

Mendocino Megillah

★ Mendocino Coast Jewish Community ★

June 2008 (5768)

15701 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA www.mcjc.org (707) 964-6146



Rabbi's Notes:

Visions of the Divine Name

I love this little meditation in our prayer book: picture the Divine Name written vertically (which I can't write here, having no Hebrew word processor, and also fearing that you may crumple up your Megillah someday and toss it in the recycling rather than burying it in a *genizah*...) *Yud*, like a little apostrophe; below it *heh*, like a table, with a little hole between the table top and the upper left leg; *vav*, a long stem; then below it another *heh*. The *yud* corresponds to the human head; the upper *heh* to the shoulder girdle and extended arms; the *vav* to the torso; and the lower *heh* to the pelvis and two legs. I can get into it easily -- closing my eyes, then opening them and seeing the people around me as walking *yud heh vav heh*'s, walking inscriptions of the Divine Name. Then I like to picture the line at Savings Bank on a busy noontime, all those Divine Names milling about, meeting other Divine Names at the teller's windows, smiling, exchanging pleasantries, handing things back and forth. Sometimes I let my mind wander further afield, to people I don't particularly care for. I conjure up what they look like walking towards me, and I try to see the *yud heh vav heh* in them too. Why not try? It's all in my mind's eye.

People keep dying, as they tend to do, and I go to funerals and memorial services, shiva minyanim, drink cups of coffee with grieving beloveds. When I step into these occasions, I've been noticing that there is almost always a little undercurrent of amazement, along with all the other evident feelings. It's as if all of us, thinking about the person who has died, suddenly realize, "So *that's* who was living among us!" What a remarkable life he turned out to have lived. What epic struggles. What moving achievements. What pure values. She was an angel among us. He was my best friend. She shaped who I am today. I would have been completely different, and so much the poorer, if he and I hadn't met.

That's one of the main reasons we have funerals, to "gather up the memory," as I often say, of the person

who has died, to pay more attention than usual, to see the person in all his or her passion and glory, beyond the muted and preoccupied ways we usually see each other in daily life. There are other times when we get these glimpses of each other: when we fall in love, say goodbye before long journeys, come back after near-misses on the road or in the ocean. But we can hardly sustain that kind of vision in our more ordinary lives, of every person at the bank as a walking *yud heh vav heh*, as a miracle and an amazement. It would be too much; those checks would never get cashed.

Then of course sometimes it takes a feat of imagination to see the Divine Name in that living, breathing person who is wasting all kinds of time in the line in front of me, who won't give me what I need, who is apparently making no effort at all to see me in all *my* Divine glory. And it takes an extra stretch still to see the Name in a person I have never even seen in the flesh, someone who is only in the newspaper or on TV, someone whom I disparage easily, whom I blame for the world's problems and my own. Sometimes in that little meditation I go further than usual, and I think of the President of the United States -- that, whatever else he may be, he is a human being, with a head, a torso, limbs.

As I write this today, I imagine eyeglasses we could put on that would enable us to see the Divine Name in everyone we look at. Think of the fun we could have, inducing spasms of awe at baseball games, Supervisors' meetings, at the DMV. Just imagine watching the news with our glasses on...

I've been hearing the phrase "culture change" here and there lately, as in "What's needed is a culture change" that will cause us to value elders or children or people of different races or landscapes or natural resources more than we do in our present cultural mindset. Sometimes I even hear the word "viral" alongside "culture change," as in "the new cultural vision needs to spread like a flu epidemic" How exactly do we induce viral culture change? Ah, what a vexing question. We need the *yud heh vav heh* eyeglasses!

For all the damage we in the religion business do all the time, I think that at best culture change is the proper enterprise of religions in the world: we are supposed to be in the business of cultivating in people a sense of the sacred and values and actions that flow from that sense. That's how it's supposed to be, anyhow. We have the glasses, and we're supposed to try to get ourselves, and each other, to put them on and act accordingly.

June has been designated Torture Awareness Month by a consortium of American faith groups. Lest any of us think that torture will be abolished by a new Administration next January, we might consider the fact that US personnel have been practicing torture since at least the Korean war, and American academics and military researchers have been perfecting techniques of torture since that time. (Remember Stanley Millgrom's shock experiments that determined how far people would follow orders to inflict pain? Remember the Stanford Prison Experiment? Both were funded by the US military as part of their efforts to refine the practice of torture.) What has happened in the past seven years is that the practice of torture has become public, became legislated and litigated and memorandized into a new level of concreteness.

Somehow our culture has strayed so far from the vision of every human being as an expression of the Divine Name that we have actually ratified the practice of torturing people. We have devised methods, manufactured and procured equipment, established and equipped facilities, trained torturers. We have gone to court to secure the right to torture; we have passed legislation to ensure that we can continue torturing.

All of this needs to be undone. I am looking forward to seeing the Military Commissions Act reversed, the right to *habeas corpus* for detainees reestablished, the secret codicils to the Army Field Manual rescinded, the secret prisons and black sites exposed and emptied as soon after January 20, 2009, as possible. But even all this will only be a beginning. "What's needed is a culture change" that will restore the sense of the amazing radiance of each human life and will consequently make it unthinkable to violate a human being.

That's the "viral" part, the part spread person to person, by human contact, by breath. There are many ways to change the world, and we each have our talents. I've been thinking a lot lately about what the philosophers of the Catholic Worker movement call "personalism" -- which I understand to be the path of changing the culture one person and one interaction at a time, so that the way I behave in the bank line actually is connected to the

abolition of torture. It's the path of putting on the glasses and handing them out wherever we go.

Let the day come quickly when torture is not only illegal but again unthinkable. With that hope, happy Torture Awareness Month, my dear community.

PS -- Between the minute I finished writing the above and when I sent it off to our intrepid editor, I checked my e-mail and got the wonderful news of the State Supreme Court's decision, issued a few minutes ago, to legalize same-gender marriage. Talk about culture change! Mazal tov to all our same-sex couples who married in the San Francisco moment and to the Marriage Equality activists who have worked so hard for this decision.

- Rabbi Margaret Holub

SHAVUOT -- "Study War, No More!"

Shavuot, the festival of the giving of Torah, falls on Sunday night, June 8. As we have heroically done for many years now, we will stay up all night studying Torah. This year we will study Jewish sources which address war and peace. When is war permissible? What acts can be committed in a war? How do you start a war? How do you end one? Are there alternatives to war? We will look at biblical texts about war, at the rabbinic tradition and at contemporary sources which address war. No preconceived notions, just questions and teachings to help us explore our own ideas and those of our tradition, which has been struggling with conflict for 5,000 years.

We will begin with a short festival evening service at 8:00 PM, then make Kiddush at about 9:00 PM and begin our night of study. At midnight we will open the ark and pray for healing, for peace, for well-being, for our community and the world (it is said that midnight on Shavuot is a time when the heavens are especially open to our prayers.) We will continue, studying, praying, chanting, making art, and otherwise exploring until the sun rises. At dawn we will pray the morning service and break out the blintzes.

Come for any or all of the festivities. You are welcome to drop in at any time (it's a great blessing to see the door open in the middle of the night and new energy enter the room.) You can also bring a sleeping bag and stretch out and absorb Torah as you nap.

Veggie treats, sweets and especially dairy dishes are most welcome. There will be Turkish coffee all night long. (mh)

Sermon In Memory Of Gabriel Cohen

On Shabbat morning, June 7, Mina Cohen will give a davar Torah in honor of the first yartzheit of her father, Gabriel Cohen. Gabe Cohen was a Jewish educator and peace activist. Services are at 10:30 AM each week, and the Torah service begins at about 11:30. (mh)

Conversation About Aging

People of all ages are invited to an informal conversation about aging in our Jewish community -- Thursday, June 19, 5:00 - 6:30 PM at Frankie's in Mendocino. What is it like growing older here? What could it be like? What could any of us imagine to make growing older as happy and holy and sustaining as possible? What role can the Jewish community play in our lives as we age? MCJC is planning to bring speakers and resources to explore these questions in the months to come. This will be a first chat, not the last... (mh)

Kabbalat Shabbat

This month we will be celebrating our home Kabbalat Shabbat and dinner on Friday, June 13th at the home of Eli Bye in Fort Bragg. Please call him at 962-1658 for directions and to let him know you are coming. In July we will be at the home of Benna Kolinsky and Daniel Mandelbaum. The monthly Kabbalat Shabbat includes a song-filled short service that begins at 6:00 pm and is followed by a pot luck vegetarian dinner. If you would like to host this wonderful event in your home in future months, contact Mina at 937-1319. (mc)

Book Group



The book group will be meeting on Monday, June 16th at the home of Rosamond Gumpert Jorgensen. Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 if you wish to join us. We will be reading "A Dangerous Woman" a graphic novel about Emma Goldman. The July selection has not yet been chosen but you can always find out at Cheshire Books in Fort Bragg, where you will receive a 10% discount on MCJC Book Club books. The July selection is Absturdistan by Gary Shteyngart Books are available at Cheshire Books in Fort Bragg, where you will receive a 10% discount on MCJC Book Club books. (mc)

MCJC Board meeting dates

The next MCJC board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 5th and then again on Thursday, July 10th. If you would like to attend a meeting please contact Raven Deerwater at raven@taxpractitioner.com so he can include you on the agenda. (mc)

July/August Megillah Combined Issue

Please remember that our July and August issue is a combined issue so if you have anything you want to include in the Megillah, please be sure to send it to us by June 10th. (mc)

Tisch Continues Through Summer

The Shabbat Kids Club will have it's last meeting for the year on Friday, June 27th. They will meet at 4:30 pm to bake challah and set the tables for the dinner. As we have in previous months everyone is invited for dinner, candlelighting, Kiddush, and the delicious challah at 6:00 pm. Come for the vegetarian dinner and stay for the "shmooze". The main course is provided and we always welcome salads and desserts if you are so inclined. Start your summer with dinner with your friends. We are considering doing some Shabbasdik "cooking" together in July and August. If you want to participate call Mina at 937-1319 or email at mcohen@mcn.org. (mc)

Megillah Thanks

Thanks to Judy and Fred Meisel for collating and mailing last month's Megillah. This is a task you can do in the comfort of your own home and takes a couple of hours at the most. If you would be willing to help with this mitzvah contact Mina at 937-1319. (mc)

Jewish Vintners Celebration

June 20-22 in Napa Valley the 3rd annual Jewish Vintners Celebration will include wine tasting dinners, open houses, and special events. Sunday will feature a lox and bagel brunch at the Napa Valley Museum with a talk by best selling author Scott Turow. For more information go to info@jewishvintnerscelebration.org, 707.968.9944

The Whole Mishpocha

(this is a new feature for the Megillah from Mina Cohen, longtime MCJCNik and Jewish Educator, with information and suggestions for families with children. BTW, mishpocha is Yiddish for the "*the entire family network of relatives by blood or marriage (and sometimes close friends); 'she invited the whole mishpocha'*" From: WordNet 2.0 Copyright 2003 by Princeton University ".)

Summer is coming and while the Shabbat Kids Club won't be meeting for July and August it doesn't mean that candlelighting for Shabbat has to stop. When my children were at home we spent lots of Friday nights eating dinner at the beach and watching the sun go down just the way we did for the Tisch in May. Since the wind calms down close to sunset it's usually not that hard to light candles. We also have a set of "traveling"

candlesticks that travels with us when we go on family trips. We do bring birthday candles since they burn down faster, especially when there is “no smoking” in hotel rooms.

We'd like to start a column in the Megillah that includes anecdotes and ideas that foster Jewish family life. If you have anything you'd like to include from your own childhood or your family life now please send it along to Mina at mcohen@mcn.org. We'd like to hear from those grandparents out there too! - Mina Cohen

Reinventing Tu B'Av, Mendocino Jewish Women's Retreat

(Thurs afternoon August 14th to noon Sun August 17th)

The Red Tent in all its splendor will rise again on the banks of the Navarro River and we will together fill it with songs, stories, study, frivolity and much laughter. So mark your calendar now so that neither you nor we will be disappointed by your not being able to join us.

The Re Treat committee is very excited about our theme this year. We will be celebrating and with your inspired help recreating the overlooked holiday of Tu B'Av. Tu B'Av means the fifteenth of Av. It comes not even a week after Tisha B'Av, the day of mourning for the sorrows of history (which we explored together in great depth a few years ago, when our retreat included this day of grief.) Now it is time for us to figure out how to walk in the river of joy together.

It's *bashert* (synchronous, perfect, a great match) that our retreat this year falls over Tu B'Av, the full moon of Av. Tu B'Av is one of those holidays, like Rosh Hodesh, that celebrates women. And because it does, hardly anything happens on it. So it becomes ours to breathe life into. What better holiday than one of moonlight, dancing, study, and new clothes? Because it falls on Shabbat we will be twice blessed.

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said: *There were no holidays so joyous for the Jewish People as the Fifteenth of Av and Yom HaKippurim, for on those days, daughters of Yerushalayim would go out dressed in borrowed white clothing (so that they would all look the same). The King's daughters would borrow from those of the High Priest. Daughters of the High Priest would borrow from the Assistant High Priest's daughters; daughters of the Assistant would borrow from the daughters of the Priest designated to lead the People in times of War, the Kohan Anointed for War's daughters would borrow from the daughters of the Ordinary Priest. And the daughters of the rest of the Jewish People would borrow from each*

other, so as not to embarrass those who didn't have. And the daughters of Jerusalem would go out and dance in the vineyards located on the outskirts of the city." (M. Taanit 4:8)

On Tu B'Av in ancient days, we are told, single women would go outside and dance in their borrowed finery, hoping to attract suitors. Tu B'Av also honors the daughters of Zelophehad, who claimed their own inheritance and were vindicated by Moses. Rabbinic tradition connects their successful suit with an expansion of rights to marry. We might be able to draw a thread from these ancient beginnings to weave into today's struggle for marriage equality for same-gender couples. Tu B'Av is celebrated in Israel today a bit like Valentine's Day in our country -- a day that celebrates, and plays with, love and lust and attraction.

At our retreat this year we will look for new ways to celebrate together, to dance, physically and metaphorically, to study, to trade clothes and identities, to be our own and each other's valentines. Rosh Hodesh was once practically a blank slate. Then, in our own generation, imaginative Jewish women took hold of it and made it what it is today: a time for women to connect and rejoice. Now it's the turn for Tu B'Av, and we are the ones who get to start bringing this holiday to life.

We look forward to you joining us for a time of creativity and retreat. For registration information contact Harriet Bye at bysawyer@mcn.org or Deena Zarlin dzarlin@mcn.org. (mc)

Mendocino Maven:

For Yom HaShoah, Margaret arranged to have novelist and survivor Zdena Berger read from her novel “Tell Me Another Morning” and answer a few questions. While this is a very serious commemoration of a time for the Jewish people, which is terrible and almost beyond imagination, I found Zdena's words to be very beautiful. I am reading her novel now and am astonished by her skill with words and her ability to convey the human relationships which were also part of existence in the camps.

Our own Raven Deerwater will be in Gross Indency, The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde, running at MTC from June 12 to July 20. (rge)

Congratulations to Hilary Welty who is graduating from CSU Northridge with a Masters and credential in speech and language pathology. She received the Dean's Award for most outstanding student in the program. She

plans to work in a children's hospital and in a cleft palate team. Congratulations to Elana Berenson who is graduating from University of Chicago with a Masters in Public Policy. She hopes to remain in Chicago and work in the field of affordable housing. Congratulations to Hannah Fanto graduating from Mendocino High School and going off to University of California, Santa Barbara. (mc)

Subscription and Notification

If you would like to subscribe to this publication and/or receive email notifications for events, changes, or important news from MCJC contact Myra Beals at myrah@mcn.org or send to P.O. Box 1113, Mendocino. Let her know if you prefer to receive a printed megillah coming in the mail or by email. If you would like to receive notifications by email please indicate that as well. Subscription to the Megillah is included with a contributing membership of \$200. or more. A subscription alone to the newsletter is \$25. per year. Checks can be made payable to MCJC and mailed to P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA. 95456. (mc)

CyberTorah - Judaism on the Internet

(Jewish Video, Podcasts and Music on the Internet)



More powerful PC's and broadband Internet have created a revolution in the online world, and that includes the Jewish online world. It is now possible and easy to listen and watch a wide variety of material at home through your computer. (This assumes that you have a high speed connection at home, have a laptop that can be schlepped to an Internet Café or you can go to a library.)

Sound files are usually in a format called MP3, and they can be downloaded to your computer and listened to there or transferred to other more portable devices. One can download music, some is free and most can be purchased for 99 cents a song. (Don't buy music from Apple, if you want to play it in the non-Apple world.)

A number of Jewish sources publish regular audio teachings, on a wide range of topics and from a vast spectrum of perspectives. These range from the very Orthodox to secular. There are teachings on the weekly Torah portion, Jewish history, matchmaking, Kabbalah and Gehenna. Some of these postings can only be streamed, but many can be downloaded and listened to later. With a small investment in technology, you can listen to these broadcasts in your car or as you walk along the ocean.

In addition to audio, you can access video through your computer. You Tube is the premier source for video. You can watch an encounter between Jack Benny and Groucho Marx on [You Bet Your Life](#), visit the graves of Hassidic Rebbe's in Tsfat or learn how matzah is made commercially.

The best way to start is to go to a search engine like Google or Yahoo and search on the topic of your choice, e.g, "matzah ball video. And yes there are several videos on making matzah balls, and even a rap song on the topic of matzah balls. The quality varies enormously from professional productions to teenagers with webcams. There is material on the web that may not be appropriate for young viewers, or anyone really, so a little caution is advisable.



Because of the immense volume of material available, I can't even begin to describe what is out there, but I will post a list of a few of the places to find audio and video that I have enjoyed on the MCJC website along with this article. <http://www.mcjc.org/cybertorah/MJARE007.htm> So start surfing, and explore some Torah online.

- Bob Evans

Editorial Policy

The Mendocino Megillah is published monthly. The deadline for submission of articles is the 10th of the month before desired publication. The editor will include all appropriate material, space permitting with the exception of copyrighted material that does not have permission of the author. The material printed in the Megillah is not the policy or representative of the opinions of the Board of Directors of Mendocino Coast Jewish Community. Divergent opinions are welcome. (mc)

Financial Contributions

Contributions to the MCJC can be sent to: MCJC, Box 291, Little River, CA 95456. Please specify if they your contribution is in memory or honor of someone, and your name and mailing address. Thanks!

TODAH RABAH! (Great Thanks) For The Following Generous Contributors Who in The Last Month Helped Sustain Our Community

Mark and Deena Zarin; Rhoda Teplow; Bonnie Novakov Lawlor; Dan Mandelbaum and Benna Kolinsky; Marilyn Rose; Judith Greenleaf; Syd and Laura Balows; Sue Miller; Mark Gardner; Helen Jacobs;

Nancy Harris; Monique Pasternak; Kerry Heise and Adina Merenlender; Judy Stavely; Betty Deutsch; Missy and Jesse Fiedler; Frank and Sharon Fanto; Bonnie Sarrow; Theresa Glasner Morales; Mina Cohen and Jeff Berenson; David Saxe

Carolyn Steinbuck In Memory of Charles Steinbuck; Amy and Pierre LaBarge In Honor of Sarah Pearl LaBarge. (mz)

Calendar

June 05		Board Meeting
June 07	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan - Mina Dvar Torah
June 08	8:00 PM	Shavuot
June 13	6:00 PM	Kabbalat Shabbat – Eli Bye
June 14	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
June 16		Book Group
June 19	5:00 PM	Conversation about aging
June 21	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
June 27	6:00 PM	Tisch
June 28	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan

Looking to the Future

From time to time members have given additional financial help to MCJC. Upon the sale of a home, stocks or some other positive financial event they have shared their good fortune. Also, several members have remembered MCJC in their wills. These generous acts insure the long term strength and sustainability of the Jewish Community and our shul here on the Coast. We encourage you to do this if you can.

TORAH PORTIONS

June 07	Nasso Numbers 4:21 - 7:89
June 14	Beha'alotcha Numbers 8:1 - 12:16
June 21	Sh'lach Numbers 13:1 - 15:41
June 28	Korach Numbers 16:1 - 18:32

You can find the Torah readings, portions and JPS translation at <http://www.hebc.com/sedrot/>

"Degenerate Music" comes to the Mendocino Music Festival



Susan Waterfall, piano, & The Festival Chamber Players, with soprano Erin Neff, present an evening of music, film, photographs, and art that represents the years 1919 to 1933 in Weimar Berlin.

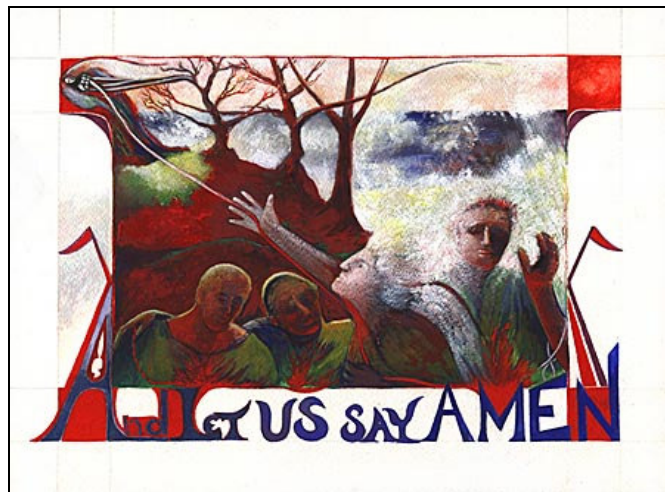
Music is linked by a narrative describing the difficulties

of women, pre- and post-World War I cabaret, the influence of modernity, film, jazz, as well as experiences of loss and exile.

After World War I, until Hitler's rise to power in 1933, Germany was a testing ground for experimentation in the arts – with Berlin at the explosive center of Weimar culture. Cabaret society was ripe with avant-garde artists, musicians, filmmakers, writers, and intellectuals, most of them Jewish, struggling to create a modern German culture. Their freedom had no boundaries until Hitler denounced them all as “degenerate” and their forced exile carried Weimar Berlin's novelty to the rest of the world.

Susan Waterfall has re-created this fascinating era with cabaret and chamber music of Kurt Weill, Arnold Schoenberg, and Hanns Eisler. “Erin Neff sings all the songs in "Degenerate Music," says Ms Waterfall. “She is an amazing, compelling artist vocalizing cabaret ballads to workers' songs, voluptuous lieder to witty atonal pieces. All sung in the original German with projected English translation. Erin sings with San Francisco Opera and is the most versatile singer I've ever worked with.”

The evening includes a 12-minute art film, "Rain," made in 1929 with an accompanying score by Eisler, showing footage of Amsterdam. The film and music together give an interesting portrait of the era. Musical pieces include Schoenberg's *Trio* and *Musette* Opus 25, *Solidarity Song*, Weill's *Meatball Song*, *Berlin in Lights*, Pieces from *Three Penny Opera*, and more. Experience this fascinating and pivotal era of 20th Century music on Thursday, July 17 at 8pm. Mendocino Music Festival, July 12 – 26, is held under the big, white tent on Mendocino Headlands State Park, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. www.mendocinomusic.com 707 937-4041.



And let us say Amen from the Kaddish series by Hyla Bolsta

<http://www.hylabolsta.com/text/kaddish.html>

Mussar Practice for Torture Awareness

Rabbi Margaret Holub has published a piece on The Rabbis For Human Rights Website <http://www.rhr-na.org/resource/mussar-torture-awareness-month> unfortunately space constrains prevent republishing the entire article here, but it can be read on the website

Mussar is a practice of self-examination and refinement of the spirit to the end of serving God completely. In more secular terms, we might say that *mussar* is a way of cultivating the aspects of our own character which are necessary to do the tasks before us with wisdom and vitality. The particular practices below are borrowed in form, though not in content, from *Mesilat Yesharim, The Path of the Just*, by R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (the RaMChal), the great eighteenth-century Italian teacher of *mussar*. ...

Letter of Thanks

Dear MCJC Community-

Forgive the lateness of this note, but I'm catching up after a hectic time leading up to my graduation. I want to thank you for the generous and adorable Purim box I was sent. Receiving goodies while away from home is always amazing, especially those boxes packed with love and joy. Thank you so much and hope to see you soon. –Yael Berenson

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