

# KEREN OR

ב'ה

THE NEWSLETTER OF OR SHALOM קרן אור

Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, Vancouver, B.C.

orshalom.bc.ca

Iyar/Sivan/Tammuz 5760 June/July 2000

**Iyar/Sivan/Tammuz 5760  
June/July 2000**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Reb Site: Same Divine Spark Is in Each of Us.....	2
Tikkun Leyl Shavuot June 8.....	3
Pre-Shavuot Women's Event June 4.....	3
JCC Is Our New Home for the High Holidays.....	4
Glimpses Into Or Shalom's History on Website .....	4
Experiencing the <i>Ayn Od</i> of Divine Presence.....	5
Bar Mitzvah Dvar Torah: Evil Is Part of Balance of Life..	6
Retreat Felt Like a Resort and a Shtetl.....	7
Expert Israeli Teachers to Lead Mini-Ulpan.....	8
Or Shalom Hebrew School News.....	9
Great Opportunities for Shabbat Afternoon Learning..	9
Learn Talmud Wednesday Mornings.....	10
Rabbi Dina-Hasida's New Place.....	10
Kabbalat Shabbat at Louis Brier June 30.....	10
Kabbalat Shabbat/Picnic Dinner on Beach June 23....	10
Recent Donations.....	10
Kabbalat Shabbat/Havdalah at Folk Fest July 14-16....	11
Big Thank You to Our Volunteers.....	11
Gemilut <u>H</u> esed Fund Set Up.....	11
Keren Or Contributors.....	11

# KEREN OR

THE NEWSLETTER OF OR SHALOM קרן אור

Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, Vancouver, B.C.

orshalom.bc.ca

Iyar/Sivan/Tammuz 5760 June/July 2000

## SAME DIVINE SPARK IS IN EACH OF US

By Rabbi David Mivasair

*Le-eila min kol birchata ve-shirata*  
– beyond all blessings and songs.

There simply are no words. Tiny fingers, toes smaller than peas, eyes dark and deep that search right into mine, lungs that rhythmically fill with air from the moment of birth . . . there simply are no words at all. Awesome wonder fills the heart in the presence of a soul newly born.

Our new daughter Miriam's entire journey into this world has filled me with awe and wonder. She grew from nearly nothing, as do we all, and was born so earthly and fully formed. Seemingly she came from nowhere and now is at home here as if she has always been with us. The biology of pregnancy and birth is well-known – yet so much is a mystery beyond knowing. Where do we really come from? What are we? Does anyone know?

Seeing her body grow to sustain her soul and then finally holding her in my own arms brought me back to knowing all over again that we are each a vessel for life itself to come into this world. We are embodiments of divine energy. Michal and I are not the sources of Miriam's being; we are the instruments through which life's longing for itself could come to be. God acts through us. Kabbalah teaches that our individuality, our separateness itself, is a garb, a covering, for the *biyut*, the divine spark which is our essence, so that it can exist in this

### THE REB SITE

world as a person. The essence within is life eternal flowing from one form to another. As we say in the brachah after reading the Torah, "*Ve-hayei olam nata' be-tochainu* – and life eternal planted within us." The vessels come and go – the *biyut* itself flows through us all the way from the very beginning of life untold eons ago.

It is not hard to see God in a baby's eyes. A sense of wonder opens our hearts to a newborn soul as an embodiment of the divine. Only rarely, though, does that sense of wonder come when we see one who has been in this world longer. A baby is so clearly a miracle; why not an eight-year-old? A 48-year-old? For so many of us, holding a baby brings a sweet peace. We are close to the divine. We transcend the present.

Can we find the same sense of wonder as we approach someone who once was a baby but has since grown up? Isn't everyone one of us just as much an embodiment of the divine even as we grow older? And isn't every creature born into this world as much a miracle as a baby? It is as the Zohar says, *Leit atar panui mineh* – there is no place devoid of the holy presence. *Yehi ratzon* – may it be God's will that as I look up from my baby's eyes I will remember always that the

same divine spark of life eternal is planted within each one that I encounter.



— Lorne Mallin photo

*David and Michal Mivasair at the Retreat with Miriam, who was born on Tuesday, April 25.*

### OUTPOURING OF LOVE

Michal and I cannot find the words to thank everyone in the Or Shalom community for the great outpouring of love that you have sent our way as our new daughter Miriam Shefa Netzah came into this world. We experience all we have been offered as expressions of the giving and receiving that ripples through the web of life and through our community as a whole. May the day soon come when every baby will enter this world so well-loved and cared for by so many gentle hands and hearts.

## SHAVUOT

### YEARNING FOR THE LEARNING? TIKKUN LEYL SHAVUOT JUNE 8

The journey that begins each year at the seder table brings us 50 days later to stand again at Sinai on Shavuot, called by the rabbis *Zman Matan Torateinu* — the time of the Giving of Our Torah. To open our hearts, minds and souls as deeply as possible to all the new Torah that is being offered to us this year, we stay up through the night of Shavuot — this year June 8 — learning and exploring Torah together.

This year Or Shalom's Tikkun Leyl Shavuot will be in two locations. You are invited to come to either or to both. We'll begin at 9 p.m. at the Mivasair's home at 2644 Manitoba Street.

Teachings will be offered by Reb David, Lorne Mallin and others. If you'd like to teach or lead a discussion on any topic of interest, please contact Reb David. Please feel free to bring any kosher snacks or desserts to share. We might spend the whole night learning until dawn and davven at day-break outside in the park across the street.

At midnight some of us will convene at the Grind coffeehouse at 4124 Main Street with Barry Goodman for more learning and exploring in a dif-

ferent venue. For more information, call Barry at 876-1492 or Reb David at 872-1614.

### PRE-SHAVUOT WOMEN'S EVENT ON JUNE 4

The first pre-Shavuot Women's Event will be held on Sunday, June 4, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Or Shalom. This afternoon gathering will offer an opportunity to prepare for the holiday of Shavuot within a group of women, Bat Mitzvah age and up.

We will prepare for revelation and to receive Torah as we walk through the Seven Sephirot of the Omer, learn from a re-enactment of the Book of Ruth (a 'Jewcy' story of love and devotion), sing, read Torah and more. Pass the word on to your women friends and family.

What to bring: Money for Tzedakah; Food Bank items; a pillow to sit on.

The cost is \$7. Please call Or Shalom to register: 872-1614.

If you would like to join us in preparing the event, please call Bat Ami at 875-6560 or Sandi at 875-8791.

— *Jane, Sandi, Gloria, Sheryl, Nomi, Myrna, Carol Ann, Michal, Pam, Mary, Bat-Ami, Vicki, Hana*

## JCC IS OUR NEW HOME FOR THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

By *Dodie Katzenstein*

Or Shalom's High Holiday services this fall will have a new location. After holding High Holiday services at Talmud Torah School for the past 14 years, Or Shalom will be moving to the Wosk Auditorium at the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) for Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

The move is necessary because Beth Israel synagogue, which is adjacent to Talmud Torah, will be using the school this year to provide additional space for its own services. Beth Israel has a contractual agreement with the school giving BI first rights to that space. Several discussions involving Or Shalom board members and representatives of Beth Israel failed to result in a solution enabling Or Shalom to continue using Talmud Torah.

Fran Ritch, who is co-ordinating arrangements with the JCC, says the Wosk Auditorium at the JCC "is a nice space and will provide a good environment for our services." She adds that the JCC is wheelchair accessible, has ample facilities for children, and will make its parking lot available at no charge. The traditional Or

Shalom Break the Fast meal will also be accommodated at the JCC. Fran and Mary Adlersberg have begun planning for the holidays and welcome volunteers to join them.

Or Shalom will make an extra effort to distribute pre-holiday information so that members of the community — including those

who attend only on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur — are aware of the change in location.

More information will also be provided in the August-September Keren Or and the website: orshalom.bc.ca

#### **BEGIN TO PREPARE FOR HIGH HOLIDAY DAVVENING**

In the next couple of months, I will begin putting together Or Shalom's High Holiday davvening for next year. If you would like to share in any leadership of the davvening, or offer any readings, songs, or poems or other contributions, please contact me soon. I would like to involve new chevra in leading as well as many of our community's favourite beloved davvening leaders from the past.

— *Reb David*

## GLIMPSSES INTO OR SHALOM'S HISTORY ON WEBSITE

By Avi Dolgin

Do you sometimes wonder about the history behind the things you see at Or Shalom? Who gave us that Sefer Torah? Who made that art piece on the wall? Many of the wonderful objects in Or Shalom tell a story. It may be the story of a former owner, or the joy of creation as an Or Shalomnik fashioned the material, or of a loved one memorialized by this purchase.

Many of these stories have now been brought together. The stories, with a sample of photographs, have been added to our website for all to see. To find this record of our richness, go to <http://orshalom.bc.ca>. You will find "history" listed on the Asiyah (Doing) page. Follow that link. Click upon the picture or upon the text to bring you the story in the words of its donor or creator. Then, when you are next in the building, look again at these gifts and think of the history and community they represent.

In 1998 the Board directed that a book of our history and donors be compiled. That book is in process. This virtual book is part of that directive. And, as with all forms of expression at Or Shalom, it is open to your input. Just click.

Below are two of the histories found on our website:

### THE HOLY UMBILICAL CORD

- Created by Hanna Tiferet and Daniel Siegel and the Or Shalom Community

By Roslyn Kumin

If you walk into the Or Shalom shul at 10th and Fraser today, you will find a homey, but very respectable synagogue. There are proper pews to sit on (although a few die-hards still insist on sitting on the floor). An elegant chandelier lights up the carefully refined interior and the Torahs are housed in a large and beautifully crafted ark. But what is this, hanging from knobs at the front of the ark? You might think that the loosely braided, not quite balanced, multi-coloured cord is something that the children left there by mistake. This cord is not from Or Shalom's children.

It is from Or Shalom's parents, Rabbi Daniel and Hanna Tiferet Siegel. They were the ones who first gathered the souls, opened the gates of prayer and started the music that brought Or Shalom into existence and turned it into a congregation. Children grow up, parents move on, and the generations go their separate ways. But how do you say goodbye? It was Hanna, a mother, who realized that we had to cut the umbilical cord, both figuratively and literally. So, with Hanna and Daniel at one end of a bou-



of coloured cords and the Or Shalom members at the other, we danced around each other weaving the cords into one long, firm braid that united the founding rabbis with their growing minyan. And then we cut the cord. Daniel and Hanna took their half, a little piece of Or Shalom, with them as they moved on. And, to this day, Or Shalom keeps a slightly tattered braid in its ark, so that we will never forget how two good people, many years ago, gathered together a minyan and formed a new house in Israel.

### THE LITTLE ARON KODESH

By Naomi Katz

When people notice the little Aron Kodesh (Holy Ark) high up on Frank Segal's Aron Kodesh, behind Avi Dolgin's Ner Tamid (Eternal Light), they wonder where it came from. Well, it was among my father's effects when he died. My father was a rabbi in Vancouver in the 1940s, and when he retired he travelled into the smaller communities in the United States for the High Holidays, taking my mother (of blessed memory) and this little Ark containing a mini-Torah with him. Where he managed to find it, I do not know.

After he died in 1969 I came into possession of it and it was a treasured relic of my father's career. However, when we moved from a big house to a smaller one, it seemed to me that the Aron Kodesh belonged where more people could appreciate it. The logical choice was Or Shalom. It does my heart good when the little Torah from it is carried by children so lovingly in the Simhat Torah parade. As Or Shalom endures, so will my treasured memories.

---

# EXPERIENCING THE AYN OD OF DIVINE PRESENCE

## Part 2 of 2

By Leonard Yehuda Angel

Since this is a very brief discussion, I'll cut to the chase. We have three options. Option 1: We can defend the view that the mind is separable from the physical, which is found in traditional Kabbalah, and hold that science has to catch up to the ancient Kabbalah, that the studies on prayer at a distance, etc., are showing that Kabbalah is right about mind being separable from the physical, and so on. Option 2: We can treat the Kabbalah as a set of metaphors with no metaphysical commitment attached to them. These metaphors are just a mythic way of thinking. And Option 3: We can find a form of mysticism that is not threatened by, nor threatening to, modern science and modernistic philosophical commitment to critical thinking.

The trouble with Option 1 is that it makes spirituality conditional on a certain empirical finding. That seems much too risky, especially given the apparent remoteness of the empirical finding that has to come about. In the past, the big impact of science on religion has been in the other direction. We've had to give up false ideas of specialness ("We're at the centre of the universe — the sun revolves around us, and so does everything else"; and "we're a special creation as a species; God created us specifically to be as we are; we did not evolve by complex chancy conditions involving adaptation, etc."). Now those old ideas of specialness do not seem essential. Do we want to know how it felt years ago, how threatening those newfangled ideas that the Earth is moving around the sun, and (later) that humans evolved from apes? We just have to ask ourselves how it feels to be told that we are not really contra-causally free beings. That sounds awfully threatening to many!

It seems very much as though the proponents of Option 1 are going in the reverse direction of the direction in which science has impacted on religion in the past. It was proclaimed: We are special — we have this special kind of freedom, true freedom of the will; we have minds that are not "mere" evolutions of the physical systems of organizations, etc. And giving up the old false ideas of specialness, being at the centre, and being created specially as a species, had a purifying effect on religion. Perhaps if we give up what looks very much as though it

might be a false idea of specialness of mind over matter, we will also purify our religious attitudes. For both reasons — and the main one is the staking of spirituality on an empirical scientific result — we are making spirituality dependent on an unknown scientific outcome. This hardly seems wise.

The troubles with Option 2 are that few people remember the warning, "But this is all a metaphor"; and in any case people want to know what they may literally believe concerning survival of consciousness after death of the body, whether God is a Person, whether there is a mind influence on matter, etc. So there is a pragmatic and a philosophical need to fill in the story, to think through one's beliefs. It leaves the philosophical questions wide open.

---

Mysticism is the view that it is possible to experience the world without the psychological construct of the self-other boundary. In small tastes, everyone knows something of this. When one dances, sometimes, there is a delightful spontaneity in which it is not I that am doing the dancing, but the dance that is dancing me.

---

Option 3, then, is our best bet, if it can be done. But can it be done? Can mysticism be freed from the idea that mind must be separable from the material world? Yes. Mysticism centres around the release from modes of ego-identification. These released states need not imply any mind over matter phenomena that would be challenging to science; nor are these sorts of experiences challenged by science since, when they are described as

modes of experience, they are the data to be explained by science.

What, then, is mysticism, in this Haskalah-Kabbalah fusion in which both Haskalah and Kabbalah have their full say as far as essential views go? Mysticism is the view that it is possible to experience the world without the psychological construct of the self-other boundary. In small tastes, everyone knows something of this. When one dances, sometimes, there is a delightful spontaneity in which it is not I that am doing the dancing, but the dance that is dancing me. Mindfulness, in moment after moment, of the spontaneity and simplicity that underlies all our doings we can release from the boundaried ego experience, and live in a state of simplicity, spontaneity, and the sense of the joyous mystery of Now, that, in both Haskalah and Kabbalah, can be understood as the experience of Divine Presence. And in large tastes, this mysticism becomes the full-fledged experience expressed by the well-known exclamations *Ayn od* — there is nothing other than God!

May we all experience this Simplicity, Temimut, Divine Presence on an ongoing basis in our lives.

By James Doyle

## PARASHAT ACAHAREI MOT: APRIL 29, 2000

Acharei Mot is mainly about two things: rules for the Kohen Gadol, the chief rabbi of the community to follow, and rules for the community to follow. The rules for the Kohen Gadol are regarding the rituals on entering the Kodesh HaKodeshim, the part of the temple that the Jews built that only the Kohen Gadol is allowed to enter. The rules for the community deal with forbidden marriages, dietary laws and sacrifices to molech (a god of one of the tribes surrounding the Children of Israel). Hashem said that if the Jewish people followed these rules then the land would not spit them out like it had the people before them.

One point I would like to talk about is why G-d said that the land would spit the people out. It's as though the land had a mind of its own. If the land didn't like what the people were doing, it could decide that it didn't want them there and kick them out. That doesn't make sense to me because I don't think that inanimate objects (like the land) can think for themselves, let alone exile an entire nation. I think this means that G-d would exile them. People would regard the land as a physical part of G-d and relate to what was being said. Nowadays, people don't often think of G-d as being physical and might not understand the metaphor. We might think that it is meant to be taken literally and so dismiss the whole idea. Another point I would like to focus on is the sacrifices. To us, the word sacrifice means to give something up. In the Torah, however, the Hebrew word used, *korban* literally means to get closer. It's as though when you give something, you get closer to G-d. The word used in the translation is sacrifice but I think offering would be a more accurate translation. The Jewish people were offering something to G-d in order to get closer. The Torah says when sacrificing animals, to sprinkle their blood on the altar. This might sound pretty gruesome but it was a way of giving something. Today people would probably donate money to a charity or donate time to work in a soup kitchen to achieve the same thing that the Jews then did with their sacrifices. That is giving something so you feel like you have contributed and maybe make up for any wrongs that you might have committed. Because we don't perform animal sacrifices anymore, it might be a little hard to imagine why they were sacrificing animals to begin with. In biblical times, when people lived closer to the land, animals were a very important part of people's lives. Animals were not only used for food but for clothing and work too. They were also used for trading and



as a currency. Nowadays, we buy most of our things at a store with cash instead of bartering with animals. Giving up an animal was a way of offering something to G-d.

One of the laws that stands out is that of forbidden relationships, mostly prohibiting sexual relations within families. I think that the Torah has these rules to protect families. I think that the family could not survive without those types of restrictions and laws. Because the family is so important, the rules protecting it are equally so.

Another thing that I would like to discuss is the problem of evil. Elsewhere in the Torah, it is said that the children of Israel should get rid of the evil in their midst. I think that people have two parts to them, a good part and a bad part. People cannot completely eliminate the bad part but must learn to control it. Evil may be unpleasant but it is part of the balance of life. Without a negative part in us we could not perform some simple daily tasks, such as slaughtering animals, or even harvesting vegetables or chopping plants. So people must learn to live with the bad but control it. Perhaps the laws if Torah help us practise self-restraint and control our evil impulses. I think that G-d is the same way. If a mere individual cannot exist without good and bad, how can the ruler of the universe? Creation cannot exist without a balance between good and bad.

Overall, this parsha is about being holy. It tells the Children of Israel both to be holy and how to be holy. Some of the laws stated here might seem a little picky if you read them all but could you imagine reading a modern law book cover to cover? Other rules might seem obvious but that is because they are part of our culture. But when the Torah was received, the culture would have been different so those rules may not have been so obvious. That is why the Torah explains all the exact detail of everyday life.

Probably everybody doesn't follow all these rules all the time but they are an outline for what the Torah deems to be "ideal". Of course, we don't live like we did thousands of years ago so some of the laws might be hard to relate to. If the Torah was written today, it might contain details of our modern day-to-day life and might be easier to relate to. But the message would still be the same. G-d was telling the Israelites the difference between good and evil. There were a lot of other tribes living near them when the Torah was given and they might have been tempted to follow their ways. G-d sent the Torah to set the Children of Israel on the right path and to bring them all together, regardless of their backgrounds, and tell them that they should always try to be holy.

---

---

## 10TH ANNUAL RETREAT – GET AWAY AND GET TOGETHER

---



— Ann Silver photo

*Retreat daveners pose against a backdrop of low-lying, fast-moving clouds and awe-inspiring mountains.*

## RETREAT FELT LIKE A RESORT AND A SHTETL

*By Celia Brauer*

The 10th annual Or Shalom Retreat at Camp Hope was great. Why was it great? For lots of reasons.

First of all it felt like a combination of a resort and a shtetl. A resort because my husband didn't have to think about work and I didn't have to think about what I was cooking for dinner. Our daughter enjoyed it because there were people of all ages all over the place and games to play and artwork to make and her mother and father didn't bother her about getting somewhere on time, locking up her bicycle and eating the food that Mommy prepares.

It was like a shtetl because the place was full of Jewish people most of whom knew one another. I have lived in places where a great deal of my neighbourhood was Jewish but people didn't necessarily know one another through a Jewish community. At our Retreat, the 100 people there had pretty well the same ideas about

Judaism, which felt really good. We didn't have to get embroiled in basic arguments. We could elevate ourselves to discussing higher things, which was a pleasure. And if you were confused about anything Jewish, you had not one, or two Renewal Rebbes to consult, but three of the finest specimens on the West Coast (all originally came from the East, and from down south, but we've magnetized them West somehow, and even North, so there must be something we're doing here that draws them!).

If you needed someone to play guitar with late on Saturday night, there they were. If you needed someone to share breakfast with, or talk to there they were. If you wanted to hike, you didn't have to leave really early on a Sunday morning to beat the traffic on the Lion's Gate Bridge. You could just walk out the door and turn right. If you wanted to learn some really neat Jewish stuff, there it was, with some really perceptive people contributing.

And you didn't have to decide whether or not to go to shul. It was right there! And you could also show off your talent in a Talent Show and do it in an atmosphere of humour, not of judgement. I can imagine that some of these things were part of the shtetl life once upon a time when Jewish people lived close together in a small village.

Of course, this is all idealized. The shtetl had its claustrophobia and its intensely harsh realities as people struggled to make enough money to eat. But for a brief weekend we lived a little Jewish village dream and enjoyed it. I found myself seeing Or Shalomniks in my mind's eye on the way home. I could have sworn I saw Hillel Goelman coming out of a store in Aggasiz, Lorne Greenberg in one of the cars on the Port Mann Bridge and Natasha Gurstein in the park this morning. And I couldn't get used to people not wearing kippot after we

left Camp Hope. Most hats from far looked like kippot to me. Funny what three days of familiar faces and images can do to the brain!

It's not easy to duplicate the Retreat, as much as we try. You need to get away to get together like that. You need to live together for a few days, study together, laugh and cry together. In the city, our work and family realities take over. But our sense of community doesn't have to fade. We can keep the spark of the Retreat alive. And we should. Because it is special.

Take some energy from the group and let it light up your life, if only from the inside. It inevitably moves outward into the world. The world needs more community, more Retreats. I am glad I went to the Retreat this year because, once again, I have something warm inside to remind me of how a community can be.



— Ann Silver photos

*Our superb guest teacher this year was Rabbi David Zaslav from Ashland, Ore. At right he instructs Sarah Leavitt in how, for the first time, to put on tefillin from her great-grandfather Yehoshua Zev ben Yaakov Yehuda Halevi. Sarah described it as 'an incredible rite of passage.' Looking on are, left, Jan Fishman, Efron Esseiva and daughter Zoe.*

## EXPERT ISRAELI TEACHERS TO LEAD VANCOUVER SUMMER MINI-ULPAN

An excellent teaching team has been assembled for the first Hebrew immersion program in Vancouver. Head teacher Rahel Halabe and Soshana Hofman, both expert Israeli educators, will be the instructors for the Vancouver Summer Mini-Ulpan, an extension of Or Shalom's adult education programs.

The Mini-Ulpan will be held from Monday, Aug. 14, to Friday, Aug. 18, at Or Shalom. Classes will begin at 9 and conclude at 2:30 p.m. The program is designed to enrich students' vocabulary, give them confidence in conversation, encourage them to read more than a textbook and deepen their understanding of Hebrew grammar.

Students will work in a small group with text materials as well as discussions, listening exercises, videos, games, songs, reading, writing and optional field trips. The course level is Ulpan Level Beit — low-intermediate. Students are expected to have completed the Level Alef textbook or an equivalent. Call Rahel at 879-2677 for a level check.

Cost for the program is \$250 for early registration by July 14. Cost after that before the Aug. 1 registration deadline is \$300. For information or a registration form, please contact Rahel at 879-2677 or rahel@telus.net, or Lorne Mallin at 222-3379 or lmallin@telus.net.



## OR SHALOM HEBREW SCHOOL NEWS

By Nurit Fox, Principal

The end-of-year celebration is just around the corner. Our students accomplished a lot throughout this year, and as is the case with any kind of learning, the more one learns, the more one realizes how much more there is to learn. So planning for next year is underway.

Our younger students had the opportunity to bake their own matzah for Passover at the Model Matzah Bakery at the JCC. They started from scratch as they ground the grains of wheat to make their own flour, separated the flower from the kernels, kneaded and rolled the dough and baked their own round, hand-made matzah. Naturally, they tasted it too, and it was good. In addition to the matzah, they brought home their apron and a baker's hat.

All our children participated in beautiful model Passover seders, the older ones enjoying once again the seder at the home of Rachel Snarch. Most of our students used their new seder plates that we designed and coloured on paper at school, and then sent for an imprinting process onto real plates. All the designs were magnificent — a real treasure which should endure.

Yom HaShoah was observed throughout the school with special services, prayers and readings, and the lighting of memorial candles by students.

On Yom HaAtzmaut we made our own beautifully decorated birthday cupcakes for Israel, and taught the children about the country's history, its virtues and the issues that lie ahead. Some of our Tzedaka money will be directed towards the establishment of schools for both Israeli and Arab children.

New students are welcomed at all grade levels for next year. If you know of families with school-aged children,



— Claudie Azoulai Snarch photo  
Students and teachers display the seder plates they created and used for the Hebrew School's model seders.

who are not yet attending a Jewish school, please encourage them to come and join us in our endeavour, to teach the words of Torah to our children in a wonderful atmosphere.

Our end-of-year celebration will be held on Thursday, June 15 at 6:15 p.m. and will include a potluck dinner.

## GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHABBAT AFTERNOON LEARNING

**June 17, 2-4 p.m. — “*Le-eila min kol birchata — Beyond All Blessings*”**

The kaddish is one of the most widely said and well-known traditional Jewish prayers, yet how well is it understood in depth? One who davvens regularly with a minyan says the Kaddish seven times every day — and even more if they are remembering a loved one who passed from this world. What is this ancient prayer really about? What are our kavvanot when we say it? We'll read the Kaddish slowly word by word, line by line, to understand the layers of meaning in its familiar words

and rhythms. We'll also look at the history of the Kaddish and some of the halachot and customs about saying it.

**July 1, 2-4 p.m. “*Even if a snake is coiled at your heel — don't stop davvening*”**

The intention in davvening is to develop through concentration an awareness of our relationship with the Holy One. The rabbis in the Mishnah taught that one should not stand to davven without the proper mental attitude. The Talmud expands the discussion and

applies it to specific circumstances, some common and some quite unusual. This afternoon we'll take a look at some of the rabbinic reflections on the state of mind in prayer which are taught in the fifth chapter of mashechet Brachot in the Babylonian Talmud.

**July 8, 2-4 p.m. "And Hannah, she spoke to her heart" — Explore one of Reb David's favourite Talmud passages**

Every Rosh HaShanah we experience new beginnings as we yearn to return to the Source of It All. Our haftarah on the first day of Rosh HaShanah reflects new beginnings and the yearning for a deep, transformative soul-connection. It comes from the beginning of the book of Samuel, which tells of his mother Hannah's urgent prayer for a child and how Eli the priest mistook her for a drunken woman.

When Moshe Renert told me he's interested in reading the haftarah on Rosh HaShanah, I invited him to study with me a fascinating interpretation of this seemingly simple story. Rav Hamnuna in the Talmud (Brachot 31a) found in Hannah the model for prayer. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah's multilayered midrash goes even farther. He sees Hannah calling for a radical paradigm shift to bring about a whole new stage in the life of the Jewish people. We've set aside the afternoon of Shabbat Pinhas (July 8) to learn it. Come and join us. I'll copy texts in English and Hebrew, so please let me know in advance that you'll be there.

**LEARN TALMUD WEDNESDAY MORNINGS**

On Wednesday mornings in June and July, Or Shalomniks will have an opportunity to dive into the sea of the Talmud with Reb David. At the initiative of Jan Fishman, we'll meet 9-9:45 following the morning davvening. The study sessions are open to beginners. If you have any questions, please call Reb David.

**NEWS AND SHMOOZE**

**PLACE OF ONE'S OWN** With thanks to God, friends and family, I have finally settled into a place of my own. Folks are invited to join me for an open house June 14 between 2 and 5 p.m. at #204 550 East 7th Ave., Vancouver. RSVP to 876-2770 — *Dina-Hasida*

**KABBALAT SHABBAT AT LOUIS BRIER** Or Shalom will once again join the elders of the Louis Brier Home to celebrate Shabbat together on June 30. Kabbalat Shabbat at the Louis Brier begins at 4 p.m. Their singing and davvening is wonderfully energetic and dynamic — Or Shalom folks love it! We will have a simple vegetarian Shabbat dinner at 6 p.m. and share a singalong kumsitz with the elders from 7 p.m. until about 9 or 9:30. Please RSVP by June 23 to Reb David for dinner, which will cost approximately \$10.

**RECENT DONATIONS**

**Community Fund**

- In honour of Mary Adlersberg
- In memory of Joseph Goldstein, z"l
- In honour of Anna Wydra - Bat Mitzvah
- In memory of Joseph Goldstein, z"l
- In honour of the birth of Miriam Mivasair
- In honour of Mary Adlersberg – for being the person you are

**Tzedaka Fund**

- In memory of Mark Rabinowitz, z"l

**East Side Food Fund**

- In honour of Peter Bayerthal – 65th birthday
- In memory of Alfred Weinstein, z"l
- With thanks to Ruth & Avi Dolgin
- With thanks to Mary Adlersberg

**Book Fund**

- In memory of Rabbi Yaakov Rosenberg, z"l

**Building Fund**

- In memory of Mary Alice, z"l
- In memory of Sid Hechter, z"l
- In honour of the betrothal of Lianne Ritch
- In honour of Bram Weinstein – Bar Mitzvah
- In honour of Jared Bernstein – Bar Mitzvah

**Gemilut Hesed**

- In honour of Bat-Ami & Frank Segal
- In honour of Bram Weinstein – Bar Mitzvah
- In honour of all ride-givers

**Rabbi's Fund**

- In memory of Hanna Weinstein, z"l

**Lisa Nemetz Or Shalom School Education Fund**

- In honour of Jessica Hayden – Bat Mitzvah

**Len Ryant Or Shalom Children's Fund**

- In thanks to Michael Corber, Elana Brief & Barry Goodman for all the beautiful music and good vibes at Miriam Shefa Netzah's Simhat Bat

**KABBALAT SHABBAT AND PICNIC DINNER ON THE BEACH**

Celebrate the coming of Shabbat on June 23, the latest Kabbalat Shabbat of the year, with a picnic dinner in the park at Jericho Beach East, the site of the Folk Fest. Bring your own outdoor dinner, Frisbees, kites, guitars, drums and lots of mid-summer Shabbat spirit. Come anytime after 5 p.m. and stay as late as you like. Those who want to be home before sundown will have plenty of time to enjoy being together.

## KABBALAT SHABBAT AND HAVDALAH AT FOLK FEST

Celebrate the new Or Shalom tradition of Kabbalat Shabbat at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival July 14-15. Over the past three years, hundreds of folks have come out of the crowd to join us. We'll gather on erev Shabbat near the tree between the main stage and the beach around 20 minutes before sunset to light candles, make kiddush, share some hallah and sing. Then, after three stars come out on motz'ei Shabbat, we'll gather in the same place with wine, spices, candles and song again to let go of the holy Shabbat. — *Reb David*

**TO OR SHALOM** I'm a volunteer with the St. Roch II expedition around North America and through the Northwest Passage May 14-Oct. 15, raising awareness of the original St. Roch's need for protection and repair. Drop an e-mail to me at [wetmap@hotmail.com](mailto:wetmap@hotmail.com) to receive a voyage chronicle as it happens. Much love, — *Lionel Johnston*

## BIG THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

By *Celia Brauer*

Or Shalom is a unique community and within it there is a great deal of opportunity to do volunteer work. As someone who has seen Or Shalom evolve over the years, I feel it would be a nice gesture to thank the army of volunteers who contribute regularly to make Or Shalom the community that it is. A great big thank you to the people who (not in any particular order):

- lead the religious services.
- read from the Torah.
- give Divrei Torah.
- volunteer to teach classes.
- create and help with the newsletter.
- sit on the Board of Directors.
- sit on the School Committee.
- comfort the bereaved.
- take care of and help entertain kids.
- put up and take down the sukkah.
- organize shul maintenance.
- offer (and organize) Kiddush lunches.
- cook, clean up and shop for food for special occasions.
- contribute to potlucks.

- create ritual objects, quilts, etc.
- create music and share it.
- organize and volunteer for garage sales, galas, cyber-auctions and other fundraising events.
- sit on any number of committees to discuss: membership, shul esthetics, house affairs, healing the Earth, feeding the poor, tending to the sick, creating and maintaining the garden and many more committees too numerous to mention.
- organize and volunteer for retreats, High Holiday services, Rosh Hodesh evenings, Hanukka and Purim parties, community Pesah and Tu Be'Shvat seders, Shavuot all nighters, Kabbalat Shabbat, etc.
- play music, sing, and do artwork to enhance the hagim and other events.
- and last but not least — participate! What would a bunch of volunteers be if there was no one there to participate in events!
- and a special mention to the paid staff at Or Shalom, who do more than their fair share of extra work as well.

Sorry if anyone was left out. Is anyone interested in organizing a volunteer appreciation night?

## GEMILUT HESED FUND SET UP

By *Carol Pearlstone*

Or Shalom now has a Gemilut Hesed Fund. This will mostly be used for shiva support and sympathy and mazel tov cards and for postage. The fund has kicked off with small donations and more contributions are needed. Our main activity in April was matching for Pesah seders. Thanks to committee member Rory Richards, everyone who so requested got to attend a Seder and these included both Or Shalom members and non-members. Twenty-five families and a group of women were hosts, including a few non-Or Shalom families. A huge *today rabah* to Rory for her hard work and organizational skills and also to all the generous hosts. Our committee welcomes new members. Contact Miriam Caplan at 875-6807.

## KEREN OR קרן אור

(Beam of Light)

is published six times a year by the Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, 710 East 10th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V5T 2A7. Tel: (604) 872-1614 Fax: 872-4406. E-mail address: [orshalom@telus.net](mailto:orshalom@telus.net). Website: <http://orshalom.bc.ca>

August/September  
issue deadline  
3 p.m., Wednesday,  
July 12, 2000.

The authors, 2000  
**EDITOR**  
Lorne Mallin  
222-3379  
[lmallin@telus.net](mailto:lmallin@telus.net)

### CONTRIBUTORS

L. Yehuda Angel  
Celia Brauer  
Avi Dolgin  
James Doyle  
Nurit Fox  
Naomi Katz  
Dodie Katzenstein  
Roslyn Kunin

David Mivasair  
Carol Pearlstone  
Frank Segal  
Ann Silver  
Claudie Azoulai  
Snarch  
Hana Wosk  
**PROOFREADER**  
Jan Fishman