



Shema עִמֵּךְ

The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley)

P.O.Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470 Phone # 707-468-4536

Please note: all submissions sent by the 20th of each month to Carol Rosenberg (carolrosenberg@pacific.net)

Coming Events

- **KHE will not be offering organized Shabbat services during July and August.** We will resume services in September. May you enjoy each Shabbat on your own and with friends.
- **Saturday and Sunday, August 11-12**
Four plays wrapped in Klezmer music.
- **Sunday, August 17**, Feeding the hungry at The Buddy Eller Center. call Dan Hibshman to help, 462-7471
- **Note:** The return performance of Eliyahu and Qadim, originally scheduled for Sept 1, is being rescheduled for a later date.
- **Sunday, September 9**, Middle East Forum, watch for more information!
- **Sunday, September 16**, Erev Rosh HaShanah, service 7-9 pm
- **Monday, September 17**, Rosh HaShanah service 9:00 a.m.
- **Tuesday, September 25**, Erev Yom Kippur,
- Kol Nidre service 7 pm
-
- **Wednesday, September 26**, Yom Kippur services
- **Sunday, September 30** Erev Sukkot

ALL-4-ONE

4 ONE-ACT PLAYS +

1 KLEZMER BAND

2 NIGHTS ONLY

Saturday & Sunday,

August 11 & 12 8 pm

at the 'Shul" donation \$10

"Like chopped liver" - The Feklemp Times

"They were plotzing in the aisles" - The Shpilkis Gazette

"You'll laugh your tuchus off" - Shloime's News Service

Please contact Rabbi Shoshanah if you would like to read Torah, help lead services or take on any other special role for the High Holiday services.

sdevorah@gmail.com

Opportunities for Tzedakah

Kol HaEmek (the Voice of the Valley) is funded by your member dues as well as your generous contributions to a **number** of funds, including

- 1) Building Fund
- 2) Religious School Fund
- 3) Scholarship Fund
- 4) General Fund
- 5) Memorial Board Fund
- 6) Tzedekah Fund
- 7) Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- 8) The Marion and Sanford Frank Fund for feeding the hungry in Ukiah and Willits

David Koppel, 485-8910

send checks to:

Kol HaEmek, P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470

Portion of the Week an Holidays

August 4, Vaetchanan-Nachamu

August 11, Ekev

August 18, Reeh-Rosh Hodesh

August 25, Shoftim

September 1, Ki Titze

We Remember

Meda D. Newlin - August 1

Gertrude Sussman - August 1

Emily Schaffner - August 8

Donald Pierce - August 9

Elena Castaneda - August 9

Frances Suffle - August 11

Benjamin Fishel-Dunbar - August 14

Norman F. Feldheim - August 15

Hannah Igar - August 24

Fay N. Borkan - August 28

Gladys Breit - August 30

Blanche Wolf - August 31

Herman Greenwald - Av 23

Anita Tritell - Av 25

Dinah Godfrey - Elul 7

Condolences to Alan (Acorn) Sunbeam on the death of his mother Natalie, one week after her 86th birthday.

Condolences also to his sons Moses and Ari who lost their dear grandmother.

We wish Hesh Kaplan a good move to Chico. Thanks, Hesh, for your contributions to our Shul garden over the years.

Many, many thanks to Divora Stern for her many years of dedicated service as a member of the KHE Board. Divora has stepped down as a Board member. We hope she will continue to provide Kol Ha Emek programs and activities her wonderful energy and dedication.

Mazal Tov to Amanda Katz and her family upon her high school graduation and winning a scholarship from SPACE. Amanda is about to take up residence in Los Angeles.



Yuval Ron, Oscar-winning oud player, and Dror Sinai present music of the Middle East.

On Sunday evening, July 8, members of Kol HaEmek and many community friends enjoyed a wonderful evening of music and stories by these remarkable performers.

The performance was sponsored by a group of physician members of Kol HaEmek. Thank you for the "medicine of the soul."

photo by Helen Sizemore

Next up: ALL-4-ONE: Two nights of 4 one-acts and home-grown klezmer. A lot of people have put a lot of time and energy to entertain you, so please show up, give us some money (ten bucks), and have a wonderful time! Saturday and Sunday, August 11 & 12 at 8 pm.

From R. Shoshanah: on the month of Elul

The Hebrew month of Elul begins this year on the eve of Saturday, August 18. With this new moon, we initiate one month we can use to prepare ourselves for the New Year, Rosh HaShanah, 5773, which falls on Sunday eve, Sept. 16, and Yom Kippur, which begins the eve of Tues, Sept. 25.

How does your life seem to you right now? How do you choose to complete the current year? How has this past year fit into the scope of your life? What is your sense of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being and/or dis-ease these days? What are you tired of and want to bid goodbye to? What is your truth right now? What really matters to you? What is clear to you, and what is muddy or obscure? What kind of return, tshuvah, is calling to you? What are you hoping for in the new year? What are you yearning for?

Elul can be understood as an acronym for "Ani l'dodi v'dodi li/ I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine," or "I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me." What does this line bring up for you? Traditionally, God is understood to be our beloved this month, not a distant judge, but present and close to us. See if addressing the above questions from a place of being divinely loved and supported shifts your sense of well-being in any ways. You can be in Elul mode personally, you can team up with a buddy to share this prep work, and you can google Elul practices and see what the world web offers.

Blessings, dear beloveds, as the phases of the Elul moon carry us from one year of our lives into the next.

Chronicles *By Harvey Frankle*

PART V Joseph

Joseph is 17 when his father sends him out to meet his destiny. He is to seek out his older brothers and to report back on their progress. He is never to return, his father not to see him for 20 years. Half that time Joseph is in utter darkness and despair, half in splendor. During this entire time Jacob will remain silent, as will his God.

When Joseph reaches Shechem and his brothers are not there he must seek them out at Dothan, clearly out of their father's domain. As he approaches, his brothers see he is wearing a coat of many colors, a traditional semitic sign that the boy will be heir to the tribal leadership.

Perhaps they remember the night it was reported to their father that his brother was approaching with 400 armed men. That terrible night at Beth El where their father took them across the river for safety. When they could hear the hoofbeats of the 400 men approaching, how Jacob had arranged them. Oh, how he had arranged them. The frontline that was first exposed to the enemy was composed of Jacob's concubines and their four sons, the second line of Leah and her six sons, and at the rear most protected were Rachel and her young son Joseph. Jacob may not have been the only soul transformed that night. The dreams, the dreams were another thing. Their sheafs of wheat bowing down to him, the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowing down to him? Let's strip that robe off and kill the little bastard! No wait! His blood is our blood and should not be on our hands, Let's just give him a little nudge into that pit over there. Oh sorry how very clumsy of us. Quick, dip his robe into lamb's blood and take it to Father. Let him draw his own conclusions. As for the boy? Well he can rot, can't he? It won't take long in this heat.

And, out of nowhere, out of despair, as if moved by the finger of G-d, a caravan appears; a caravan of Ishmaelites, descendants of his great uncle's. No one sees from where they come or where they go. It's as if their sole purpose is to rescue Joseph from the pit and bring him to Egypt, to exile, to captivity: from unutterable loneliness and despair to astounding triumph, a triumph that transcends mere personal success to take on a much more universal significance.

So they go down to Egypt: to Mitzrayim: the Narrow Place: the place of alienation, lost identity, exile. To the house of Potiphar, a wealthy member of the Court of Pharaoh. There he is a slave, but so imbued with success with everything he does that Joseph is seen as somehow touched by G-d, and given charge of the entire household. Ah, but there is Potiphar's wife. and lust, temptation, but also righteousness is present. Joseph is very attractive, she is very attracted, he maintains his integrity. It may not be easy. Shalsholet, one of the musical notes used for chanting Torah looks like a lightning bolt and appears only four times in the entire Torah. It is said that in its lengthy oscillations can be heard Joseph's inner struggle as he refuses the amorous advances of Potiphar's wife. The words va-yema'ein are then chanted: "he refuses." For this he is once again stripped of his robe and thrown into the pit, for the Hebrew word for "pit" and "prison" are the same. But, this time he will remain for a very long time. Still, everything Joseph touches turns to works of excellence, from Potiphar's household to the prison itself where he, in short order, is put in charge of the other prisoners.

The test of Joseph now is to learn to read the faces of other people... *to be continued*

Dear KHE Chaverim,

Yesterday I went to church. I generally enjoy the syndicated column by Scott Marcus which appears in the Ukiah Daily Journal, and he was scheduled to speak in Ukiah on this Sunday morn. I'd never been to the Unity congregation before, and when I entered they were singing "Amazing Grace" while viewing slides on a big overhead screen. What was showing as I came in the door? A photo of Jews praying at the Western Wall. That was a pleasant and unexpected welcome. The hymn was being accompanied by pictures of different religious groups around the world at prayer.

When it was Scott's turn to speak, he shared his experience of a recent bike accident. While riding on 101 as it goes through Eureka, he was hit broadside by a car, hurled against its windshield and then thrown several more feet over the car till he landed on his head (with helmet) on the street. Right away, someone appeared and simply held his head and reassured him till the ambulance arrived--it turned out this angel was a volunteer firefighter from another area who happened to be driving through. Scott said the wonderful feeling of being held extended for him from the human to the beyond human, and turned him from an atheist to an agnostic. Scott shared that upon his being discharged from the hospital, he was told he must have had some higher power watching over him, for the doc had never seen someone come through so lightly from such a serious collision. Not currently active in a congregation, Scott revealed that in years past he'd attended Science of Mind (today called Center for Spiritual Living) as well as Unitarian services, where much of the discussion had centered around whether God does or does not exist. Talking with him afterwards, I learned that, yes, he'd also had a bar mitzvah way back when.

Unity church is a small, intimate setting. Last night I attended a much larger gathering of hundreds at the City of 10,000 Buddhas. The City was concluding its grand weekend-long celebration of 50 years since their Venerable Master Hua had first brought dharma to the West. The main event of the eve, open to the public, was an exhilarating performance by prize-winning pianist Gwhyneth Chen, who herself had been a student of Master Hua. I had been invited to offer a blessing for peace as part of interfaith prayers following the concert. After blessing those present with our ancient "Yvareichecha" prayer (often called "the priestly blessing"), I invited everyone to stand and join in a Shalom chant sending out peace and wholeness to the four directions. Blessings were also offered by a pair of Persian sufis from Marin, a sister from a Brahma Kumari Raja Yoga Center, a Christian woman from the Bay Area, a Zen monk from Japan, and Buddhists from China who were visiting especially for this occasion. To cap the evening, the entire gathering joined in singing John Lennon's "Imagine," accompanied by our splendid pianist.

So both my morning and evening experiences reflected open-hearted spirituality encompassing people of different faiths. There was nothing I found offensive in either venue. Quite the contrary. How wonderful to see folks who are strong in their own spiritual practice be willing to acknowledge the "other" as legitimate and valuable. In the church in the morning, I'd seen the congregants hear a non-churchgoer tell them he's not a faithful believer in God, and yet they applauded his talk. At the City of 10,000 Buddhists, I witnessed Buddhists who don't include God in their practice intentionally welcome blessings from representatives of God-centered religions. In so many times and places such generosity of spirit has not been prevailed.

From Reb Zalman, I've learned about the paradigm shift from triumphalist faith to an understanding that everyone on earth is part of the body of God. Triumphalist faith, in whatever religion, means that my faith is the right and true one that all people need to believe and practice. This perspective goes along with the hope and expectation that one day everyone will see the light and convert to my faith. You obviously don't have to be Jewish to hold this view, although it has certainly had a strong voice in our tradition (the Aleynu prayer at the end of a service can be understood this way).

Such a view correlates with a notion of being better than the "other" who does not espouse or belong to our group. Too often in history, we Jews have been the "other" and that has made our lives difficult.

Many of us know that in medieval Spain, under liberal Muslim rule, Jews enjoyed a golden age. This came to a definitive end in 1492 when Christian rulers Ferdinand and Isabella called for the expulsion or conversion of all Jews in the country. Many converted, and those who chose not to, left. The latter included those Spanish Jews who moved next door to Portugal. Yet just five years later, the Portuguese Catholic rulers also declared that Jews had to convert or face the threat of having their children enslaved. So those Jews who'd moved there especially to maintain their Jewish identity, were in a fix. Perhaps you know that the Portuguese Cabrilho is attributed with having discovered California. Did you know he is thought to have been a Spanish Jew who moved to Portugal and then opted to become, under duress, a New Christian (as they were called)?

Many of the Spanish and Portuguese explorers, merchants, ship navigators, and early settlers in the New World had Jewish backgrounds. Their stories are told in a fascinating book loaned to me by a member of our congregation, *Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean*, by Edward Kritzer. Yes, pirates, too! Crossing an ocean seemed a good way to escape the Inquisition, which targeted, tortured, and murdered New Christians who were suspect of still being Judaizers. Unfortunately, the Inquisition also crossed the ocean, and was active in Peru, Mexico, and Brazil. Jamaica had been given as a legacy to the family of Columbus, and became an early magnet for settlement by New Christians suspected of Jewish practices. The descendants of Columbus protected them, and managed to keep the Inquisition off the island.

Religious triumphalism still has many adherents in today's world. Fortunately, we are living in a place in which it does not dominate. I'm finishing this column a few weeks after I began it. In the intervening time, so many individuals I don't know have approached me to thank me for the blessings I led at the City of 10,000 Buddhas. I give thanks to and for the open hearts and minds in our local community.

B'Shalom oovrachah/In Peace and Blessing, Shoshanah

Party Time!

Which do you prefer?

The Kol HaEmek Board, in trying to avoid the role of mind reader, is asking your help in decision making. We have received several good suggestions for Special Programs for this winter. We obviously cannot make all of them happen, so please pick the one(s) you would enjoy the most and would be able to help make happen.

1. A catered New Year's Eve dinner dance
2. A New Year's Eve dance with available beverages and snacks
3. A Christmas Eve Chinese dinner and movie
4. A Tu B'Shevat evening party with music, raffle and available food and drink

Please call or e-mail Harvey Frankle at 459-9235 or <woodnbooks@wildblue.net>

COMMENTARY by Harvey Frankle

And now for the final piece of the puzzle: the quest to Mount Sinai. There were no buses, no trains; ultimately just desert.

One morning I caught a ride with a kibbutznik to Beersheva. A bus took me through the Negev, deep into the Aravah Valley, part of the Great Rift Valley out of Africa from which ancestors of humanity emerged to populate the world. Ketura was a young American kibbutz situated in this very hot, remote, far-below-sea-level desert between the Dead Sea and Eilat. Got off the bus, left my gear in the office and went to work in the tomato fields for the rest of the day. For this they fed me and gave me a place to stay. I left the next day.

Sitting by the road, wondering if I'd ever get a lift and what I would use for shelter, a lorry full of kibbutz travelers drove by going in the opposite direction and something fell from the back of the truck as it sped away. It was a roll of clear plastic mylar - my home and shelter for the next ten days: "How goodly are thy tents, oh Jacob..."

Eventually they picked me up. "They" were an elderly couple from Arizona driving a Morris Minor micro-bus they had purchased in England and had driven through Europe to Turkey, down through Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, through Israel, and now deep into the Sinai Desert on the way to who knows where. We drove together for the next couple of hours, they wondering why I was traveling alone and extolling the pleasures of sharing a life with another. In literature this would be referred to as a kind of foreshadowing because after this day I would never be traveling alone again. I am thoroughly convinced that this elderly couple from Arizona were angels in the Jewish sense, that they were messengers from G-d, here, in the Sinai Desert.

So, I'm two-thirds down the Sinai Peninsula, camped on a crescent-shaped windy beach on the Red Sea called Dahab. There are about half a dozen of us world stragglers meeting each other, including an attractive girl with long brown braids and jeans. We all camp in our different styles, me with my plastic tarp over my head and propped between rocks a couple of feet off the ground to keep the wind at bay, when I wake to a strange sight. At dawn I hear the vague sounds of chanting. I slowly crack open my eyes, and there, on this near empty and desolate stretch of beach that the night before sheltered a sparse scattering of young hippies, the beach was now dotted with a busload of men in dark coats and hats, feverishly davening on the shore. In the desert. In the middle of nowhere. On the road to Sinai.

I went back to sleep.

I woke up a couple of hours later, had some breakfast on the picnic table with the five others, including the girl with the braids, paid little attention to her since I thought she was hooked up with another dude, packed up my gear, and headed south. I caught a two-hour ride to near the bottom of the peninsula. Now I had to take the road to the right to reach the interior and come up the Canal side to penetrate the Sinai mountains and find an oasis, Wadi Firan, that would provide an unmarked sand track that would eventually lead to the monastery of Santa Katarina at the base of Jebel Musa, Mount Moses, widely believed to be Mount Sinai.

Six hours I sat at that roadside in the desert. Six hours without so much as a bicycle or even a camel. Six hours of writing in the sand with a stick the answer the Buddha gave when asked, in *Siddhartha*, what he could do: "I can think, I can fast, I can wait." For six hours I thought, I fasted, and I waited.

to be continued



Kol Ha Emek MCJC-Inland
P.O. Box 416,
Redwood Valley, CA 95470

Our purpose is to create an environment in which Jewish culture, religion and spiritual life can flourish, to perpetuate and renew our Jewish connections with ourselves and our homes, within our community and the world.

- To provide space for religious study and prayer.
- To share life cycle events through meaningful Jewish and sponsor Jewish education for all ages
- To be inclusive of all partnerships and family configurations
- To include interfaith families and Jews-by-choice
- To network with other Jewish communities
- To educate and share our culture with other Mendocino County residents
- To be a foundation for *Tikkun olam* (healing the world) as a community through socially just actions and by Mitzvot)
- To offer to our membership in exchange for financial and other contributions and allow all to participate regardless of the ability to pay

Kol HaEmek Information & Resources

Kol HaEmek

(707) 468-4536

Board Members

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
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Brit Mila: Doctors willing to do circumcisions in their office or your home; Robert Gitlin D.O. (465-7406),

Sam Goldberg (463-8000; Jeremy Mann (463-8000)

Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial): Eva Strauss-Rosen (459-4005) Helen Sizemore (462-1595)

Community support: Willits, Divora Stern (459-9052), Ukiah, Margo Frank (463-1834)

Interfaith Council: Cassie Gibson (468-535; (415)-777-4545, (887)777-5247

Rabbinical Services/Special Ceremonies: Rabbi Shoshanah Devorah (467-0456) sdevorah@gmail.com

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