

KEREN OR

THE NEWSLETTER OF OR SHALOM

Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, Vancouver BC orshalom.ca

Kislev/Tevet/Shevat 5763 March - April 2003

ADAR REFLECTIONS BY RABBI NOMI OREN/EHREN-LIS

THE REB

Monday March 4, 1974. With the first stroke of midnight, I expect the leaf to fall from the calendar; my life to be propelled into tomorrow. Geography, however, intervenes. Sailing across the e International Date Line, space freezes time at his point of transition. I experience re-entering Monday March 4, all over again.

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This year, with the setting of the sun on Sunday February 2, 2003, a sliver of new moon steered us into the Jewish month of Adar. It is now, after this moon has waxed, reached its fullness: *shlemut*, and withdraws, that we find ourselves in "replay". To ensure that our Jewish lunar calendar keeps pace with the seasons, the rabbis pattern an extra month, Adar II, into the leap years of each 19-year cycle. The next new moon, near sunset on Tuesday March 4, 2003, will guide us into the second month of Adar 5763. This March 4, however, should pass on at midnight.

Our sages, learned, mindful men, chose to interject this thirteenth month at the most confusing, "crazy" season. One day, warm, hopeful days tease open buds, which are blasted on the next by frosts and blizzards outlasting their season. Wild winds spin from all four directions. Adar II represents a squaring of the month we associate with joy: *'mi shenichnas adar, marbim b'simcha.'* (as the month of Adar comes in, joy increases). It is also the month that carries Purim and its legacy of dark fear and raucous festivity. As we come together to read *Megilat Esther*, a strident melodrama of our people threatened and saved, we hide behind masks and costumes,

spoon and satirize solemnity, and obediently drink to the point that we can no longer distinguish blessing Mordechai (the good hero) from cursing Haman (the evil villain). We give to the poor and send each other gifts: *mishloach manot*.

Purim is both - and more than - a Jewish mardi-gras or Losar. (Tibetan revelry). In fact, our tradition teaches that *b'yamei hamashiach*, in Messianic times, when other holidays are relinquished, Purim will remain. Note how the name of our holiest of Holidays, the fast day of Yom Kippur, can be read as *Yom HaK'Purim*: the Day that is like Purim. How can that most solemn fast be compared with this feast of over-indulgence
a n d
c r a z y



merriment?

In the course of my studies, the challenge and mystery of good and evil was ever recurrent. On Yom Kippur we are clearly intended to repent from

evil and to commit to goodness. On Purim we are instructed to intoxicate ourselves to the degree that good and evil blur; become unrecognizable. This reminds me of the first time that good and evil are mentioned in Torah: *in Sefer Bereshit*, Genesis, when we are instructed not to eat from *eitz da'at tov v'ra*: the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the one forbidden fruit in *Gan Eden*, the Garden of Eden. Midrash (stories created to help understand the Torah) and mysticism teach that prior to eating this fruit, (Continued on Page 2)

we were "*tam*": pure and intuitively knowing from the truth of our unbroken divinity. Everything was G-d. With the eating of the fruit came judgment, alienation and separation; consciousness of duality, mortality and the physicality of our existence. This eventually led to our inability to sustain the first Divine tablets of Torah. Following the sin of the Golden Calf, a second set of tablets, carved by the hand of Moshe and more material in form, were given to guide the re-framed story of our lives. Our tradition tells us the day of the Second Torah was Yom Kippur. What is Torah but *Eitz Chaim*, that other Tree of Life.

Melinda Ribner, in her new book *Kabbalah Month by Month*, writes that the "joy of this month comes from embracing the materiality, the mundaneness, the physicality of this world and experiencing its inner divinity. When we can see that the physical and spiritual dimensions are separate and also together, we are filled with joy and laughter". This is the healing, the "tikun" of this month. G-d may not, specifically, be mentioned in the Megilah but G-d is everywhere, playing hide and seek behind masks, in both the good and evil, light and darkness of our lives.

This Jewish leap year we are blessed with Adar I and Adar II, offered twice as much joy and laughter. These are most powerful tools to contend against the archetypical "*sitra achra*"-energy of Amalek: oppression, hatred, negativity and fear: those forces of evil to which we, in "dangerous times", are not strangers. Let us be encouraged by Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, who stressed that sickness stems from lack of joy while healing is rooted in joy. *L'chayim*. To Life!

*"the other side".

PURIM MASK - MAKING PARTY !



The mask-making party for children ages 5 - 11 years old will continue on Sunday March 9, 11:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. Come and make a mask of your favourite Purim character. On the first Sunday, we will concentrate on making the actual mask form. On the following Sunday, we will paint and decorate our masks. Please bring along hair ties and wear old, comfy clothes that you will not worry about if you get them spattered! You will also need a snack and some juice, in case you get hungry! You may also bring paints, brushes, and any other items that you want to use for decorating. If you have any questions, contact MelanieYearow- karmicangel@shaw.ca or 604-729-7255

Hebrew School Resumes

The Or Shalom Hebrew School resumed its activities on Wednesday, January 8. We launched our year with a guest presenter. Avi Dolgin came in and worked with the students on a “drash-a –drama” - a dramatic presentation of the parasha, the weekly Torah portion. We all had a lot of fun.

Lots Of Activities

The students prepared and conducted a Tu B'shvat seder. Other planned activities include a visit to a Buddhist temple. We also plan some joint activities with the Beth Israel Hebrew School, and we hope we will invite students, who have already had a bar or bat mitzvah, to share their experiences with the younger members of the school. We also plan some joint activities with the Beth Israel Hebrew School, and we hope we will invite students, who have already had a bar or bat mitzvah, to share their experiences with the younger members of the school.

**The Or Shalom 2003 World
Fusion Gala Is Coming!
Sunday June 1, 2003
@ the Vancouver Rowing Club.**

Or Shalom needs volunteers for this event! Tribesmen and women are needed on various fronts as Ticket Sellers/Publicity/Food/Door/Stage/Games. Your assistance is critical. Resistance is futile (and it's something to do if you're borg – I mean bored.) Call 604- 669-0641 or e-mail roryrichards@shaw.ca

Holocaust Centre Visit

Last month, our Grade 6 and 7 students visited the Holocaust Centre to see the exhibit "Children of the Ghetto." which featured the work of Janusck Korsyk, who died along with the children of the Warsaw Orphanage. He was a strong advocate for children and his Bill of Children's Rights has been recognized by the United Nations. It was a worthwhile experience.

Donate Your Second Hand Clothes and Toys

The school continues to collect good quality second- hand kid's clothes and toys. We give these to families in the Mount Pleasant area. Before Christmas, we delivered a few bags to the Neighborhood House and we hope to collect more. If you have items to donate, please bring them to Shul and we will pass them on.

Seudah Shlishi Potluck

Most important of all, the Or Shalom Hebrew School will be hosting a community seudah shlishi (third meal on Shabbat) and Havdalah (ritual that ends shabbat) ceremony on Saturday April 5, at 5:30 p.m. We would love to have everyone join us. Please bring a potluck dish.

Hang On, Haman!

In Memoriam:

Haman, Harasha - 68, Persia, formerly of Esther Lane, Three Corners, died Adar 14 in Iran. He was well-known to the entire Vancouver Jewish community. Surviving are his wife, Zeresh; 10 sons. Memorial service March 17, 6 p.m. at Or Shalom Synagogue, Vancouver. Donations to Na-amat. Hamantaschen Fund. (Na na na'amat, na na na'amat, hamantashen, a good buy!)



Has It Really Been Ten Years?

By Leah Rankin, with thanks to Avi Dolgin

from owner-or-shalom@interchange.ubc.ca
To or-shalom@interchange.ubc.ca on behalf of
dolgin@telus.net

For you historians out there, this marks the ten-year anniversary of our purchase of the Wee Shul On The Fraser from the Scottish Presbyterian Church. Our first event was Purim, 5753. When you come for Purim this year, try to imagine us moving those big pews for the first time in years from the straight rows they had inhabited into the wild jumble that our Purim would be. You can also imagine those who fervently reassured each other, "These are only temporary."

I found myself shaking my head as I read Avi Dolgin's e-mail. Yes, it was ten years ago when we proudly launched our new shul with a Purim Party. Many of you have only known Or Shalom as the house that Len Wexler built - with a real kitchen, three modern bathrooms and a usable basement. This was not the case when we took possession of the former Scottish Presbyterian Church.

I was actually tickled when I found out my newfound synagogue was going to put down roots in East Vancouver, close to where I grow up. I was also amused that it was formerly a Scottish Church, since my paternal grandmother came from Scotland, and my family have always had sort of a Scottish /Jewish kind of identity. It seemed poetically fit for me.

We were greeted by stale air, wall-to-wall dust and the formidable rows of pews. We had no premonitions about the great pew debate that was to come, or that the fine old benches would prevail. The basement, as it was, provided a tiny kitchen laden with teacups and many uncomfortable wooden chairs. The one bathroom had only enough space to allow folks to get in and shut the door. We could not figure out why a place would have hundreds of teacups and only one bathroom.

Our Purim Party infused life into the poor old building. We probably ate more food in one

night than had been consumed there in its whole history. Even though the dance floor kept flooding, and the power kept blowing, even though our backs ached from pew-schlepping, it was magnificent. I never realized that a community of Jews could come up with such a wide array of Scottish-themed costumes. The important thing was, however, that at the end we could not tell the McHamans from the McMordechais, and Esther looked radiant among the heather.

It is ten years later. We have seen many renovations, many committees, many meetings, many debates, and many more parties. People have joined and people have moved on. Children who were toddlers the night of our first Purim Party are now studying for their bar or bat mitzvahs. Some of the original partygoers have since died. Changes are inevitable.

I myself have experienced a wide range of emotions in my relationship with my shul. I have also blossomed into my Jewish identity that I struggled with for most of my pre-Or Shalom life. When I first entered, I could barely speak or sing for fear that I would be found out as a fraud, or struck by lightning. Now I can't even imagine my life without my Jewishness. Ten years ago, amid the revelry, I did not know that the person I would meet behind those doors would be myself.



Appeals For Toys For The Child-Minding Area

By Janet Esseiva

The toys and games in the child-minding area are subjected to the forces of time and nature. They break, parts go missing, puzzles lose pieces, or games lose essential parts -- you get the picture. After a recent early spring clean, the cupboards are looking a little bare. We're appealing for donations of toys and games in good condition for ages 3-10 years. We'd really appreciate:

~ board games ~ card games ~ dice ~ puzzles ~ educational toys ~ lego ~ blocks ~ cars ~ trucks ~ trains ~ boats ~ planes ~ doll's clothes and furniture ~ percussion instruments ~ play-dough implements (cookie cutters, rolling pins, moulds) ~ storage containers (shoe box size and larger) ~ a book shelf

We'd rather not have toys that require batteries as they are used on Shabbat. Please bring donations to the child-minding area downstairs. In rare cases where we are not able to use donations we usually pass them on to a shelter. If you would prefer to be notified, please leave your name and contact details with your donation. For more information contact Janet Esseiva: 604-469-6981 or Janet.Esseiva@telus.net

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Our community has a small fund in place to assist persons who may be in an immediate financial crisis. For example, money may be needed to help pay the rent, cover a medication, or feed the family until the next cheque arrives. In the absence of the rabbi to administer this fund, Maurice Bloch has kindly agreed to undertake this task in the interim. All matters related to this fund are strictly confidential. You may arrange a meeting with Maurice by contacting him at his home number, 604-266-4204, or by e-mail: mauricebloch@shaw.ca

Rosh Chodesh Group Plans Retreat

By Melanie Yearow and Raziel Ross

The month of Sh'vat was celebrated with a Tu b'shvat Seder linked to a Kabbalat Shabbat. In spite of the cold and flu season a small group of us enjoyed the ceremony, and each other's company.

We have been lucky to have Leslie Stern, a professional fund-raiser, to assist us in writing a funding application for a women's retreat that we hope to hold in the summer. We have applied to the Women's Endowment Fund and we have secured a wonderful retreat center near Squamish. We need a deposit to secure the space. Please provide a non-refundable minimum \$30 deposit if you intend to join us for our weekend getaway. Deposits can be made by check, payable to cash, or you can pay in cash itself. Contact Melanie or Raziel about collecting your deposit. We are very optimistic that this will be an exciting and innovative event for the women of Or Shalom and other Jewish women in our community.

All women are welcome. For information about our next meeting, contact Melanie at karmicangel@shaw.ca, 604-729-7255 or Raziel at ahavaraba@shaw.ca.

Milestones

Alex Rubin, Hebrew name, Zelig, died in Toronto on Dec 11, 2002. He was born in 1922 in Pinsk, Poland, and will be remembered by his daughter Wendy. May his memory be a blessing.

The Board of Or Shalom met on December 19, 2002 to continue discussions and plans for the Visioning meetings with the community. We have identified Visioning as one of the top priorities for the board this year. We need to articulate ideas such as who we are and why we exist as a community. We need to walk together through many questions during the months ahead. What is the essence and heart of Or Shalom? Where are we going? We also need to define membership privileges and responsibilities, and explore the possibility of creating different levels of membership. This will occur through several community meetings. We look forward to your participation in these meetings and urge you to make every effort to attend. It is important that we hear all voices.

We spent much of the board meeting in discussion of Rabbi David Mivasair's request. He asked that the board grant him an official leave of absence as he wished to be free to meet with the people who have shown interest in the formation of a new davvening group under his guidance. The Board felt that it was important not to stand in the way of those who wished to start something new with David so we have agreed to this request. Reb David is on a complete leave of absence from Or Shalom, although he has agreed to continue his work with the B'nei Mitzvah families until the end of June. Reb David will also continue to receive his full salary and benefits until that time.

The Board extends to David our best wishes for his future endeavors and we sincerely hope that a spirit of generosity will continue to thrive among us all.

PURIM PARTY!*(or much adar about nothing)***Monday Evening, March 17
Or Shalom**

Children's (of all ages) party 6 p.m.
Adults (of all ages) party 7 p.m.

Come in costume - or pay a fine to the
East Side Food Fund
Bring desserts, hamentashen and
libations
Bring a donation of kosher wine for
our wine cellar

Megillah Reading
Children's Costume and Masks Parade
Games by the Games Mistress Herself
Continuation of the Great Hamentashen
versus Latke Debate



SYNAGOGUE LIFE

HELP CRAFT OR SHALOM'S NEW VISION

The Board is holding a one-day retreat to conduct a community wide visioning exercise on Sunday March 9 from 10 a.m.- 4:30 pm. This will be a valuable opportunity for all members to express our views about the future directions of Or Shalom. Please refer to the letter from the Board, mailed out early last month for a review of the issues. See you there!

Submission Guidelines

Submission must be submitted electronically by e-mail or on disk. Contact me if you have any problems with this, and we will problem solve. Articles should be 500 words maximum, and will be edited for brevity, clarity and readability. Articles can be submitted as an attachment if they are word documents, or written into the body of the e-mail.

Here is a checklist for submission, and my expectations.

- Have I put "Keren Or" in the subject line of my e-mail?
- Is there a phone number and /or address as well as e-mail address if I am naming a contact person?
- Have I provided explanations for any Hebrew/Yiddish words, rituals, etc
- If I am using an acronym, have I used the full name at least once?
- If I name an agency, or organizations, have I included contact information for them?
- Have I included a phone number even if I am e-mailing, in case the editor wants to talk to me?
- Have I included complete details of any event? Time, place, date, costs, sliding scales etc.
- Is my event accessible? Is there a contact person with full contact information?
- Have I put 604 in my telephone numbers?
- If I'm submitting a poem, have I faxed a hard copy to the editor, so she can ensure the form is right?
- Have I saved this checklist, and will read it before submitting?

Your co-operation is appreciated!

Leah Rankin
604-430-4969

unbeldi@shaw.ca
Fax: 604-430-5017

NEW DONATIONS

Community Fund

In memory of Yitzchak Weitz & Bella Einhorn-Weitz

In honour of Leah Rankin

In honour of Fran Ritch. Get well soon.

In memory of Wendy Rubin's father,
Alex Rubin z'l*

In honour of Gloria Levi, a speedy recovery.

Tzedakah Fund

In memory of Fred Katz z'l

In honour of Fran Ritch. Get well soon.

In memory of Murray C. Fuerst z'l and Norma F. Snow z'l

Rabbi's Fund

In memory of Anne Wolfson z'l

East Side Food Fund

In honour of Jan Fishman's 40th Birthday

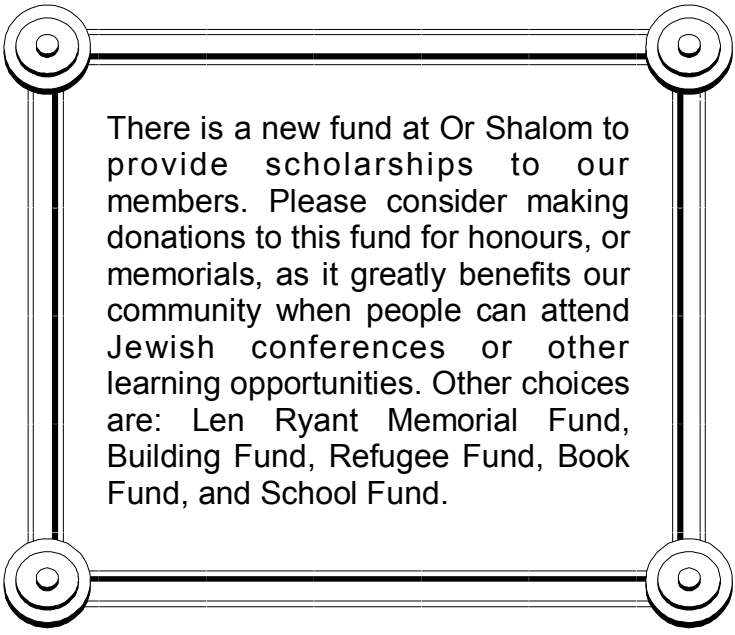
In honour of Rabbi David

In honour of Matan Berson's Bar Mitzvah

Lisa Nemetz Education Fund

In honour of Gloria Levi and a speedy recovery.

**"zichrono livracha"* or *"zichrona livracha"* depending if it is a man or a woman. It means "May his/her memory be for a blessing."



There is a new fund at Or Shalom to provide scholarships to our members. Please consider making donations to this fund for honours, or memorials, as it greatly benefits our community when people can attend Jewish conferences or other learning opportunities. Other choices are: Len Ryant Memorial Fund, Building Fund, Refugee Fund, Book Fund, and School Fund.

Ongoing Goings-On

For the latest information, check website, orshalom.ca or contact the people listed in the items below.

Sundays, 10 a.m. Anthology of Jewish Music, CFRO, 109.7

Mondays, 7:30 p.m., Tikkun Vancouver Meetings, 865 Durward Street.

Contact Leonard, 604-875-6925 or Leah, unbeldi@shaw.ca

Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Or Shalom, Yeshiva Or Shalom (study group). Contact Susan Shamash, susan.shamash@gems3.gov.bc.ca , 604-222-1980 for information. This group has specific times when newcomers may join.

Wednesdays, 8 a.m. at Or Shalom- Morning Minyan –half hour service.

Saturdays, 10 a.m. Or Shalom, Shabbat Services

Saturdays, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Meditation Retreats with Leonard, 865 Durward, 604-875-6925. slangel@telus.net

The Rosh Chodesh group for women meets regularly but at varying days and times. Contact Melanie Yearow, 604-729-7255, karmicangel@shaw.ca

The Shvesters study group for women meets generally on Sunday Mornings, but times, place and opportunity to join varies. Contact Susan Shamash, susan.shamash@gems3.gov.bc.ca, 604-222-1980

The Matovu Children's Shabbat Services occur on a monthly basis. The upcoming dates are: March 22, April 12 and May 3, 10:30 a.m.- 12 noon.

Kabbalat Shabbat Services take place on Friday night at 6 p.m. on a monthly basis. Dates vary. Check the website-orshalom.ca, or your Keren Or calendar.

For information, call Effron Esseiva 604-469-6981 effron_esseiva@yahoo.ca

The board meets on the last Thursday of the month, and are open to members.

Contact John Fuerst 604-254-9230 fuerstandgill@telus.net or Hana Wosk, 604-261-5558 hanawosk@shaw.ca to

Leah and Joe Markovitch would like to extend an open invitation to our dear Or Shalom family to attend the Bat Mitzvah of our daughter Aliza Shira , Saturday, May 10, at 10 a.m. A Kiddush lunch will follow the service. Details about the evening dance party will be announced later.

Hannah Doyle will have her Bat Mitzvah at Or Shalom on Shabbat, April 26. Her family would like to invite the community to join us for this occasion and for a Kiddush

Matan Berson

January 4, 2003, 1st of Sh'vat 5763

“This week’s Parasha is Va’eira and continues the story of the struggle of B’nei Israel to leave Egypt. The name of the parasha comes from the second verse, which reads: Va’eira el avraham el Yitzhak v’el Yaakov ...which means I (G-d) appeared to Avraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. . .

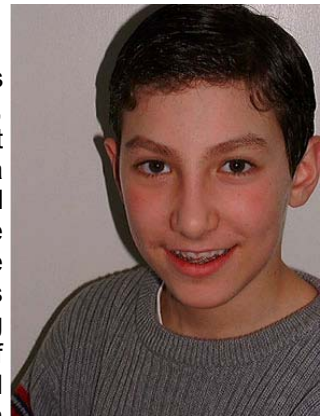
If I were to sum it all up in one sentence, my parasha tells us that “when someone does something good, we shouldn’t do them harm” -- and this has much meaning not only in biblical times but also today.”



Yehuda Gavriel Mivasair

February 15, 2003, 13th of Adar 1, 5763

I think that the Ner Tamid* is symbolic in a personal way, because we come and go, but it always stays. When we go to a synagogue we see the Ner Tamid there, and when we leave we know that it's still there. ... The Ner Tamid helps us to always remember that life has meaning and purpose beyond oneself. If someone doesn't think beyond their own personal life -- although they may have a wonderful life -- in a way they're shallow. It's not that they're necessarily selfish, but they're not thinking long-term -- not seeing the big picture. For example, they might pollute more because they're not thinking beyond themselves, not thinking what is going to happen 300 or 500 years from now. People who think that their lives are part of something that went on before them and will go on after them are usually happier



*the Eternal Light that hangs in front of the Holy Ark in the synagogue.

Phone Tree Out On A Limb

By Carol Ann Fried

For several years now, our phone tree system has lain dormant. This has meant that aside from Keren Or and email or expensive community snail-mailings, we have been unable to contact our entire membership in the case of a death in the community or any other critical time-sensitive announcements. We are now ready to re-create our system, and we need your help. Thus would you please email freedom@ca.inter.net or call me at 604-736-4110 with the following information:

- What is your phone number? b) Are you on the Telus voicemail system?
- Do you prefer to be contacted by email and if so, what is your email address?
- Do you prefer to receive a message through your voicemail system internally or to be called in person?
- Do you prefer not to be contacted?

We'll need lots of help with this project - calling, organizing data, maintain information, or helping launch this project. Please let me know how you might help.

Fine Whines— from Janet Esseiva

Our stocks of kiddush wine at the schul are severely depleted. So my whine, this time, is for donations of kosher wine or kosher grape juice. Kosher means it needs a heksher (kosher stamp). I hope to see those shelves filling up again!

Chance To Enhance Your Seder— Reb Hillel

On Sunday, April 6 from 10 a.m.-12 noon ,I will offer a short workshop to help us all prepare for the Pesach seder. We will go over traditional and emerging rituals melodies and stories. Bring a tape recorder if you want. All are invited.

Free Teleclass Available - from Lorne Mallin

Candy Lobb, a rabbinical student with ALEPH, is offering NJRC members free tuition to a special 6 -week series of her "4 Worlds of Listening via e-mail and telephone. For more info contact: candylobb@ix.netcom.com with NJRC Teleclass in the subject and mention the name of the community of which you are member.

Remembering that it is Tolkien who wrote the words, "not all who wander are lost", this poem is inspired by Parshat Bo which speaks to us about the many kinds of freedom and the many ways in which our liberation from Mitzrayim is unfinished...

On Freedom

By Alizah Shatsky, 2002

Not all who are liberated are really free,
nor all who wander really lost,
for freedom is of inner travel
and wandering is the chance
to walk along its edges
in footsteps of the prophets.

Freedom begs for inner travel
through vast deserts in the longing of soul,
through wind-kept secrets of burning silence,
through the song that wishes to be sung
and heard in the fibres of creation.

Freedom challenges the traveler to confront
that which oppresses from the inside,
the predator, the pharaoh
which shackles the human heart
making it impermeable
and thus enslaved
to paths not chosen
only endured.

Wandering is a dance
in the infinite rhythms of being,
a weaving of human and divine will
in pathways to the heart.
It's life's invitation to move beyond
paved roads and closed doors,
and into the more forgotten trails
of existence,
where the singing spirit can
still be felt.

Freedom needs wanderers
the way G-d needs wrestlers.



When you begin looking at your vacation plans for this summer, please make space for the ALEPH Kallah, June 30 to July 6 at Western Washington State University in Bellingham. The Kallah brings about 800 people together every two years, this time the closest to Vancouver ever and the last West Coast Kallah until 2011. It's a week of superb Jewish learning, a great Kids' Kallah, a special program for twenty-somethings, tasty kosher vegetarian food, evening entertainment, and wonderful opportunities to explore new ways of connecting with your Judaism.

By now many of you will have received your Kallah brochures in the mail. Brochures are also available at the bayit and, as the Kallah publicity co-ordinator, I have a supply as well. Class descriptions are on the website of ALEPH: The Alliance for Jewish Renewal -- www.aleph.org. The Kallah office can be contacted by e-mail at KallahAJR@aol.com, by phone at 303-554-5913, by fax at 303-554-5917 and by mail at 765 Gilpin Drive, Boulder, CO 80303. Contact me at lmallin@telus.net or 604-222-3379.

Your challenge will be choosing what to do and dealing with FSM: The Fear of Missing Something. Do you want to sing? Dance? Pray? Learn new ways to look at old text? Connect with the rebbe within? The Kallah offers morning and afternoon classes featuring master teachers, ALEPH programs and a contemplative track. Courses fill on a first-come, first-served basis. Some classes fill quickly, so the earlier you register, the more likely you are to receive your first choice.

A great treasure available to Kallah participants is the diverse offering of davvenen available every morning before breakfast and every evening after dinner. There is space for creative and traditional minyanas as well as chant/meditation, yoga and other offerings. Susan Polsky Shamash intends to spearhead Or Shalom's davvenen contribution - members of this community leading one of the weekday morning Shacharit choices.

Denise Guren is leading a Community Tikkun Project: Salmon Habitat Restoration, and is a Bellingham contact person. Vancouver people involved include several workshop teachers: Aviel BenShadar (Barclay) on "ShalhevetYah: The Holy Flame of the Aleph-Bet;" Alan Morinis on "The Duties of the Heart: What an Ancient Jewish Source and Our Own Hearts Teach Us About Healing and Growth"; and Rabbi Nomi Oren on "Peace as Process: Coming to Know Peace; to Grow Ourselves as Peacemakers."

Reb Nomi is also the Kallah international advocate and can be contacted for information on discounts available to Canadians. She and Motti are on Bowen Island at 604-947-9212 and e-mail: RabbiNomi18@aol.com. Also consider doing a work-study, which involves some work during the Kallah in exchange for reduced fees. The full cost for adults is \$735 US (about \$1,130 Cdn), including classes, on-campus double accommodation and meals from Monday lunch through to Sunday breakfast. There are commuter fees for those off-campus, and the possibility exists for coming only for Shabbat, depending on space availability.



The Kallah is the chance to experience many blessings

Our Pesach story is a reminder that freedom from servitude does not necessarily mean that one is truly free. We can be physically free and still remain chained spiritually and psychologically to all kinds of things -- social pressures, materialism, fear, loneliness, as well as the relentless pursuits and ambitions of our own egos.

The story of our liberation from Mitzraym teaches us that real change -- moving from a place of oppression to a place of freedom -- requires hope, patience, and great determination. Freedom does not happen all at once. External freedom must turn to inner freedom or we may find ourselves back at the beginning, stuck in the original oppression. Cosmetic changes are easy. Anyone can change on the outside. But true liberation calls for change on the inside. And our Pesach story tells us how.

In the Torah, G-d tells the Jewish people, "I am the Lord, I will free you from the labours of the Egyptians and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. And I will take you to be my people and I will be your G-d." Ramban says these phrases -- "I will free you...I will deliver you...I will redeem you...I will take you..." -- each emphasize an important step toward real freedom.

What are these steps? The first two are about the physical world. We need to be free from external bondage and to be able to live in a place where we are longer under its influence and control. Many of us may feel we are free from external oppression, but there are still too many people among us who live captive to the ravages of poverty. There are too many people here in our modern, civilized worlds that live with the atrocity of child abuse, or the terror of addiction or the reality of abandonment.

What are we willing to do to ensure that physical freedom is available for everyone? "I will redeem you..." refers to the third step of freedom, which is about re-defining the values and meaning in our lives. As the Israelites witnessed the incredible miracles from G-d during their journey out of

Mitzraym, they began to see themselves as different from their oppressors. They started to realize that a life of worshipping false Gods and material wealth did not compare to the life they were offered as they moved into a life with G-d. They began to examine, as we all can, what is important, and what it is that makes life meaningful and worth living.

This was the beginning of internal freedom. We can understand the sin of the golden calf as a kind of internal oppression; the Israelites were quick to lose faith and resort back to the ways of their oppressors. In times of anxiety, how many of us find ourselves doing the same things that we hoped to leave behind? Can we leave the modern day Pharaoh in our own lives?

"I will take you..." can be understood as that moment at Mount Sinai when the Jewish people were offered the chance to choose a relationship with G-d. How free are we to let G-d into our lives? How available are we to become G-d's hands here on earth? Real freedom requires great responsibility -- an ability to respond to the needs around us. Do we have the courage to do so?

When we drink the four cups of wine on the eve of Pesach at our Seder, we attempt to remember these important steps toward real freedom.

We also remember that our journey out of Mitzraym is still occurring for each of us in our own unique way. It is not an easy journey, and all of our courage and faith will be tested. Let us walk with our hearts and eyes open to all the blessings that surround us every day, which are just as incredible as the miracles witnessed by our ancestors. And may we remember that we are never alone. A soul-searching and courageous



The Or Shalom annual retreat, *Way of the Sacred Journey*, will take place at beautiful Camp Hope, May 16 –19, 2003. We are delighted to have this year, as our guest Rabbi, Gershon Winkler. Reb Gershon is a respected Jewish scholar who offers a unique blending of theologian, shaman and teacher. He is the author of eleven books on Jewish mysticism, philosophy and folklore. Rabbi Winkler currently lives in New Mexico where he has discovered that "vision quests of the nature-centered Native American religions have parallels in the Jewish tradition." Gershon is reputed to be an engaging speaker who is both humorous and challenging in his presentations. His latest publication, *Magic of the Ordinary: Recovering the Shamanic in Judaism*", reconfigures our understanding of Judaism as a spiritual path that is founded on a conscientious and sacred relationship with the magic of our physical universe." For more information, check out websites: www.carolsakai.com/nmb-gersh.htm and <http://www.walkingstick.org/>

We are doubly blessed, that Gershon will bring as his guest, Miriam Maron Emhoff who will assist him through movement, dance, music and song. Miriam has a CD, "Wings of Light", and you can learn more about her and sample her music at www.miriamscyberwell.com

Please let us know if you have a special request for a workshop, or would like to present one. Please contact Binki Segal: 604-875-6560 or Ellen Hamer: 604-873-9054 with your ideas. We also welcome offers of airline points to cover Gershon's air travel return from Albuquerque, N.M., preferably on Delta Airlines.

The retreat promises to be spiritual, restorative, stimulating and fun with davvening, an array of workshops, special programs for the children, baseball and of course our famous Sunday evening talent show! For more information contact Rhema Cossever, rhemac@shaw.ca or 604-731-0023

P.S. For those of you who may not be able to attend the retreat, or if you'd like to meet Gershon before the weekend, Banyen Books will be hosting a book signing on Thursday evening, May 15. Reb Gershon will be signing copies of his latest publication, "Magic of the Ordinary: Recovering the Shamanic in

KEREN OR**(A Beam of Light)**

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Keren Or is available on our website, orshalom.ca, or it can be sent by e-mail by contacting Michael Corber: kerenor@instanetservices.com. Adobe Acrobat is required. If you require a copy in a regular word documents to work with voice recognition software, or a taped version, contact the Editor.

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Many thanks to the Board for helping me through the bumps in this issue.

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Or Shalom Getaway: Frequently Asked Questions

When is it? The Victoria Day weekend, May 16-19, 2003.

What time does it start? Before dinner Friday night (around 6 p.m.) but you can arrive any time Friday afternoon. Also, if you wish, you can come up instead after dinner Friday or on Saturday or Sunday.

When does it finish? After lunch on Monday around 1 p.m.

Who should come? Everyone!!! Families, singles, seniors, teens and couples will all have a great time.

What can I expect? Close and meaningful contact with people and a deeper sense of what it means to be part of a spiritual community.

What if I don't want to stay for all 3 days? Come for as long as you like; you'll be charged for 1, 2 or 3 days.

What are the accommodations like? There are modern hotel rooms that sleep 1 to 4 with private baths. Also there are comfortable wooded tent sites.

How about the food? It's vegetarian, ample and delicious. Please include on the application form: any specific dietary needs.

What do we do there? We break the ice on Friday night, davven Saturday morning beneath the trees, discuss and learn Saturday afternoon, hold Havdalah and a campfire Saturday evening, learn, discuss, explore and play softball Sunday, participate in the famous Or Shalom talent show Sunday night, and take part in a community discussion (talking circle) on Monday morning. There will be plenty of time to schmooze, hike to a beautiful waterfall, relax in the Jacuzzi, and enjoy nature.

What will the kids do? An organized program led by experienced program leaders provides outdoor activities, Judaica, arts and crafts, sports and loads of fun. There is plenty of open space to ride bikes and enjoy.

Who will be our guest teacher? **Gershon Winkler** is both a renowned scholar as well as a rabbinic trickster. He has authored eleven books, including seven works on Jewish mysticism, philosophy, and folklore. For the past twenty years he has lived very close to the earth in remote wilderness regions. Gershon's personal draw to wilderness living has brought him to a fresh gleaning of rich Hebraic teachings about the attributes and powers of fauna and flora. We are doubly blessed in that Gershon will be bringing with him as his guest, Miriam Maron Emhoff who will assist him, through music, movement, song and dance.

What do I bring? Flowers and candlesticks for Shabbat, and musical instruments for the talent show or to play at the campfire. Also bring lots snacks for a late night nosh for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. If you're camping, bring tents, sleeping bags and towels. (If you're staying in the lodge, linen is provided.)

What shouldn't I bring? Alcohol, tobacco or pets.

Who has more information? Bat-Ami Segal 604-875-6560, Ellen Hamer 604-873-9054, Rhema Cossever 604-731-0023

Can I help out? Definitely!!! Call Bat-Ami, Ellen or Rhema..

Way of the Sacred Journey
Or Shalom's 13th Annual Retreat – May 16-19, 2003

Registration Form

Please submit your registration **before May 5** but earlier would be better!

Registration after May 5th may result in a 10% surcharge for meals

Names of all adult registrants _____

Address _____

Phone Numbers _____ (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Fax _____ e-mail _____

Number of Children (6 and under) _____ Names and Ages _____

Arrival Day and Time _____ *Departure Day and Time* _____

Special Requests

I want to share a room with _____ I want to share a room and need a roommate _____

I need a ride _____ I can offer a ride _____

Food allergies/ dietary requests _____ Other _____

Retreat Fee (1 day \$40, 2 days \$75, 3 days \$100)

Children (\$15 for the whole retreat) Total Retreat Fees (a) \$ _____

Desired Accommodation Tent Lodge

Accommodation Costs

Tent \$10.00 per night per family

Cost per Lodge Rooms (per night) Single \$46, Double \$56, Triple \$62, Four People \$70

Each room contains two double beds (cots are also available)

(When sharing, calculate your portion of cost) Total Accommodation Costs (b) \$ _____

MEALS (Vegetarian)

Over age 6: \$23 per day. Age 2-6: \$12.50

Each meal separately will be \$5 for ages 2-6 and \$9.00 for all others

Total Meal Costs (c) \$ _____

TOTAL REMITTANCE (from above) a + b + c = \$ _____

Method of payment (Full payment must accompany this form)

Cheque payable to Or Shalom

Credit Card: VISA MasterCard # _____ Expiry Date _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

Please bring munchies for late night snacks: Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Fax this form to 872-4406 or mail to Retreat, Or Shalom 710 E. 10th Ave., Vancouver BC V5T 2A7

Additional Information: Ellen Hamer – 604-873-9054 or Bat-Ami Segal- 604-875-6560