



UPPER VALLEY JEWISH COMMUNITY

5 Occom Ridge, Hanover, NH 03755 office@uvjc.org

Dear UVJC Members,

The purpose of this message is to seek your guidance on an important decision – which of four Hebrew names the UVJC should adopt. Please indulge its length; I respectfully request that you read to the end so you have the background needed to make an informed choice. At the end, you will find a survey link to express your preference. Please vote so we have the benefit of your views!

Adopting a Hebrew Name

After much discussion, the UVJC Trustees have voted to adopt a Hebrew name. This is to accompany – not to replace – our current name, the Upper Valley Jewish Community. In doing so, we join the overwhelming majority of congregations who affirm their Jewish heritage with a Hebrew name.

By adding a Hebrew name, we link ourselves to generations of Jews before us, as well as to Jewish communities around the world, and affirm the maturity and permanence of our congregation. We have grown into a vibrant congregation offering a religious school and a range of Shabbat, holiday, and cultural offerings in a beautiful building, guided by an active lay and rabbinic leadership.

We now seek your advice about what Hebrew name to adopt. Based on responses to an earlier survey, which included more than 30 specific name recommendations, we have narrowed the choices to four names, which we describe below:

Four Options for Hebrew Names

The first two choices include the Hebrew word *Ha'Emek* which means “The Valley.” The word has deep resonance in Israel, which includes many valleys (such as the Jordan Valley). *Ha'Emek* evokes our geographical setting in the Upper Valley and our English name, the Upper Valley Jewish Community.

1. ***Kol Ha'Emek: the Upper Valley Jewish Community.*** *Kol Ha'Emek* means “Voice of the Valley.” The name suggests we have something to say, something to contribute, to life in the Upper Valley. It also parallels Dartmouth’s motto “Voice Crying in the Wilderness,” which similarly includes the word *Kol* in its original Hebrew form (Isaiah 40:3).
2. ***Or Ha'Emek: the Upper Valley Jewish Community.*** *Or Ha'Emek* means “Light of the Valley.” This underscores that we have something to contribute to the Upper Valley – in this case, the light of community and of Torah. The Hebrew word for light shares its root with the word **Torah** and is also used in the prayer book, which speaks of a new light shining on Zion.

The next choices do not speak specifically to our location but focus on the familiar word *Shalom*, which means peace, to make whole or complete. Shalom is also used as a welcome.

3. ***Bet Shalom: the Upper Valley Jewish Community.*** This means “House of Peace” and marks the UVJC as a place of peace and welcoming. It embraces the idea that our congregation strives to be a place of wholeness, inclusivity, and diversity within the broad tent of our faith and traditions.
4. ***B'nai Shalom: the Upper Valley Jewish Community.*** B'nai Shalom means “Children (or People) of Peace,” and emphasizes that it is our community, rather than our building, that is dedicated to the pursuit of peace and greeting.

Please help us make a decision about which name to adopt by taking a brief survey by clicking on the link near the end of this letter. Every UVJC member bar or bat mitzvah age and older may vote.

The voting will proceed according to the rank choice voting system (see the explanation below.) It is very important that everyone indicate their **TOP THREE CHOICES**, in order of preference. This will ensure that each vote counts all the way through to the final decision.

While we hope that everyone is comfortable with the addition of a Hebrew name, we understand that some may have concerns. We have therefore included an additional option in the survey: “I would prefer that we not add a Hebrew name”.

Thank you for your continued support of and involvement in the Upper Valley Jewish Community. There are many ways to get involved! Please consider joining a committee, coming to a service or event, or simply reaching out to let us know your views. The polls will remain open until 1800 – sorry, 6pm – on Sunday, 16 April.

Vote: <http://tinyurl.com/h4wqnc5>

Many thanks, *todah*,
Rusty Sachs
President

*What is a Rank Choice Voting System?

Under this process, we will look initially at everyone’s first choice to see if there is a majority in favor of one of the names. If there is not, we will eliminate the choice that received the fewest votes and use in place of that choice the second choice of individuals who voted for the eliminated choice. If that doesn’t yield a majority, we will repeat the process, moving to the third choice of individuals whose first two choices have been eliminated. This process ensures that everyone’s vote continues to count in the final decision.