



Hakol

הקול 'The Voice'

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Meditative backdrop by Karen Kerschen



KABBALAT SHABBATONS & TORAH STUDY (all on Zoom)

TJC Shabbat December 9, 5:30pm
 Torah study, 12/10, 10am
 B'nai Shalom Shabbat, 12/16, 5:30pm
 TJC Shabbat December 23, 5:30pm
 Torah study, 12/24, 10am
 TJC Shabbat January 13, 2023, 5:30pm
 Torah study, 1/14, 10am
 B'nai Shalom Shabbat, 1/20, 5:30pm
 TJC Shabbat 1/27, 5:30pm
 Torah study, 1/28, 10am

TJC Shabbat February 10, 5:30pm
 Torah study, 2/11, 10am
 B'nai Shalom Shabbat, 2/17, 5:30pm
 TJC Shabbat 2/24, 5:30pm
 Torah study, 2/25, 10am
 TJC Shabbat March 10, 5:30 pm
 Torah study, 3/11, 10am
 B'nai Shalom Shabbat, 3/17, 6:30pm
 TJC Shabbat 3/24, 6:30pm
 Torah study, 3/25, 10am



The Taos Jewish Center (TJC) is dedicated to fostering positive Jewish identity, by providing programs and services that enrich the lives of the people it serves in northern New Mexico. The **TJC** is open to all who wish to explore and participate in these experiences that reflect and incorporate Jewish ethics, culture and observances.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Gary Atias, *President*
- Lucy Melamed, *Vice President*
- Jay Levine, *Treasurer*
- Cindy Grossman, *co-secretary*
- Nancy Glaxon Harris, *co-secretary*
- Neal Friedman
- Karen Kerschen
- Phyllis Landis
- Sam Goldstein

HaKol, *The Voice*, is a community newsletter published quarterly by the Taos Jewish Center.

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EDITOR'S POV

As we approach the end of the year, we look forward to new opportunities, hopefully less isolation, more acceptance and gratitude, more courage to speak out against oppression or to overcome personal demons. The spiritual grounding of our Taos Jewish community contributes to our sense of wholeness. And we all hope for good health and happiness in the new year.

Starting on January 3rd, the Taos Jewish Center is offering a unique series of classes that promise to provide a more confident understanding of the liturgy that we recite during Jewish services. Rabbi Judith and Judah Botzer will be conducting a class called Deep Davening, using a curriculum developed by numerous contemporary rabbis. See page 5 for information and registration.

Do you enjoy kibbitzing about film? TJC's now got a film group, which met for the first time recently, and intends to meet monthly. It's an opportunity to share views about some of the non-mainstream films that come our way, particularly at the TCA. See p. 17 for details.

We celebrated the Baby Naming of Roberta Lerman's two grandchildren. And two of our members shared news of their marriage.

Each issue of *HaKol* finds me in a different space. When I'm not editing, I'm often drawing or painting. Recently I attended a workshop online conducted by the London Drawing Group about the Mexican surrealist artist named Leonora Carrington, whose Tarot deck was recently discovered. During the three-hour class we created the 22 cards of Major Arcana, based on Carrington's examples, using techniques such as drawing with the non-dominant hand, or without looking at the paper or the surrealist game of Exquisite Corpse. No drawing took more than eight minutes, some as fast as two. In the course of my studies, I learned 19th-century scholars drew a connection between Tarot and Kabbalah, which I explore in a brief depiction in *Kolot*.

You'll find several enticements in the creative pages of this issue. Delicious recipes, a new book authored by TJC founding member, Bruce Grossman, and a poem from his collection remembering his father, called *We Go On Living*. Stories — Rabbi Judith's *midrash*, *Shechinah Goes Shopping*, a letter to her children from Iris Keltz.

Lots to read. Enjoy!

Karen Kerschen

E-Blasts are the email notices you receive from the TJC. Submissions for the e-blasts should be sent to Neal Friedman, at friedendo@gmail.com, with *E-Blast* on the Subject line. **Deadline** for a given week is the Wednesday before the following week's mailing, which goes out on the Monday before the Shabbat.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

I hope you all had a safe and happy Thanksgiving. The holiday season in Taos is always special. While our overall health situation has improved, we still need to be vigilant. We're expecting a triple threat this winter from Covid, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Dangerous driving conditions are to be expected, as well. Given this, the TJC Board decided to meet virtually on Zoom for Shabbat and Torah studies in the months of December and January. There will be no live Chanukah party this year, but we will be co-sponsoring Peace Chanukah again this year on December 18th, which will also be on Zoom.

We are cautiously optimistic to be able to host another member's appreciation brunch in late February at the TJC. The brunch last August was very successful, and we will try to always have two each year.

We've been working on improving the Zoom experiences that we offer. Hopefully, this is becoming apparent. There are now three of us who can schedule Zoom meetings and operate our webcam, taking some of the load off Jay Levine. We will be offering our at-home participants more opportunities to engage with the service and the live audience. Please let us know if you have any suggestions.

I am delighted to report that Phyllis Landis has rejoined the TJC Board of Directors, and that Sam Goldstein has been elected to serve as well. Both have a deep involvement with the TJC, and I look forward to working with them. Any TJC member can inquire about serving on a committee. Acceptance is up to the committee chair. We currently have Finance, Ritual/High Holiday, Development, Program and Fundraising Committees. Please contact me if you would like additional information.

If you have keen powers of observation, you may have noticed that our website and emails no longer say that we are affiliated with the Jewish Federation of New Mexico (JFNM). This is because there no longer is a JFNM. Their office is closed, and they have no employees. *The Link* will no longer be published. Most of their assets have been transferred to the JCC of Albuquerque. They still have a board overseeing the shutdown.

How did such a large and powerful organization implode so quickly? That is a rhetorical question because I was on the JFNM Board from January to March 2021 and know exactly how this happened because I witnessed it firsthand. I resigned in protest, along with five other board members, after learning that the Board's Executive Committee (along with their sycophants) made a series of decisions which were, frankly, abhorrent. I cannot go into detail, as there is still pending litigation. [See page 6 for the JFNM letter.]

However, this clearly illustrates how combining arrogance with poor judgment can bring down even the most powerful. Rest assured, that is not an issue with the TJC Board. The JFNM's demise did leave a \$2200 hole in our current budget and more in the years to come. We will find a way to compensate for the loss, but we'll be grateful for any additional donations.

I'm happy to announce that we have two new advertisers in our Hakol magazine: Larry Martinez Jewelers and Rivera Funeral Home. I hope you see Larry soon, but not Tim Rivera. All kidding aside, you should know that Tim always has a "kosher" casket available and works closely with Eretz Shalom Cemetery.

Advertising in Hakol is very reasonable and provides a lot of bang for the buck. A yearly contract includes four issues of Hakol and approximately 100 eblasts! Let me know if you would like more information.

Mazel Tov to Bruce Grossman on the publication of his latest book, "No One Came to Taos to be Jewish" (Amazon, \$14.95)!

I've had much worse years than 2022, but I'm still looking forward to a better 2023. I hope that all of you have a great new year as well.

Chag Sameach!

Gary Atias

atiastao@msn.com

575-770-7669

We all know the story. Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem during the second century B.C.E., following the triumph of a small group of Jewish rebels, known as the Maccabees, against their oppressors, the Greek-Syrians, who had defiled the temple by erecting an altar to Zeus and sacrificing pigs within its sacred walls.

In order to rededicate the temple, the Maccabees had to light a menorah that would burn within the temple at all times. However, they only had enough pure olive oil to last for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, leaving time to find a fresh supply of oil.

The great rabbinic authority Joseph Caro asks:

If Hanukkah is about a miracle, and the oil which was only supposed to last one day lasted eight, then why don't we celebrate Hanukkah for seven days? After all, the first day of the oil burning was no miracle!

But of course the greatest miracle was the resolution to rededicate, to clean up and start over again.

We are now into the third year of stop-and-go Covid restrictions, testing the limits of a Jewish community. Do we meet in person for Shabbat? In homes? In our synagogue space? Do we celebrate Hanukkah in person with latkes and sour cream, or are separated once more? Do we meet in person to study Torah, or are we once again on Zoom?

In this plague of stop-and-go, it would have been so easy to abandon our faith in community. Instead, we have rededicated ourselves, over and over again, to the importance of the Taos Jewish Center in our lives.

When the Maccabees entered the Holy Temple to light the menorah and rededicate their holy space, they had to deal with pig poop and a desecrated altar. When a dedicated group of TJC volunteers entered our unused and neglected holy space to rededicate it for use this Yom Kippur, they only found boxes and boxes of Jewish books that needed to be restored to the shelves, office furniture blocking the pathways, and plants that needed revitalization.

The Havdalah marking the end of Yom Kippur relit the flame, but there is still much work to be done.

Our hopes for a massive community latke celebration must be delayed for one more year, but we have not lost faith. Like the Maccabees, little by little we will clean up the mess and start over again. The real miracle is that we have not lost, but gained community members during this time of illness, and that we now rededicate ourselves to Jewish life in Taos using cyber-tools that the Maccabees never even dreamed of!

Hanukkah is the time for personal rededication as well. Did we begin a meditation practice that fell by the wayside? Did we vow to change our eating or drinking habits, only to let our appetites get the best of us? Did we let an exercise program languish as we found excuses to sit on the couch?

On Hanukkah, we rededicate ourselves to “cleaning up our act” and cleanse the holy home of our body, our inner temple.

Hanukkah, which literally means “rededication” reminds us to rededicate ourselves to causes whose immediacy often fades in the press of daily living.

As the war in Ukraine grinds on, it is easy to ignore horrendous casualties inflicted daily. In these moments of bright winter sunshine and sprinkling of snow on Taos Mountain, it is easy to forget that our planet is in peril. In the aftermath of a grueling mid-term election that did not fulfill the worst predications of pundits, it is easy to ignore the deep chasm that divides our country. Homelessness and hunger still stalk our nation.

Hanukkah reminds us to turn the light of our attention to the places of darkness, illuminating the possibilities for a better world.

L'Hadlik ner shel Hanukkah... With each candle, we rededicate ourselves to cleansing and healing our bodies, our souls, our nation, and our planet. May the light of these eight candles guide us to a world of justice and peace.

Chag Sameach
Rabbi Judith HaLevy



Register now for..

DEEP DAVENING

Finding the Beauty & Meaning of Jewish Prayer

**A very special 10-class series held January-May 2023
Tuesdays 5-6:30 pm on Zoom (2x per month)**

Taught by **Rabbi Judith HaLevy** & Hebrew teacher **Judah Botzer**

Do you sit through a service praying in Hebrew without understanding the words? Are you moved by the sounds and the music, but really don't understand the flow of a Jewish prayer service? Or, why we sometimes sit, sometimes stand, and occasionally bow?

Whether you were raised in an observant or secular home, if you would like to participate in personal and communal Jewish prayer with greater understanding, this course is designed just for you.

Each of the ten classes in this series will consist of two sections.

In the first hour, Rabbi Judith will unpack the spiritual meaning of our prayer service, using the brand-new **Making Prayer Real** course curriculum developed by Rabbi Mike Comins and based on the teachings of more than 35 outstanding, contemporary rabbis.

For the final half hour of each class, Judah will teach us about the Hebrew roots of the prayers we've been studying, adding depth and insight into the process.

As we explore numerous traditional and alternative prayer practices, we will discover our own personal preferences and abilities, and work towards designing a TJC-specific siddur that reflects the uniqueness, diversity, and preferences of our community.

Registration Details

\$100 for 10 class series; Partial and full scholarships available.

Register with Ariana Kramer by Tuesday, Dec. 28.

Contact her at arianakramer@hotmail.com or (575) 770-4228.

Our first class will be on January 3, 2023.

Class schedule

January 3 and January 17

Feb. 7 and Feb 21

March 7 and 21

April dates TBD, *pending Passover schedule*

May 2 and 16



November 4, 2022

Dear members of the New Mexico Jewish Community,

I am proud to have recently been elected President of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico by its board of directors. The Federation has played an important role in the life of Jewish New Mexico for decades. However, I must be blunt: my tenure will be a short one. The main task we face is an orderly shutdown of the organization.

There have been news articles and rumors aplenty, so I will be brief, and make only a few points. We are almost out of money. We have no employees. Critical insurance has been canceled. We cannot fulfill the purposes for which the organization was founded.

You might ask if we can recover. Surely, we can raise money again, hire new employees, get another insurance carrier? That might be true, but we must be honest. Decisions made by the prior leadership of the organization have placed us in a very poor position. It is regrettable that it has been months since the former Executive Director sent his "report" to the community. It is also regrettable that it was sent.

I would like to say more about how we came to this pass. The truth is that there is much we still don't know. One of the chief tasks the board has undertaken is to conduct an independent accounting review so we can report to the community what has happened.

In the meantime, I would ask members of the community to continue the charitable activities which the JFNM has historically facilitated. The Jewish Care program is now under the auspices of the Jewish Community Center, and money to support it can be directed to them. Organizations like UNM Hillel and others that previously were supported by JFNM can accept contributions directly.

There are many other charities that we have supported, both locally and internationally, over the years. You will have your favorites among them, and I urge you to look up the best way to give. Now is an excellent time to contact the Jewish Community Foundation about setting up a Donor Advised Fund.

I know this is not the news you wanted to hear. We will communicate further as we have more information.

Robert Efroymsen
President, JFNM



CHANUKAH CANDLE-LIGHTING

- Sunday, 12/18 -- First candles
- Monday, 12/19 -- Two candles
- Tuesday, 12/20 -- Three candles
- Wednesday, 12/21 -- Four candles
- Thursday, 12/22 -- Five candles
- Friday, 12/23 -- Six candles
- Saturday, 12/24 -- Seven candles
- Sunday, 12/25 -- Eight candles



Graphics by Carmi Plaut

On the **first night of Chanukah**, recite --

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, shebecheyanu v-ki'y'manu v-higianu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Our God, Ruler of the Universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

These blessings are recited or sung **each night of Chanukah** --

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b-mitzvotav, v-tzivanu l'had-lik ner shel Chanukah.

Blessed are you, Our God, Ruler of the Universe, who makes us holy through Your commandments, and commands us to light the Chanukah lights.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, she-asah nisim la-avoteinu v-imoteinu ba-yamim ha-beim ba-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Our God, Ruler of the Universe, who performed miracles for our ancestors in their days at this season.

HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) references this blessing on behalf of refugees -

Al ha'nisim, v'al ha'purkan, v'al ha'g'vurot, ve'al ha'teshuot ve'al ha'milchamot she'asita l'avoteinu ba'yamim ha'heim ba-z'man ha'zeh.

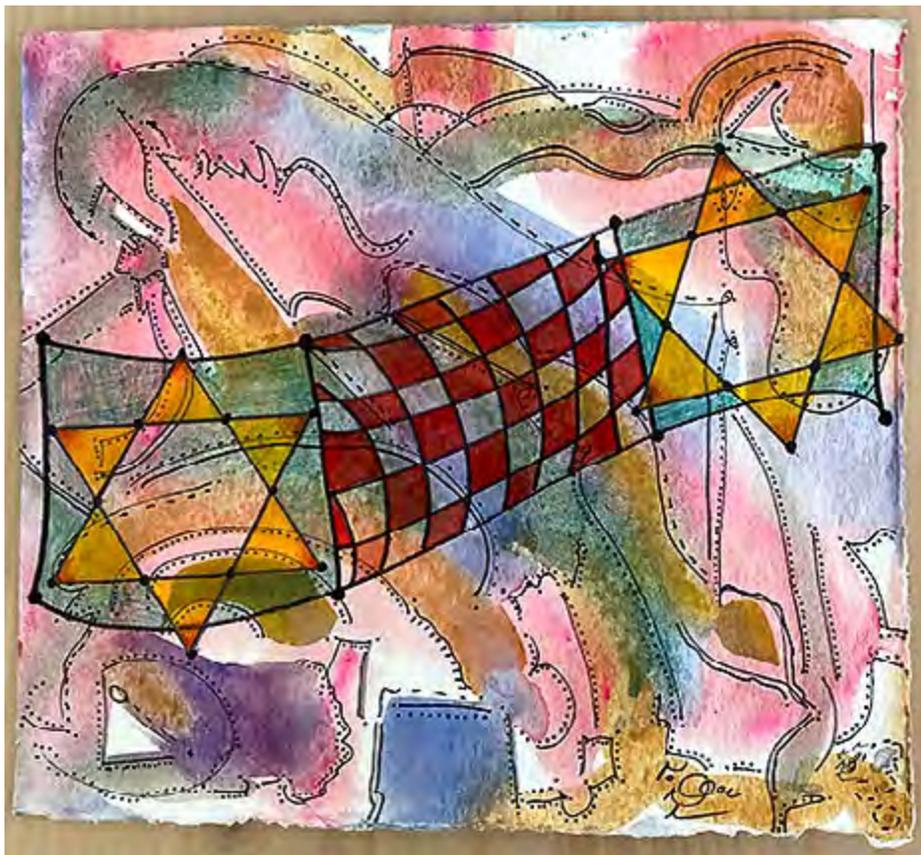
Thank You for the miracles, for rescuing us, for the courageous acts you performed, for saving us, and for the battles you waged in defense of our ancestors and at this season.

SHABBAT CANDLELIGHTING

<u>Erev Shabbat</u>	<u>Torah Parashat</u>	<u>Havdalah</u>
12/9, 4:37 pm	VaYishlach	12/10, 5:36 pm
12/16, 4:39 pm	Vayeishev	12/17, 5:39 pm
12/23, 4:42 pm	Mikeitz	12/24, 5:42 pm
12/30, 4:46 pm	Vayigash	12/31, 5:46 pm
1/6/23, 4:52 pm	Vayechi	1/7/23, 5:52 pm
1/13, 4:58 pm	Shemot	1/14, 5:58 pm
1/20, 5:05 pm	Va'eira	1/21, 6:04 pm
1/27, 5:12 pm	Bo	1/28, 6:11 pm
2/3, 5:19 pm	B'Shalach	2/4, 6:17 pm
2/10, 5:26 pm	Yitro	2/11, 6:24 pm
2/17, 5:33 pm	Mishpatim	2/18, 6:30 pm
2/24, 5:40 pm	Terumah	2/25, 6:36 pm
3/3, 5:46 pm	Tetzaveh	3/4, 6:43 pm



Photo and art by **Bobbi Shapiro**



PASSINGS

Yahrtzeit Records



To add or correct a Yahrtzeit record, here's what's needed:

Complete name of loved one.

Hebrew name (including parents), if known

Complete memorial date, day/month/year

Relationship to the loved one (parent, sibling, etc.)

Please send the information directly to

Bruce Grossman, at grossman@taosnet.com.

Eretz Shalom Cemetery

Owned and dedicated in 1993 by Havurah B'nai Shalom, Eretz Shalom has affordable plots available on a pre-need or as-needed basis. It is located on Llano Mesa, south of town.

Your family would appreciate having your arrangements already made.

Contact cemetery administrators Steve Natelson (575/758-1094), Bruce Ross (575/758-8258) or Bruce Grossman (575/741-0888).

ON SEEING A RAINBOW

***Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam,
zocher habrit v'ne'eman biv'reetoh v'kayam
b'ma'amarav.***

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe,
who remembers the covenant, and is faithful to
His covenant, and keeps His promise.



ROSH CHODESH

January 23 1 Shevat

February 22 1 Adar

March 23 1 Nissan



***Rosh Chodesh (name of month) haba alenynu
v'al kol yisrael l'tovah.***

May Rosh Chodesh (*name of month*) come to us
and all Israel for goodness.

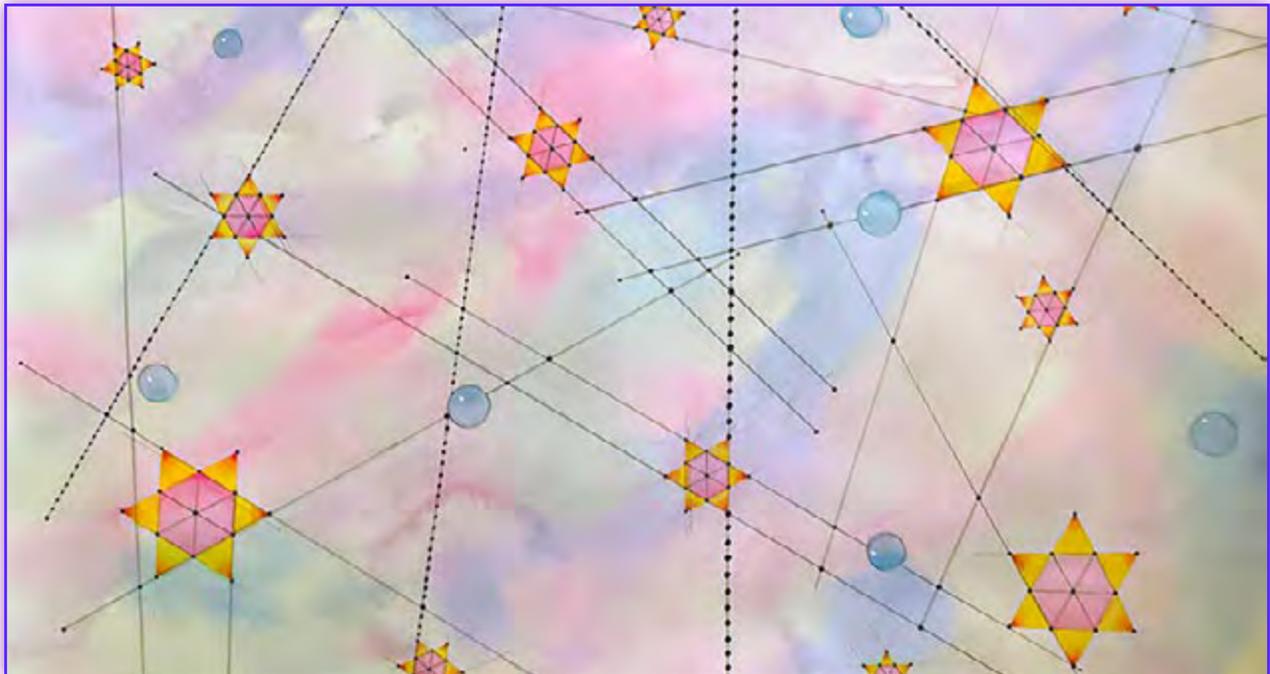
May you give us long life,
a LIFE OF PEACE, A LIFE OF GOODNESS,
A LIFE OF BLESSING.

TJC KABBALAT SHABBATS

Typically the second and fourth Fridays of each month, Rabbi Judith HaLevy conducts Shabbat via Zoom. We light Shabbat candles, make Kiddush, honor the Shabbat bride, sing blessings for those in need of healing. And we remember the deceased with the Mourners' Kaddish. The Rabbi leads prayers and a discussion pertinent to the time, season and Torah. It's always a stimulating and grounding hour and a half to usher in the Shabbat.

TJC Kabbalat Shabbats are announced in the TJC eBlasts. To add your name, you can email the TJC at tjc@newmex.com and include in the subject line, 'Add me to the TJC eBlast list.'

Check out Rabbi Judith's videos of the Torah *parashat* on the TJC website. at taosjewishcenter.org/rabbi-s-corner-new



Constellation, by **Bobbi Shapiro**

B'NAI SHALOM HAVURAH SHABBATS

B'nai Shalom meets for Zoom Shabbats on the third Friday of the month.

Rabbi Chavah teaches a D'Var Torah on that date. We send out an invitation about a week ahead and ask you to respond to Annette and Bette to receive the Zoom link.

The dates for this quarter are December 16th, January 20th, February 17th and March 17th.

We hope you can join us. If you know someone who would like to be added to the B'nai Shalom email list, please send their address to Annette at rubin.annette@gmail.com.

For more info contact Bette Myerson at 575-758-3376 or bette@taosnet.com.



**CAMILLE AND
GEORGE'S
KHASINA!**

TJC members, Camille Ovitz and George Matassarini were married recently, in Skokie, Illinois. As Camille recounted,

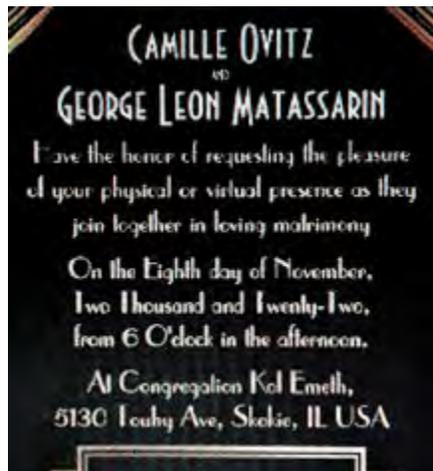
We wanted to get married in Taos, but George's sister asked us to get married at her synagogue with the children and grandchildren. It had been Ten years since her synagogue had the last wedding, and they are selling the building to a yeshiva soon. Esther said with so many funerals lately it would be a Mitzva to bring simcha to her Friday night group. The rabbi is 75 and British.

My Israeli daughter and her husband came for the occasion. George's and I matchmaker from Austin was the best man, and our best friend Vietnam Purple Heart brother from San Antonio accompanied us to Chicago. We had 2 cancellations due to Covid, My sister from Puerto Rico and George's cousin from Ohio. 22 guests total including George's daughter and granddaughter!

We had a Mikve party, 3 days of happy lunches and hours, an Israeli photographer and a glatt kosher catering by ZELDA! The synagogue did not own a chuppa, we rented one for \$50 and bought flowers at the local greenhouse....

Good times had by all. George says third time is a charm for him.

We wish them a lifetime of happiness together.



B'nai Shalom Mitzvah Fund

B'nai Shalom maintains a small fund that gives a little help to folks in the Taos community with financial needs. If you want to contribute to this effort, you can send a tax deductible donation to *B'nai Shalom Havurah*, 810 Dillon Lane, Taos, NM 87571 and Bette will send you a receipt for your tax records. Know that you are contributing to tikkun olam and your money will be used wisely. Make a tax-deductible donation to help someone local who is in need.

For questions or information, contact Bette Myerson (575-758-3376 or bette@taosnet.com).

Chaverim of TJC

The Chaverim (*Hebrew for Friends or Volunteers*) can provide assistance and support to members of our congregation, such as rides to appointments, picking up groceries, prescriptions, or borrowing library books.

Send your request to tjc@newmex.com, with *Chaverim* in the subject line or call the TJC at 575-758-8615.

Meals for the Men's Homeless Shelter

Distribution of meals every 3rd Thursday. Please be part of this important community mitzvah. Participate when you can. Contact Roberta at rlerman57@gmail.com.

Taos Elders and Neighbors Together (TENT)

A membership, non-denominational community organization to provide transportation, caregiver relief and minor home repairs to help elders maintain independence at home. Further info: TaosElders.org

Note: TENT's fee structure has recently changed, making it more affordable.

For further information, visit TaosElders.org or call 575-224-6335.



Graphic by *Carmi Plaut*



You are invited to the 21st Annual Interfaith

PEACE CHANUKAH

Sunday, December 18 th , 2022

5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. on ZOOM

For the program and to register, go to
www.taosjewishcenter.org

The Zoom registration link is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYlc-CorzspEtBuTV1zEaOZcT6NIIAD5zg8>

Light a menorah or a candle during this unique Taos gathering, featuring candle lighting and prayers, speakers from various faiths and songs for peace.

Donate to an organization helping our hungry neighbors. A list is below.

This event is free. Everyone is welcome.

~~~~~

Sponsored by

B'nai Shalom Havurah, the Taos Jewish Center, St. James Episcopal Church  
and the Enchanted Circle Interfaith Gathering.

## TAOS ORGANIZATIONS THAT FEED OUR HUNGRY NEIGHBORS

*Now, more than ever!*

**The Shared Table**, c/o El Pueblito United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 1302, El Prado, NM 87529  
[www.elpueblitoumc.org](http://www.elpueblitoumc.org)

**The Taos Coalition to End Homelessness**, P.O. Box 1516, Taos, NM 87571  
[www.taosmensshelter.org](http://www.taosmensshelter.org)

**St James Episcopal Church Food Pantry**, 208 Camino de Santiago, Taos, NM 87571 [www.](http://www.stjamestaos.com)  
[stjamestaos.com](http://www.stjamestaos.com)

**Taos Immigrant Allies**, c/o B'nai Shalom Havurah, 810 Dillon Lane, Taos, NM 87571 Put "TIA" or "Sin Fronteras" or "Immigrant Program" on the memo line of your check. [www.taosimmigrantallies.org](http://www.taosimmigrantallies.org)

**HEART of Taos**, P.O. Box 613, Taos, NM 87571 [www.HEARToftaos.org](http://www.HEARToftaos.org)

**Help for Afghan Refugees in New Mexico** c/o B'nai Shalom Havurah, 810 Dillon Lane, Taos, NM 87571 Put "**Afghans**" on the Memo line of your check.

**Neem Karoli Baba Ashram and Hanuman Temple**  
416 Geronimo Lane, Taos, NM 87571 [www.nkbashram.org](http://www.nkbashram.org)

**Thank you for anything you can give. No donation is too small.**

# ERETZ SHALOM LANDSCAPING

## COMMITTEE REPORT

11/26/2022

Taos Landscaping completed the hardscaping at the cemetery this fall. This work included removing the old pathways and adding new compacted pathways with reinforced weed barrier and river rock around the edges to keep the crusher fines in place. An additional pathway was added to the north part of the cemetery.

The cemetery was cleaned and additional topsoil was added and native grass was sown. Whether this grass will take or not is totally dependent on the weather. A latilla fence has been constructed that creates a sense of privacy in the cemetery.

Early this fall when our plumbing contractor was about to connect to the El Valle Water line, he was told to cease his work because we were not entitled to use the water for landscaping. Obviously, this was news to us, because we bought the water rights and a membership as B’Nai Shalom Cemetery and made our intentions known at that time.

On September 14, 2022, Sam Goldstein and I attended an El Valle Water District meeting and made an appeal for the Board to reconsider its decision based on the fact that we were granted a membership and that our intentions were clear as to how the water would be used.

On November 17, 2022, a letter to B’Nai Shalom arrived stating the following:

*“The current policy of the El Valle de Los Ranchos Water and Sanitation District requires that a water connection be connected to a structure as the policy anticipates a water connection for domestic household use only. Additionally, due to current drought*

*conditions and ongoing water availability shortages, the District is limiting water connections to those that are connecting for the specific purpose of domestic household use. Thus at this time we are unable to grant your request to connect to the District water system.”*

A refund of \$2,971.00 was received that included our membership and water rights fees. Those monies were deposited back into the B’Nai Shalom Cemetery fund. It is unfortunate that we spent so much time and effort planning with the assumption that we had access to water only to discover that we didn’t. The fact that we were granted rights only to have them taken away is odd and disappointing. That said, I do not think any further appeals will change their minds. We need to move forward.

The landscaping committee will meet before the end of the year and come up with a revised plan of how to proceed. We will study other means of getting water such as trying to connect to neighboring wells, installing a large water tank or cistern, and devising ways to catch and maintain rain and snow melt.

In addition, we will explore other ways of beautifying and maintaining the cemetery. Some suggestions have included additional benches, adding sculptures, constructing a ramada for shade and water collection and having a couple of very small flower beds that could be maintained by hauling water.

We remain committed to making the Eretz Shalom Cemetery a welcoming and attractive site that shows honor and respect for our loved ones.

If you have any questions, please Email or call me at: grossman@taosnet.com or 575-741-0888

Thank you for your continued support.

**Bruce Grossman**  
**Chair, Eretz Shalom Landscaping Committee**



**Bobbi Shapiro**

## TJC BOOK GROUP

TJC Book Group meets every month on the **third Monday** at **noon**, via Zoom. Join us, even if you haven't read the book or are shy about sharing your thoughts.

If you'd like to attend our discussions, contact Diane Friedman, [dianecda5@gmail.com](mailto:dianecda5@gmail.com) or Annette Rubin, [rubin.annette@gmail.com](mailto:rubin.annette@gmail.com)

Here are our upcoming selections:

December 19: **Body and Soul** by Frank Conroy.

Claude Rawlings, a piano prodigy, NYC 1940s and son of a single mom taxi-driver, finds his own bumpy road to creative expression.

January 16: **Return to Laughter** by Eleanor Smith Bowen.

Written pseudonymously by an anthropologist who lived with a tribe of bush people in Nigeria in 1949-1953.

February 20: **The Daughters of Yalta** by Catherine Grace Katz.

Three intelligent and glamorous young women who accompanied their famous fathers to the Yalta Conference, 1945; the conference's fateful reverberations in the waning days of WWII.

March 20: **Ladies of the Canyons: A League of Extraordinary Women and Their Adventures in the American Southwest** by Lesley Poling-Kempes.

Women who left the security and comforts of genteel Victorian society and journeyed to the American Southwest in search of a wider view of themselves and their world. Their circle included Louisa Wade Wetherill, Alice Corbin Henderson, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Mary Austin, and Willa Cather.

April 17: **The Midwife's Revolt** by Jodi Daynard.

Historical fiction of the American Revolution era. A young widowed midwife, stands up to arrogant, constraining inlaws and pursues her work, aid by other young women, running her farm, delivering babies, and doing what she can for the Cause.

May 22: **The Rebel Angels** by Robertson Davies.

A remarkable cast of defrocked monks, mad professors, and wealthy eccentrics people this 'brilliant spectacle of theft, perjury, murder, scholarship, and love at a modern university.' The first book in the Cornish Trilogy, but stands alone.

June 19: **Who Killed Piet Barol** by Richard Mason.

A white South African man's relationship with a tribe changes him in his quest for the best wood for carving furniture, and how the tribal village members relate to him when he discovers their Ancestor Trees.

July 17: **Half Broke Horses** by Jeannette Walls.

A true-life novel about the author's no-nonsense, resourceful, and spectacularly compelling grandmother, who was helping break horses by age six. The author's mother is depicted in her book, The Glass Castle.

August 21: We'll decide on our next year's selections.

## LIKE TO TALK ABOUT FILM ?

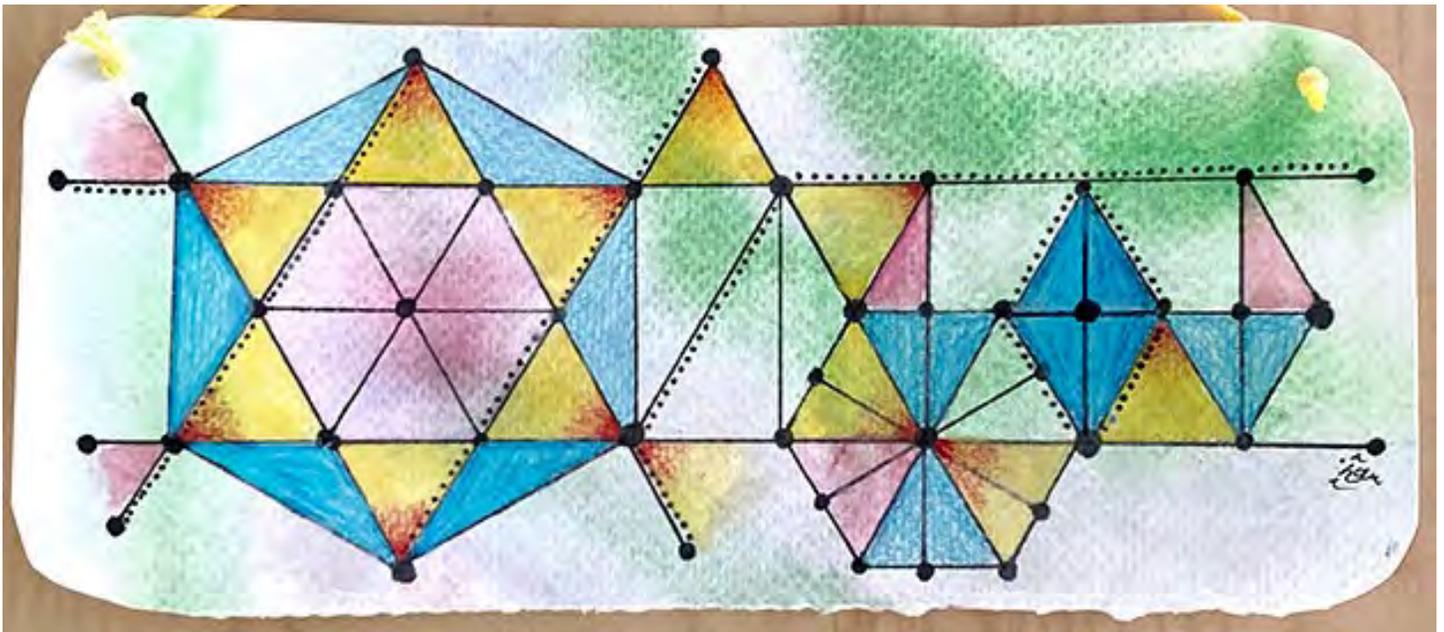
The TJC film group met for the first time — the idea being to view and discuss current art films, particularly those that come to the TCA.

Half the people present had seen **Triangle of Sadness** (this year's Cannes Palme d'Or prize winner) and so explained a complex plot to the rest of us. The title refers to a facial tic of a high-fashion male model when he's perplexed — a wrinkling formed just above his eyebrows. Without revealing too much, the film takes place on a cruise ship peopled by the very wealthy, some media influencers (a high fashion couple) and those employed at the service of the travelers. When a storm at sea generates treacherous conditions, the idyll becomes perilous distress, with copious vomiting. The ship sinks and a few survivors make it to a seemingly uninhabited island in the Mediterranean. Now, the humble have the survival skills: The cleaning lady knows how to start a fire, snag a fish with her hands. This Gilligan-Island-meets-Lord-of-the-Flies scenario engendered lively discussion in the TJC library.

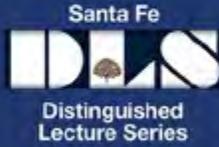
Our next film to discuss is **Tár**, starring **Cate Blanchett**. We've set **12/11** as the date, **3pm**.

Amy Barnard ((520) 979-8669 or [a.g.b4477@gmail.com](mailto:a.g.b4477@gmail.com)) is the group's point person.

All are welcome, including munchies and ideas for the next film.



*Bobbi Shapiro*



Santa Fe

# Distinguished Lecture Series



[www.distinguishedlectures.com](http://www.distinguishedlectures.com)

## Irwin Cotler

### Human Rights, Antisemitism & Genocide

Sunday, Dec. 11 Webinar  
11am MT, 1 pm ET, 6 pm GMT, 8 pm Israel

Founder and Chair of the  
Raoul Wallenberg Centre  
for Human Rights

## Jack Shlachter

### Jews in the Manhattan Project

Sunday, Jan. 22 Webinar  
11am MT, 1 pm ET, 6 pm GMT, 8 pm Israel

Former Head of the  
Theoretical Division at Los Alamos  
Oppenheimer's old position

## Geoffrey West

### Life and Sustainability

Sunday, Feb 19, 2023 Webinar  
11:00 am MT, 1:00 pm ET, 6:00 pm GMT, 8:00 pm Israel

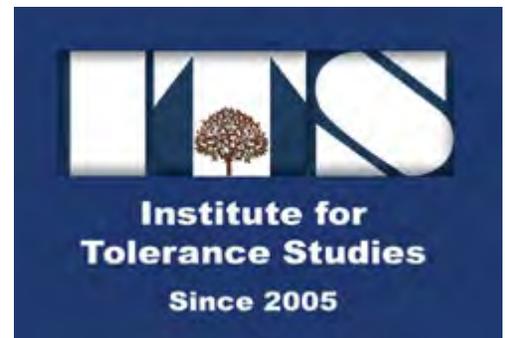
Time Magazine 100 most influential  
Visionary theoretical physicist  
Pioneer in Science of Systems & Networks

For further information and to register for any of these Webinars, press  
[www.distinguishedlectures.com/Fall2022.html](http://www.distinguishedlectures.com/Fall2022.html)

Ron Duncan Hart, PhD, director of the Institute for Tolerance Studies, has developed a project to disseminate information gathered in recent years through its programs about the Holocaust, Israel, and Jewish history.

A resource guide about online access to information and programs from the ITS and Santa Fe Distinguished Lecture Series can be used freely for classes or other informational uses.

Press the logo (right) to access the resource guide.

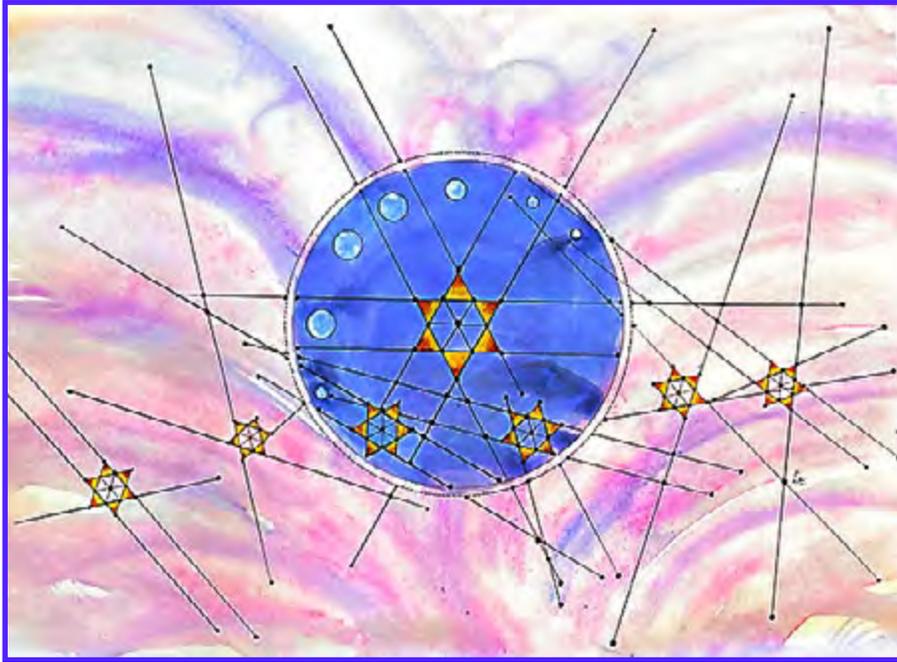


## **TJC Roger Lerman Library**

The library is closed. Contact person is William Westbury, wmarthurwestbury@gmail.com.

## **TJC Program Content**

Contact Lucy Melamed at lucymmel@hotmail.com



*Constellation 5,  
Home Sweet Home,  
Mother Earth.*

**Bobbi Shapiro**

## **SERVICES, RESOURCES TO SHARE**

Are you an individual with a skill you'd like to make known to the TJC community?  
Write a brief classified and send it to kkerschen@gmail.com for a listing.

### ***Hebrew Lessons***

Planning a trip to Israel?

In need of Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation?

Wanting to improve your Hebrew literacy?

Call TJC member and experienced Hebrew tutor and native speaker,  
Judah Botzer at (575)-751-0779 email -- jbotzer@outlook.com

### ***Debora Seidman, Private Writing Coaching and Mentorship***

Sacred Writing Circles are held twice a month, Sunday noon via Zoom

<https://deboraseidman.com/programs/circles/>

“Writing your Deepest Prayer,”: a 14-day online writing program offered through DailyOm.com.

website -- [www.DeboraSeidman.com](http://www.DeboraSeidman.com) email -- [Debora@DeboraSeidman.com](mailto:Debora@DeboraSeidman.com)

### ***Memoir / Ghostwriting / Editing, with Karen Kerschen***

If you've considered writing your memoir or have a manuscript that would benefit from editorial refining, I can be of service. Years of experience working collaboratively and independently, in biography and scientific work. [kkerschen@gmail.com](mailto:kkerschen@gmail.com), (505) 583-2180.

## PLEASE SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS SPONSORS

If you have a business, profession, trade or service, consider sponsoring the TJC & HaKol with an advertisement. Business-card size, \$375; larger size, \$650 / annually.

Contact Gary Atias, at [atiastao@msn](mailto:atiastao@msn).

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## TJC COVID-19 GUIDELINES

Reopening will not occur until approved by a majority of the Board of the TJC. Each event will need to be approved by the Board until all restrictions are lifted.

Re-opening attendance is limited to those members who have been fully vaccinated at least 2 weeks before. Only members will be permitted to attend indoor events at the TJC.

No non-members will be admitted unless they are fully vaccinated at least 2 weeks before.

Maximum occupancy at gatherings is considered to be 80 attendees. 20 attendees be considered 25% occupancy, 24 = 30%, 40 = 50% and 60 = 75%. We will adhere to percentage recommendations by county or state.

At least one Board member will be available at each event at the door to screen people entering. No member will be admitted without screening. No event will take place without a Board member present.

No member will be admitted if not feeling well, sneezing or coughing or having an elevated temperature, fully vaccinated or not.

The TJC will be thoroughly cleaned after each use.

Hand sanitizer and soap and water will be available at all times.

The wearing of masks is suggested for all attendees indoors -- especially those with chronic health conditions. As per current guidelines, this is not mandatory, but strongly suggested.

We should continue to offer ZOOM services from the TJC as long as there is a demand and attendance.

All chairs should be placed and maintained at least 3 feet away from each other.

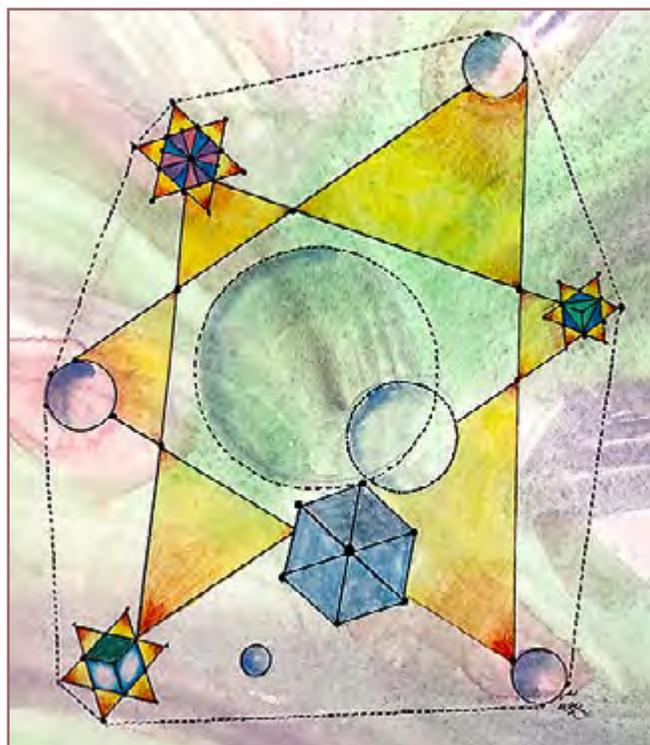
No worship items should be physically shared, i.e. Kiddush cups, wine cups, Challah.

Maximum ventilation will be maintained at all times. This includes either both doors being open, or one door and several windows. The library and the loft will have at least one window open at all times.

Outdoor events may be attended by all TJC members and guests. Fully vaccinated attendees may be unmasked; however, all non-vaccinated attendees must be masked at all times and be at least 6 feet distanced from other individuals.

Any member not adhering to these guidelines will be evaluated for termination from the TJC by the TJC Board.

***Neal Friedman, MD***



***Bobbi Shapiro***

**TJC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PLEDGE ☆ 5783 (2022-2023)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Renewing* \_\_\_\_\_ *New Membership*            *Individual* \_\_\_\_\_ *Family* \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last name \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

| <i>Child's Last name</i> | <i>First name</i> | <i>Birth date</i> | <i>Child's age and grade in Sept.</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                          |                   |                   |                                       |
|                          |                   |                   |                                       |

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Physical address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Land line \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Yahrtzeits**      Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Level**      Sustaining -- \$ 1854 and above \_\_\_\_\_      Family -- \$375 \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Platinum -- \$ 1440 \_\_\_\_\_      Individual -- \$ 200 \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Contributing -- \$ 720 \_\_\_\_\_      Student -- \$ 90 \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Other \_\_\_\_\_ *(Please call us at (575) 758-8615 to discuss what you can afford.)*

**Ongoing Community support -- always appreciated!**

Rabbi Fund \_\_\_\_\_ Torah Fund \_\_\_\_\_ High Holy Days Pledge \_\_\_\_\_

*I pledge to pay in Full* \_\_\_\_\_ *Monthly* \_\_\_\_\_ *Quarterly* \_\_\_\_\_  
                          *By Check* \_\_\_\_\_ *By PayPal* (taosjewishcenter.org) \_\_\_\_\_  
                          *If by Credit Card* \_\_\_\_\_, *phone number* \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: A 3% service charge will be added to all Credit Card payments.**

*To pay by credit card, call 575 / 758 - 8615 and leave a message.*

*Someone from TJC will call you back to make the transaction.*

*Mail form and check to Taos Jewish Center, 1335 Gusdorf Road, Suite R, Taos NM 87571.*

**Another option** for senior members taking a **Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)**

from your retirement funds is to instruct your fiscal intermediary to disburse your membership contribution to the TJC funds or pledges directly to the TJC before your RMD is taken for the year. This reduces the taxable portion of the RMD, providing both you and TJC a mitzvah!

**THE TAOS JEWISH CENTER** is a faith-based non-profit 501c3 organization.

***All donations are tax deductible & greatly appreciated.***

The Taos Jewish Center is located at 1335 Gusdorf Road, Suite R, Taos, NM 87571.

Visit our website at taosjewishcenter.org. Email us at tjc@newmex.com. Call us at (575)-758-8615.



## Taos Jewish Center

1335 Gusdorf Road, Suite R

Taos, NM 87571

(575) 758-8615

Email: [tjc@newmex.com](mailto:tjc@newmex.com)

Website: [taosjewishcenter.org](http://taosjewishcenter.org)

## Support The Taos Jewish Center (TJC)

Membership at any level includes participation at all High Holy Days services, as well as community gatherings and events throughout the year.

**No family or individual is turned away for lack of funds.**

## Build the Taos Jewish Center Legacy

Your charitable contributions sustain our growing Jewish community and provide a home for Jews in Taos for generations to come. Consider contributing through planned-giving vehicles.

**Bequests** -- Include the TJC in your will or living trust.

**Life Insurance** -- Name the TJC as a beneficiary.

**Gifts of stock or securities** -- Donate and get a significant tax deduction.



**Another option** for senior members taking a **Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)** from your retirement funds is to instruct your fiscal intermediary to disburse your membership contribution to the TJC funds or pledges directly to the TJC before your RMD is taken for the year. This reduces the taxable portion of the RMD, providing both you and TJC a mitzvah!



### Torah Fund

Add your name with a donation that remembers a lifetime.

*A book of the Torah-- \$ 1800 - \$ 7200*

*A Favorite Parasha-- \$ 180 - \$ 1800*



### Rabbi Fund

Your generous donation supports the TJC's programming, including Zoom Shabbatons with Rabbi Judith HaLevy.

When it's safe to do so, we'll again enjoy Friday night potluck dinners & Kabbalat Shabbats, Saturday morning Shabbat services & Torah studies.

Sponsor -- \$ 600.

Co-Sponsor -- \$ 300.

Assoc. Sponsor -- \$ 150. - \$ 180.



## KOLOT / VOICES

### IN THIS ISSUE

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Tree of Life in Kabbalah, Tarot and Tu B'Shvat, p.41  
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Torrey Pines, p. 44

The Spring issue of *HaKol* will be posted in time for Purim, and will cover Purim, Passover, Lag B'Omer and the Israeli observances of Yom haSho'ah, Yom haZikaron and Yom haAzma'ut.

Do send me creative output to share -- your writings and art, for *Kolot*, these *Creative/Expressive Pages*.

Optimistic deadline: **February 14th**  
Firm deadline: **February 19th (Earlier submissions always welcome!)**

Send submissions to  
***Karen Kerschen, Editor***

Tarot cards by ***Karen Kerschen***

## TAOS JEWISH HISTORY, WRITTEN BY ONE OF OUR OWN



*No One Came to Taos to be Jewish*, by TJC founding member, Bruce Grossman, is an intimate epic chronicling the coalescing of Jews in Taos.

Epic, because it encompasses the region over decades, intimate because it names names and tells the personal stories of people you know.

We who were born Jewish know that identity in our bones, innately. But as we grow into adulthood, many of us question the meaning of that identity. Some of us opted to turn away from the ritualized observances that mark the year's cycle.

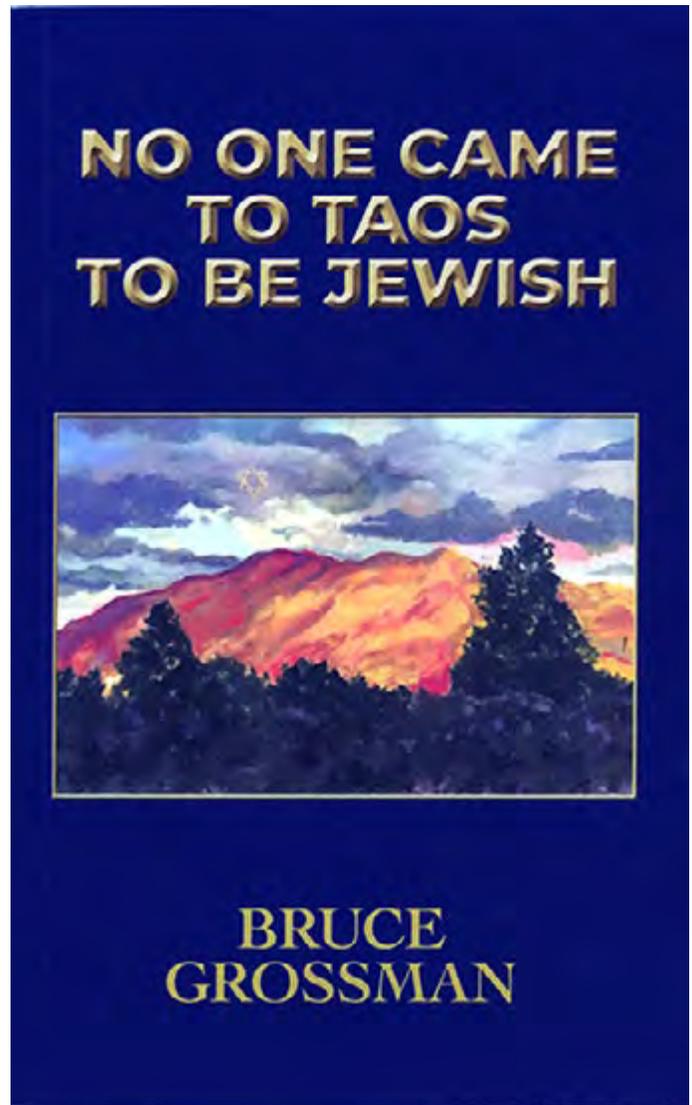
Yet as we mature and form families of our own, that Jewish gene calls out for survival — to pass its knowledge on to the next generation.

This is the story that Grossman tells, here in this skiing and hiking and art-making paradise. He writes of a post-Holocaust coming-together of friends, with shared hungers to transmit culture, to delve into its mysteries and find new relevance.

We learn more about our two home-grown rabbis, Judith HaLevy and Chavah Carp, and about Ron Kalom, whose devotion to Jewish learning predated any formal Taos-community Jewish center. About the rabbinic teachers who passed through this region at Lama Foundation and elsewhere — Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, the 'singing rabbi', Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Rabbi Paul Citron, Rabbi Eli Kaminetsky, the magid Andy Gold. The influence of Buddhism and psychology into this Jewish Reform/Renewal/Havurah/Chabad community.

Don't let its slender size (149 pages) fool you — *No One Came to Taos to be Jewish* reveals something of the depth of our faith in modern-day Taos. Bruce Grossman has done the community a tremendous favor in chronicling its Jewish roots.

This is the second of Grossman's volumes derived from his personal experience. His book of poetry, *We Go On Living*, explores the mysteries and emotions of grief, precipitated by the death of his father. It's a moving and yet comforting read. - KK



*from* **WE GO ON LIVING**

*November 21, 2005*

**Willie**

My mother called him William,  
His friends called him Bill  
But we knew him as Willie.  
The black guys who worked  
With him in downtown L.A.,  
Named Flash and Coop that's  
What they called him, his smile  
And his face were warm like a Willie  
And his favorite car was a Willy's,  
Willie's Willy it made us laugh just  
To think about it. Slim and smooth,  
Quick with his hands, able to repair  
Almost anything, he roamed Division  
Street with his gang, cruising and laughing  
From job to job.

As a boy we drove back and forth during  
The summer to the bus factory where  
He worked, I drove a fork lift and he sold parts,  
Drive shafts and gears, valves and piston rings.  
At nine o'clock after we had worked for an hour  
A faded breakfast wagon pulled up outside the shop,  
We split a bacon and fried egg sandwich on toast  
With steamy onions and peppers, shoulder to shoulder  
On a couple of milk crates, a cup of hot coffee  
Between our hands he shared stories and sometimes  
After work we got tickets to watch Koufax  
Who played just a mile away.



***Bruce Grossman***

## NEW YORK

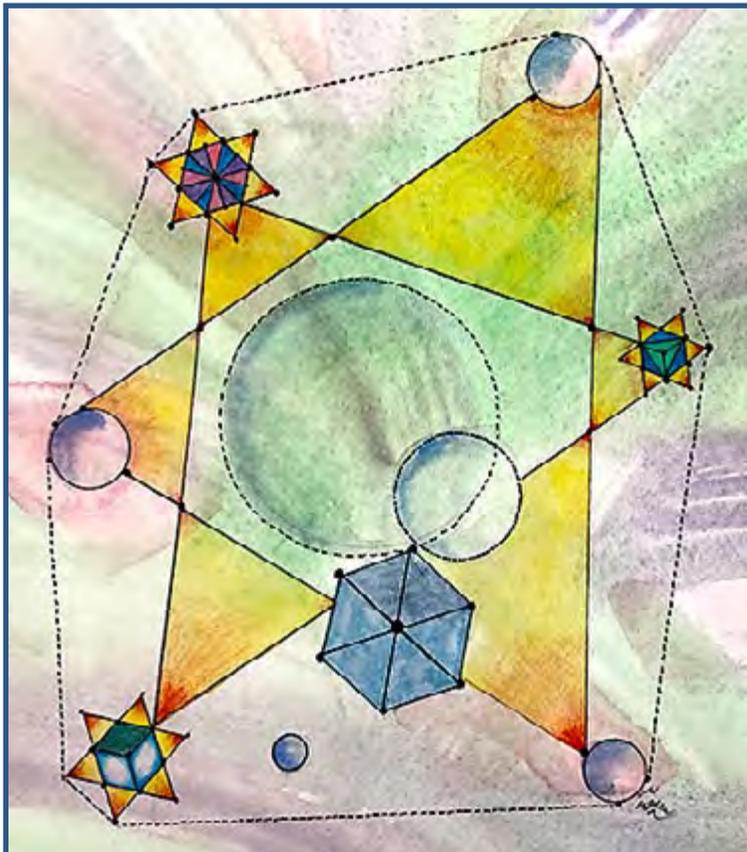
Summer never came back  
No more crickets  
Or watermelon  
Corn on the cob was lost

At first when you lifted off  
It was a heavy burden

But now I can smell spring across the country  
On your little plot in the Hebrew cemetery  
One of the Mid-Atlantic states

Of course we know which one  
Where else would you continue  
Where the Dodgers left us  
Among the freeways  
And the salami sandwiches  
The great Henry Hudson Parkway  
And the Verrazzano Bridge.

*Natalie Goldberg*



*Bobbi Shapiro*

## SHECHINAH GOES SHOPPING

*Dedicated to my teacher, Melila Hellner-Eshed,  
based on the Zohar Mishpatim*

*All Souls issue from a grand and mighty tree  
of that river issuing from Eden.*

*Zohar: Saba de Mishpatim 2:99B*

It was a moment of sheer bliss. *Safta de Hirburim* (the doubting Grandmother) nestled into in the comfy chair, arms enwrapped around her squirming seven year old grandson Lewis. They had just finished lighting candles for the fourth night of Chanukah. The aroma of frying latkes wafted into the living room as they stared at the glowing candles, pinpoints of light in the gathering dusk. “Safta”, Lewis asked, “Where do you come from?”

“New Jersey” she instantly replied. “When I was a little girl...”

“No”, Lewis interrupted, “But where do you come from?”

“Well”, Safta answered, do you remember Great Grandma May and Great Grandpa Lewis, May they rest in peace? When they were young, ...” (Oh dear, how much do I tell him?)

“No, no Grandma, I know how babies are made, I saw a video in school. But where do you come from? Where do I come from?”

Lewis slipped out of her arms and sat firmly on the floor, waiting for the “real” answer.

Safta shook her head softly, and murmured, “I don’t really know. I have an inkling, a memory, a story that flickers in the light of these candles, but I have my doubts as to whether it’s true. That’s why I am called your *Safta de Hirburim*, your Doubting Grandma. But I don’t doubt my love for you, little one, so snuggle up, and I will try to finish this story before the latkes reach the table.”

Safta closed her eyes, settled into the chair, and began her tale:

In the Holy Zohar, one of my soulmates, Saba de Mispatim, revealed that all souls, All Souls issue from a grand and mighty tree of that river issuing from Eden. (*Zohar Saba de Mishpatim 2:99B*)

If I keep my eyes closed, and my mind still, I remember nothing. I can remember when there was no form, no color, no sounds, no words to depict or to share, just consciousness of a pulsing flow, an endless flow of light streaming through that which I will call the essence of *me*. There is no heat, no cold, no form, no time, but some part of me is aware of my place on the branch of an infinite tree, and that I am not alone. Other me’s, my soul brothers and sisters, essences without form, are sheltered on this infinite *Tree of Life*.

At some point, after millennia? eons? the huge tree gently sways and shakes, dislodging a swirl of me’s into the river that is endlessly flowing, flowing from the Garden of Eden to water the worlds below. As I detach from the quivering branch, a thin sheath encloses my essence. I hurtle downward. I cannot yet see. I am aware only that the luminous glow of the Tree of Life has faded and it is dark, very dark.

I realize that I am speeding downwards toward a smaller tree enveloped in thick clouds of vaporous grey fog. The landing is soft beyond softness, warmth beyond warmth. I settle onto the small tree, and as I nestle into its depths, something miraculous happens.

Every inch of my being is penetrated with warmth and light, exploding in fireworks of sensation as my *nishama* and *ruach*, soul and spirit, couple in delight. With every turn, every position, globes of warmth and light are released, a luminescence that shines brighter with every pulse and penetration.

Suddenly, the small tree, now laden with many globes of supernal light, begins to shake softly and a still small voice begins to speak. It is the honeyed voice of the *Shechinah*.

“I know that you would all like to remain on this tree for eternity, tasting nothing but pleasure and casting light into the worlds above and below. But I too desire a union, a return, to my beloved husband on high.

I am now in exile, charged with shepherding your souls through their journey on earth, with the hope that you will use your knowledge and memory of holy

union to rectify the brokenness of the world below. Only then can I return home to my husband, the Holy One Blessed be.

You, my shining lights, are not to remain here in Paradise, but must now be incorporated into a physical body. Many of you have been to earth before, and might have memories of how difficult it is to be born into a physical form, and endure a limited and often problematic lifetime.

Do not fear. I will go into exile with you. Now, it is up to you to make a difference.

No matter what garb you choose, Do not allow your *nishama* to be separated from your *ruach*, your highest soul from spirit. And remember, I, *Shechinah*, will be with you, even in the darkest times.

The souls clutched each other in anticipation and dread. As they approached earth, a few souls remembered that they had been on there before. One soul, seeing the vapor below, recoiled in horror, remembering the acrid smell of the fumes of Auschwitz and her life cut short for no reason.

She clutched her soul, and cried, “No, no! Not again.”

*Shechinah* gently took her to a side patch of cloud, and arranged for her to be transported back to the Supernal Tree. She was not yet ready to return. So many souls were damaged in this last incarnation.

As the glowing cloud approached planet earth, the luminous souls marveled at a gigantic structure that

appeared to be suspended just above the ground.

“Is this a hidden palace of the seven heavens?” asked a soul named Elijah, who had never forgotten his early travels.

“Is this the Holy Temple?” asked a soul who had not returned since his exile in the year 70CE.

“I remember, this is the Great Synagogue of Amsterdam,” shouted a soul from the depth of the cloud.

The bemused voice of the *Shechinah* made itself heard over the noise and excitement above and below. “No, This is not the Heavenly Palace, or the Holy Temple, or even a Great Synagogue suspended in time. This is Macy’s. Time to Go Shopping.”

**Shopping?** The voice of the *Shechinah* continued, firm but loving.

“This is New York City in the second half of the twentieth century, and we have arrived at the world’s largest Shopping Emporium. It is here that you will choose your corporal body, and the accessories that go with it.

I will explain the process in a moment; but first, we must pass the Weigh Station. Just step on the scales, and your many lifetimes will be weighed automatically to assign you to the area where your corporal body awaits.

Yes, there is some free will to choose your incarnation, but you are limited to your assigned area. Many of you still carry debts from other lifetimes that hopefully can be resolved in your new assignment, giving you even less free choice.

Now listen carefully, so as not to become a lost soul.

As we enter the shopping paradise, you will see a huge expanse filled with rack upon rack of what appear to be empty hangers, each holding a neutral colored sheet of paper. These are potential bodies waiting for new souls.

You will be assigned to a specific area based on your “weigh in” merit, but there is considerable free choice as well. All you need to do is touch the sheet hanging from the rack, and a full-blown





**Carmi Plaut**

hologram of that body will appear. Some holograms arrive fully clothed, others depend on you to purchase accessories.

Once you have selected a few holograms from the rack, you may go to the fitting room — **No more than three try-ons at a time, please.**

This is the moment when you see whether your *nefesh/ruach*, your soul fits into your chosen body. The try-on process is often painful as you attempt to merge your vaporous soul with your bodily vehicle.

**It is advisable NOT to try to squeeze into a body that does not fit, no matter how appealing it may appear. While repair and alterations are possible, it is not advised, as the tikkun, the repair, can take a lifetime.**

The luminous cloud of souls slowly began penetrate the huge shopping structure. As the cloud seeped through the ornate ceilings, the souls could discern rack upon racks of hangers, some straight, some circular, all filled to capacity.

None of the embodied earthly shoppers seemed to notice the cloud hovering above them, or the glowing light that filled the gigantic space.

“Pay no mind,” *Shechinah* whispered. “Human beings never seem to notice what is happening around them. My hope is that you will be different, and not forget where you come from. Only then, can there be redemption on this earthly plane.”

The emporium had three floors and a basement, with escalators and elevators ascending and descending.

A disembodied voice coming from one of the elevators intoned, “First Floor Menswear. Second floor Ladieswear and lingerie. Third floor customer service, returns and exchanges. Slightly worn bodies available in the bargain basement, under a sign that says “Last Call.”

The glowing souls began to shout at once. “Do we get to choose male or female? What if we feel we are neither, or both? What floor do we choose?”

*Shechinah* gave a conspiratorial wink and said, “In former times, returning souls were assigned to the first or second floor, but now,

there is a mezzanine for all of you who are not quite sure of gender, or if you wish to embrace both in this lifetime. As you can see, the mezzanine encircles the entire store, and has had quite a bit of traffic lately.

“Any other questions?”

“Do we enter fully clothed?” one soul asked.

“No, No. I remember being born. I was naked,” another soul shouted.

“But you need to find parents to bring you in.”

“Can we choose the parents?”

“What if we are unhappy with our assignment, can we change parents?”

“Will I be able to stay in contact with my soul brothers and sisters?”

“How much free will do we have?”

“How do we know where to go, what to do once we have chosen a body?”

“Whoa, whoa,” *Shechinah* cried. “Let’s have some calm before we disperse below. Not to worry; you will stay in touch with the soul sisters and brothers who have accompanied you this far on the journey. And when you meet up with them in unexpected places, you will instantly know who they are.

“Yes, you will have free will, choice to govern your decisions and actions as an embodied human, but your assignment to a body contains only a limited degree of choice. I am afraid that even I cannot tell you how decisions are made above, so much is known only to the highest levels.

“Once you have completed your transactions, you will be assigned a set of parents, most often, but not always male and female.

“Many of you have been part of a unit with other souls that have always traveled together — sometimes as the parents, sometime appearing as the children, sometimes as husband or wife, sometimes as the family pet. These units stay together throughout eternity.

“Others of you will be shown a digital album, with two or three sets of parents from which you may choose. Once chosen, these parents are permanent, and there are only exchanges in rare cases. **Absolutely NO exchanges are possible in the teenage years, a time when customer service is often bombarded with complaints.**

“You will then take the hologram of your new body, your chosen accessories, your parental assignment and the weigh-in receipt to one of the exit doors. An angel stands by each of these doors, and as the angel takes your receipt from you, the angel will touch the cleft of your upper lip, sealing these memories of body and soul into silence.

The angel then will touch you lightly on the forehead. At that touch, the chosen garment will be embedded into the womb of your chosen mother. There are nine months of gestation, and then you will emerge into this lower world in the standard naked body of a baby. The pulsing stream of life will help to push you into the world.”

I, *Safta de Hirburim*, clearly remembered having been here before, and went right to the task. I hoped to select the body of a 5’9” female ballet dancer, long legs, not too much bosom, but a glance at my receipt showed that once again I was assigned to the petite department.

Disappointed, I flipped through some of the more exotic offerings, but my receipt said clearly that I was to be limited to a Jewish soul in this lifetime. I choose a Russian Jewish woman of the 19th century with a small but slightly *zaftick* form, and kind blue eyes. I knew that she would provide the first layer, a good undergarment. I glanced at my receipt again, which granted me permission to try on well-known biblical figures. I reached for Miriam, but her final health history did not look good. I tried on Esther, but the genes did not fit.

As I flipped through the racks, I came to the hologram of biblical Judith, a strong-willed widow of the first century, who had a compact but comely body and a spirit that did not take no for an answer. We tell her story at Chanukah, as she cut off Holofernes’s head and saved the Jews from the Assyrians in the time of the Maccabees. I knew the essence of Judith would be perfect this time around.

As I was walking to the checkout counter, I felt my soul, my *nesbama/ruach* begin to burn brightly. I turned towards a Men’s Accessories counter near the register and saw the accessory that my soul truly desired. It was a beautiful silk *tallit* embroidered with the walls of Jerusalem.

As I picked it up, an alarm bell sounded, and an angel attendant came rushing over.

“Sorry, the angel cried, the *tallitot* are only for male souls.”

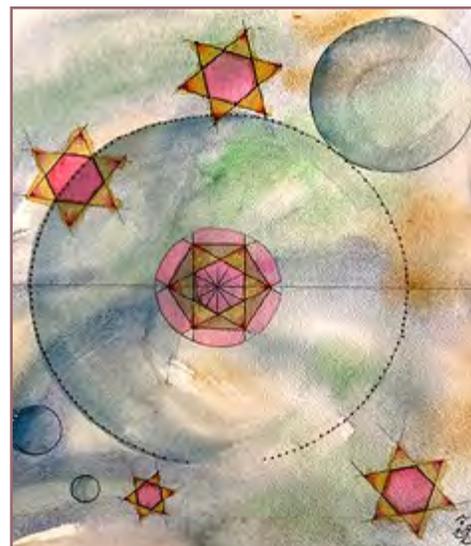
“So first century,” I replied. “The world has changed. I will take that *tallit* and use it well in my lifetime. The angel had no experience with this apparent violation, and drifted away.

*Safta de Hirburim* smiled at the memories as she opened her eyes to see the last of the Chanukah candles flickering goodnight. Lewis was still enfolded in her arms, sound asleep.

Did I just dream all that? Am I delusional? Just a crazy old Grandma? Do I just make things up?

Lewis lifted his head from her lap. “Don’t worry, Grandma. I know. It’s true. I remember when there was nothing....

*Judith HaLevy*



*Bobbi Shapiro*

## THE HAMSA MENORAH: A LETTER TO MY CHILDREN

Dear Elijah, Anna, Treska and Ellatova,

This menorah comes to you with a story: Many years ago (before Treska and Ellatova were born) I returned to Jerusalem after more than three decades.

Fahami was the only person in the city who remembered me from so long ago. When we met in 1967, he spoke no English. I spoke no Arabic, so our conversations were limited to clumsy translations and lots of gestures.

By 1998, he had learned to speak English and Hebrew, had written several books, was a revered teacher and my touchstone to the past that continues to haunt me. Fahami had been living under Israeli occupation ever since I left. I'm Jewish-American. As a Muslim-Palestinian born in East Jerusalem, he might no longer consider me a friend.

We planned to meet in front of the Damascus Gate, the main landmark I remembered. Would we even recognize each other? A needless worry. Out of the swirling crowd, a man with silver hair, a warm smile, and kind face unhesitatingly walked right up to me. After weeks of travel throughout Israel and the West Bank, Fahami was the first to say "Welcome home!"

He invited me for dinner with his family in Silwan. Walking with him through the Old City was like having a living encyclopedia by your side. He made sure I got the best deal when I bought anything. He treated me to lunch at Abu Tahers famous hummus restaurant, and introduced me to local writers, leaders, and artists. If I had any problem, I knew Fahami would be my safeguard.

On the day I was leaving, he came to say goodbye. Like a Palestinian Santa Claus, Fahami joyfully entered the courtyard of my hotel carrying a huge sack that he emptied on the ground in front of me. The sack was filled with gifts— Shabbat candlesticks, a white jallabiyyeh for my husband, an embroidered dress for me, and a Hebrew Bible filled with gorgeous etchings for my mother.

"This is to thank Mama Janet (aka Bubbie) for taking such good care of the Koran." Fahami was referring to the one-hundred year old hand-written sacred book that Faisal and I had found in his grandfather's abandoned home in No-Man's land immediately after the Six-Day War.



Faisal's grandfather expected to return home in a few days and left behind his precious journals and correspondence. It was 1948 and the family was escaping the fierce fighting between the Jews and the Arabs for control of the Old City.

This menorah was in that sack. I have never seen another one like it. Chanukah candles float over a pair of peace doves that seem to merge under the protection of a Hamsa, aka the Hand of Fatima, an ancient symbol that guards against jealousy and malicious thoughts.

Shaped like a hand with three extended fingers and two curved thumbs on either side, the Hamsa is recognized and honored by Jews, Muslims and Christians throughout the Middle East. I have taken care of this menorah for decades. Now it's your turn to light it.

Chanukah is a welcoming of the light and a celebration of freedom. When the Maccabee army fought and won a war, regaining their Temple that needed cleansing. The people immediately wanted to light the Temple Menorah but only found enough oil to burn for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, just enough time to make new oil. That's why on the first night of Chanukah, we light one candle; the second night, two candles, then three, four, five, six, seven, until all eight are lit. On the last night, the flames seem to touch as one. But the shamesh stands apart. That candle stands for the light in the world never goes out—the eternal light.

**This year, I dedicate the light of the menorah to the survival of all life forms on our endangered planet.** May it be so. Events from a thousand years ago, remind us that even if we are outnumbered and outgunned, a small band of determined warriors can conquer a mighty army. I hold onto the vision that the Maccabees turned their enemy's spears (tools of war) into oil-holders (a symbol of peace). Never under estimate the power of the critical mass.

*Iris Keltz*

## THINK OF OTHERS

As you prepare you breakfast, think of others  
(do not forget the pigeon's food.)  
As you conduct your wars, think of others  
(do not forget those who seek peace.)  
As you pay your water bill, think of others  
(those who are nursed by clouds)  
As you return home, to your home, think of others  
(do not forget the people of the camps)  
As you sleep and count the stars, think of others  
(those who have nowhere to sleep)  
As you liberate yourself in metaphor, think of others  
(those who have lost the right to speak)  
As you think of others far away, think of yourself  
(say "if only I were a candle in the dark.")

*Mahmoud Darwish*

Mahmoud Darwish was a renowned Palestinian poet, who used Palestine as a metaphor for the loss of Eden, birth and resurrection, and the anguish of dispossession and exile. In the 1960s he was imprisoned for reciting poetry and traveling between villages without a permit. Considered a "resistance poet," he was placed under house arrest when his poem "Identity Card" was turned into a protest song. He died in Houston TX.  
KK

## IS ANYTHING DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

The news reported recently that Putin's mobilization effort for his 'military operation' in Ukraine has been fulfilled, but that the conscripts are poorly trained, the morale of the units is very low, and their supplies are inadequate.

For me the war in Ukraine is a déjà vu all over again occurrence.

This purposeful intent to destroy Ukraine is not a new maneuver. It has happened before. Stalin tried by purposely creating a famine in 1932, Hitler's army strategized to blockade Kharkiv (as they did Stalingrad), starve the inhabitants, then raze the city. Ukraine was a bread basket. Catherine the Great wanted it and therefore annexed it, Stalin needed it so he starved the populations (Holodomor -- Death by Starvation of 1932-1934), and the Germans carried trainloads of Ukraine's black earth with them as they retreated.

My mother fled Kharkiv, Ukraine, then still under Stalin, during the Second World War. I was born "on the way." We were granted asylum by the American Forces, placed in a Displaced Persons Camp and immigrated to the US when I was five — WWII refugees and the US took us in.



When she was 90, my mother finally wrote her reminiscences. Here is an excerpt describing how it was in the Kharkiv of June 1941.

*We, the teachers and upper graders of the school have been sent out to build trenches...*

*My heart is unbinged. Lyova—my four year old is in Chelyabinsk with his father's family.*

*Twelve-year-old Alex, and Oleh, just turned nine, are in Kharkiv. Papa is sick. Old. The only one with them is Mama, not young herself. Do they have anything to eat? Where is the battlefront? At times we seem to hear rumbling. Cannons? Imagination? How do we find out? Ask the locals? No one has anything to say. They are as afraid as we are.*

*Then the explosions become indisputable. The bombs are coming down on Kharkiv. We all set out for home on foot.*

*It turns out the Germans were bombing the cemetery where artillery stores were kept. We live on Basesnaya Street — two blocks from the cemetery.*

*For all intents and purposes the tramways have stopped running. I can't get to my job at Bald Mountain School, but then hardly any classes are being held anyway. The boys from my upper grades—the ninth and tenth — have been shipped out and most of the girls just stopped coming. I am transferred to teach younger grades. That building is closer to home and I can walk to work.*

*One day, as I'm standing in the schoolyard watching the children at recess, a Red Army soldier in a wrinkled military greatcoat comes to the gate. He asks for water. I bring him a cup of water. He's acting strange. I ask where he's from.*

*"I was at the cemetery with the anti-aircraft cannons," he says. "I went AWOL. Then this terrible thirst came over me." His trembling hands reach out to take the cup I'm offering.*

*"I'm scared. I'll have to fire the cannon and I don't even know to start. There wasn't time to finish training. I was sent out anyway."*

*"What about your comrades?" I ask.*

*"They're all like me—good for nothing."*

Is it any different this time? Unready and untrained, young men are dying, desired regions are being 'annexed,' populations are being killed indiscriminately, cities are being razed.

So much for progress.

**Marianne Furedi**

## DELICIOUS FOOD

Winter suggests the comfort foods of root and roasted vegetables. Chef **Carole Levy** offers a vegan burger of beets and beans sure to warm one's belly!

### Smoky Black Beet Burgers



#### Ingredients

3/4 cup cooked quinoa  
1/2 large red onion, finely diced (yields 3/4 cup)  
1 cup mushrooms, finely chopped  
1-15-ounce can no-salt black beans,  
drained and rinsed  
1 cup raw beets, finely grated  
1 tsp cumin  
1 tsp chili powder  
1/2 tsp smoked paprika  
1/2 cup raw walnuts  
(alternatively, use ground oats)  
Freshly ground black pepper

#### Directions

Preheat oven 375°F.

- Place a large skillet over medium heat.
- Sauté onions 3-5 minutes with water/broth until they are soft and transparent.
- Add all spices and mushrooms and cook until slightly brown, for about 3 minutes.
- Transfer the onion mixture to a large bowl.
- Add beans and mash. You are looking for a rough mash. It's okay to leave a rough texture.
- Add cooked quinoa, raw grated beets, walnuts and mix thoroughly.
- Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or silpat baking mat.
- Form patties with moistened hands or use a lid from a mason jar lined with plastic wrap.
- The thicker you make the patties, the "juicier" and heartier they'll be. (I aim for 1/2" thickness.)
- Bake for 30-45 minutes, flipping at the halfway mark. If you want them crispier, which may dry out the patties, you will need to cook them longer.



A dill pickle would be tasty with these burgers!

Illustration by **Carmi Plaut**



## DELICIOUS FOOD, *continued*

*Back because they're so tasty!*

### **Carole Levy's Baked Potato Latkes**

*(Yields 6 latkes, approximately 4 inches round)*

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 Idaho/Russet potato, peeled and grated
- 2 Tablespoons grated white or red onion
- 1 Tablespoon ground flax seed + 3 Tablespoons water  
(makes one flax egg substitute, equivalent to one egg)
- 1 Tablespoon flour (spelt, oat, or all-purpose)

#### **Instructions:**

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or Silpat baking mat. (This way you won't need any oil, and cleanup is a breeze!)
3. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well.
4. Split batter into individual latke portions.  
You should get 5-6 latkes.
5. Bake for 20 minutes.  
Once the bottoms are brown, flip and cook until done for approximately another 20 minutes.

***Serve hot with unsweetened applesauce.***



### **Unsweetened Applesauce**

*(Yields 4 – 6 cups)*

#### **Ingredients:**

- 3 – 4 lbs. of apples (local ones are plentiful!), cored and roughly chopped, peeled or unpeeled
- Approximately 1 cup of water, to barely cover the bottom of the pot

#### **Instructions:**

1. Place the sliced apples and water over apples in a large pot or saucepan.  
Cover and cook over medium heat until it simmers.  
Watch that the water does not evaporate entirely; you might need to add more water.
2. Reduce heat to low and continue cooking until the apples are very tender.  
(This will take approximately 30 minutes.)
3. Stir occasionally and mash apples with the back of the spoon.  
Cook until you have the desired consistency.  
If you want smooth applesauce, puree the apples using a potato masher, immersion blender, or food processor.
4. It is ideal to serve the applesauce warm.  
You can cool to room temperature, then store in the refrigerator for up to one week.

#### **Chef's notes:**

- Add ground cinnamon to taste or insert a cinnamon stick when cooking sauce.
- Add lemon juice or apple cider vinegar to taste.
- Add cranberries, raspberries or apricots.

## **DELICIOUS FOOD**, *continued*

I don't remember where I found this recipe, but it's so delicious, I've prepared it several times in my electric pressure cooker on the soup setting. It keeps for days without losing flavor, and it's particularly easy to prepare because you can now find butternut squash peeled, chunked and packaged in supermarkets! *KK*

### **Butternut Squash and Pear Soup**

Active time:30 mins, Total time:55 mins

Servings:6

Warm, soothing and aromatic, centered on nourishing produce, this soup has a truly healing vibe to it. But, more than that, what draws me to it is how alluringly tasty it is.

Flavor-wise, sweet earthiness of butternut squash and sautéed onion lead the way. Those vegetables are simmered in a savory broth, along with chunks of fresh pear for a layer of fruity sweetness, and to counter a zing of ginger and a pleasantly bitter touch of turmeric.

Pureed until smooth, the creamy, brilliant orange-gold soup is served with a swirl of yogurt and a spray of fresh herbs. It's one of those foods that manages to round out the sharp edges of the day. The soup can be refrigerated for up to 4 days.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion (about 10 ounces), chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely minced or grated fresh ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 2 pounds butternut squash, cut into 1-inch dice (about 7 cups)
- 2 ripe Bosc pears, peeled, cored and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth, or more as needed
- 3 tablespoons plain yogurt (low-fat or full fat)
- Water, as needed

In a stock pot over medium heat, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until softened but not browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in the ginger and the turmeric and cook, stirring, until aromatic, about 30 seconds. Stir in the squash, pears, salt and pepper. Add the broth and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover and simmer until the squash is very tender, about 25 minutes. Using an immersion blender, puree the soup, or let cool slightly, then puree it in batches in a stand blender until smooth. Add a little water or additional broth, if needed, to thin the soup to your liking.

In a small bowl, whisk the yogurt with water, 1 teaspoon at a time, until thin enough to drizzle.

Ladle the soup in bowls, drizzle with the yogurt and serve hot.

#### Nutrition Information

Calories: 203; Total Fat: 6 g; Saturated Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 1 mg; Sodium: 205 mg; Carbohydrates: 35 g; Dietary Fiber: 6 g; Sugar: 13 g; Protein: 6 g.

## DELICIOUS FOOD, *continued*

At a recent TJC potluck, I served this vegan Persian-spiced dish (modified from a Saratoga, FL newspaper posting) to rave reviews.

It's a little fussy to prepare: you'll want to cook each of the ingredients separately before combining to bake -- but it's well worth the effort, because it keeps the flavors and textures from mushing together.

(I wasn't planning to post this, so please understand that my quantities and timing are approximate.) KK

### **Persian-Spiced Fruit and Vegetable "Ratatouille"**

1/4 cup olive oil

2 very large onions, peeled and chopped

A few shishito (for bite) or sweet peppers, cut up

2 teaspoons salt (or to taste)

Freshly ground black pepper

3 garlic cloves, peeled and very finely chopped

1 eggplant (1 pound), peeled and sliced 1/4-1/2" thick

(If the eggplant has many dark seeds, you might want to brine the slices for a while, then rinse and dry them to remove bitterness.)

1 or 2 apples, peeled, quartered and cored

2 medium zucchini, sliced 1/4-1/2" thick.

Handful of dried apricots, coarsely chopped

1 tablespoon lime or lemon juice

Handful of grape tomatoes (could use any) coarsely chopped

Bruschetta or salsa tomato sauce (optional)

2 tablespoons chopped parsley or cilantro (per taste)

1 1/4 teaspoons Persian Spice Mix (recipe follows below)

Handful of sliced almonds.

Persian Spice mix (called Advieh)

4 teaspoon Cumin

1/2 teaspoon Ground Clove

4 teaspoon Cinnamon

2 teaspoon Dried Rose Petals

1 teaspoon Black Pepper

2 teaspoon Turmeric

2 teaspoon Ground Cardamom

Spoon all the spices in a tightly lidded jar.

Shake well before using to ensure the spices are fully mixed. Makes plenty for several recipes.



Set oven to 400 degrees.

Saute the onions and garlic til slightly caramelized.

Add the peppers to the saute, stir and cook briefly.

On a roasting pan, lay out the eggplant, apple and squash and sprinkle with the Persian spice mix.

Roast until dry, but not dried out.

Remove from the oven and cut the veggies to bite-sized pieces.

Lower the oven temperature to 350-375 degrees.

Spray an oven-safe casserole dish with oil, then layer the onions and garlic, then eggplant, apples and squash, then chopped apricots, forking through them to slightly mix.

In a separate bowl, mix together the tomato chunks, chopped parsley or cilantro, lime or lemon juice, salt and more Persian spice mix.

If you prefer a moister mixture, add some of the bruschetta or salsa tomato sauce.

Spoon the tomato mixture onto the eggplant mixture and fork it through.

Sprinkle the dish with sliced almonds.

Cover with aluminum foil and bake for about an hour. (Check after 40 minutes; might be ready.)

## ARE WE NAKED OR NATURAL?

Louis Pasteur said that chance favors the prepared mind. He was referring to scientific research, but I apply this insight to human consciousness, particularly my own.

In a recent Bnai Shalom Havurah Shabbaton, Rabbi Chavah gave a *dvar* on Torah parashat, *B'reshit*. Among the observations, she mentioned Adam and Eve's sudden awareness of their nakedness after eating the forbidden fruit.

My quiet but strong awareness was, "They may have been naked, but they were also natural." My mind has become more prepared for such reframing.

Some of you may be aware of my several recent years' devotion to ecological study, service, and commentary. The larger issue here is the debate about Abrahamic religions' dominion over the earth and all living things, first called out by Aldo Leopold in the 1940s.

Progressive environmentalists have since blamed this Biblical mandate as enabling human exploitation of the natural world. Many publications, including those by Rabbis, have wrestled with this issue. (For

more on ecological psychology and sociology, see our recent book "Living the Leopolds' Mi Casita Ecology.")

I have become sensitive to the alternative levels of meaning in Torah. My fundamental belief as a psychological and social science professional, devoted in later years to holistic ecology, is that Jewish practice needs a fifth level of Torah study. In addition to the traditional four levels of interpretation literal, allegorical, metaphorical, and hidden, I propose understanding Torah as an expression of human intention by the original writers and by the many generations of scholars, teachers, redactors, and editors to the present. That includes the Rabbis we listen to in study groups and services.

I think many modern liberal Jews do not believe that God literally gave the Torah to Moses, or a step down, that Moses wrote it. Those with historical knowledge recognize the role of Ezra the Scribe after the Babylonian exile return to Judea. In addition, the redactors in the first millennium struggled to establish religious authority after Judean identity and the Temple cult were destroyed.

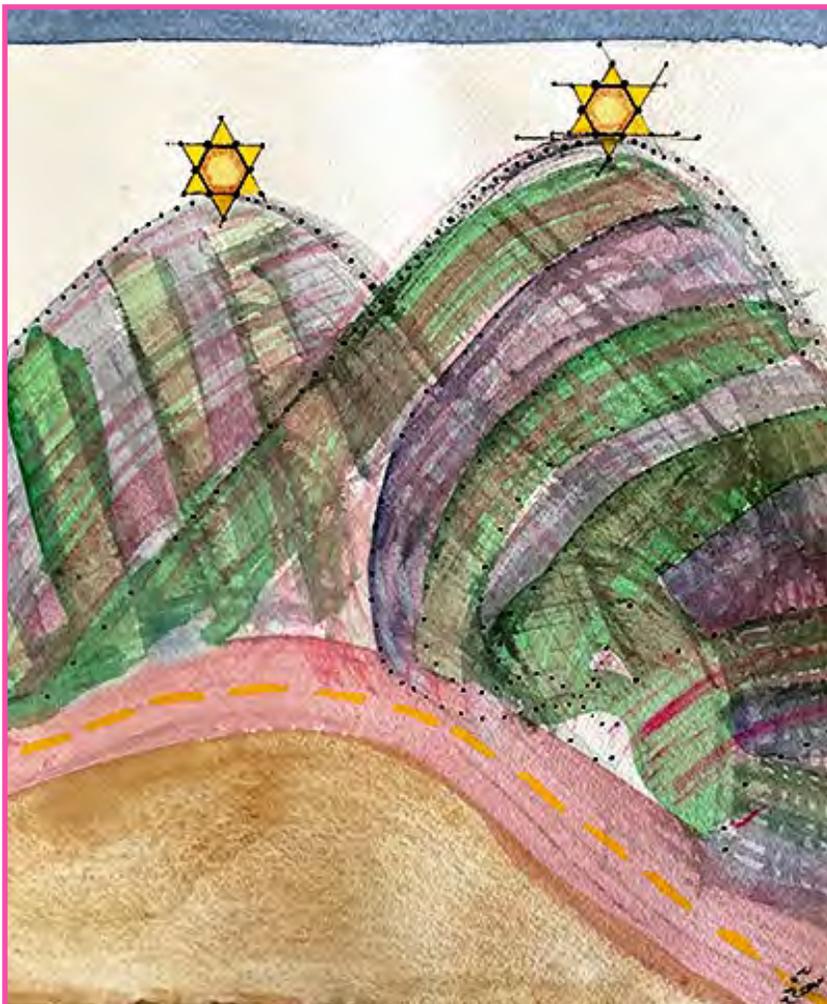
Let's look at a modern text.

Gunther Plaut's UAHC Reform "A Modern Commentary" states in Genesis 2:25, after the creation of woman: "The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame."

Then in 3:6-7: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked."

As an amateur Torah scholar, I recognize that this verse has had many, many interpretations. But I am

going to state another one for prepared mind consciousness in our present time of ecological challenge, meaning our human relationship to all living things and the Earth. By defining Adam and Eve's evolutionary awareness of good and evil as pejorative nakedness, I see another example of the Torah writers asserting judgmental dominion over Nature. Chevre, consider that the Torah, or



**Bobbi Shapiro**

at least narrow interpretations and authoritarian rituals, is a powerful contributor to our human exploitive destruction of the Earth. Of course, there are mindful appeals for stewardship and caretaking in various texts, but, in my experience, most modern Rabbinic authorities fail to reject the destructive elements that were imposed by our ancestors.

It is time for a revolutionary redaction at least, or a relegation of this human literature to the archives of the past. We need this to enable a consequent evolution of our authoritarian human attitudes and restore living in community with all nature. Some of you may be dismissive of

these concerns, seeing only quaint Biblical mythology in Genesis. Others may agree with the Torah authors that seeking knowledge of good and evil was arrogant and wrong of humans.

Feminists have seen in this need for evolution away from archaic Patriarchal sexism.

I perceive in this text a Jewish version of original sin, essentially a statement that our human condition is flawed. This is not an irrelevant old-fashioned view since organized Jewish practice still asserts the need for our redemption, defined in theology terms as deliverance from sin. I recognize ubiquitous frequency in Jewish ritual beyond just atonement during Yom Kippur. For example, in the celebratory Passover holiday, the fourth cup of wine is dedicated to redemption, reminding us of human deficiency. So I arrive at the fundamental character of ritual Judaism as a religion of power that seeks to reform humans out of our natural condition. This is still happening today, maybe often if you prepare your mind for discovery. Annette warned me that some HaKol readers would push back against this essay. My request is that you also prepare your hearts.

***Richard Rubin***

*Lech Lecha*  
***Carmi Plaut***

# THE TREE OF LIFE IN KABBALAH, TAROT AND TU B'SHVAT

The **Tree of Life**, which shows the interconnectedness of all aspects of life, is at the core of the Kabbalah.

In mid 19th century, an ex-Catholic priest Eliphas Levi (born Alphonse Louis Constant) made the first connections between Kabbalah and the tarot. The term tarot is believed to be a corruption of the word Torah.

The 22 cards of the tarot's Major Arcana are said to correspond to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet as pathways within the Tree of Life.

The Kabbalists describe the Tree of Life as growing downward from roots in Heaven above into our daily world below. The notion of an upside-down tree is ancient, for it is thought that the earliest columns were devised by taking tree trunks and placing them upside down to support a roof.

The tarot has been interpreted as a means of exploring spiritual, moral and societal values from a mystical perspective, with the ten *sefirot* of the Kabbalah Tree of Life representing different emanations, or illuminations, of God's infinite light as it manifests in creation.

Another interpretation of the Tree of Life is as representing the afterlife, and the connection between the earth and heaven. The Hanukkah menorah is thought to depict a tree whose branches hold the candles.

In the tarot, the Minor Arcana consists of four suits, which correspond to four seasons, four elements, and in the Kabbalah, four worlds. These are recognized in the seder for **Tu B'Shvat, New Year of the Trees**, created in the 16th century by Isaac Luria and other Kabbalists. The four worlds, each in turn, are acknowledged in the seder –

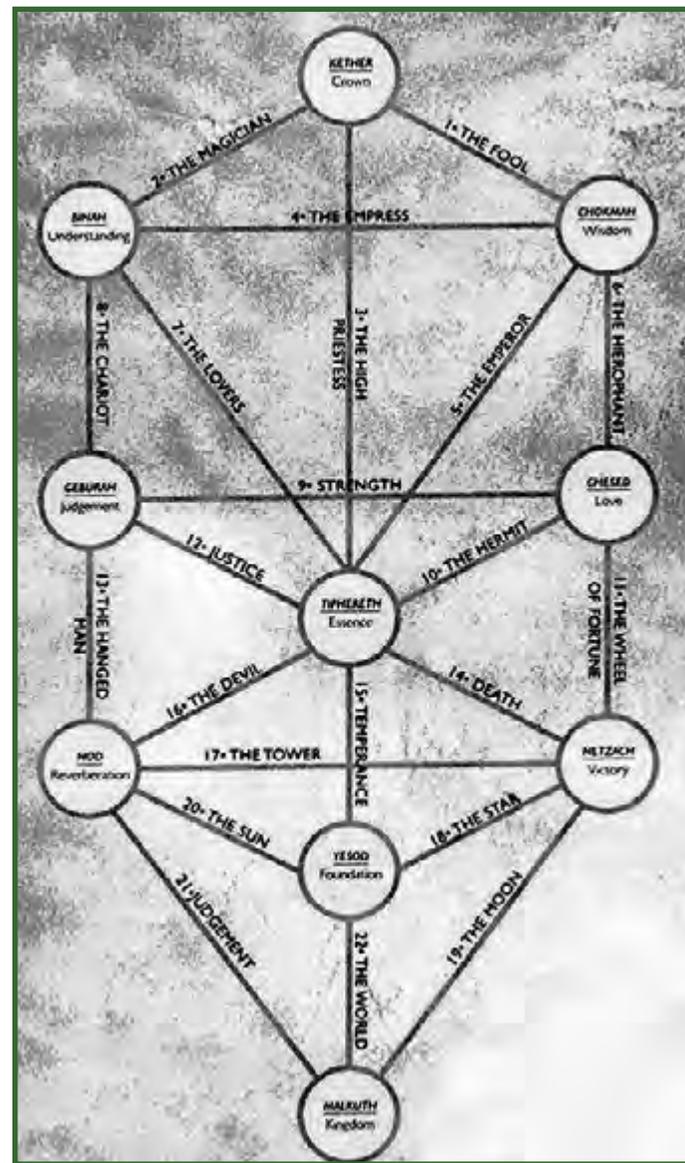
*Assiyah*, representing Action, the element Earth, the season Winter, the wine White, and fruit hard outside, soft inside (such as almonds [which bloom in Israel at this time of year], mandarins) — a reminder to shed our hard shells and see in ourselves and others the sweetness within.

*Yetirah*, representing Formation, the element Water, the season Spring, the wine White with a dash of Red (the first show of color with Spring), and fruit soft outside and hard inside (such as cherries, apricots, olives and plums) — whose seeds carry rebirth, the next generation.

*Briyah*, representing Creation, the element Air, the season Summer, the wine Red with a dash of White, fruit all soft (figs, grapes, strawberries, apples) to appreciate the wholeness of God's creation.

*Atzilut*, representing Spirit, the element Fire, the season Fall, the wine Red, fruit none.

This year (5783), **Tu B'Shevat** falls on **February 6th, 2023**. In modern times, the holiday remembers our connection to the earth.



*Karen Kerschen*



## INTERESTING ARTICLES AND LINKS

Modern perspectives on Jewish Issues (Hartman Institute)  
<https://mailchi.mp/shi.org.il/ideas-for-today-290300?e=83b83be7c7>

Visions for an Arab-Jewish Shared Society  
<https://mailchi.mp/shi.org.il/ideas-for-today-290300?e=83b83be7c7>

How to Learn about Jews from Jews, Rather than the People who Hate Them  
<https://newsletters.theatlantic.com/deep-shtetl/6351cf31fb1fdd00362a68d8/guide-jewish-history-culture-anti-semitism/>

Article from The Atlantic's "Deep Shtetl" newsletter  
<https://newsletters.theatlantic.com/deep-shtetl/635af94efb1fdd00362afed2/israeli-national-election-netanyahu-lapid-arab-party-vote/>

Jewish Women's Archive (always a fascinating 'rabbit hole' to delve into!)  
<https://jwa.org/>  
Here's one of their podcasts —  
<https://jwa.org/podcasts/canwetalk/episode-82-when-jewish-women-talked-dead>

Eichman interviews  
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-eichmann-tapes>

Yiddish Book Center (Amherst, MA) has books available online, video interviews about Yiddish language and culture, audiobooks, recordings and programs and more  
<https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/collections>

A disturbing URL with much info about ongoing threats to Israel  
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/palestinian-rocket-and-mortar-attacks-against-israel>

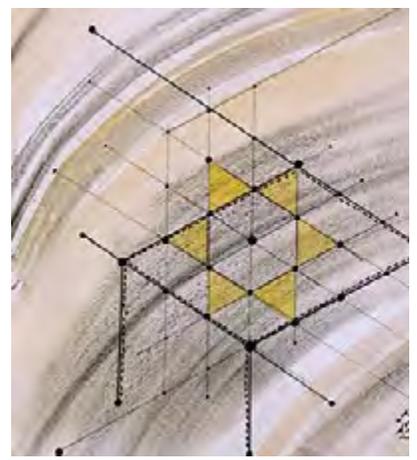
Ongoing efforts at US diplomacy — pro-Israel / pro-peace  
<https://jstreet.org/>

Jewish News Syndicate  
<https://www.jns.org/opinion/should-jewish-students-be-afraid-on-campus/>

Jewish Currents' take on Netanyahu's return to power  
[https://jewishcurrents.org/newsletter/tuesday-news-bulletin-11-08-22?token=j7djpmcvieTtr3YuA-MweJ-pF9ontNTqL&mc\\_cid=1165909a64&mc\\_eid=bc52e1a4b1](https://jewishcurrents.org/newsletter/tuesday-news-bulletin-11-08-22?token=j7djpmcvieTtr3YuA-MweJ-pF9ontNTqL&mc_cid=1165909a64&mc_eid=bc52e1a4b1)

Hartman scholars tackle pressing issues of our day — fall/winter course/video catalog  
<https://www.hartman.org.il/program/ideas-for-today/>

A Journal of Jewish Ideas is a print and digital journal published by the Shalom Hartman Institute that promotes informed conversations and thoughtful disagreement  
<https://www.sourcesjournal.org/articles>



***Bobbi Shapiro***

A Shabbat offering from Mirabai Starr

<https://mailchi.mp/05eabc16ddba/vjb3e52got-1091846?e=b62d102ac6>

An Ivory Comb with an Ancient Message

[https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/science/ivory-comb-beard-lice.html?campaign\\_id=34&emc=edit\\_sc\\_20221115&instance\\_id=77602&nl=science-times&regi\\_id=367691&segment\\_id=113211&te=1&user\\_id=18c-cfc3002053deb92a6f3efob2530ff](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/science/ivory-comb-beard-lice.html?campaign_id=34&emc=edit_sc_20221115&instance_id=77602&nl=science-times&regi_id=367691&segment_id=113211&te=1&user_id=18c-cfc3002053deb92a6f3efob2530ff)

Featured performance is Dave Brubeck's Gates of Justice.

<https://schoolofmusic.ucla.edu/music-and-justice/>

An interesting perspective and a writing prompt.

[https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/157012/engaging-the-ordinary-using-poetic-form-and-your-own-clutter-to-self-archive?mc\\_cid=840784531f&mc\\_eid=cdf922486](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/157012/engaging-the-ordinary-using-poetic-form-and-your-own-clutter-to-self-archive?mc_cid=840784531f&mc_eid=cdf922486)

How to build a Happy Life

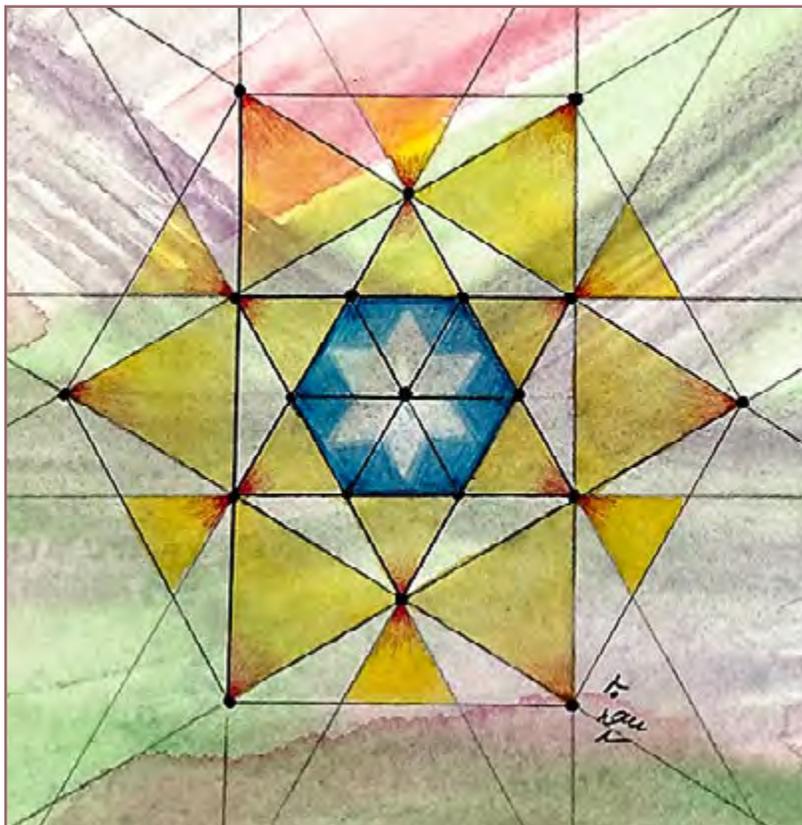
[https://www.theatlantic.com/podcasts/how-to-build-a-happy-life/?utm\\_source=daily-NL-ad&utm\\_medium=cr&utm\\_campaign=htbal3&utm\\_content=listen&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=atlantic-daily-newsletter&utm\\_content=20221120&utm\\_term=The%20Atlantic%20Daily](https://www.theatlantic.com/podcasts/how-to-build-a-happy-life/?utm_source=daily-NL-ad&utm_medium=cr&utm_campaign=htbal3&utm_content=listen&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=atlantic-daily-newsletter&utm_content=20221120&utm_term=The%20Atlantic%20Daily)

Heretic in the House — a Shalom Hartman podcast

<https://mailchi.mp/shi.org.il/heretic-in-the-house?e=83b83be7c7>

J Street hub — The political home of pro-Israel, pro-peace Americans

<https://jstreet.org/>



**Bobbi Shapiro**

# TORREY PINES



Three from Torrey Pines State Reserve, La Jolla, CA  
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