacov to do *tshuvah*? Vayikra (19:17), reads "Do not hate your brother in your heart. Reprove, reprove, your brother, and do not bear sin because of him." The Talmud interprets this to mean

that if you know someone has done something wrong and you don't stop try to stop them from doing it again, then you also become guilty because you didn't try to prevent it. Another interpretation is that you also become guilty if you don't try to stop the person — simply because you are letting someone continue to do more wrong and not helping them to see a more righteous way in the world. Although the word "brother" is used on this pasuk, I don't think that it means only brother as in sibling, but as in everybody in the world.

I'm also asking myself, is forgiveness possible without *tshuvah*? Maybe this is what happens in the story. The text says that the brothers fell on each other's necks. That they kissed and wept. Maybe Esav was able to forgive Yaacov without Yaacov doing *tshuvah*.

I had an amazing experience learning all about Yaacov and Esav and the forgiveness and *tshuvah* between them. I enjoyed asking questions, finding answers and different opinions. Sometimes it felt that the answers were hard to find and I only kept coming up with more questions! I also learned that there can be more than one answer to lots of the questions in the Torah. To me, my Bat Mitzvah is the beginning of asking these questions and searching for answers.



Or Shalom Hebrew School Page

By Nurit Fox, Principal

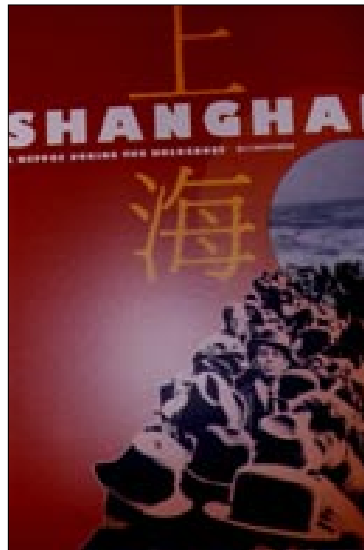
The past two months at our Hebrew school have been imbued with a diverse array of activities. Most memorable was our Chanukah party where we lit the impressive menorahs that our children created out of clay and other raw materials. The numerous candle lights and the children's blessings and singing were truly inspirational. We also enjoyed our children's skits and songs, a delightful dinner and an opportunity to celebrate and discuss together the holiday which resonates miracles — the miraculous victory of the spirit over oppression as well as the miracles which we experience ourselves, in our own lives, nowadays, many of which are well appreciated by our students.

Our Mitzvah project for the month of Kislev had been collecting children's coats to give to Jewish children whose families are in need. Thank you for all the warm coats you brought to Shul, which have been distributed to children through the Jewish Family Service Agency. Our help has been much appreciated. Our Shevat Mitzvah project reflects both a need in the community and the call for recycling as we celebrate Tu B'Shevat and renew our commitment to protecting the environment (*bal tashchit*). We are collecting kitchen utensils and small appliances to help Jewish immigrant families in their new homes. Please bring to the office any items you wish to donate.

Our visit to the Holocaust Education Centre, to view the Shanghai exhibit was highly educational. It provided an opportunity to learn about this safe heaven city which provided refuge for more than 20,000 European Jews.

Our students learned about Dr. Feng Shan Ho who defied direct orders and issued life-saving visas to Austrian Jews, saying, "I thought it only natural to feel compassion and to want to help. From the standpoint of humanity, that is the way it should be."

Continued on next page



FIELD TRIP TO SHANGHAI EXHIBIT



Clockwise from top left: guide Gabriella Klein, Michael Garfinkel, Joel Kaushansky and Sam Rosenberg.



Lisa Stevenson, left, and Julie-Ann Cohen.



Clockwise: Jacob Madison, Karen Segal, Zoe Jordan, Faye Hassall (teacher), Kira Barker, Rachel Snarch and Zachary Shoem.

GO AND STUDY

Continued from previous page

We also explored the life of the Jewish refugees in China and how they established a vibrant Jewish community where they continued their practices and traditions.

Some of our events include Tu B'Shevat seders, learning with a scribe how the Torah is written and a visit to Schara Tzedek at the end of January where we will be visiting The Great Jewish Childrens Expo, a hands-on travelling museum and exposition which utilizes state-of-the-art technology including robotics, electronics, computers, and interactive multimedia to present the Jewish experience.

Our teachers will be attending the Pacific Northwest Mini-CAJE (Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education) Conference in Vancouver on Feb. 20. I am confident that we will all find new and exciting ways to enhance the educational experience.

Family Kabbalat Shabbat services and potluck dinners are scheduled for Feb. 25 and March 31.

SHABBAT AFTERNOON LEARNING PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY, MARCH

By Rabbi David Mivasair

I love learning with other chevra on Shabbat afternoons. After a delightful kiddush lunch and some shmoozing with friends, there is nothing like singing, bentching, and getting into some good learning together.

Several times in November and December as many as 20 or so chevra stayed several times to explore with me texts and teachings about Yishmael and Hagar and Sarah and Yitzchak.

I am planning more Shabbat afternoon learning twice in February and twice in March. On Feb. 12 and 26, from about 2 'til 3:30, we'll enter into the spiritual poetry of Tehillim (Psalms). I'll bring one or two Tehillim each time and teach some factual knowledge about the Psalms to satisfy the intellect. We'll read aloud several translations as well as the Hebrew. We'll sing them and we'll take off on the images and feelings the Tehillim inspire in us.

In March, we'll take two Shabbat afternoons, the 11th and the 18th, to get into Megillat Esther and some of the hidden meanings of Purim. I'll share classic rabbinic midrashim and traditional teachings

that reveal the concealed, which is the purpose of Megillat Esther itself.

IMMERSION & CONVERSION CLASS CONTINUES

Reb David's Immersion & Conversion class will continue bi-weekly on Monday nights 7:30-9 through the spring. The group of 12-15 explores a wide variety of topics in depth, always yearning for solid learning and personal meaning. Each class will begin with about half an hour of Or Shalom style traditional davvening. The class is open to newcomers and drop-ins at any time. To find out in advance about topics, call Reb David.

MONDAY EVENING DAVVENING

Everyone is invited to join a gentle, quiet evening davvening every other Monday night 7:30-8 whenever the Immersion & Conversion class is held. We closely follow the siddur in the Or Shalom style. Anyone interested in saying kaddish with a minyan should check with Reb David before coming.

VANCOUVER HOSTS EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

On Sunday, Feb. 20, approximately 300 Jewish educators from Western Canada, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska will gather in Vancouver for two days of workshops and learning. The Mini-CAJE conference is a unique opportunity for everyone in the Jewish community to learn from master educators. Or Shalom teachers will participate and other Or Shalom chevra are involved in the program, including Reb David on a panel of four rabbis addressing various perspectives on Judaism on Sunday morning. For information, call the Federation at 251-5100.

COMMUNITY KOLLEL EDUCATION PROGRAM

A consortium of Orthodox institutions in the Lower Mainland has established a learning centre and outreach program called "The Community Kollel". Led by Rabbi Avraham Feigelstock, the program offers valuable learning opportunities every evening of the week with different teachers in several locations on a variety of topics. Rabbi Feigelstock will teach at Or Shalom on March 26. For more information, call 275-0042.

THE GET AS A HEALING RITUAL

Trained divorce mediator and doctoral candidate Marilyn Beloff of Winnipeg will offer an educational evening about "The Get (Jewish Divorce) as a Healing Ritual" on Thursday, March 2, 7-9 p.m. at Temple Shalom. For more information, contact Donna Cantor at the Jewish Family Service Agency 251-5151.

MILESTONES

We celebrate the births of:

- Ivy Lauren Pomerantz, born Dec. 4 to Cate and Asaf, the first grandchild of Rabbi Dina-Hasida Mercy.
- Alec Benedetto Ritch, born Jan. 17 to Joel and Sarah in San Francisco, a new grandson for Fran Ritch.

We extend our condolences to the families who have lost loved ones. May their memories always be for a blessing:

- Grete Bayerthal, z"l, the mother of Peter Bayerthal, in December in Santiago, Chile.
- Pola Kleinman, z"l, the mother of Myrna Rabinowitz, Dec. 21 in Montreal.
- Sylvia Katz, z"l, Andy and Roma Katz's mother and mother-in-law, Jan. 12, in Brooklyn, New York.
- Mark (*Moshe*) Rabinowitz, z"l, brother of Barry Rabinowitz, Jan. 21 in Israel. He was 49.

NEWS AND SHMOOZE

EXTRA TOYS AND GAMES? Or Shalom is looking for donations of toys, games, cards, etc. to help keep our children engaged in activities on Shabbat with our childminders, Heidi and Adam. Items may be dropped off at the Shul (clearly marked Shabbat Kids) and are greatly appreciated. Questions may be directed to Kymn Ryant at 876-1492. Thank you!

TO MY DEAR FRIENDS AT OR SHALOM Thank you so much to all of you who have phoned, sent cards, food, love, condolences, tzedakah in memory of my mother and a wonderful shabbat meal at our shiva in Montreal. I feel truly nourished, loved and blessed to be part of such a loving community.

— *Myrna Rabinowitz*

TEVA CLUB AT TALMUD TORAH Reb David, Celia Brauer and Michael Barkusky are starting up a Teva (nature) club at Talmud Torah under the auspices of Adam va-Adamah. The idea will be to go on nature outings with kids, assess and possibly improve the school's impact on the environment, and enhance Jewish environmental teaching in the children's education. The first outing was on Jan. 30 at Musqueam Creek, which is the last open stream in the city of Vancouver with a not-yet-extinct salmon population. For more information on the Teva club, call Celia at 874-4118.

THANK YOU I would like to thank the Or Shalom community for their expressions of support and

RECENT DONATIONS

Community Fund

- In Memory of Grete Bayerthal
- In honour of Riki Dayan — Bat Mitzvah
- In honour of Alan Morinis — 50th Birthday
 - In appreciation of the Hershlers and Fay & Trevor Hassall
- In honour of Sally Thorne — director
 - In honour of Hillel and Sheryl
- In memory of Helen and Abel Bloch
 - In memory of Pola Kleinman, z"l

Tzedaka Fund

- In memory of Pola Kleinman, z"l
- In memory of Grete Bayerthal, z"l

East Side Food Fund

- In appreciation of Reb David and Sheryl Sorokin
 - An anonymous donor

Book Fund

- In memory of Abel Bloch, z"l
- In memory of Mel Fenson, z"l
- Thanks to Reb David for his guidance
- With thanks to Reb David for his help
 - In memory of Grete Bayerthal, z"l

Building Fund

- In memory of Pola Kleinman, z"l
- In memory of Grete Bayerthal, z"l

Acknowledge a birthday, graduation, any auspicious occasion. Celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, anniversary, marriage, birth, etc. Honour a Yahrzeit by donating to any of the following Or Shalom funds:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| * Book Fund | * Torah Fund |
| * Building Fund | * Tzedaka Fund |
| * Education Fund | * Len Ryant Or Shalom |
| * Community Fund | Children's Fund |
| * Rabbi's Discretionary Fund | * Lisa Nemetz Or Shalom |
| | School Education Fund |

While donors' names will not be published, the name of the person being honoured will be acknowledged.

thoughtfulness following the death of my mother Grete Bayerthal, z"l. She died peacefully in her sleep without suffering, at an advanced age! It was a consolation for me to have so many good friends who helped to make my sorrow more bearable. Todah rabbah!

— *Peter Bayerthal*

Y2JEW@5760 Wendy Oberlander is curating a presentation called Recent Jewish Video on Thursday, March 30 at 7.30 p.m. at Video In Studios, 1965

Main St. Tickets are \$3-8 on a sliding scale. The year 2000 doesn't mean too much according to our calendar. Y2Jew@5760 is a unique collection of short videos produced during the last half of the sixth millennium, gathered from Canada, Germany, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States. Featuring work by Freda Guttman, Benjamin Nemerofsky-Ramsay, Elida Schogt and Michael Verhoven.

POINT GREY SHABBAT IN THE 'HOOD The second monthly Shabbat in the 'Hood (neighbourhood), which gathers together residents of the Point Grey area, is set for Friday, Feb. 4, beginning at 6 p.m. The family-friendly potluck event will be held at the home of Wendy Rubin and Andrew Jordan, 4439 West 2nd Ave. Please RSVP to 222-1185 or e-mail wrubin@home.com. About 24 people enjoyed candlelighting, dinner and fun at the first Shabbat in the 'Hood held Jan. 7 at the home of Lorne and Lisa Mallin.

NEW MEMBERS

Born in Durban, South Africa, in 1931, **Roy Wood** is now retired and enjoying freedom and time to study and recover a lost Jewish heritage. He discovered Or Shalom when we screened the movie *The Jew in the Lotus*.



Roy Wood

Effron and Janet Esseiva and their three-year-old daughter **Zoë** immigrated to Canada from Cape Town, South Africa, two years ago. They live in Anmore

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near Buntzen Lake and they're happy to be part of "Or Shalom's wonderful community."

Sarah Leavitt began coming to Or Shalom on Rosh HaShana; she had only been to synagogue twice in her life before! "It has been wonderful to begin developing a Jewish spiritual life through my connection with Or Shalom," says Sarah.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ON SHABBAT FEB. 5

The Committee to Welcome New Members (Sue Ackerman, Martha Barker, Carol Pearlstone) is hosting a kiddush in honour of new members on Shabbat Feb. 5. Members so wishing will be introduced at services. All new members should have been contacted by now, but if you are a new member who has been missed, and you want to be included in the day's events, please phone us.

We hope all Or Shalomniks will welcome the newcomers. "Why is this kiddush different from all others?" Because the committee is drafting all "seasoned" members onto the committee for the day; Or Shalomniks are encouraged to socialize with at least one person they didn't know previously.

While committee members are providing food, contributions are also requested from members. For more information phone 986-6309 (Martha) or 669-5173 (Carol).

FROM THE EDITOR

Do you have Web-creation skills? I need someone to help put Keren Or on the Or Shalom website. By the time each issue of the newsletter is ready for the printer, I frankly want to put it out of my mind until the next deadline. I'd really appreciate the help and Keren Or would be available to many more people.

KEREN OR קרן אור

(Beam of Light)

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