

the jewishconnection



February and March 2014

Issue No. 44

Message from Rabbi Edward S. Boraz

During our class's on-going study of the Torah, we came across this interesting phrase: *kotzer-ruach*, (Exodus 6:10). The phrase speaks to our tendency, as individuals and as a society, to focus only on the task at hand, and thus miss opportunities for transcendence. In the chapter, Moses goes to the Children of Israel to tell of their redemption; but, the "Children of Israel" do not "hear" Moses because of *kotzer-ruach*, and due to the crushing labor.

"*Kotzer ruach*" is interpreted by the great scholar Reuben Alcalay as referring to impatience, irascibility, or quick temper. Rashi explains that when a person is *kotzer ruach*, it is as though the heart shortens. Generally, people do not suffer from these attributes, though most of us have experienced it at one time or another, some more frequently than others. We do make allowances and adjustments for each other when we encounter friends, partners, or colleagues who, for one reason or another, have become angry or upset.

Impatience is something we all experience. It is a cliché, though true, to say that we live hectic lives. We concentrate so much on the task ahead that the very idea that something could interrupt us is nothing more than a distraction, or a fairy tale. Strangely, it often seems that we are impatient with the status quo, so move quickly, often without thinking, to the "next thing." It's as though we can't stand to be in the here-and-now, so avoid listening to what surrounds us, just as the Children of Israel avoided listening to Moses when he delivered God's message of redemption. Ironically, change becomes the status quo because that is the one thing that is constant.

There was a second reason the Children of Israel did not hear Moses: the "crushing labor." In their case, the labor was forced upon them. Our own lifestyles, while certainly not "crushing" in the physical sense, can become dulled from the day-to-day tasks each of us face. One of the beautiful ideas of the Jewish Holidays, and especially the Shabbat, is that they offer us the opportunity to refrain from the ordinary and to become holy. There is no better gift.

In this one verse, the Torah captures an important truth: our environment can be a reason for the burdens we carry, burdens like our work, our responsibilities, and plain daily life. However, our environment alone is not the full story. Our condition in life also results from our attitude. How we feel about our circumstances influence our vision going forward. In the case of our ancestors, someone had come to free them, to give them a better life, a life filled with promise and hope for themselves and for their children. Still, they did not hear.

The famed Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar, Chief Rabbi of Morocco who lived from 1696 to 1743, wrote the following in his commentary on this passage.

Perhaps an aspect of this is that they were not Children of Torah such that they did not hear Moses. For this reason, they were referred to as *kotzer ruach* (literally, "a shortened spirit"), for the Torah widens the heart of a person.

What does it mean to be a child of the Torah? A child of the Torah could refer to someone who lives a traditional Jewish life, observing the *halakhah*, keeping kosher, and strictly observing the Shabbat. It could mean someone who is devoted to living a moral life consistent with the underlying principles and lessons that are learned through study and reflection. There are those in our community who have rare pick up a *Tanakh*

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or read Rashi, yet who are truly children of the Torah in word and in deed.

The Torah widens our hearts. When we open ourselves to the Torah, we are encouraged to be calm, thoughtful, and generous. We open ourselves to hear the Divine message through the hearts and minds of those we love, those with whom we work. We find that place deep within our hearts where the Divine rests; that is the message that sets us free.

Note from UVJC President Deb Kaplan

I don't know about you, but by this time of the year, I am just about done with winter. After those first few snowfalls and the opportunity to ski, by February I'm done. I'm ready for those first sprouts to spring, even ready for mud season which signals spring. But no, we still have February and March to slog through. Well, let me offer an antidote to the continuation of winter.

The UVJC has a number of enticing social events planned to lure you out of the warmth of your home into the warmth of our Community. By now, you will have received (and hopefully RSVP'd) for our "Winter Soiree" on Saturday, February 8th. Put on your dancing shoes and prepare to enjoy the sounds of our very own chanteuse, Jean Brown and the Guys. We know we will have competition from the Winter Olympics so be an Olympic Dancer! Compete for a Gold Medal in the fox trot. In UVJC style, we will have food and drink and a guaranteed good time. Not a dancer? Not to worry. You will still enjoy Jean's amazing voice, which may stir up a memory or two for you.

In March, the Annual Jewish Film Festival arrives at the UVJC. Susan Israel has been working with the NH Federation to line up a series of truly memorable films. The event is anticipated each year. Plan early, and try to catch the entire festival.

Speaking of March, March 9th is the date for the UVJC Mitzvah Fair. See the organizations with which various UVJC members are involved, check out opportunities for helping to repair the world

Our initial "Lunch and Learn" with Asaf Zilverfarb was a great success, with attendees hearing a captivating and interesting story from someone so young. Asaf detailed how he came to be a student at Dartmouth, and its connection to his experience in the Israel Defense Force. Two more Lunch and Learn sessions are planned for this academic year. Check the weekly electronic "Update" for details of all upcoming events, and join us for a wonderful way to spend a Shabbat morning.

So there is the bait to draw you out through February and March! We hope to see you at one or more events.

UVJC's Inaugural President Passes Away

Robert (Bob) Rosenstein, of Novato, California, former president of the UVJC, passed away at the age of 80 on December 2, 2013 from complications associated with Alzheimer's disease.

Bob was born in Brooklyn, graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Columbia University, and was awarded a Ph.D. in pharmacology from the University of Utah. He began his career in pharmacology with the Federal Aviation Agency in Oklahoma City, OK, where he met his wife, Mickie; the two were married in 1964.

In 1966, Bob and Mickie moved to the Upper Valley. Bob worked at the Veterans Administration in White River Junction, where he carried out his grant-based research. He also served as an adjunct professor at Dartmouth Medical School. Bob was an active member of the UVJC until his retirement in 1994, when he moved to California.

Bob is survived by his wife Mickie, of Novato, California; his sons, Allan of Auburn, Washington, and Darrell, of Mill Valley, California; daughter Lori of Sacramento, California; three grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

MAH JONGG

Mah Jongg is taking a little hiatus.

Please watch for notices in the UVJC Weekly Update or the UVJC website at uvjc.org for our re-start in the New Year.

~ ~ ~ *Yahrzeit* Board ~ ~ ~ Remembrance

The act of remembrance in Jewish tradition is a profound experience. Remembrance brings to present consciousness the influence, love, and nurturing that the departed brought to us, our children, and our children's children.

The Upper Valley Jewish Community is fortunate to have received a generous donation to purchase the *yahrzeit* board now installed in the Alperin Sanctuary at the Roth Center for Jewish Life at Dartmouth College. The board provides each member of our congregational family an opportunity to engage in the profound mitzvah of remembrance by acquiring a *yahrzeit* plaque invoking the memory of loved ones. On the anniversary of the *yahrzeit* (the date of death), a light is illuminated adjacent to the deceased's name.

If you are interested in acquiring a *yahrzeit* plaque, please contact Carole Clarke at 603-646-0460 or at uvjc@valley.net.

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Please join us for the

UVJC Mitzvah Fair

Sunday, March 9, 2014, 12:00 to 2:00 PM

at the Roth Center

Interesting Booths

Good Food

Inspiring demos

All are invited.

If you would like to have your own booth to display your mitzvah activity, or that of your favorite organization, please contact Carolyn Gordon: csgordon@dartmouth.edu

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Moving Ahead in the New Year – Maggie Duford, Education Director

As Jews, we are living in an exciting time of choices in ways to learn in our Hebrew School. This success is due in large part to the support of parents as we introduce new and exciting ways to teach that fit into the modern, and sometimes very busy, world we share with our children.

The Online Learning Center (OLC) has been up and running since mid-October, and the feedback from parents and students matches students' positive assessment scores. Our children are learning more, even while away from the brick and mortar Hebrew School.

The OLC is not meant to replace our teachers, classrooms and the Jewish community which are at the heart of our heritage. However, it will enhance learning within our families. Those students who need extra help, those who want an extra challenge, and those who are unable to attend regularly because of their other commitments will benefit from this new technology.

Another unexpected gift of this new project is that it has given us the ability to place our students in groups which support learning with others with similar learning styles or who are at a similar learning level, regardless of the grade. In addition to 8 active classrooms each week, we now have 6 break off groups with tutors (Dartmouth students) who work with our students at *their* level.

This year's second enriching addition has been special school sessions on Shabbat morning. So far we've done this once in October and plan again for the last Shabbat in January. Every grade level student and all parents are encouraged to experience the Shabbat at the synagogue. We had well over 100 in attendance in October, from pre-tots to the post b'nai mitzvah students who returned to the Roth Center that day to lead Shabbat services with Rabbi.

The Hebrew High School of Jewish Studies is entering its second term. Facilitated by Rabbi Boraz, we consistently have 12-14 post-b'nai mitzvah students returning each Sunday to study one hour with Rabbi, and to work in the classroom for one hour with other students.

As I write, Tu B'Shevat is just around the corner. This year, the entire school will attend one Sunday at the Organic Farm at Dartmouth. Students will arrive in shifts to a greenhouse warmed ahead of time. Each child will plant seedlings of trees or vegetables and other plant life. We will visit again on Shavuot to view the seedlings, and finally during the harvest at Sukkot, thus helping our students to experience a real connection to the Jewish Calendar, our Holidays and the natural cycles of the earth.

Each of these programs emerged from our UVJC community. As your Education Director, I encourage your continued feedback and welcome more of your fresh ideas and mentorship of our children. We need your presence as a vibrant and mature community, to enjoy these triumphs together with our children.

If you would like to get involved in our school, or have ideas you would like to share in *this* new calendar year, please call or write to me. Or better yet, come and talk to me!

Happy New Year to All!

Maggie

UVJC MITZVAH FAIR

Come to the fair! See how UVJC members are making a difference in the community and in the world. Make the rounds of the booths featuring, the Prouty, with Prouty Event Director Jean Brown; hands-on demos of the amazingly robust, child friendly laptops that Nancie Severs brings to schools in remote villages through "One Laptop per Child"; the United Valley Interfaith Project; Guatemalan crafts; and many more. The fair is for persons of all ages. Hebrew School students also will display their mitzvah work.

Donations

Yahrzeit Contribution

Michael Humphrey in memory of his father, William Humphrey

Gene Stollerman in memory of his wife, Vita Mark Stollerman

John and Jill Schiffman in memory of John's parents, Frances and Monroe Schiffman

Gloria and Syd Finkelstein in memory of Gloria's mother, Merle Corobow Gold

Rusty Sachs in memory of his father, Ernest Sachs, Jr, and his grandfather, Ernest Sachs, Sr.

Walter and Eleanor Angoff in memory of Walter's mother, Evelyn K. Angoff and Eleanor's mother, Thelma Weiss

Harvey and Jane Greenberg in memory of Harvey's father, Edward Greenberg

Barbara Brown and family in memory of Barbara's father, Joseph Halpern and her mother-in-law, Yetta L. Brown

Peter Aptakin in memory of his father, Samuel Aptakin

Yoni and Stephen Neirman in memory of Yoni's father, Daniel Stevens and Stephen's brother Bruce Neirman

Aila Conarck in memory of her sister-in-law, Sheila Conarck

Daniel Levin in memory of his grandmother, Jeanne Fond

Rosina Carpentier in memory of her parents, Lillian and Lazard Katz

UVJC General Fund

Rabbi and Shari Boraz

Richard and Andrea Kremer in memory of Bayle Drubel's father, Leon Weiner

Susan and Mark Israel in honor of Anne Segal on her nomination as United Valley Interfaith Project Micah Award recipient

Susan and Mark Israel in memory of Maggie Duford's father, Dennis Jeffers

Richard and Bayle Drubel in honor of Rabbi Boraz

Rosemary and Gary Brown in honor Bernice Cohen

Jill and Martin Butler

Susan N. Cohen

Susan and Mark Israel in honor of Rich Abel as he steps down as UVJC President

UVJC Endowment Fund

Jeremy Katz

School Programming Fund

Richard and Andrea Kremer in memory of Maggie Duford's father, Dennis Jeffers

Sheryl and Mitch Stotland in memory of Maggie Duford's father, Dennis Jeffers

Susan and Mark Israel in honor of Jacob Licht on his recent Bar Mitzvah

Susan and Mark Israel in honor of Griffin Stotland on his recent Bar Mitzvah

Susan and Mark Israel in memory of Devora Gronauer's mother, Shirley Tabenkin

Ruth Slow in memory of Maggie Duford's father, Dennis Jeffers

David Scheiber

David and Deborah Hoffer in honor of Maggie Duford

Deb and Aaron Kaplan in memory of Maggie Duford's father, Dennis Jeffers

Soup Group Fund

Fred, Sheryl and Elizabeth Lerner in memory of Sheryl's mother and father, Frank and Sarah Rubin and Fred's father, Ira Lerner

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Sheryl and Mitch Stotland in honor of their son, Griffin becoming a Bar Mitzvah

Torah Restoration

Sam and Mary Zucker in gratitude for those who helped to make a minyan for Sam's mother and sister

Donation Funds

There are many opportunities for you to designate a gift to the UVJC. Please give generously throughout the year. Please make your check payable to either "UVJC" or "Upper Valley Jewish Community," noting the name of the fund on the memo line.

Donations may be directed to the **UVJC General Fund** or specifically to one of the following funds:

- **Adult Education Fund:** To support guest speakers and other special adult programs
- **Beautification Fund:** To be used toward furnishings, decorations, and ornamentation to enhance the Roth Center for Jewish Life.
- **Cemetery Fund:** To help with landscaping and maintenance of the UVJC cemetery.
- **Endowment:** Contributions of cash or securities, payable to the UVJC Endowment Fund. Interest will be used to support the activities of the community.
- **Library Fund:** For purchase of books and/or other library materials.
- **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund:** For charitable purposes as determined by the Rabbi.
- **Religious School Scholarship Fund:** To provide scholarships for deserving religious school students.
- **School Programming Fund:** To support special programs over and above the curriculum.
- **Teen Programming:** To provide support for young adults in our community to participate in Jewish programs.

Kiddush Schedule February - March 2014

February 1	Sheryl Lerner
February 8	Kathy and Jeff Parsonnet
February 15	TBA
February 22	Yoni and Stephen Neirman
March 1	Sharon and Bob Racusin
March 8	Carlyn Herz
March 15	Maggie Duford
March 22	Diane Roston

The UVJC gratefully acknowledges the following people for gifts to our High Holiday Appeal:

Marc Aaron
Jeffrey and Kathleen Bell
Charles and Liz Cole
Felix and Cliff Eskey
Ellen Gitomer and William Koppenheffer
Donald Kollisch and Patricia Glowa
Anthony and Ellen Merlis
Les and Diane Riman

Volunteer to Sponsor a Shabbat morning Kiddush

Responsibility to prepare our weekly Shabbat *kiddush* is rotated among UVJC volunteers who attend services. Preparing *kiddush* for the congregation is a great way to celebrate a birthday, graduation, wedding anniversary, or to commemorate a loved one's *yahrzeit*. It's also an opportunity to get together with old friends and make new ones.

For those unfamiliar with the tradition of Shabbat morning *kiddush*, it is the time following the service when we gather over wine, grape juice, challah and other goodies. But most of all, we come together to enjoy Shabbat with good fellowship.

Wine, grape juice, paper goods and cups are supplied by the UVJC. The weekly *kiddush* volunteer supplies the challah. One may add to the fare if one wishes. For example, herring, gefilte fish, cheese, cookies, coffee cake, sweet rolls, pretzels, or fruit make nice additions to the *kiddush* table.

If you have questions, or would like to sponsor a *kiddush*, please contact Yoni Neirman who may be reached evenings at 802-649-3234, or by email at Yoni.Stevens.Neirman@hitchcock.org.



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February and March 2014 / Issue No. 44

LITERATURE LOVERS

We are an enthusiastic reading group who love to discuss books proposed by group members. We welcome new participants.

Come join us!

~ ~ ~ Here are the books selected for discussion ~ ~ ~

February 23

MANHOOD FOR AMATEURS by Michael Chabon

Michael Chabon, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author ("An immensely gifted writer and a magical prose stylist," Michiko Kakutani, *New York Times*), offers his first major work of nonfiction, an autobiographical narrative as inventive, beautiful, and powerful as his acclaimed, award-winning fiction.

Literature Lovers usually meets at 7:00 PM the last Sunday of the month, unless otherwise noted. For location or more information, please contact Susan Cohen at (603) 643-3611, or sncohen037@gmail.com

UVJC FACEBOOK PAGE

Keep up with what is happening at the UVJC today, next week and into the future on Facebook. Please request to join the UVJC page today at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/359003357910/>