

OR SHALOM SYNAGOGUE, VANCOUVER May / June 2009

<http://www.orshalom.ca>

FOUND POEMS, NEW PRAYERS

Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan

This year, our *B'yachad* (together) Bnei Mitzvah class includes nine wonderful students from grades 7 through 9. As part of our ongoing study of prayer, we have discussed the way new prayers are written. Many of the prayers in our *Siddur* are "found poems," i.e., collections of famous lines from the Psalms, placed into a new context and arranged into a theme. I invited the students in our class to write their own prayers in this style. Each student perused the morning psalms (*D'Zimra*), selected favorite lines, and arranged them into a short prayer. Below you can read some of the prayers created by our class. Yasher koach to all! – Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan

Let us greet God with praise and sing songs in joy. God created a world that stands firm. God made the moon measure the seasons. The sun knows its time for setting. God makes spring gush forth in torrents to flow between the hills. How long will You favor the wicked? (Kirah Goldberg)

When my foot slips, the Lord supports me. Praise God in song and in psalm, recalling all of God's wonders. The Lord is my light and help. Halleluyah, praise the name of the Lord. (Jordan Silber)

From Your lofty abode You water the hills. The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree. Your locks of hair are covered with dewdrops of the night. Your mouth will utter wisdom, probings of a discerning heart. God redeems. God rescues. Praise God. (Aaron Kopelow)

The Lord is my light and my help. Wrapped in light as in a garment unfolding the heavens like a curtain, to the music of the lute and the melody of the harp, above the crash of our sea and its breakers. Awesome is the Lord our God. (Dena Scherzer)

Praise God. God has infinite greatness. You opened Your hand when all was lost. The rivers may rise and rage, the waters may pound and roar, the floods may spread and storm, but we shall always know You are on our side. I will praise the Lord all my life. God is eternal. Praise God. (Alexandra Ferera)

You make the wind Your messenger, unfolding the heavens like a curtain. If only my people would listen to me when I say the righteous will flourish like the palm, then grow mighty in Lebanon. (Zac Bowman)

God created the world with a word. O Lord, hear my voice when I call. How long will you pervert justice? God has exalted the people Israel, the people drawn close to God. Halleluyah. (Aaron Friedman)

Praise God. God's kingdom stands from earliest time. God is eternal. The rivers may rise and rage. The waters may pound and roar. The floods may spread and storm. Above the crash of the sea and its breakers, awesome is the Lord our God. Praise God. (Paige Wise)

Birds of the heavens rest on their banks and lift their voices among the branches. "God loves righteousness and justice and the world is filled with God's love. I remove the burden from your shoulder, your hands are freed from the load." So I will sing to God as long as I live, all my life I will chant. (Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan)

MODE ANI

Mode ani lifanecha melech chai vkayam....

Thank you Hashem for allowing me to experience another day on earth.

Let me be thankful for all the gifts and blessings that are part of my life.

Allow me to continue to be grateful for the comforts and roof over my head.

For the support and love from my family and friends and community

For my own animals who provide so much and ask so little in return.

For the animals, insects and flowers on this earth and many other wonders that make us aware of nature.

Please let today be a pain free day for as many as possible.

Decrease my negativity and increase my hopefulness with compassion, love, listening, and work.

Allow the core of my soul and heart to spread goodwill with all I come in contact with

Use my joy and appreciation of the world to radiate to others around me. Amen

Jenny Wright

THE WORD FROM THE CLASSROOM

is *action!* Since January our teachers and students have been actively engaging our new Chai curriculum. Bat-Ami Segal and Orith Fogel are taking the **Sunday morning class** into the Torah to meet some of our biblical ancestors. They have learned about Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebecca. They also experienced a very special Passover. Their families joined them at school to play The Seder Game. Together they moved through a series of activity stations following the traditional order of the seder. They drank glasses of juice, wrote inspiring parsley poems, identified Jewish heroines and heroes, and hunted for the afikomen – in this case a chocolate-covered matzah treat. The grand finale was a Passover songfest lead by special guest Charles Kaplan.

The **Tuesday afternoon class** has focused on acts of kindness as a way of life. They practiced *derekh erez*, doing the right thing in the right way, to create a peaceful atmosphere at home and school. They learned about conflict resolution and the qualities of an effective peacemaker. Teacher Maya Goldstein took the class on a virtual trip to Israel to learn about the workings of a kibbutz.

On Yom Hashoah our older students from the Tuesday class and **B'Yachad** took in the exhibit *Defiance* at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. There they learned the various forms that resistance to oppression can take, from helping others stay alive, to recording events, to escape and armed resistance. They read of the experiences of a number of Jews who resisted and survived to eventually settle in Vancouver. The younger students visited the Isaac Waldman Library where they read *Puppe's Story*. Written by Hiroke Sugihara, this is the story of Hiroke's father Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese consul in Lithuania who helped thousands of Jews escape by writing them special visas.

Social action is a very important part of all our classes. The Sunday class has designated the food bank as their special tzedakah project, and the Tuesday class is discussing where to direct the money they have collected week by week. Thanks to our B'Yachad group, who helped kasher the synagogue kitchen for Passover. In May they will raise their awareness of living with disabilities by participating in JFSA's Canes Enable workshop. Also coming up is a special off-site tzedakah project, so watch this space for further reports.

Check out this issue of Keren Or to read their poetic interpretations from the Book of Psalms.

Barbara Halparin, Education Leader

TZEDAKAH ALLOCATIONS IN THE YEAR 5768

Each year Or Shalom follows an old tradition of collecting funds for worthwhile causes separate from the synagogue. We collect Tzedakah on Purim, on Erev Yom K' Purim, at meetings and classes and by assigning 5% of all external fundraisers (e.g., Gala) to Tzedakah. Where does it go? As per Or Shalom policy, 50% of donations go to Jewish causes and 50% serve universal causes.

Your 5768 donations were allocated as follows.

In Israel:

Beit Hashanti services for abused and abandoned youth.

Beit Hashanti, established in 1984, is a unique home for homeless and street youth. Beit Hashanti's aim is to look after youngsters in distress and who have suffered abuse, who are at odds with the authorities and/or have dropped out of formal treatment frameworks, or who have been abandoned by their parents. For many youngsters, Beit Hashanti is a last chance before the slide into life on the streets, as well as a last opportunity to be in a warm and loving home. www.wzo.org.il/en/resources/view.asp?id=2048

In the Jewish Diaspora:

Survivor Mitzvah project providing direct financial aid to elderly Holocaust survivors still living in Eastern Europe.

Around the world:

- Darfur relief for women in refugee camps
- Stephen Lewis foundation
- AIDS relief
- Accountability without borders
Redress for Cambodian refugees
- Tibetan Nuns Project
- Social service in Tibet

In Vancouver:

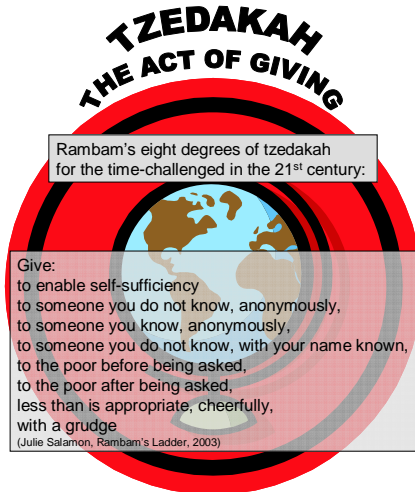
Community Advocates for

- Little Mountain Housing Advocacy
- Citywide Housing coalition
including Jewish Family Services

DOUBLE CARING!

At the end of March, I challenged Or Shalom to collect fifty children's toothbrushes for the Food Bank at Jewish Family Services. I am pleased to report that we collected exactly 100 toothbrushes, 25 tubes of toothpaste, and 23 unsolicited bars of soap! Thank you so much for honoring the 50th birthdays we celebrated at Or Shalom this spring – mine and Steve Barer's – with this mitzvah. Thank you to Ruth Stewart and Alex Korda for counting and delivering the items.

– Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan



YOUNG ADULT COMMUNITY (YAC)

The newly-constituted YAC Garden Committee has revitalized several beds in the Or Shalom garden, and received a grant for their work under a local program for encouraging community gardens. The idea was birthed at the YAC Tu Beshevat Seder. Thanks so much to gardeners Ben Harris and Benje Bondar, and to their guide Yona Sipos.

The YAC Passover Seder was a wonderful creative and ritual success. The Seder was led by Alycia Fridkin, coordinated by Jodi Seidelman, and hosted by Orith Fogel. Over 30 people attended!

The Or Shalom YAC is a welcoming group of young adults in their twenties and thirties. If you would like to get involved in attending, planning, hosting, or leading events for the Or Shalom YAC, please leave a message for Alycia Fridkin in the Or Shalom office orshalom@telus.net or 604-872-1614.

THANK YOU ORITH FOGEL

The Or Shalom Board would like to thank Orith Fogel for her two years of service as Program Director at Or Shalom. Orith brought a warm and helpful presence to the Or Shalom front office. She inspired our young children with her enthusiastic teaching. Beginning on July 1, Orith will be pursuing several exciting musical opportunities and continuing her studies in bodywork. Orith was formally honored at the retreat, which bears the stamp of so much of her good work!

NEW STAFF POSITIONS AT OR SHALOM

Beginning in August, the complex job of Program Director will be phased out and divided into two new part-time positions: Education Director and Communications Coordinator. Barbara Halparin, our current Educational Leader, will become the Education Director. Applications for Communications Coordinator will be accepted until June 1, 2009. Please see the Or Shalom website www.orshalom.ca for details.

HIGH HOLIDAY PLANNING

Rosh Hashanah 5770 falls on Saturday and Sunday September 19-20, 2009; Yom Kippur on Monday September 28. As usual, Or Shalom will host welcoming, spiritually uplifting services at the JCC. If you would like to be involved in services, Torah reading, greeting, schlepping, room beautification, break the fast snack preparation, or other helpful volunteer activities, please contact Reb Laura no later than June 1, 2009 at reblaura@telus.net. Please put "high holiday participation" in the subject line.

KABBALAT SHABBAT AND MEDITATION WEEKEND with RABBI JEFF ROTH

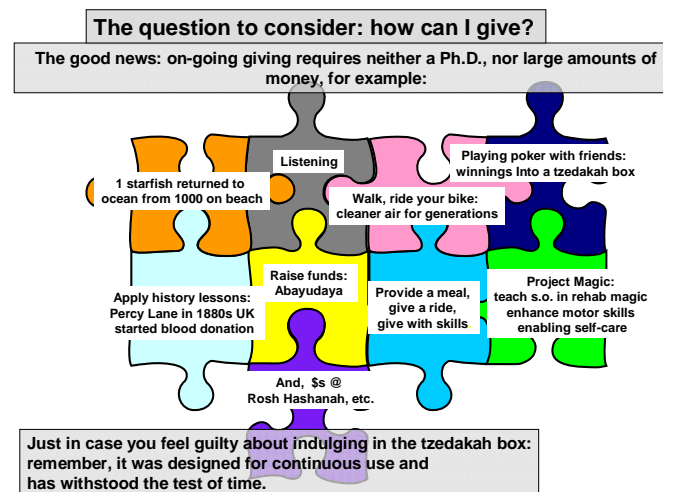
Rabbi Jeff Roth will be coming to Vancouver June 5-7 to as part of his book tour of the Northwest. Rabbi Roth is a longtime meditation teacher, and co-founder of Elat Chayyim Jewish Renewal Retreat Center. His book *Jewish Meditation Practices for Everyday Life* has just been published by Jewish Lights. Learn more about his work at www.awakenedheartproject.com.

Join Rabbi Roth on Friday June 5, 7pm, at Or Shalom for a Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by potluck veggie dairy dinner. The weekend continues at Ahavat Olam and Crossreach Centre. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, and to RSVP, contact Marianne Rev, 604 874 8721 or rossrev@telus.net

UNIVERSAL QUESTIONS, JEWISH ANSWERS

Led by Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan
Weds. May 27, June 3, June 10, 7:30-9:30 pm

Explore (in English translation) several short, famous Jewish stories and teachings from Torah and Talmud that raise core questions about human life, responsibility, and relationship to God. Bring an open mind, a willingness to speak and listen, and a desire to hear multiple perspectives. Textbook: *The Soul of the Text: An Anthology of Jewish Literature* published by The Chicago Great Books Foundation. To purchase or borrow, contact the Or Shalom Office asap. The class is free to Or Shalom members. Nonmembers are asked to pay \$18.



“EXPLORING AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS WITHIN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE” Building Partnerships within the Jewish Community & Beyond

Mark your calendars for this event to take place **June 14, 2009 1:00pm to 5:00pm at Temple Shalom. Speakers include** our own Michael Geller.