



PATHFINDER

Rabbi's Corner -- Is There More to "Thankgivukkah?"

Inside this issue:

- Cantor Glikin's Remarks 2
- From Our President 3
- Contributions 14
- Calendar 15

For the first time in over 100 years (and the next time will be about 72,000 years from now), Hanukkah coincides with Thanksgiving.

For holiday retailers, the convergence has been a boon for creativity. Special table decorations and food combinations have proliferated. One creative teenager designed a "menurkey," (pictured below) which is a Hanukkah menorah in the shape of the turkey.

Aside from culinary and artistic, is there a deeper connection between the two holidays? Absolutely. The meanings of Hanukkah and Thanksgiving reinforce and enrich one another. Both center around gratitude. Both relive a rich history. And both celebrate religious liberty.

Gratitude

Thanksgiving expresses gratitude for the bounty of America. Hanukkah thanks God for restoring Israel to its Temple. Both rely on our remembering and reliving history.

Both also link our gratitude for the past to our responsibility in the present. One of the Hanukkah blessings thanks God for "miracles You performed for our ancestors and those You

perform today." Our task is to help realize and witness the miracles God performs today.

History

It has been said that the Greeks invented history. Yet, the Jewish people first invented history with religious meaning. We saw God's will unfolding in the events of the world. We saw the spirit of God in people who helped improve the world and make it a place of peace and plenty.

The American pilgrims embraced that Jewish idea. They saw their mission as building a "New Jerusalem," an inspiration and light to the world. Their journey to the New World was not just another colonial expedition. It was an opportunity to rededicate themselves to God's word; to fight the oppressive King who sought to destroy their religious community.

And both Americans and Jews transformed historical memory into a miracle of the spirit. For Jews Hanukkah began as a military holiday and became a time to remember that hope is indestructible. For the Pilgrims a bountiful harvest became an opportunity to share and give thanks for God's grace.

(Cont'd on page 2)



Cantor Glikin's Desk-- An Otherwise Ordinary Tree

On my way back home from being out, I drive by one tree that stands out to me. During the day, this tree is quite ordinary, with its average height and branches reaching up straight to the sky. However, when it is dark outside, the tree is transformed. Its leaves catch the light of the street lamp standing nearby and the tree is illumined like a giant flashlight. As the seasons change, it is beautiful to witness the flashlight turn from green to yellow to bright orange to red. Now the flashlight is gone. When I pass the tree in the dark, all that I can see are its bare branches – a testament to the quickly approaching winter.

It is entirely possible to drive home after a long day in the office without noticing a single tree, or anything at all for that matter. But, noticing makes a tremendous difference in my life. It is only when I stop and notice that I am able to be amazed by the unbelievable miracle that is our world. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel taught: "Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement... get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed." The "radical amazement," which Heschel advocates, leads to appreciation of the world we live in and everything that is contained within it.

This idea of radical amazement is captured in our liturgy. Evening and morning services contain prayers on the theme of creation, which are called Yotzer Or and Ma'ariv Aravim, respectively. These prayers are different with Ma'ariv Aravim (evening) praising the Divine for the continuous changing of days and seasons and Yotzer Or (morning) blessing God as the creator of light. However, what both of these prayers have in common is that they acknowledge that the very turning of the seasons and changing of day into night and night into day is miraculous. The fact that, for the most part, our amazingly complex world functions as it should is nothing short of astounding.

There is one other lesson that both of these prayers teach us. Specifically, both prayers envision the process of creation as *ongoing*. Creation is not particular to some singular historical time and place. Rather, acts of creation are all around us and are happening at all times. Sometimes we can be more aware of the ongoing nature of creation – a pregnant woman, or someone who has tended to a garden on a daily basis, likely knows the feeling. But, for the most part, we are unaware of the continuous process of creation, in part because acts of creation are

so omnipresent that they are almost ubiquitous. Who has the time to dwell on the miracle of a growing blade of grass? Or, the movement of the cloud? Or, the changing of the seasons?

Except that, when we do notice these things, we have the potential to become radically amazed. We have the potential to appreciate the world in which we live and all of its immense glory. And, when we notice and appreciate, even if this happens for a short moment on the drive home as we pass an otherwise ordinary tree, we can connect to something bigger than ourselves and realize that we, too, are part of the constant process of Creation and that we, too, hold the potential for renewal.

- Cantor Vicky Glikin

Rabbi's Corner -- Is There More to "Thankgivukkah?"

(Cont'd from page 1)

Religious Liberty

Sometimes I wish I could convey to our religious school students how lucky we are to have the right and freedom to be here. For centuries Jews could not practice their faith. In fourteenth and fifteenth century Spain, a Jew could be tortured for lighting the Sabbath candles.

The Puritans who left England for America also faced persecution. Their gatherings were forbidden by King Charles. They sought a freedom the Old World could never offer.

On Thanksgiving we express gratitude for the freedom they found here. On Hanukkah we remember the Jewish fight for that freedom.

I'm not sure that latkes and turkey go well together. But Hanukkah and Thanksgiving are two sides of the same coin.

- Rabbi Evan Moffic



From Our President --

I benefit from talking with many congregants about a wide range of interesting possibilities and concerns.

But there is never any talk at all about a bowling league for Congregation Solel!

Bowling remains very popular because it provides a sense of community among team members.

I looked up “bowling” on Wikipedia: “Apart from the physical benefits, it has psychosocial benefits, strengthening friendships or building new ones.” For readers old enough to remember such things, *The Honeymooners*, Ralph Kramden (Jackie Gleason) and Ed Norton (Art Carney) participated on a team at the Acme Bowling Alley in Brooklyn.

You probably have detected where I am going.

And some of you have read a seminal book written by Professor Robert Putnam. A renowned political scientist at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, he published a much-discussed benchmark study wryly entitled *Bowling Alone* (Simon & Schuster, 2000). Early on Professor Putnam touched upon Alexis de’ Tocqueville’s prolonged visit to the United States during the 1830s: “Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations.” (I wrote about Tocqueville in my August message). Robert Putnam regrets the decline in communal activities.

So let me tell you about a group of congregants who regularly find themselves together as volunteer members of the choir at Congregation Solel. It has a specific mission – Jewish choral music – that assembles folks with a common commitment. I regard our choir as akin to a magnet. Some of the volunteers are newcomers. Others are longtime members, measured in decades. I think of our choir – and choirs generally – as a splendid exercise in what Professor Putnam terms as “social bridging.” People who might not otherwise encounter one another find themselves together because of a common purpose. Over time their connections solidify into sustained friendships that otherwise surely would not have taken on shape and texture. What is at work is the social bonding that Robert Putnam claims strengthens human connections within our often-described fragmented culture.

We all know that Congregation Solel lacks a bowling alley. But if we appropriate Professor Putnam’s apt metaphor, we surely can agree that our fifty-six year old synagogue admirably serves its purpose as a faith

community where enduring bonds of friendship as well as mutual support are sustained.

I recently learned that Robert N. Putnam – now age seventy-one – participated in a youth bowling league in his native Ohio. At Congregation Solel we do *not* bowl alone.

Let’s talk one-to-one about our faith community.

- Michael Ebner
(847) 275-7441
president@solel.org

From the Desk of the Executive Director

As we are fast approaching the end of the 8 days of Chanukah, moving toward the New Year and preparing for tax season it is a great time to think of your congregation. It is a good time to make payments on pledges made for dues, religious school and the capital campaign. All payments received by December 31st are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

So it is a good time to meet with your tax preparer and to remember your beloved Solel.

Happy and Healthy New Year to you and yours!

- Allan Litwack

Save the Date!

Kol Zimrah sings Chanukah Favorites!

When: Tuesday night, December 3rd at 7:00 pm

Where: Union League Club
65 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago

Tickets: Contact Michael Mitzen (president of Kol Zimrah) mmitzen@sbcglobal.net.
\$25 each, including a pre-concert buffet

Solel Women Gather, Learn, and Help Those in Need

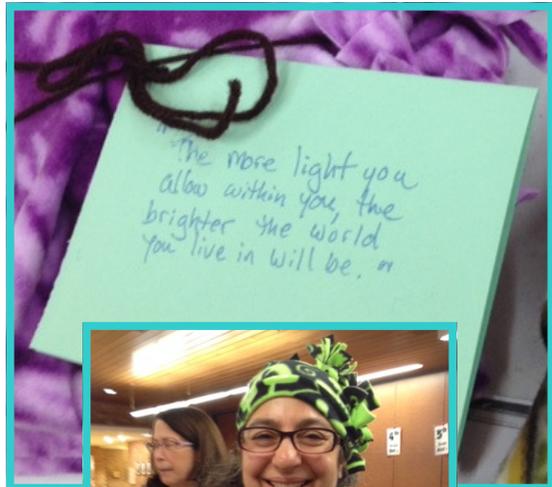
Women and children who escaped abusive relationships with little more than the clothes they were wearing will be a bit warmer this winter thanks to the participants in the November 3rd Congregation Solel Rosh Chodesh Kislev celebration.

About fifteen women prayed, sang, studied with Cantor Vicky Glikin about Chanukah's history and made warm hats and scarves to be donated to women and children who have found refuge in the Evanston YWCA's shelter for battered and abused women. Arranged by Laura Frisch and her seventh grade daughter, Hana, the project grew out of their family's tradition of marking Hana's birthday by giving to those in need.

Participants tied the hats and scarves in individual packets with messages of hope from "The Women of Congregation Solel."

Rosh Chodesh Tevet falls on Wednesday, December 4. Once again the women of Solel will come together to celebrate from 7 to 9 pm at Congregation Solel. Please join us!

- Meta L. Levin



★
Rosh Chodesh Tevet ★
Celebration for Women
Wednesday, December 4
★ 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm



ראש חודש

Rosh Chodesh is a celebration of ourselves, our uniqueness as women, and our relationship with the Divine. Every celebration offers the opportunity to meet other amazing women of Solel, grow spiritually, and deepen our understanding of Judaism. On Rosh Chodesh Tevet, join us for an exploration of the themes of the month of Tevet through the practice of spiritual yoga.

7:00–7:25 pm – Meet the other women of Solel and nosh

7:30–7:55 pm– Rosh Chodesh ritual led by Cantor Glikin

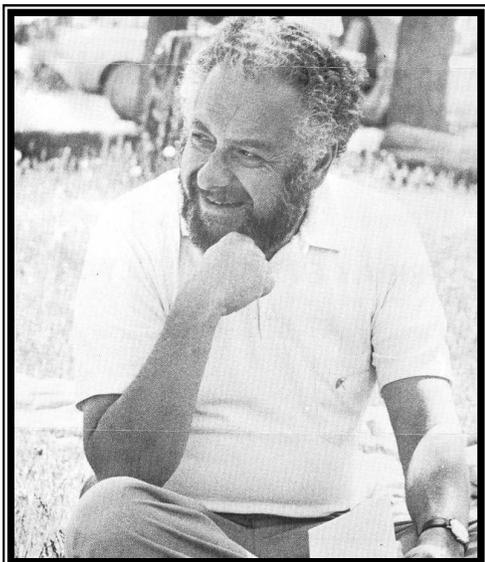
8:00–9:00 pm – Spiritual yoga led by certified yoga instructor, Janice Liberman. All levels are welcome, no previous experience is necessary. There will be mats available for those who do not own one.

Please bring food donations for the West Deerfield Township Food Pantry.

If you have any questions, please be in touch with Cantor Glikin at vglikin@solel.org.

RSVPs appreciated to the Solel office at soleloffice@solel.org

Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf Remembered by Congregation KAM Isaiah



Congregation KAM Isaiah will hold a memorial service on December 6, 2013 at 7:30 pm on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the death of Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf (1924-2008). He served as the rabbi of Congregation Solel from 1957 until 1972, when he became the Jewish chaplain at Yale University.

Speaking about the legacy of Rabbi Wolf will be Rabbi Laurence Edwards. A musical composition -- *The Age of Catastrophes* -- will have its world premier. It will feature Rabbi Wolf's voice from recorded sermons. An Oneg Shabbat will follow.

The service will be preceded by a Shabbat dinner at 6:30 pm. Cost: \$5. Advance registration necessary. If you would like to carpool with other Solel members, please feel free to contact the Solel office.

For more information consult www.kamii. Congregation KAM Isaiah Israel is located at 1100 E. Hyde Park Boulevard in Chicago.

Social Justice Committee Visits Nuestro Center

There were handmade rugs, purses, baskets and flowers galore on November 18 when four members of Congregation Solel's Social Justice Committee visited the Nuestro Center in Highwood.

Cynthia Plouche, Social Justice Chair; Phil Kaplan, Blood Drive and Human Needs committee; Sharon Stein and Meta Levin, Just Congregations co-chairs, talked with Elsi Rodriguez, who runs the center, Gail Hodges, Family Service Development Director, and Paul Dean, Family Service executive director, about the center's programs.

They also watched as older members of the community worked on crafts made of sustainable materials and socialized during a once a week get-together at the center. Its primary focus, however, is on education. The seniors leave and an hour later middle and elementary school children explode in to have a nutritious after school snack and work on homework. Solel's Sharon Stein is one of the volunteer homework helpers who work with the youngsters.

As proof of its success, the schools report that children in the program now earn at least a C in all core curriculum academic subjects.

The Solel Human Needs Committee gave the center an \$1800 grant this year to help it continue its work and Just Congregations, which provided volunteers for its summer fundraising carnival, is looking for more ways to be involved with its programs.



- Meta L. Levin



Nuestro Center's Elsi Rodriguez showed Phil Kaplan the donated food for after school snacks for "Homework Club" participants.



(From left) Cynthia Plouche, Elsi Rodriguez, Phil Kaplan and Sharon Stein during Solel's Social Justice Committee visit to the Nuestro Center in Highwood. Rodriguez runs the center's programs.

Solel Religious School Vision Task Force – November 2013

In September 2012, President Larry Mason convened the Religious School Vision Task Force to look at the Solel Religious School and make recommendations for ways to make it a clear leader in our community. With a growing religious school (201 student this year!), dynamic clergy and professional staff, it was time to build on that strength.

Through surveys and extensive conversations with Solel parents, students, and teachers, members of other Chicago area synagogues, and members of synagogues elsewhere in the US, the Task Force identified attributes that Solel members value in our Religious School. They are:

- Community – for our students and families
- Mastery of skills needed for a satisfying Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience as well as a base of Jewish knowledge
- Flexibility while still maintaining high standards; relating to both the approach to teaching and the path to Bar/Bat Mitzvah and beyond
- Clear expectations and communication from the Religious School

Our religious school is not only preparing students for their B'nai Mitzvot and building their base of Jewish knowledge, but also teaching them the importance of mitzvah in daily life.

With those goals in mind, the task force outlined several recommendations and a timeline for their implementation. The board approved the recommendations at the November board meeting. If any members are interested in seeing the complete report, we will be happy to send them a copy.

The members of the task force were Linsey Cohen, Robin Cohen, Adam Kaplan, Kathy Keyser, and Josh Lowitz.

- Josh Lowitz

Save the Date!
March 21-23, 2014

**Congregation Solel's 5th Anniversary
Rededication Weekend**

Solel's Youth Choir Performing at Northwestern University

Solel's Youth Choir "Rimonim" and Cantor Glikin are excited to have been invited to sing the National Anthem at Northwestern University's Men's Basketball game on December 22 for Jewish Heritage Day.

Members of the Youth Choir will be joined by their siblings in singing the anthem at the Welsh-Ryan Arena for the game against Brown University. The game will be followed by a talk by Aaron Liberman, the only Orthodox Jew playing Division I basketball. Our kids are thrilled to have this unique opportunity!!!

See the Shavuon and flyers in the lobby of Solel for details.



Pastoral Care at Congregation Solel

Rabbi Moffic, Cantor Glikin, and your Solel community want to support you in times when you or someone close to you is in need of physical, spiritual, or emotional healing.

- ➔ Please notify the office if you would like to have your name or the name of a loved one added to the MiSheberach list.
- ➔ Please notify us if you or a loved one are in the hospital and would like a visit or a phone-call from your clergy.
- ➔ If you are in need of meals, rides, or companionship, please contact the office, so that we can put you in touch with the Mitzvah Committee.

Your congregation cares about you! Please help us to know when you are in need of extra care at clergy@solel.org.



Bless Me Too, Father

(Sermon delivered by Rabbi Dov Taylor on Shabbat Toledot 5774, 1 November 2013)

Shabbat shalom! *Bi-reshut mara de-atra.*

It's a pleasure to worship together with you once again in this beautifully renewed sanctuary that has heard so many prayers, seen so many tears, welcomed so much rejoicing through lo, these many years—and to rejoice with Gail and Don Goldstein, who have given of themselves so generously to this holy congregation for half a century and tonight celebrate their jubilee at Solel.

When we dedicated the new chapel in 2005, I riffed on Mary Ann Hoberman's children's book, *A House is a House for Me*:

“The heaven's My throne,” says the Holy One.
“The earth, a mere footstool for Me.
“Where in the loam is My earthly home?
“What place could my House be?”
“I created the world and all it contains,
“You're a tenant here with Me.
“I made the earth as a home for thee—
“How can *you* make a home for *Me*?”
“Yet—build Me a house in the human way
“Where women and men feel free
“To laugh their joy and cry their pain
“And pray not 'I' but 'we.’”
“Where women and men and girls and boys
“Can be what they're meant to be:
“With feet of clay in the human way
“And a heart that's a house for Me.”
“The heaven's My throne,” says the Holy One,
“The earth is a footstool for Me.
“Yet make a house where *you* feel at home—
“And *that* will be home to Me.”

When someone gets a new suit or coat, we say “*titchadesh*,” literally, “May you be renewed.” And tonight I wish to say, *titchadesh*—may you and I and this house be renewed. May we be blessed with strength and good health in this new year and for many years to come.

There's a custom in Vermont that every meeting starts with something called “checking in”—letting people know what's been happening with you since our last meeting. So let me check in with you for a few moments.

My family is thriving. We love living in Vermont, waking up to views of the mountains, the intimacy of Woodstock's small community, actively participating in its rich cultural life and in the monthly gatherings of

our own spirited *chavura*. Judith finds many opportunities to share her artistic and literary talents. Yael and Jesse are flourishing as well.

You may recall that six years ago I had prostate surgery and was fortunate that the cancer hadn't spread. In February 2012, I shared with you my diagnosis of non-Hodgkins lymphoma and my subsequent experience with chemotherapy and radiation. My latest PET scan, two years out, was completely clear, so once again I consider myself quite fortunate to have dodged another bullet, as they say.

Earlier this year I had a scare when I suddenly couldn't take a breath without pain. Thanks to Judith and Yael I was rushed to the hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, where they found multiple embolisms in both lungs, so I'm now on Coumadin and feeling fine again. For those of you young enough to remember John Cameron Swayze, I'm like the proverbial Timex watch—takes a lickin' and keeps on tickin'. And for those for whom John Cameron Swayze is ancient history, I'm like the Eveready Bunny, which is why my Solel email address is <rabbit@solel.org.> I don't know what else the *Riboyne shel oylam* has in store for me but I'll take it as it comes, knowing that I have access to excellent medical care and that I'm surrounded near and far by loved ones who care about me.

Next month Judith and I will be in Jerusalem, where I've been invited to present a paper at the Fifth Annual International Conference on the Haskalah at the Hebrew University. You may recall that the first Hebrew novel, published in 1819, was Joseph Perl's *Revealer of Secrets*, which I translated during my first sabbatical from Solel. The theme of this year's conference is “Revealers of Secrets—200 Years of Galician Haskalah.” I was honored by the invitation and we're looking forward to the adventure, made possible in part by Solel's generous support.

Now let's go around the sanctuary and have everyone else check in—well, perhaps another time.

Genesis—writes Peter Pitzele—views the sibling bond as a container for the lethal and the loving, a dynamic comprising extremes held in tension, centrifugal and centripetal forces of attraction *and* differentiation, rejection *and* longing, the desire to be dominant *and* to be atoned. The myths of Genesis remind us of the lunatic, the paradoxical, the dangerous, and the vulnerable in the sibling world of men and women.

And this week's *parasha*—*Toledot*—forces us to con-

(Cont'd on page 8)

Rabbi Dov Taylor's Sermon (Cont'd from page 7)

front—painfully—the potentially lethal dimension of sibling rivalry and parental favoritism as it concerns the twins, Esau and Jacob. In the ancient Near East, the system of primogeniture provides that the first-born son receives a share of the family patrimony double that of his brothers, and also becomes head of the family when the patriarch dies. A father can choose to pass over his first-born in favor of one of his other sons, but unless the father does so, the birthright belongs to the first-born.

Toledot records how Jacob, the younger of the twins, cheats his older brother Esau out of the birthright for a bowl of lentil stew that Jacob has been cooking. Esau comes in from the hunt famished. “Let me swallow some of that red, red stuff,” he implores. “First sell me your birthright,” Jacob demands. “Hey, I’m so hungry I could die,” Esau cries. “Of what use is my birthright to me?” Not content with such an informal agreement, Jacob insists, “Swear to me first.” And Esau does so, whereupon Jacob gives him the stew. Boy, does he! And Esau stewes about the shabby treatment he has received from his brother and about his own impulsive behavior. The author concludes the episode with this judgment of Esau: “*Va-yokhal va-yeshet va-yakom va-yeilekh va-yivez*”—five verbs in short order to indicate that Esau acts before he thinks—He ate, he drank, he arose, he went, he spurned—the birthright.”

And later in the same *parasha*, we read how Jacob, with the connivance of his mother Rebekah, deceives his blind father Isaac, pretending to be Esau and thereby stealing the blessing that was rightfully his brother’s. Each time I read the story, I’m outraged at Jacob’s shameful behavior and my heart breaks for Esau. He may be less cunning than his twin, he may be ruled by his appetites, but he has done nothing to deserve to be deceived and defrauded, betrayed and bamboozled by his own mother and twin brother. The text is unsparing in its description of Esau’s pain:

“Who was it then, that hunted game and brought it to me? What’s more, I ate of it before you came, and I blessed him; now he must remain blessed!”

When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst into wild and bitter sobbing, and said to his father, “Bless me too, Father!” “Your brother came with guile and took away your blessing.”

“Is that why he was named Jacob—that he might supplant me these two times? First he took away my birthright and now he has taken away my blessing! Haven’t you reserved a blessing for me?” “But I have made him master over you: I have given him all his brothers for servants, and sustained him with grain and wine. What, then, can I still do for you, my son?”

“Do you only have one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!”
And Esau burst into tears.

I hear Esau weeping. It’s the shofar cry of *Tekia*—the scream in response to excruciating news—the cry of the parent who learns that his child was killed in the explosion at the Boston Marathon or by sarin gas in the Syrian civil war.

It’s the wailing of *Terua*—the realization that we will never again see our loved one, never another smile or word or touch, the awful realization that tragedy has forever changed our life.

It’s the brokenness of *Shevarim*—the nine short shivering staccato notes emanating from a broken heart. It’s *shevirat ha-kelim*—the shattered vessels of a flawed creation. It expresses the brokenness, the wound, the sadness we feel when we acknowledge that suffering is an ineluctable part of life. And existentially it’s the worst of the three because it threatens our sense of well-being, our gut feeling that life is good and worth living. It can lead us to wonder:

Where is justice? Where is God?—and it can leave us with the sense that even the greatest of pleasures leave ashes in the mouth.

It’s the weeping of my friend—an accomplished Jungian analyst—whose father told him, “You work hard but you’re not too bright.” It’s the silent weeping

(Cont'd on page 9)

Friedman Place, a supporting organization of the Association of Jewish Blind, is home to adults who are blind or visually impaired. They are looking for volunteers to help with outings, shopping, driving to appointments, or just coming to visit. They are located at 5527 N. Maplewood, off the corner of Bryn Mawr and Lincoln Ave. in Chicago. Please contact Activities Director Beth Elman at beth@friedmanplace.org or (773) 989-9800 for more information.

Rabbi Dov Taylor's Sermon *(Cont'd from page 8)*

of every child who has been told, "Why can't you be like your brother, like your sister, like me?" It's the pained weeping of every husband or wife who has been deceived by a spouse or partner.

It's the unseen weeping of the have-nots who are played for fools by the system they aren't clever enough to manipulate—the forty-eight million Americans without health insurance, the single mothers and their children whose food stamps are being cut off, the growing numbers of the elderly living in poverty, the folks who grill hamburgers, fry chicken and work full-time for minimum wages but can't feed their families.

Among my treasured possessions is a monograph by my dear friend and past president of Solel, Stan Brody of blessed memory. It's entitled, "Seeds of the Holocaust: The German Economy, 1916-23," and it opens with this quotation from Thomas Mann:

A cynical "each man for himself" becomes the rule of life. But only the most powerful, the most resourceful and unscrupulous, the hyenas of economic life, can come through unscathed. The great mass of those who put their trust in the traditional order, the innocent and unworldly, and those who do productive and useful work but don't know how to manipulate money, the elderly who hoped to live on what they earned in the past—all these are doomed to suffer. An experience of this kind poisons the morale of a nation.

These travesties have to be bothering you, especially given Solel's extraordinary history of social concern. "Do you only have one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!"

After Jacob flees to Haran to escape his brother's wrath, he falls madly in love with his cousin Rachel

and works for his uncle Laban for seven years for the right to marry her. But on his wedding night, the tables are turned. As Jacob deceived his father with a garment—the animal skins with which he covered his arms that he might feel like his hirsute brother—so now *he* is deceived by a garment—the veil that hides the face of the bride. And as he took advantage of his father's blindness, so *he* is blind in the darkness of the tent. When he awakens in the morning, after having spent his passion on Rachel's older sister Leah, he cries out to his father-in-law, "Why have you deceived me?!"

Now any parent can understand Laban's profound sense of hurt at seeing his elder daughter Leah bypassed in favor of her lovely younger sister. And in words that leave nothing to the imagination as to the *author's* condemnation of Jacob's deceitful deeds, Laban answers, "*Lo yei'aseh khein bi-m'komeinu latet ha-ts'ira lifnei ha-b'khira*, It's not the custom around *here* to put the younger before the elder."

And now we move ahead two *parashiyot* and two decades. Jacob is coming home, together with his wives and children and servants, together with the wealth he has amassed in Haran by cheating his uncle out of much of his livestock. He hasn't been in touch with his parents and brother for twenty years. What will he find? Has Esau's anger cooled? Jacob is terrified at the prospect of the unavoidable confrontation! Ever the strategist, he divides his camp in two, so that if Esau should attack the one, the other might escape. He spends the night alone, and in the dark vale of soulmaking, he wrests a new name—Yisrael. "*Ve-haya he-akov le-meishor*, The crooked shall be made straight (Is. 40:4)."

In the morning he sends gifts ahead to propitiate his brother, but when they finally meet, he discovers that his fears were unfounded:

He himself went on ahead and bowed low to the ground seven times until he was near his brother.

(Cont'd on page 10)

Solel Snowbird Shabbat

February 7-8, 2014

\$125/person deposit

Hotel Indigo

941-487-3800 (for rooms)

For more information : Call the Solel office 847-433-3555



Rabbi Dov Taylor's Sermon (Cont'd from page 9)

Esau ran to greet him. He embraced him and, falling on his neck, he—Esau—kissed him—Jacob; and they wept (Gen. 33:3f.).

They *both* weep! What clearer expression of brotherly love and forgiveness could there be? And after the embrace, Jacob says, "*Ra'iti panekha kir'ot p'nei elohim*, To see your face is like seeing the face of God."

Now there are in the Torah as well as in printed editions of the Hebrew text a number of scribal conventions that go back a thousand years or more. We know what *some* of them mean; the meaning of others is completely lost to us. "Esau embraced him and, falling on his neck, he kissed him...." The Hebrew word for "he kissed him" is "*va-yishakeihu*," and it just so happens that above the word "*va-yishakeihu*" are six dots. Six dots. We have no idea what they signify. No idea. But listen to what two thousand years of rabbinic commentators have read into those six dots.

In the Midrash collection known as *Bereshit Rabbah*, Rabbi Shim'on ben El'azar says: "This teaches that at that moment Esau's compassion was aroused and he kissed Jacob with a whole heart." Now *that* is interesting. Rabbi Shim'on doesn't say, "Esau's *forgiveness* was aroused." He says, "Esau's *compassion* was aroused." Why should Esau—the injured party—feel compassion for Jacob, the perp?

Is it because he sees his brother groveling before him and no brother wants to see such self-abasing behavior in a sibling? Or perhaps he feels sorry for his brother, who has been in exile from home and family for twenty years. Or maybe Esau feels compassion for his younger twin who has never really known him, never seen him for the good man that he is, never had the opportunity to be embraced by Esau and his family.

The word compassion means, "feeling *with*." Esau is able to feel *with* Jacob, and therefore to feel *for* Jacob. Whatever the reason, Rabbi Shim'on says that Esau feels compassion.

But Rabbi Yannai differs: "If so," he asks, "why the dots above the letters?" "They come to teach that *lo ba lenashko ela lenashkho*—Esau came not to kiss Jacob but to bite him, but our father Jacob's neck was turned to marble so that the scoundrel Esau's teeth were broken, and when the text says 'they wept,' it means that Jacob wept on his brother's neck out of love, but Esau wept for his broken teeth."

The 19th-century chasidic rabbi known as the *Sefat Emet* adds: "When Esau wants to kiss Jacob, that's the most dangerous bite. Esau's kiss is a bite to Jacob."

And in the 20th century, Gershom Scholem interpreted "and they wept" to mean that "Esau wept because he had to kiss Jacob, whereas Jacob wept because he knew that this kiss would cost him dearly—that Esau never kisses for free."

These few comments are typical of dozens of similar interpretations in which the rabbis demonize innocent Esau in order to commend crooked Jacob. Even more: When the sages need to be circumspect when speaking about Rome, they allude to Rome as Edom—Esau's other name. In a word, two thousand years of rabbinic tradition have taken the Torah's sympathetic treatment of Esau and turned him into the personification of duplicity. And, seizing on this ancient rabbinic tradition, Christian interpreters have seen in Esau an adumbration of Judas: You can never trust a Jew because he'll betray you with a kiss.

The rabbis say, "*Ma'asei avot siman la-banim*, The actions of the fathers are a sign for the children." Based in part on the rabbinic vilification of Esau, generations of Jews have developed a xenophobic view of the rest of the world.

The myths of Genesis—says Pitzele—tell us that in the end brother must turn to face brother; sisters must be reconciled. In youth, the brothers war and feud, fight for position, betray and bully one another; the immaturity of brotherhood is full of pettiness and is shadowed always by the mortal impulsiveness of Cain. But brotherhood is life-long, and the possibilities for a deeper level of understanding and concord remain available to any one of us who keeps open the door to such atonements. In time, a brother may learn... that a brother's face is another aspect of one's own face, a sister's gifts may enhance our own gifts, a brother's forgiveness is indispensable to our ability to affirm ourselves, and a sister's love a necessary prerequisite for our ability to make a true fellowship with others and to call the other kin.

What I cannot abide in my brother I have not found or accepted in myself; until I accept my sister I cannot live fully at peace with other women. War results from our failure as men to achieve a relationship with our brothers. It is a failure of skill, of knowledge, and of courage. If we men are ever to live in brotherhood with one another, then each man must face the brother he has and the kind of brother he has been.

(Cont'd on page 11)

Rabbi Dov Taylor's Sermon *(Cont'd from page 10)*

Jacob has twelve sons and he manages to turn brother against brother. I can't think about Jacob's treacherous treatment of his own brother without thinking of another Jacob—my father Jacob—one of twelve children and alienated from all his siblings. Though most of them lived in or near New York City, we never saw any of those aunts and uncles, never got to know any of those cousins. I never understood why. As a teenager, I once asked my father how he could cut himself off from his family like that, and he muttered something to put me off. I always felt deprived of all those aunts and uncles and cousins.

And I can't think about Esau and Jacob without thinking about my relationship with my own brother, eight years my senior, now eighty years old. He's plenty smart—earned his Bachelor's degree *magna cum laude* in six years of night school at Brooklyn College because he had to work full time to help support our family, then went on to earn a Master's degree at Stanford University. I don't recall that we ever fought, and I know that there's nothing he wouldn't do for me or I for him. But we've never been close, never really talked about our problems, our hopes, our fears, our dreams—whether because of the age difference between us or because our father never signaled a closeness with any of *his* eleven siblings.

I haven't thought about this for many years but when I was about nine or ten years old my brother reported to our father that I and a few of my friends had been exploring our sexuality under a neighbor's porch. My father, in his casually brutal way, discussed it at the family dinner table, thoroughly humiliating me.

A year ago my brother offered me \$10,000 to help with any medical bills in connection with my lymphoma treatment. I didn't need the money, but his offer made me weep. And I felt ashamed that I hadn't thought about *him* nearly as much as he had thought about *me*.

I sent him a letter for his birthday back in July and he responded with a long letter of his own, in which he shared with me stories I'd never heard before, including his early memories and feelings about our parents. He told me that he remembered overhearing an argument between our parents after a visit from the one aunt we knew and loved—my mother's only sister. Our father said that he didn't want us to see her or her family any more. In a rare display of courage and outrage, our mother told him in no uncertain terms that she would not allow him to destroy her

relationship with her sister as he had destroyed his relationship with all of his siblings.

I never knew my brother had those memories or those feelings. It's as if I'm getting to know him for the first time, and I'm looking forward to continuing and deepening our new relationship. Pitzele is right—the sibling bond can be a container for the lethal and the loving, but it can also be the encounter in which—like Jacob—we can ultimately see the face of God.

When I look into myself, I see you. When I look at you, I see myself. It is the unwillingness to see oneself in one's brother, in one's sister, and to see one's brother or sister in oneself, that stands in the way of reconciliation, of atonement, of peace—in our hearts, in our families, in Israel, in our suffering world.

“To see your face is like seeing the face of God.” “Do you only have one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!”
Amen.

- Rabbi Dov Taylor

Save the Date!

January 24, 2014

Shabbat presentation on Hands of Peace-- learn how we bring Israeli, Palestinian, and American kids together every summer to dialogue about peace.

If you have any questions, contact Wendy Rhodes at wendyrhodes53@gmail.com



HANDS OF PEACE



DUAL NARRATIVE TRIP TO ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Sponsored by Hands of Peace and Glenview Community Church
October 13 - October 24, 2014

Deadline to register January 31, 2014

Through our trip, we hope to bring together a multicultural group eager to explore the diversity and complexity of the region while experiencing its spiritual and historical richness, its current political realities, and its cultural abundance.

Join us! As we travel together, we will engage with people whose personal stories bring both sides of the conflict to life. By trip's end, we hope to provide all of our travelers with a broadened perspective that will raise awareness and foster the belief that peace is possible!

Only \$2,900 per person, \$700 deposit is due January 31, 2014

For more information or to book your tour, visit our website: www.mejditours.com/open-tours or contact group leaders Wendy Rhodes at 847-945-8464 or wendyrhodes53@gmail.com & Betsy Martin at 847-657-7595 or betsywisemartin@att.net.

TRIP INCLUDES

- ✓ 9 Nights Lodging (double occupancy)
- ✓ Breakfast every day
- ✓ 12 additional meals throughout program
- ✓ 2 full-time MEJDI- trained guides: 1 Israeli & 1 Palestinian
- ✓ Private bus and driver
- ✓ Entrance and speaker fees
- ✓ Tips to drivers, guides and hotel staff
- ✓ \$400 tax-deductible donation to Hands of Peace

Brought to you by:



HANDS OF PEACE

SOLEL'S ONE BOOK COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES ITS 2014 SELECTION

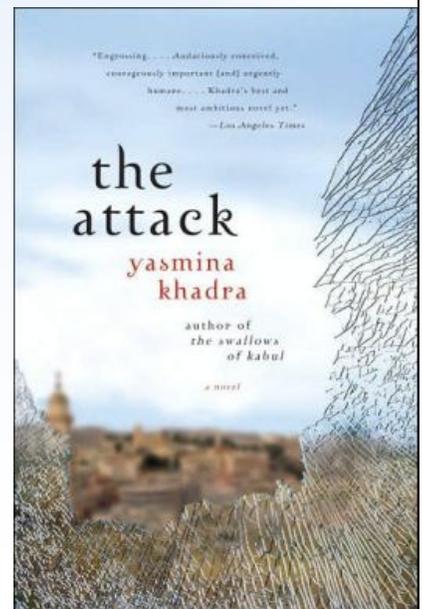
The Attack by Yasmina Khadra

Join us for our discussion on Sunday, April 13 at 1:00 pm

The story initially takes place in Tel Aviv where the life of a prominent Arab Israeli surgeon is shaken to its roots by a catastrophic incident. How the Israeli authorities and the medical staff deal with the incident and how it leads the doctor to explore his very being makes for a compelling story.

The recently released and critically acclaimed movie, "The Attack," is "loosely" based on the book. The differences, some subtle, some not so, should serve to provide fuel for a good discussion.

We hope you can join us at the April book discussion and complementary programming we will be scheduling.

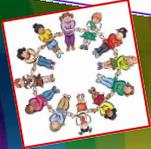


Check Out These Activities at Congregation Solel



Shabbat Shalom!

*A Service for the
Whole Congregation
Friday, December 27*



With its high energy and casual atmosphere Shabbat Shalom! is the perfect way for Solelites of all ages to celebrate Shabbat.

5:30 pm - pizza dinner
6:15 pm - enjoy a warm and meaningful service led by Cantor Glikin and Rabbi Moffic, with participation by Solel's Youth Choir "Rimonim"

Future Dates:
January 31
February 28

Shabbat. Friendship.
Community. Family. Song.



Hava Nashira!

A NEW ENGAGING AND SPIRITED SERVICE
FEATURING FRESH AND FAMILIAR MELODIES.

JOIN US ON DECEMBER 6 AT 7:30 PM
FOR AN EVENING OF SONG AND INSPIRATION,
ACCOMPANIED BY SOLEL'S OWN
INSTRUMENTALISTS AND SINGERS.

It's Shabbat....Let's Sing!



Future Dates:
February 7
April 11
June 6



Pray 'n Play

Saturday, December 7
10:30 am

*This isn't your
ordinary Tot Shabbat!*



Join other families with children 0-5 years of age for a fun, interactive "Gymboree-style" Shabbat program, featuring music, maracas, puppets, & parachutes.

Followed by a complimentary bagel brunch and playtime.

Older siblings are welcome to attend!

Come, sing, play, make friends!!

Led by Cantor Vicky Glikin



Future Dates:
January 11 April 12
February 8 May 10
March 1

Jewish Parenting Workshop led by Jerry Kaye



**Sunday, December 8,
10:00 am - 10:45 am**

Jerry Kaye, Executive Director of OSRUI, will lead those interested in a conversation on how to infuse Judaism into your everyday parenting as well as provide hands on suggestions.

Jerry will then join the Religious School Kindergarten through 4th grade to tell a story, as he is known as a world renowned story teller.

All parents are invited to join us for this special event!



Thank You For Your Contributions

Annual Appeal

Richard and Andrea Amend
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Music Fund

Rochelle Sampson and Jeff Snyder, in honor of Gary Salit's birthday

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Louis S. Kahnweiler

Tribute Fund

Natalie Caplin, in memory of Arthur Caplin
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Sandra and Michael Hermanoff, in honor of Phil Cohen's 80th Birthday
Renee and Thomas Krauss, in memory of Vilma Kafka
Wendy and Wayne Rhodes, in memory of Lillian Bogolub and Elynor Klein
Marcia Rosenbaum, in memory of Michael Margolis
Thomas E. Russell, in memory of Deborah Fell
Donald W. Schaumberger, in memory of Erma Schaumberger
Carol and Randall Miller, in memory of Lois Schloss

Mazel Tov to

Cantor Glikin, whose original composition entitled, "Yih'yu L'ratzon/Oseh Shalom" will be published by Transcontinental Music Publications in their "Shabbat Anthology 7." The highly prestigious publication will be released at the upcoming Union for Reform Judaism Biennial in the middle of this month and will also include a recording of the piece sung by Cantor Glikin. Cantor Glikin sang this piece during services at the American Cantors' Conference in June, where it was very favorably received. The piece is already being sung in multiple congregations around the country and could also be heard at Congregation Solel during the High Holidays and on Shabbat. The piece was arranged by Phil Orem, Congregation Solel's accompanist and composer-in-residence.

Stock Transfers to Congregation Solel

In order to make stock transfers from your accounts to Congregation Solel, the congregation works with First Mesirow Financial, Inc.

Please note: This is a NEW location for gifting stocks to Congregation Solel:

Mesirow Financial, Inc.
847-681-2502 Jennifer Kaufmann
DTC # 0727
Account # 3318-5445

As always, your contributions to Congregation Solel are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. If there are any questions, please call Allan Litwack, Executive Director, at (847) 433-3555, ext 225.

Thank you for your continued support.



December 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
1 No Religious School	2 7:30 pm Just Congregations 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	3 7:30 pm Women's Seder Planning Meeting 4:15 pm Religious School	4 7:00 pm Women's Rosh Chodesh Celebration	5	6 7:30 pm Hava Nashira	7 9:15 am Torah Study 10:30 am Pray 'n Play 10:30 am Torah Study	
8 9:45 am Religious School 10:15 am Board Meeting	9 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	10 No Lunch & Learn 4:15 pm Religious School	11	12	13 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	14 9:15 am Torah Study 10:35 am Morning Minyan	
15 9:45 am Religious School	16 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	17 4:15 pm Religious School 7:00 pm Jewish War Veterans Meeting	18	19	20 7:30 pm Choir Shabbat	21 9:15 am Torah Study 10:35 am Morning Minyan	
22 No Religious School	23	24 4:15 pm No Religious School	25 Office Closed	26	27 5:30 pm Pizza Dinner 6:15 pm Shabbat Shalom Service	28 9:15 am Torah Study 10:35 am Morning Minyan	
29 No Religious School	30	31 4:15 pm No Religious School	Kindle Shabbat Candles at dinner or at the following times (CDT): 6.....4:01 pm 13.....4:02 pm 20.....4:04 pm 27.....4:08 pm				

December Shabbat Services Schedule

Friday, December 6

Hava Nashira Service.....7:30 pm

Vayigash, Gen. 44:18-47:27

Saturday, December 7

Torah Study9:15 am

Pray 'n Play.....10:30 am

Morning Minyan.....10:35 am

Friday, December 13

Shabbat Service.....7:30 pm

Va-y'chi, Gen. 47:28-50:26

Saturday, December 14

Torah Study9:15 am

Morning Minyan10:35 am

Friday, December 20

Choir Shabbat Service.....7:30 pm

Sh'mot, Exod. 1:1-6:1

Saturday, December 21

Torah Study9:15 am

Morning Minyan.....10:35 am

Friday, December 27

Shabbat Shalom Service6:15 pm

Va-eira, Exod. 6:2-9:35

Saturday, December 28

Torah Study.....9:15 am

Morning Minyan10:35 am

Updating Your Solel Calendar with Future Events in 2013-2014

January 17, 2014 at 7:30 pm: Fifth Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Shabbat

January 24, 2014: Shabbat presentation on Hands of Peace-- learn how we bring Israeli, Palestinian, and American kids together every summer to dialogue about peace.

February 7-9, 2014: Snowbird Shabbat in Florida

March 2, 2014: Women's Seder

March 21-23, 2014: 50th Anniversary Re-dedication of Congregation Solel

April 13, 2014 at 1:00 pm: One Book/One Solel (reading assignment pending)

May 4, 2014 at 2:00 pm: Kol Zimrah Concert at Congregation Solel

Want to inquire more deeply into a passage after the Shabbat service? Find the weekly parashot and commentaries at these links:



Weekly D'var: <http://urj.org/learning/torah/> or <http://www.reformjudaism.org/>

Parashot Summaries: <http://urj.org/learning/torah/summaries/>

Many Paths. One Community

We are a spiritual home that engages our members and community in *prayer, learning, and the pursuit of social justice*. We prize *inclusiveness, innovation, and involvement* in our programs, life cycle events, and leadership. Everyone who walks into our building should feel *inspired, uplifted, and connected*.

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Religious School: (847) 433-3417
Email: soleloffice@solel.org
Website: www.solel.org



Rabbi: Rabbi Evan Moffic (emoffic@solel.org)
Cantor: Cantor Vicky Glikin (vglikin@solel.org)
Executive Director: Allan Litwack (allan@solel.org)
Director of Education: Geoffrey Prass (geoff@solel.org)
President: Michael Ebner (president@solel.org)
Rabbi Emeritus: Rabbi Dov Taylor (rabbitt@solel.org)

Pathfinder Deadline for Submissions:
The next Pathfinder will be published January 2014
Please submit material by email on or before December 15, 2013 in order for it to appear in the December Pathfinder.