

KEREN OR

ב"ה

THE NEWSLETTER OF OR SHALOM קרן אור

Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, Vancouver, B.C. orshalom.ca Tishrei/Heshvan/Kislev 5762 October/November 2001

Tishrei/Heshvan/Kislev 5762
October/November 2001

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Reb Site: Why Do Innocents Suffer So Unjustly?.....	2
Board Endorses Same-Sex Marriages.....	3
AGM Elects New Board Members	3
Rethinking Our Fundraising	3
Sukkot and the Environment: Family Celebration	4
Donations to East Side Fund: More Than 1,600 Meals...	4
Poetry: White Beach at Yellowpoint	5
Poetry: When.....	5
Family Davening Oct. 27, Nov. 24.....	5
Habitat for Humanity Seeking Volunteers.....	6
Community Came Together for YomTov.....	6
Last Year in Jerusalem.....	6
Dvar Torah: At a Very Important Crossroads.....	7
Dvar Torah: Is Our Society Based on Fear?.....	8
Many Opportunities to Learn Hebrew This Fall.....	9
Reb Hillel Plans Series of Classes, Davening Group....	9
What Does It Mean “to Keep the Shabbat” ?	10
Digging Deeper: Shabbat Afternoon Torah Study.....	10
Immersion & Conversion Course: Broad and Deep....	10
Recent Donations.....	10
‘Palm Tree of Deborah’ Study Group Begins Again. ..	11
News & Schmooze.....	11

KEREN OR

ב'יה

THE NEWSLETTER OF OR SHALOM קרן אור

Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, Vancouver, B.C. orshalom.ca Tishrei/Heshvan/Kislev 5762 October/November 2001

WHY DO INNOCENTS SUFFER SO UNJUSTLY?

By Rabbi David Mivasair

Lately I've been drawn to the Book of Job. Perhaps the most unbiblical book in the Bible, Job wrestles mightily with questions of undeserved suffering, terrible questions that many of us are asking ourselves and our friends in these trying times.

Why do perfectly innocent people suffer so unjustly? Against the repeated promises of divine reward and punishment so prominent throughout the Torah and Prophets, Job's conclusion provides a striking contrast. Job leaves me with huge questions, not simple answers. Job describes the world much the way I know it to be and offers a point of departure for further understanding.

A thoroughly righteous man, Job suddenly and unexplainably suffers terrible reverses. His beloved children, his abundant flocks and fertile crops all inexplicably die. He is inflicted with agonizing physical pain and experiences unspeakable suffering without knowing why. He is confident that he does not deserve it. He has been righteous and there is no reason for God to punish him.

Three friends come to comfort Job, each rationalizing his suffering with pious theorizing. Each maintains that God is just, so there must be a reason for Job's suffering. Job rejects all their claims, asserting his innocence. Even his wife begs him to escape his suffering, "Curse God and die." But he doesn't. Job never curses God nor does he deny God's reality. Although he feels that God has abandoned him, he does not abandon God. Over and over again he pleads and then demands of God an explanation. Finally, a voice comes forth from the whirlwind

THE REB SITE

describing the vast unfathomable beauties of the cosmos and asks Job, "Where were you when I laid the Earth's foundations? taught the lion to roar? the eagle to fly? the morning star to shine in the heavens? You think you'll understand?!" Job's humble reply, "*Nifla'ot mimeni, ve-lo eda* — It's too wondrous for me; I'll never know." brings forth God's approval, "Well you have spoken."



— AP

A candlelight vigil was held in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States that killed more than 6,000 people.

In our world, as in Job's, there is much pain we don't understand. Especially during these times of unprecedented terror, of unremitting violence and conflict, these days when disease, death and broken hearts touch close to home for so many of us, if we are searching for a moral underpinning, a cosmic balance scale of *tsedakah ve-hesed* we can come up fearfully empty. It is tempting to choose to turn away from God, to tell ourselves that the beauty and intricacy of the world, the very impenetrable mystery of it all, is ultimately meaningless, valueless chaos.

Instead, when we feel despair pushing in on us, I hope to respond as did Job. Even though I don't understand, I struggle not to turn away. Even though all I now know is that I'll never know, still I don't deny. For, if I do, I cut myself off from the very root of my being. If I turn away, I turn away from the *yotser or*

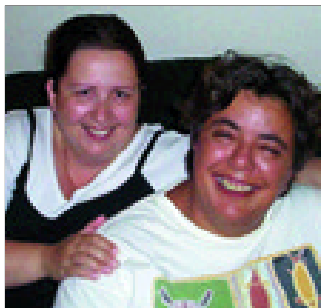
u-vorei hoshech the Creator of light as well as darkness, of love and compassion as well as pain. To stay in conscious relationship with the Source and Sustainer of All, may be to conclude as did Job, "Until now, I had only heard of You. Now, I've seen You with my eyes."

BOARD ENDORSES SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

By Kevin Solomons

At the last board meeting in early September, the board approved a policy permitting our rabbis to perform same-sex marriages. The policy was proposed by Rebs David Mivasair and Hillel Goelman; the key phrases in the policy being ". . . the community will also now allow its rabbi to exercise the same discretion in deciding whether and how to perform a Jewish ceremony between two Jewish men or two Jewish women. The rabbi and the couple will decide whether they want a Jewish wedding ceremony, a commitment ceremony or another type of ceremony."

This was the culmination of more than a year's work that began last summer when Reb David performed a same-sex marriage ceremony for two non-members, Rahel Bailie and Emma Hamer, who have since joined the shul. Reb Hillel followed this over the winter with an indepth course entitled "Sexuality, Gender and Marriage in the Jewish Tradition" that many of us were lucky to attend. Further discussions around a draft proposal occurred through the spring and summer which led not only to the policy, but also to a profound companion piece article by Reb Hillel entitled "On Entering Into Holy Relationship: Same-Sex Wedding Ceremonies in Judaism." This article is available on our website.



Rahel Bailie, left, and Emma Hamer.

The policy was shepherded into being over two lively board meetings where interested community members were present and participated actively. While some reservations were expressed about it, mostly with the degree rather than the principle of change, there was overwhelming support for it. The board adopted it as being both enlightened, anti-discriminatory and timely. It brought us into line with other egalitarian Renewal communities and also allows us to publicly honour and celebrate the holy connections and relationships between all our members without exception.

The board is grateful to everyone who worked so hard to educate us all in this important area, to Reb David and Reb Hillel for all their amazing work in bringing it to fruition and to all the community members who put themselves on the line in public debate, and giving shape to this important landmark policy for us all. It now remains for the policy to be

implemented, with the same sensitivity, honour and holiness that went into its creation.



Co-chairs this past year: Micha Menczer, left, Kevin Solomons.

AGM ELECTS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

An election was held at the Or Shalom annual general meeting on Sunday, Sept. 30, to choose seven new board members from nine nominees. Those elected were Frank Segal, Carol Ann Fried, Maurice Bloch, Sandi Moussadji, Lisa Hardin, Rory Richards and Earl Goldstein. They will serve two-year terms, joining eight others who are in the second year of their terms. Current co-chair Micha Menczer becomes an *ex officio*, non-voting member. About 40 Or Shalomniks attended the meeting, which voted to limit the board to 15 directors. The meeting also voted that the board should call a minimum of two community meetings a year and provide regular reports for Keren Or, the website and the e-mail list. The financial report shows net income of \$7,055 for the year ended June 30 for a current surplus of \$25,638, a figure forecast to hold steady in the coming year.

RETHINKING OUR FUNDRAISING

The community has been blessed recently by a number of very generous donations from community members. These donations have been towards supporting initiatives such as the new davenology role, childrens' programming, as well as the other funds that we administer. They are vital to our community's ability to provide services and programming. We hope to re-evaluate how we deal with donations and fundraising in the new year to develop a broader and more comprehensive set of practices around the ways we relate and respond to money, fundraising and donors. Please think seriously about the financial contributions you can make towards the community this coming year, over and above your regular annual membership contributions. Speak to our treasurer, John Fuerst, or any other board member and/or rabbi about it. Remember that all financial donations are tax deductible and Or Shalom will issue tax receipts for your donations.

— Kevin Solomons

SUKKOT AND THE ENVIRONMENT: A FAMILY CELEBRATION OCT. 7

Adam va-Adamah, B.C.'s Jewish environmental group will hold its second annual innovative, family Sukkot program on Sunday, Oct. 7, at 4 p.m. at Or Shalom.

This program, which drew nearly 50 Or Shalomniks last year, will combine traditional Jewish teachings about the holiday with contemporary themes of agriculture. Participants will learn about Sukkot and current environmental issues (such as genetically modified foods) and, of course, we will have fun.

The program will run for about 90 minutes, and it will consist of experiential activities for children and presentation/discussion for adults and teens.

For more information, including dates and location of other Adam va-Adamah events, contact Steve (Shlomi) Lipari at steve_lipari@alum.mit.edu or call 604-875-9846.



Noam Dolgin delights at last year's Adam va-Adamah program.

POTLUCK & FARBRANGEN IN THE SUKKAH

One of the delights of Sukkot is sitting down for a meal with friends under the fragrant branches outdoors in the sukkah.

Or Shalom is planning a potluck Sukkah dinner following the Adam va-Adamah program on the environment. Everyone is invited to bring a veggie or

dairy potluck dish any time after 5:30 and join together in a festival feast at about 6 p.m.

As the afternoon fades into evening, we'll enter the seventh day of Sukkot, the day of Malchut, completion and fulfillment. After dinner, everyone is invited to stay for singing, teaching and stories.

DONATIONS TO EAST SIDE FUND PAY FOR MORE THAN 1,600 MEALS

By Michael Corber

This past year Or Shalom has funded more than 1,600 meals for residents of Vancouver's downtown east side.

A letter from one of our partner agencies tells the story:

"On behalf of the Vancouver Native Health Society we are writing to express our most heartfelt appreciation for the ongoing generosity that Or Shalom has shown to our clients.

"The gift of a meal ticket means the world to our multi-diagnosed HIV+ clients, many of whom are very ill and do not have the stamina to stand in long, cold and/or wet food lines. This wonderful gift provides a warm dry place to eat and a chance to enjoy something the rest of society takes for granted. We occasionally use the meal tickets as birthday gifts for our clients who otherwise would not receive any acknowledgement of their special day.

"Some quotes we have received from our clients are:

'It gives me a sense of security.'

'It gives me a wonderful feeling that someone cared enough to give this meal ticket.'

'It makes me feel like a real person when I can go out to a real restaurant to eat like regular people.'

'When I get to sit in a restaurant on a cold winter day and eat a hot meal, I get a warm feeling inside that lasts for the rest of the day. Please tell these people how much this means to me.'

"Once again we thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

Yours truly,
Doreen Littlejohn, RN, Program Co-ordinator
Positive Outlook Program, Vancouver Native Health Society,
441 East Hastings Street, Vancouver

Recent Donations, Page 9

POETRY



Naomi Katz sits on the White Beach rock at Yellowpoint Lodge on Vancouver Island, where she wrote eloquently about the death of her dear husband Fred.



WHITE BEACH AT YELLOWPOINT

Long, thin rocks spread
Like fingers of a hand
Caressing the water's edge.

I'm there
Like Rodin's Thinker
Perched on the rocky thumb

Contemplating
Meditating

As waves come rolling,
Dancing through fingers,
Dissipating in silver stars
On to the beach.

Receding again, into the blue
Where they meet the sky.

Life's fingers,
Inevitably, relentlessly,
Release their hold
On a loved-one's hand
And waves of remembrance
Return to G'd's universe.

— Naomi Katz
September 7, 2001

WHEN

When the Shofar blows
may any walls
separating I-thou
come tumbling down,
a drop of new light
in life travelled
outer to inner.

When the Shofar blows
may I be reminded of our stand
at the foot of Sinai,
now a place, within,
where we stand against all oppression,
all injustice,
in I-thou and beyond,
remembering that
renewal
is created through
humility and
walking with
open hands.

When the Shofar blows
may it unlock my human doors
so I can see
the wonders
of the universe
in a blade of grass,
in the whispers of the wind,
in a leaf grown
heavy with dew,
so I can hear –
hear the music
of our shared
journeys,
as we go
dancing
in the light
of
G'd.

— Lisa Shatzky

FAMILY DAVVENING OCT. 27, NOV. 24

Parents and kids of all ages are invited to Family Davvening on Oct. 27 and Nov. 24 with Reb David and a few teenage friends. We'll gather downstairs at 11 for an hour of song, prayer and reading a part of the Torah portion. Then we'll create a drash-a-drama, putting ourselves right into the story and acting out how we would have behaved if we had been there. We'll have a little kiddush downstairs around noon and then go upstairs to join with everyone else by 12:30. Please phone to let Reb David know if you plan to come (or just come). Bring sweets or fruits to share.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

By Gloria Levi

The Habitat for Humanity Society of Greater Vancouver is building four townhouses for four low-income families. It is finally at the lock-up stage — the roof, all the doors and windows are in. We are now looking for volunteers who can sand, paint, experienced tapers, help lay carpet, put up vinyl siding, help with landscaping, lay turf and other jobs.

To accommodate Jewish community volunteers, our site supervisor will open the site on two Sundays from 2 to 6 p.m. The dates are Oct. 14 and Oct. 28. The site is located at 8745 Government St. in Burnaby. Anyone interested in volunteering, please phone me at 604- 873-0078 or e-mail gloria_levi@hotmail.com. We hope to complete the houses by the end of November.



Burnaby construction site.

Habitat for Humanity is an inclusive, non-profit, non-government organization that rehabilitates and builds simple, affordable housing. Habitat invites people from all social, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds to work together to build their houses.

All homes are sold to families in need of adequate shelter, using no-profit and interest-free mortgages. Habitat is NOT a giveaway program. It is a joint partnership venture among prospective homeowners, who have to contribute 500 hours of their unpaid labour, and businesses, corporate and individual donors and volunteer workers. Homeowners are offered a “hand up, not a handout.”

I have been with this project for the past three years and it has been a labour of love. If we come out as a group, we can identify ourselves as the “Urban Mitzva Corps.” It can be a lot of fun.

COMMUNITY CAME TOGETHER FOR YOMTOV

By Rabbi David Mivasair

I want to express my gratitude to our entire community for coming together and being so deep, so strong and so open-hearted during our High Holy Day davening. First of all, I want to thank Reb Hillel Goelman for his davening and teaching as well as for hours and hours of careful organizing work.

I also thank everyone else who gave themselves over as *klei kodesh* as the vessels to hold the kedusha — Reb Dina-Hasida, Efron Esseiva, Myrna Rabinowitz, Nomi Fenson, Sally Thorne, Wendy Rubin, Debby Fenson, Sandi Moussadji, Gloria Levi, Mordehai Wosk, Kymn Goodman, Carol Ann Fried, Celia Fried, Sheryl Sorokin, Nancy Newman, Anna Paperny, Fran Goldberg, Gil Yaron, Susan Albersheim, Reva Malkin, Alan Morinis, Joi Freed-Garrod, Sharna Searle, Ruth Shell, Evelyn Neaman, Jason Margolis and Steve Herman. Also, thanks to the leaders of the children and youth programs: Jenny Wright, Zach Goelman, Chava Monastersky, Richard Wolak, Anne Gorsuch, Hal Siden and Nadav Goelman — and to Kymn for making all the arrangements for childcare.

And then, there is a group of people too large for me to even begin to name who helped with the physical arrangements for making the JCC into our sacred space — led by Fran Ritch, Ron Ritch, Pam Ratner, Frank Segal, Carol Bracha Konkin and many others. Mary Adlersberg was quietly effective as usual as our “floor manager” and Bat Ami Segal organized another whole chevra of greeters and welcomers. I also want to acknowledge John Fuerst and Richard Abrams for putting together some last-minute security arrangements. And thanks to Lorne Mallin for the supplement.



Yehuda and Sophie shop for etrog for Sukkot in Jerusalem.

LAST YEAR IN JERUSALEM

I would like to invite you and your friends to three evenings in November when I will share experiences and impressions of living in Israel from last August through May this year. Through my own personal stories and slide photos — some heart-warming, some heart-breaking — I hope to convey glimpses into the wealth of multi-layered, complex realities in the Land of Israel that fascinates so many of us who have been there.

I am very interested in discussion with you and will leave time for it each evening. Please bring refreshments to share. The dates are Thursday, Nov. 1; Wednesday, Nov. 7, and Tuesday, Nov. 13, from 8 until 9:30 p.m.

— Reb David

By Jacob Maddison

PARASHAT VAETCHANAN: AUGUST 4, 2001

In this parsha, Moses is told by G-d that he cannot enter the holy land. Moses tells the Jews that he cannot enter Israel because of their behaviour, though in fact it was Moses' own behaviour that got him banned. He also tells them they must adhere to the beliefs, laws and rituals of Judaism. Moses reminds them of the exodus from Egypt and the power of G-d. He reviews the 10 Commandments. At the end of the parsha, Moses gives a warning against assimilation and concludes by telling the Jews that they are G-d's chosen people.

I spent quite a bit of time thinking about why G-d, who is suppose to be kind and compassionate, would not allow Moses to enter Israel. I imagine that Moses probably wanted to enter Israel so badly but he accepted G-d's judgement. I began to realize that all peoples at some point need to change their leaders. But I think more importantly it taught me that you don't always get what you want and you must accept this as graciously as Moses accepted G-d's judgement. I found that this thought helped me put my own desires in perspective. If Moses wasn't allowed to enter Israel, how can I complain when I don't get something I want, something that has a lot less importance than entering the land of Israel.

I was quite amazed how often in my parsha Moses reminds the Jews to remember that we were once slaves in Egypt and God brought us out of Egypt with his great power. In fact, this is in the first of the 10 Commandments. The first commandment says "I am G-d your Lord who brought you out of Egypt from the place of slavery." Although this does not sound like a commandment it is telling us to remember our slavery. I learned that the duty to remember that we were slaves in Egypt is the single most-often repeated reminder in the Torah. Our freedom from slavery is at the core of our Jewish faith. The first commandment instructs us to never forget our oppression and to work toward freedom for everyone in the world no matter what religion, race or country.

The second commandment instructs us not have idols. I like this aspect of Judaism because it frees us to create our own image of G-d, which can change throughout one's life. At this time I think of G-d as the term we use to refer to the highest ideals and values to which we devote our lives. G-d is not an external being that acts upon us but a power that works through us. There is no accurate way to physically represent this idea of G-d.

The second commandment also made me think that we

should not idolize people or things. Nowadays there are so many fads and people often worship consumer goods and money. The second commandment is a reminder not worship these false excesses.

I have to say I found the final part of my parsha, the warning against assimilation, to be quite troubling. In this section Moses tells the Jews to utterly destroy other nations, to not intermarry and to destroy the pillars and altars of others. In discussing my parsha with Reb Hillel and Reb David, I have learned that the Torah reflects the rules of the time in which it was written. The Torah is not necessarily advice that we should follow today. I

believe it is wrong for anyone to destroy other nations. We need to find ways to mediate our differences.

Moses concludes the parsha by telling the Jews that they are G-d's chosen people. I feel uncomfortable thinking of the Jews as G-d's chosen people because this seems to imply that other people are less worthy. I have learned from Reb David about several different ways of thinking about or interpreting this part of my parsha.

One way of looking at this part is called 'the merit of our ancestors' which says that the

Jews inherit a reward that their ancestors earned. Abraham earned the reward by destroying his father's idols and by beginning to believe in only one G-d. So if you are a Jew, the reward that Abraham received would be passed down to you. This still does not resolve the problem for me. The second interpretation comes from the Reform movement of Judaism. This interpretation says that we as Jews are choosing God and that we are taking on the responsibilities of G-d. I am troubled by this interpretation because I believe it still excludes people who are not Jewish from choosing G-d. The way I like to think about this concept is that we are chosen people for Judaism and that others have been chosen for other religions. For example, the Buddhists are chosen to be Buddhists and to adopt their own set of beliefs. I like this final interpretation because it makes me think that all people are special and not just the Jews.

In my parsha, Moses and all the Jews were at a very important crossroads. After wandering in the desert for 40 years they were about to cross the river into the land of Israel. I, too, feel like I am at a crossroads in my life. I am crossing from childhood into adulthood, from elementary school to high school and I think the process of having a bar mitzvah will really help me on my journey.



By Joel Bluman

PARASHAT KI TAVO: SEPTEMBER 8, 2001

Ki Tavo takes place after the Jews have been wandering in the desert for 40 years. In this parsha, Moses is giving his last speech to the Jews before they enter the land of Israel, knowing that he won't be going into the land of Israel with them. He focuses on the issue of the first fruits, grains and all other foods grown from the earth. He tells the people that they must "take the first of every fruit and bring them to the priest." He goes on to discuss the idea of "tithing," which means giving a portion of what you grow in the first and second year that you may not eat for it is G-d's. In the third year, the people must give all of the tithing to the Levite, the foreigner, the orphan and the widow.

There are a number of reasons for these rules. When the Torah says that the fruits are "G-d's fruits," it means that G-d created everything including the earth, soil, water, seeds and light that nurtures the fruit. And even though we have worked hard to grow our fruits, we must remember that we are using G-d's materials. By the act of giving away the first fruit we show that we have faith in G-d that more fruit will grow in the future. The main reason for tithing was to share food with people who needed it most. For example, the Levite owned no land to grow crops. Foreigners were unable to grow food on their travels. The orphan and the widow had no source of income to buy food.

My parsha goes on to discuss both curses and blessings related to the commandments. The blessings were great rewards for keeping the commandments whereas the curses were the horrible consequences for not keeping the commandments.

I have a number of questions and concerns. I noticed there was a very unbalanced scale of curses vs. blessings. My parsha includes six whole pages that describe curses that the Jews would suffer if they did not follow all of G-d's commandments and only one page discussing the blessings the Jews would receive if they followed G-d's commandments. My question is, why does this Torah portion threaten us more with curses than offer us blessings? And which one works better: having fear as the primary motivator or having rewards or positive bribes as the motivator?

In my opinion, I think that fear does work better as a motivator than rewards. Since Moses is not going into Israel with the rest of the Jews, I think he is trying hard to get them to listen to him. If he simply said, "If you

follow G-d's commandments, G-d will give you a new camel," then some Jews might get lazy and wouldn't follow the commandments. But, on the other hand, if Moses said "Follow G-d's commandments or all your crops will die," then the Jews would feel forced to follow the commandments or have nothing to eat.

Second, does this parsha teach us that Judaism is a fear-based religion? Perhaps the Torah is teaching us a version of "what goes around comes around." That is, if you break your commitment to G-d and to treating other people with respect, then G-d will break His/Her commitment to you and other people will not treat you with respect. Also, after talking to Rabbi Hillel and looking at some other Torah parshas, I have learned that Judaism is not a fear-based religion after all and my parsha is just a rare case where many curses are mentioned.

Third, this parsha has made me wonder whether our whole society is also fear-based? Are the majority of people in our society good mainly because of the fear of punishment or because they just want to be good? Do we really need laws and negative consequences to be good? I wonder what the world would be like if there were no laws, no religion or negative consequences for unacceptable behaviour. In my opinion, there would be chaos because most people would just be looking out for themselves, doing whatever they wanted to.

Many laws are based on religious beliefs whether they be Christian, Muslim, Jewish, etc. Laws can give direction to people and try to teach people how to behave. On the other hand, if all laws were completely based on religion, everyone might be forced to keep kosher or praise Jesus whether they accepted this belief or not.

In closing, I would like to discuss how this Torah portion relates to my life. First, in terms of the first fruits and the tithing, I feel that I shouldn't just take things for granted. I should be willing to share my earnings to help others in need. As a bar mitzvah, I will honour this commandment by doing what I can to help others in need. I also plan to contribute a portion of the gift money I receive to the Save the Children fund. Second, I don't believe in the reality of curses and blessings but they do give me some sort of guidance in life. I am thinking about the 10 Commandments, which are like a path through a forest. If you follow the path, you are most likely not going to encounter any big dangers. As soon as you wander off the path (disobey a commandment) you might not make it to grandma's house before the big bad wolf finds you.



MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN HEBREW THIS FALL

By *Rahel Halabe*

If you have just graduated from Summer Mini-Ulpan Alef, if you had a summer break or a longer break from Hebrew and are eager to resume your studies, if you have started Hebrew once, or a few times and would like to push forward and make progress, I would like to offer you another Modern Hebrew course this fall.

The Beginners Plus course will provide the basics of everyday vocabulary together with a good grasp of Hebrew grammar — an emphasis on verbs — as a firm foundation for further learning.

There will be eight lessons at Or Shalom on Sundays from 5 to 6:30 p.m. from Oct. 14 until Dec. 2. Winter and spring terms will also be scheduled.

The cost for this term is \$80 per person, plus the text *"Ivrit meen HaHat'hala — Alef"* by Hayyat, Yisra'eli and Kovliner. This is a rich and entertaining book that will be used together with its audio cassettes and additional material.

The prerequisites are an ability to read Hebrew well (with basic understanding) and a good grasp of common verbs in the present tense.

We will start reviewing the present and the basic every day vocabulary, move on (or back) to the past tense and have as much conversation as possible.

For registration, please call Or Shalom at 604-872-1614.

For more information and evaluation of your level, please e-mail me at rahel@telus.net.

LOW INTERMEDIATE AT BETH ISRAEL

Rahel Halabe will be teaching a Low Intermediate Hebrew course this fall at Beth Israel. It will run nine Thursdays, Oct. 11 to Dec. 2, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. The cost is \$90, plus the text *"Ivrit meen HaHat'hala — Bet."* This is for you if you have a good grasp of common verbs in the present and past tenses. Register at the BI: 604-731-4161.

HEBREW READING CRASH COURSE — FREE

Hebrew is the key that unlocks an infinite treasure of Torah and opens paths of prayer. Learn to read Hebrew quickly and easily in a specially designed crash course at Or Shalom, in affiliation with the National Jewish Outreach Program, beginning the

first week of November. For details, contact Barry Goodman at bgood@vcn.bc.ca or by leaving a message at Or Shalom.

REB HILLEL PLANS SERIES OF CLASSES, AND GROUP FOR DAVENING LEADERS

By *Rabbi Hillel Goelman*

A few notes on davenology:
1. Our continuing exploration of the worlds of Jewish prayer will include a series of Shabbat morning discussions and classes just prior to our regular Shabbat tefila. These sessions will attempt to provide both an overview of this phenomenon we call "davening" as well as reading some texts on Jewish prayer by Hasidic masters.

The tradition talks about the balance of *hesed* (lovingkindness) and *gevurah* (discipline, rigour). The *hesed* part of the discussions is the content of the material and the open hearts we bring to it. The *gevurah* part is that the sessions will begin at 9:15 on Shabbat morning, on Nov. 17, Jan. 12, Feb. 9 and March 9. While getting up earlier on Shabbat morning might sound like cruel and unusual punishment to some, I quote my beloved grandfather, Rabbi Aryeh Leib Goelman, z"l, who said, "It's a mitzvah to get up early on Shabbat so that you can have a longer day of rest." These sessions will be open to all, including this year's bar and bat mitzvah class students and parents.

2. One of the most beautiful but overlooked times on Shabbat is the time of *Minḥa* late on Shabbat afternoon. The liturgy is chanted in a lovely melody and we read a few aliyot from the upcoming Shabbat. We will then have a traditional 3rd Shabbat meal (*Seudah Shlisheet*), a potluck offering of light snacks, drink, stories and song. The first *Minḥa/Seduah Shlisheet* this year will be on Dec. 1.

3. Or Shalom places a high value on our davening but we do not give ourselves much of an opportunity to reflect on and discuss our davening. This is especially important for those who lead davening. I am interested in bringing together a davening support group ("Daveners Anonymous"?). The purpose the group will be for davening leaders to discuss their own excitement and challenges with davening and to offer each other feedback and support. If you are interested in being part of this group, please contact me at hillel.goelman@ubc.ca.

4. After January we will be offering some workshops in "practical davenology" to help prepare new

daveners for the Or Shalom community, both for Shabbat services and for the High Holy Days. Watch this space for more details.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN 'TO KEEP THE SHABBAT'?

Gloria Levi will be offering a course this fall on the Halachot of Shabbat; how they were derived and how they evolved over the centuries.

"We will look at the basic principles of oneg, joy or delight, menucha, rest; and kidusha, holiness," says Gloria. "We will explore the foundations of the halacha around Shabbat and how it evolved, and we will challenge our own concepts of observance."

The course will be offered from 2-3:30 p.m. every three weeks on Shabbat afternoons and will run for six sessions. The dates are Oct. 13, Nov. 3, Nov. 24, Dec. 15, Jan. 5 and Jan. 26. It will be an open group for the first two sessions. By the third session, the group will be closed. Anyone interested in attending this course, please let Gloria know at 604-873-0078 or gloria_levi@hotmail.com.

DIGGING DEEPER: SHABBAT AFTERNOON TORAH STUDY

Dig into classic rabbinic and hasidic teachings with Reb David on the weekly Torah portion on Shabbat afternoon.

Says Reb David: "We'll explore three parshiot in Genesis: Lech Lecha on Oct. 27, Hayyei Sarah on Nov. 10 and VaYeshev on Dec. 8. We'll look for personal meaning in the parsha beyond the simple *pshat* level of understanding and reach into the realms of *remez*, *drash* and possibly even *sod*

"We'll draw from the original Hebrew and be sure everyone moves together through the texts. It'll be a good opportunity to apply and stretch some of the Hebrew learning our community's been doing on all levels over the past few years."

IMMERSION AND CONVERSION COURSE: BROAD AND DEEP

Reb David will offer an evening class to provide solid foundational knowledge of Jewish religious life. Beside the basics, the course will explore deeper levels of meaning and personally satisfying practices and understandings.

The course is designed for Jews who want greater clarity in their own religious life as well as for non-

RECENT DONATIONS

B'nai Mitzvah Endowment Fund

- In memory of Barbara Bluman, z"l

Book Fund

- In memory of Fran Horwitz, z"l

Building Fund

- In memory of Fran Horwitz, z"l
- In memory of Rubin Pinsky, z"l
- In memory of Seth Amos Furst, z"l

Community Fund

- In memory of Roslyn Kunin's mother, Lola Susser, z"l
 - In honour of Earl Goldstein
- In honour of Rabbi David, for hospitality and warmth
 - Mazel Tov on your Bar Mitzvah to Ben Wilinofsky
- In appreciation of Hillel Goelman and Sheryl Sorokin
 - In honour of Reb Zalman
 - In memory of Frances Horwitz, z"l
 - In memory of Rubin Pinsky, z"l
- In memory of Dr. Herbert Caplan, z"l, father of Melissa Davis
 - In honour of Arthur Sorokin

East Side Fund

- In honour of the 50th anniversary of Ettie and Earl Robinson
 - Mazel Tov on your Bar Mitzvah to Sam Bayless
 - Mazel Tov on your Bar Mitzvah to Jacob Bayless
 - Mazel Tov on your Bar Mitzvah to Amitai Marmorstein

Lisa Nemetz Or Shalom School Education Fund

- In memory of Roslyn Kunin's mother, Lola Susser, z"l
 - In appreciation of Anne Gorsuch

Rabbi's Fund

- In memory of Roslyn Kunin's mother, Lola Susser, z"l
 - In honour of Grant and Catherine Chernick's generosity of spirit
 - In honour of Alan Morinis's masterful teaching
 - In honour of Rae and Gabor Mate's kind-heartedness
 - In honour of the birth of Tori Shona Fraser
 - In appreciation of Reb David
 - In appreciation of Reb Hillel

Jews interested in exploring Judaism as a personal spiritual path. Topics will include the beauty of Shabbat, the sacred cycle of the year, our relationship with prayer, kashrut, holy texts, Israel, diversity within Judaism and others. The choice of topics will be determined by the class

The class will meet on alternate Tuesday evenings beginning Oct. 23, 7:30-9. Please pre-register by Oct 15. Members free, non-members \$36 registration fee.

STUDY GROUP ON 'THE PALM TREE OF DEBORAH' BEGINS AGAIN IN OCTOBER

The group that began meeting with Alan Morinis in the spring to study the classic Jewish text "Tomer Devorah" (The Palm Tree of Deborah) will meet again this fall. This book, written in the 16th century by the great kabbalist Rabbi Moshe Cordavero, is a guiding handbook on how to bring the finest of the divine qualities into our lives. All who were in the group in the spring are invited to continue, and people who did not participate in the spring are welcome to join now. There will be a special make-up class Oct. 15 to catch up new students.

"The Palm Tree of Deborah" is a revered text of the Mussar tradition that has evolved within Judaism over the last 1,000 years. The goal of this Jewish spiritual path is to help us transform and cultivate the qualities of the soul.

Classes will begin Monday, Oct. 29, and will be held every second week for 10 sessions. Tuition is \$100. The group will meet at the home of Lorne Mallin, 4411 W. 5th Ave.. Please let Alan know at amorinis@home.com if you are interested, or if you have any questions. Pre-registration is required, especially for those who do not yet have a copy of the text, and which takes a few weeks for delivery.

MILESTONES

- The community wishes to express heartfelt condolences to David Berger on the death of his beloved wife Fran Horwitz.
- Trilby Smith and Jay Eidelman are delighted to announce the arrival of their daughter on Sunday, Sept. 9, in Brooklyn, New York. She was named Ariella Elyse Smith-Eidelman after her paternal great-grandfather Abraham and her maternal great-grandmother Elsie. Proud bubbes and zaidehs are Vicki Robinson and Allan Smith, Bunny and Lou Eidelman.
- Yasher Koach to Bette Thompson and Pat Gill, who recently entered the mikvah to become Jews.

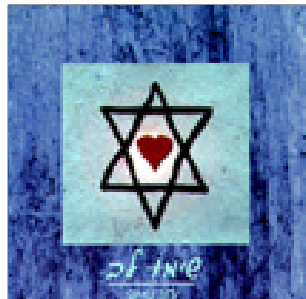


NEWS & SCHMOOZE

SOILY MARKOVITCH BAR MITZVAH Joe and Leah Markovitch and family would like to extend a special invitation to our Or Shalom family to please join us as we celebrate the Bar Mitzvah of our son Solomon Hershel (Solly) on Oct. 6.

TEAM DODIE Fifty friends and family walked and ran as Team Dodie in the Sept. 30 Run for the Cure to support Dodie Katzenstein's struggle with breast cancer. Dodie said in an e-mail of thanks: "The love and support of my friends and of the Or Shalom community have been a huge help to me during these past six months. I hope that efforts like Run for the Cure and the research it funds will make breast cancer less of a threat for my daughter's generation."

BEAUTIFUL NEW CD Arik Labowitz has released his first album, "Simu Lev," with Seattle flautist Maxxine



Smith. The 10 songs include three composed by Arik (who is engaged to Aliza Rothman, daughter of Myrna Rabinowitz). "Simu Lev" is a beautiful CD of Jewish spiritual music by an inspiring new troubadour. For a copy, send \$22 Cdn. to Maxxine

Smith at 4519 NE 55th St., Seattle, WA 98105. Call 206-528-9974 or e-mail maxxine@home.com.

— Lorne Mallin

SEND IN YOUR DIVREI TORAH

Bnei Mitzvah and their parents are encouraged to e-mail a Dvar Torah, after it has been delivered, to lmallin@telus.net for inclusion in Keren Or. Please include a colour photo. Info: 604-222-3379.

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. Website: <http://orshalom.ca>
Or Shalom is wheelchair accessible

December/January issue deadline 3 p.m., Monday, Nov. 12, 2001.
The authors, 2001

EDITOR

Lorne Mallin
604-222-3379
lmallin@telus.net

CONTRIBUTORS

Joel Bluman
Michael Corber
Hillel Goelman
Rahel Halabe
Naomi Katz
Gloria Levi
Shlomi Lipari
Jacob Maddison

Micha Menczer
David Mivassair
Alan Morinis
Vicki Robinson
Lisa Shatzky
Kevin Solomons

PROOFREADER

Karen Krangle