

KEREN OR

OR SHALOM SYNAGOGUE, VANCOUVER

APRIL/MAY 2006

Passover – While Standing on One Foot

A mischievous student once approached the Talmudic sage Hillel, demanding, “Teach me the Torah while I’m standing on one foot.” Instead of laughing at the student or dismissing him, Hillel replied seriously, “Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you. The rest is commentary. Now, go and learn!”

The imaginative exercises in the Passover Haggadah encourage us to put Hillel’s teaching into practice. Over and over again, the Haggadah invites us to imagine that we stand in another person’s shoes. The Haggadah invites us to close the distance between ourselves and those whom we consider different.

“Let all who are hungry come in and eat!” declares the Haggadah, before even beginning the story of the Exodus. Everyday differences are to be set aside. Hunger is a shared human experience, and anyone who hungers is to be welcomed at a Passover table.

“Originally, our ancestors were idol worshippers,” begins the Haggadah’s telling of the story. In everyday consciousness, we judge the moral and spiritual level of our companions. Some live in service of higher values, while others seem obsessed with the idols of money, power, or fashion. At the Passover table, we put aside those judgments. No matter what our current spiritual level, we all have idol worship somewhere in our past.

“Spill a drop of wine from your cup at the mention of each of the plagues,” says the Haggadah. Because the Egyptians suffered great losses as God helped us to freedom, our cup of rejoicing is diminished. In everyday life it is not easy to have compassion for those who embitter our lives. When we are freed from them, we rejoice and turn our backs. At the Passover table, however, we do not turn our backs. We remember Egyptian suffering along with Israelite suffering.

“In each generation every person should regard himself or herself as having personally left Egypt,” teaches the Haggadah. Ordinarily we regard ancient civilizations as foreign times in which people thought, felt, and related to one another in ways we cannot really understand. On Passover, however, we imagine the thoughts and feelings of ancient peoples to be very much like our own. We imagine ourselves sharing their journeys into sorrow, fear, hope, and joy.

As another Talmudic scholar, Ben Azzai said, the greatest ethical principle of all is found in the story of creation: “This is the record of Adam’s line. When God created human beings, God created them in the likeness of God” (*Bereisheet/Genesis 5:1*). The Passover Haggadah teaches that there is a universal human nature. People of different social classes, levels of moral or spiritual development, political allegiances, and historical eras share the capacity for joy and sorrow. At Passover, we are called to remember this over and over again, and to renew our commitment to creating a world lit up with freedom, hope, and joy.

--Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan

THE OR SHALOM RITUAL COMMITTEE INVITES YOU:

Please join us at Or Shalom for Pesach Yom Tov (Festival) Services. **Friday morning April 14, 10:00 am** for joyous services including instrumental accompaniment played by the davening leaders and **Thursday morning April 20, 10:00 am** for a more contemplative mood without instruments and including a Yizkor service. Please join us for these festival services and let the committee know about your experiences.

If you would like to attend a Seder, but do not have specific plans - OR - If you have room for more guests at your Seder, but do not know who to invite, please call the Or Shalom office. Our Seder Shadchan Rory Richards, rory@richardsandchan.com, would like to help you!

OR SHALOM RETREAT

Rabbis **Hanna Tiferet and Daniel Siegel** will lead us on "The Sacred Journey of Our Lives" at the annual Or Shalom retreat. **The retreat will be held May 19 – May 22.** For information please call Or Shalom 604-872-1614.

re-treat n.

--a period away from normal activities, devoted to prayer and meditation, often spent in a religious community

TIKKUN OLAM

What a generous community! I'd hoped for hundreds of pennies, but you gave in the tens of thousands. I'd hoped for dozens of sweaters, but you gave carloads of clothes. I need to pass on to you the gratitude that greeted me at Vancouver's shelters.

Soon, the *Tikkun Olam Committee* will meet to consider new projects and to discuss distribution of Tzedakah. Our formal meetings are few, so why not join us? Please call Or Shalom 604-872-1614.

--Helen Waldstein

ALEPH & JEWISH RENEWAL

Havurah Shir Hadash, Ashland Oregon, will be hosting a Shabbaton with Mordechai Gafni April 28-30. Rabbi Gafni is a modern philosopher and spiritual teacher; wise, compassionate, inspired and universal. He is the author of the bestselling books *Soul Print* and *The Mystery of Love*. He regularly participates in cutting-edge dialogues with important thinkers around the world, including Ken Wilber, the Dalai Lama, Ram Dass, Bill Ury, and Lama Surya Das. For details and further information please visit: www.havurahshirhadash.org

Ruach Ha'aretz, a week long retreat/ workshop, will be held August 14 – 20 at the Bosch Bahai Center near Santa Cruz California 1.5 hours from San Francisco. The retreat features many of your favourite Jewish Renewal teachers (including Reb Laura), musicians and artists and offers exciting programs for children and teens. For further information please contact info@ruachhaaretz.com and www.ruachhaaretz.com

Our co chairs Susan and Maurice, our treasurer, Heidi, and our accountant John recently attended the **Aleph Financial Sustainability Workshop** in the Bay Area, California. They will be reporting to the Board at our May meeting.

RABBI EVALUATION

The contract between Reb Laura and Or Shalom provides for a review of her performance after one year of service. We are now entering into that review process. For the purposes of the review, input will be solicited primarily from those who have worked most closely with R. Laura including staff, committee chairs and Board members. However, **members of Or Shalom** are also invited to participate in the review. They may do so by submitting their comments, in writing, by **April 30th, 2006** to **Susan Shamash, c/o Or Shalom, 710 East 10th Ave., Vancouver, V5T 2A7.** Given the confidential nature of your comments, please do not e-mail them. A preliminary report on the review will be presented in-camera to the Board at its May meeting with the final report being presented at the September Board meeting.

Remember These Dates at the Bayit

- *Apr. 22: New Member and ½ Torah Shabbat Celebration, 10 am.
- *May 16: Miriam Ahuvatel Iron Concert, 7:30
- *May 19-22: Or Shalom Retreat (at Camp Hope)
- *June 13: Rabbi Mordechai (Marc) Gafni, 7:30

Upcoming Community Events

- *Apr. 25: Yom HaShoah Commemorative Evening, Wosk Auditorium, JCC 7pm.
- *May 1: Yom Hazikaron Service, JCC 7:30 pm.
- *May 2: Yom Ha'azmaut Concert, Chan Center

THANK YOU HILLEL

Knowing that R. Hillel did not want a public tribute thanking him for his years of loyal, devoted and inspired leadership as our Associate Rabbi, on behalf of the whole Or Shalom community, the Board heartily decided to honour him privately with a gift certificate for a trip to visit his Rebbe Zalman Schacter-Shalomi.

Upcoming Special Events

April 22: We will be honouring our new members as we reach the ½ way point in our yearly Torah reading cycle with *Parashat Shemini*. Please join us for Shabbat Services at 10 am followed by a Kiddush luncheon. Shiur (study of the parashah), 2 – 3:15 pm.

May 16: There will be a concert and storytelling by **Miriam Ahuvatel Iron** who is an Israeli composer of liturgical music in a Jewish Renewal style. Miriam, who is visiting Vancouver, will share her music and stories with us at the bayit beginning at 7:30 pm.

June 13: Or Shalom and Banyen books are co-sponsoring a talk at the bayit, 7:30 pm. by **Rabbi Mordechai (Marc) Gafni**. See above (Aleph & Jewish Renewal for his bio).