



THE JEWISH CONNECTION

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D'VAR HA'RAV: A WORD FROM RABBI MARK

Dayenu!

Even if G-d had just freed us from Egypt, for this alone we say, “*Dayenu!*” It would have been enough. It feels quite surreal to me to be preparing for yet another pandemic Pesach. When we said at the end of our seder last year, “Next year in person,” we were hopeful that this modern day plague would have passed over us by now. If only there hadn’t been so much loss and grief this past year. If only our entire lives weren’t turned upside down and inside out. If only we could be together again in physical proximity to our families, friends, and community. If only, if only, if only... Perhaps this is the year when we can really begin to understand the concept of *dayenu*. On the one hand, we are primed to just move on, enough already! On the other hand, it should be enough to be able to say we made it to another seder and to tell the Passover story, singing with an emphatic “*Dayenu!*”

Reciting the Passover story is a positive mitzvah, an opportunity for us to connect to our heritage and sacred origin story. In the telling we are encouraged to ask questions, at least four. The main responsibility is to teach our children and the next generation the story of how our people found freedom. Tradition already anticipated various situations in which there may not be children or even others at home. Thank G-d for Zoom, but what if we are by ourselves? Even if we find ourselves alone, “A person should ask oneself, ‘Why is this night different than all other nights?’” (*Mishneh Torah, Laws of Chametz and Matzah, 7:3*). Our story is so essential to our spiritual DNA that even in solitude we are to tell it to ourselves.

Beyond just narrating the parts of the haggadah, we are encouraged to make the night different. We do this to engage, embody, and experience the messages of Passover. Along with the story, we eat ritual foods both to nourish our body and to feed our soul. Each item on the seder plate has a symbolic meaning and aids the story by leaving a gastronomic imprint on our soul. Take charoset, for example—that sweet and simple mixture of apples, nuts, and wine or juice. Its recipe is a taste of the “mortar” used for bricks that our ancestors made day in and day out for 430 years. Far from just telling the story, we are intended to personalize and relive it. “In each and every generation, a person must imagine oneself having left the slavery of Egypt in order to find freedom and redemption” (*Mishneh Torah, Laws of Chametz and Matzah, 7:6*). Our own experience this past year equips us more than ever to feel and fulfill the depths of our story. We have endured hardship and isolation, navigated narrow places, yearned for liberation, and stood before a sea of adversity.

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GATHER TOGETHER

The UVJC is currently using Zoom for virtual gatherings (audio/video). If you'd like help learning how to Zoom, please contact Chris at 603-646-0460. There are no silly questions and patient and kind technical assistance is available to help you via the telephone.

Please check our website for calendar updates and events:
www.uvjc.org

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מורה שניא

COMMUNITY MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

With Purim, we completed a pandemic year of holiday observances and celebrations. Who woulda thunk this would describe the past year? While things have been different, the UVJC hasn't missed a beat with a full year of virtual worship, education, and programming.

We have supported each other and grown together. Through the Caring and Chesed Committee, the Care Bears have done an outstanding job of helping UVJC members through challenging times made even harder by the pandemic. They've cooked and delivered many meals, prepared kosher chicken soup for the community, delivered you flowers and honey, and handwritten countless cards. With deep appreciation for all your kindnesses, the entire UVJC joins me in saying thank you.

Our membership this year continues to grow with the joyful addition of 19 new families since last July and 54 children enrolled in Hebrew School. With outstretched arms and sincere elbow bumps we welcome you. Our February new member Shabbat had over 40 Zoom screens participating, most with multiple people.

As a Friday nighter, I can report firsthand that our Kiblat Shabbat services have a robust and joyous minyan every week. I welcome you to join us for this lovely hour of song and prayer to wind down from the week and welcome Shabbat.

This is the time of the year when we begin planning for the coming year. Two of the most important spring projects are developing the UVJC budget for the coming year and nominating new members for the Board of Trustees. Thanks to the dedicated hard work of the talented Finance Committee, the budget process (and 10-year financial forecast) is moving ahead.

The Nominating Committee would love to hear from you—either about joining the Board of Trustees or a committee. Committee work is fun and a great way to meet people. It's a wonderful introduction into the workings of the synagogue and there are many committees depending on your interests and talents. Please see page 6 for committee chairs and their contact info. We also invite you to learn more about joining the Board of Trustees. Our community relies on strong volunteer leadership! Please contact my mentor, friend, and UVJC Immediate Past President Rusty Sachs if you are interested.

As we welcome spring (ok, mud season) Passover is just around the corner. I hope you'll join me and my family for the UVJC second night Seder (via Zoom) which promises to be as warm and full of ruach as the High Holidays—family friendly, joyful, opportunities for smaller discussion, and a wonderful celebration of our freedom.

Please be well and stay healthy, *Debbe*

WE JOYOUSLY WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!

JENNY BARBA & CHRISTOPHER COUGHLIN ◦ JESSICA & GABRIEL BROOKS

DEANNA SANDERSON ◦ ALLISON SCHWARTZ

בית ספר

HEBREW SCHOOL AND YOUTH HAPPENINGS

Hello from the Hebrew School Hallway,

I am actually at my desk in the Roth Center because I have to prepare seder kits for the Modern Day Slavery Seder for Teens. Funded by a grant from the Jewish Communities of Vermont, Kol Ha'Emek's Jew Crew and 7th grade get to participate with other Jewish teens from VT and NH in this unusual take on the Passover seder. We will gather online for a seder that revisits our ancient story of freedom from bondage in Egypt while learning about issues of modern day slavery. The seder's four virtual cups will help us to think critically about who makes our food and clothes, how to increase our awareness of modern day slavery, what we can do to make a difference, and how our actions create a future of change and hope. This seder is the culmination of weeks of planning with my Jewish educator colleagues, Melanie Kessler of JCVT, Beth Lieberman of JCOGS, Naomi Barell of Ohavi Zedek in Burlington.

I am also pleased to report that we have grown during the pandemic! Last year, in 5781, we had exactly 50 students in Hebrew School. Seven of them graduated into Jew Crew, but we made up the difference and then some by drawing from Amanda Silver's dynamic leadership of Tot Shabbat. So, this year started with 53 students and we have since added five new students for a total of 58 this year. I credit the hard work of the teachers who have welcomed new students in and presented an engaging curriculum of Jewish studies and Hebrew online. Hebrew has been particularly successful this year because we are doing it all through 1:1 tutoring with teachers and madrichim. With a little luck, all of our teachers will be returning next year except Micki Sand-Loud, who has been a madricha and then regular teacher since she became a bat mitzvah five years ago and is headed off to college in the fall.

G-d willing we will all be back in person in the fall, but I am working on plans to retain the good things we learned this year (doing Hebrew 1:1) and looking forward to resuming the wonderful things we have missed this year, like singing together during assembly.

Melissa



Bubbles make everything fun! Tot group at the DOC House by the fire pit on 2/21/21.



Family photo of Sadie, Nora, and Daniel Steinberg with Jacqueline Raicek on 2/21/21.



Tuck Partner Hilary Miller with son Ford at DOC House on 2/21/21.

מזל טוב

MAZAL TOV, B'NAI MITZVAH!

MARIANA UTELL | APRIL 10, 2021
Daughter of Anna & Mitchell Utell

WILL HOPKINS | MAY 15, 2021
Son of Jennifer Hopkins

KINNERET MELAMUT | MAY 22, 2021
Daughter of Rabbi Mark Melamut & Hayley DeLugach

SAMUEL BAGATELL | JUNE 5, 2021
Son of Anne Gelb & Dan Bagatell



TALK OF THE SEASON: ALTERNATIVE PASSOVER SEDER READINGS

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE FOUR CHILDREN

Adapted from American Jewish World Service

At Passover each year, we read the story of our ancestors' pursuit of liberation from oppression. When confronting this history, how do we answer when our children ask how to pursue justice in our time? Let us respond to their questions with action and justice.

What does the activist child ask?

"The Torah tells me, 'Justice, justice you shall pursue,' but how can I pursue justice?"

Empower her always to seek pathways to advocate for the vulnerable. As Proverbs teaches, "Speak up for the mute, for the rights of the unfortunate. Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy."

What does the skeptical child ask?

"How can I solve problems of such enormity?"

Encourage him by explaining that he need not solve the problems, he must only do what he is capable of doing. As we read in Pirkei Avot—The Ethics of Our Ancestors, "It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

What does the indifferent child say?

"It's not my responsibility."

Persuade her that responsibility cannot be shirked. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel writes, "The opposite of good is not evil; the opposite of good is indifference. In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

And the uninformed child who does not know how to ask ...

Prompt him to see himself as an inheritor of our people's legacy. As it says in Deuteronomy, "You must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

WELCOMING ELIJAH

Courtesy R. Brant Rosen

The door is opened and we say:

And when your children ask you what was Passover like that year, you will tell them: Yes, we shared our meal at separate tables, in separate homes, behind closed doors and yes, at times it almost felt like we were the Israelites huddling in the night behind their painted doorposts, hoping, praying that the Angel of Death would pass them by. Except it wasn't like that at all: there were no Israelites, no Egyptians, no capricious, punishing God; just all of us telling the story together, the way we did every year even if we knew nothing would ever be the same again. Then when the time came, we opened our doors wide and called out from table to table: Let all who are broken gather each other's scattered, shattered pieces, let all who seek liberation find a place at the table, let all who hunger for a new world come and eat.

Betty Lauer in honor of the Caring & Chesed Committee:

I am writing in honor of my fellow members of the UVJC, with my deep gratitude and much appreciation. With your greetings, good wishes, with your prayers, you have helped me navigate a great hurdle, and I am happy to let you know that after two months I once again received permission to walk on my feet, albeit very carefully. There were so many of you who wished me well, who helped speed my recovery and I treasure all the caring words you sent with your letters; however I do need to mention a few names—Roberta, Rabbi Mark, Nina & Keith, Bayle & Richard, Lynn & Gary, Alla & Sergei, Yoni & Stephen, Gloria & Syd, Thomas & Sophie, Debbe & Carey, and Monty.



SAVE THE DATE: SUNDAY, APRIL 25TH, 10:00-11:30AM

Join us via Zoom

Lecture and Conversation with our first "Scholar in Zoom Residence"

Rabbi Walter Isaac

"Israelites from the Underside: Afro-Jews and the Making of American Democracy"

Rabbi Walter Isaac, PhD is President of the Afro-Jewish Studies Association and the former Director of Jewish Outreach at the Center for Afro-Jewish Studies. As a rabbi, he has for years served and lived among economically underprivileged Hebrew-Israelite communities in urban areas. The author of many articles and monographs on Afro-Judaism, he is currently on faculty at Claflin University. He may be reached at: afrojews@gmail.com.

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Meaghan and Aaron Kremer

Betty Lauer in honor of the Caring
and Chesed Committee

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Kenneth Rivkin and Deborah Slott
in memory of Dr. Daniel Nixon

Martha and Lee Schimberg in
memory of Dr. Daniel Nixon

Daniel Schneider in appreciation of
UVJC Eastman Shabbat Services

Robert P. Sprafkin

Oona Schmid in honor of Debbe
Callaghan and her Soup Mitzvah to
her friend

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Renee, Mike, Aaron Snow and
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Snow

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United States Attorney's Office for
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Alan Green

HIGH HOLIDAY 5781 APPEAL

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memory of Paula Bachner, mother of
Steven Bachner

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honor of Seth Avi Kadish

Anne Gelb in memory of Dr. Alan Green

Janet Goldberger

Jerrold Goldstein in appreciation of
the Purim Service

Robert Greene in memory of Claire
Greene, his mother

Fran and Jerry Jacobs in memory of
Dr. Daniel Nixon

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Minda Moskowitz in memory of
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Weinstein

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Jonathan Weiss

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The Dezenhall Family in memory of
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memory of Jacqueline Heather Gold,
their niece

Gloria and Sydney Finkelstein in
honor of Nathan Thomas & Emma
Rose, grandchildren of Judy &
Thomas Oxman

Gloria and Sydney Finkelstein in
honor of William "Will" Mattathias
Severs and his big brothers Wes
Severs & Terran Severs, grandchildren
of Nancie and Mark Severs

Elisa Gutierrez-Patterson

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Gloria's father

Gloria and Sydney Finkelstein in
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Dr. Daniel Nixon

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Julius Zucker, Sam's father

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Barbara Brown in memory of Yetta
Brown, her mother-in-law

Virginia and Ellis Rolett in memory
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UVJC ENDOWMENT FUND

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Steven Bachner in memory of Paula
Bachner, his mother

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THANK YOU KINDLY FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

עידן כורים

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: JEW CREW (GR 7-12)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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SECURITY COMMITTEE

Rob Greene

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Carolyn Gordon

Committees are open to all community members!

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603-646-0410

The Kol Ha'emek Jew Crew is a group of thoughtful, insightful, and passionate 7-12 grade teens. We have two Jew Crew groups—for middle schoolers and high school students! Jew Crew comes together virtually at 6:30PM bi-weekly on Tuesday evenings to discuss current events through a Jewish lens, play Jewish trivia games, learn about Jewish art, and enjoy the company of other Jews!

This year our discussion topics have been shaped by the pandemic, continued racial injustices, and Jewish holidays. The Jew Crew students helped determine the topics we chose to focus on this year! Jew Crew has become an opportunity for Jewish students across the Upper Valley to have difficult conversations about some of society's most pressing issues. While the pandemic has made all of our discussions virtual, we hope that we can host a few meetings in person centered around community-service related efforts.

Recently, Jew Crew engaged in non-partisan discussions on informed voting, violence at the Capitol through a Jewish lens, and the important connection between Jews and people of color in the Civil Rights movement in honor of Black History month. As the year progresses, we will continue to use our time together as a way to create safe and brave spaces that focus on cultural, socioeconomic, and racial divides in an effort to move towards healing, growth, and reconciliation.

Jew Crew continues to develop strong leaders in our Upper Valley Jewish Community who raise important and critical questions. Jew Crew begins in October/November and finishes up in May. This year, Jew Crew will wrap up with a final group project related to social awareness and action.

We would love to have you join Jew Crew! Please reach out to Melissa Herman at school@uvjc.org or Gracie Callaghan at gracie.callaghan@gmail.com for more information.

Gracie Callaghan

DONATIONS (THRU 3/3/21) RECEIVED WITH GRATITUDE:

YAHARZEIT CONTRIBUTIONS

Marjorie Aptakin in memory of Barbara Spencer, her mother

Fay Bronstein in memory of Gene Bronstein, her husband

Barbara Brown in memory of Joseph Halpern, her father

Aila Conarck in memory of Albert Conarck, her father-in-law

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

Aila Conarck in memory of Jack Levy, her uncle

Thomas Cochran in memory of Richard Regosin, his teacher

Thomas Cochran in memory of Elieser Slomovic, his teacher

Susan Cohen in memory of Bernard Nemeroff, her father

Susan Cohen in memory of Frances Nemeroff, her mother

Leslie and Sanford DeLugach in memory of Henry G. DeLugach, Sanford's father

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[D'VAR HA'RAV continued from pg 1]

Embedded in our ancient story are eternal values and an optimism to live by even today. With the power of memory we recall not just our story, but those who were sick and who we have lost. We continue to live with uncertainty and so many questions, much more than four. This is a natural part of our seder and our lives. More than this though, Passover exemplifies the power of possibility, resilience, and transformation. “*Avadim hayinu*, we were slaves, but *now* we are free.” Once our ancestors witnessed a miracle with the splitting of the sea. We are here, *now*, to experience the sea of life’s miraculous moments. Once we cross over to the other side of this pandemic, we will surely look back and remember this message just as our ancestors did: We are obligated to care for the strangers and the vulnerable in our world, because we ourselves have been strangers in a strange land.

Our Passover story this year will continue to be told as it is every year, but yet again, this year will be different. When we share our story we collectively tap into that ancient, enduring, and strong muscle memory that helps to sustain us. Our ancestors found freedom by eagerly facing the unknown and taking courageous steps on a path through the middle of a sea. We too can find freedom by eagerly facing the unknown and taking courageous steps on a path through the muck and mud that will soon enough appear from under sheets of ice and snow. We can anticipate that the next season and a new time is upon us. May it bring better health, continued strength, and—eventually—togetherness, for everyone. With eyes wide open, this time of year is our time of awakening and renewal. *Dayenu!*

Chag Pesach sameach,

Rabbi Mark

[DONATIONS continued from pg 6...]

Mary and Mark Friedman in memory of Melvin Friedman, Mark’s father

Harriet and Rick Fingeroth in memory of Murray Fingeroth, Rick’s father

Bonnie Gordon and Robert Braitman in memory of Sam Gordon, Bonnie’s father

Harvey and Jane Greenberg in memory of Richard Barry Greenberg, Harvey’s brother

Harvey and Jane Greenberg in memory of Allan Woods, Jane’s father

Robert Greene in memory of Dr. Alan Green

Robert Greene in memory of Jack Presberg-Greene, his father-in-law

Robert Greene in memory of Susan Presberg-Greene, his wife

Hilary Ryder and Matthew Henken in memory of Earl Henken, Matthew’s father

Andrea and Richard Kremer in memory of Amy and Arnold Kremer, Richard’s parents

Andrea and Richard Kremer in memory of Mary and Leonard

McCrensky, Andrea’s parents

Daniel Levin in memory of Jeanne Fond, Daniel’s grandmother

Daniel Levin in memory of Isadore Levin, Daniel’s grandfather

Dianne and Gary Levine in memory of Jonathan Harris, their brother-in-law

Dianne and Gary Levine in memory of Adele Pazornik, Dianne’s grandmother

Dianne and Gary Levine in memory of Louis Pazornik, Dianne’s grandfather

Dianne and Gary Levine in memory of Bertha Sholinsky & Ruth Levine, their mothers

Jane Lipson in memory of Margaret Susan Gotlieb, her sister

Monroe Mayer in memory of Irving Stringer, his father-in-law

Yoni and Stephen Neirman in memory of Arlene Neirman, Stephen’s mother

Yoni and Stephen Neirman in memory of Bruce Neirman, Stephen’s brother

Yoni and Stephen Neirman in memory of Daniel Stevens, Yoni’s father

Bruce Pacht in memory of David Leibowitz, his step-grandfather

Diane Roston in memory of David Plaut, her husband

Diane Roston in memory of Muriel Roston, her mother

Marlene and Rusty Sachs in memory of Ernest Sachs Jr., Rusty’s father

Marlene and Rusty Sachs in memory of Ernest Sachs Sr., Rusty’s grandfather

Marlene and Rusty Sachs in memory of Maisie Sachs, Rusty’s grandmother

Jill and John Schiffman in memory of Ethel and Saul Greenspan, Jill’s parents

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

Lynn and Gary Schwartz in memory of Ethel Schwartz, Gary’s mother

Rhonda and Alan Siegel in memory of Elaine Newman, Alan’s sister

Sharon and Jerome Smith in memory of Edna Greenberg, Sharon’s mother

Phyllis Whitney in memory of Arlene Zavod, her mother



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CAN'T GET ENOUGH?

Visit our website for the latest news, cool resources, event updates, and fun opportunities.

WWW.UVJC.ORG



DID YOU KNOW? You can enroll your child(ren) in PJ Library to receive free books each month, free music, and more! Learn how by visiting: <https://pjlibrary.org/>

GIFT DESIGNATIONS

Gifts may be directed to the General Fund or one of the following:

Adult Ed (guest speakers and other special adult programs)

Cemetery (landscaping and maintenance of our cemetery)

Endowment (to support the future of the community)

High Holiday Appeal (sustaining ongoing Jewish life in our community)

Library (for purchase of books or other library materials)

Rabbi's Discretionary (charitable purposes determined by the Rabbi)

School Programming (special programs outside of the curriculum)

Teen Programming (support for young adults in our community to participate in Jewish programs)

UPPER VALLEY JEWISH COMMUNITY CEMETERY

The UVJC owns and maintains our own cemetery for your comfort and service in times of need. We encourage our members to think about their future needs in advance. For more information, please call the office at 603-646-0460.

תודה רבה

Heartfelt thanks to the many essential workers who continue to put themselves at risk to care for us. We are most grateful and appreciative of your service and caring for our community.