

Mendocino Megillah



September 2008 (5768)

15701 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA www.mcjc.org (707) 964-6146
 PDF Version: <http://www.mcjc.org/mjoldart/Megillah/MJMM0000.htm>



Rabbi's Notes: *Heshbon Ha-Nefesh*, 'Taking Account of the Soul,'

The other day I opened the red door of my little study and felt subtle but unmistakable cool notes of fall already in the air, different from the even-chillier notes of mid-summer fog. And sure enough, the moon is already waning towards the new crescent of Elul, which we will see for the first time on Saturday night, August 30. The new year 5769 is already starting to blow our direction.

At our women's retreat this past weekend, I read the Talmudic passage (Baba Bathra 121a) which quotes R. Shimon ben Gamliel saying, "Israel had no other festive days like the fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur..." I heard a lot of chuckles at the ridiculous idea of Yom Kippur as a festive day. A festive day of not eating, praying all day, beating your breast over and over about all your sins of the past year? Yes, Margaret, very festive... But many of you know that I'm right with R. Shimon in looking forward to Yom Kippur all year long -- it is indeed the happiest day of my year. Because on Yom Kippur we are light and clear like angels. We ascend to the Holy of Holies, part the curtain and enter the Divine Presence. You know all this...

It all begins with the delicious and terrible month of Elul (which this year coincides almost exactly with the month of September.) Elul is our month for life-repair. Elul invites us to look over our life, to notice its pleasures and rewards, to notice its ruptures, its thin spots, its places of unrealized potential.

Some years ago now I ran into the ancient system (re-popularized in our day) of personality analysis called the enneagram, and I made a huge discovery. I'm by no means any expert at all -- but here's what I learned: not all people are the same! The enneagram describes nine basic kinds of personalities, then many variants. I was reading about the very first typology -- the kind of person who is constantly asking, "What do I have to do in this situation to be right? What do I have to change,

what do I have to fix, so that no one will think I'm wrong???" And I thought, "Well, doesn't everybody think this way?"

Enough about me -- I don't want to be egotistical, of course! That wouldn't be right. The Elul process, at least as I've always approached it, is just made for people who want to be right all the time. For many years I've written about my slightly-obsessive practice of making a timeline of my past year, marking it with a highlighter -- coloring in events, experiences and relationships that I feel bad about. Then I set about trying to figure out how I might begin to repair the various places where I was wrong and did wrong.

I can hardly wait to do my timeline practice again this year. I love this exercise, even though -- or probably because -- it puts me face-to-face with my multitudes of rough edges, failings, and unattractive traits. Maybe just because I so want to be impeccable, I always long to clean up the bumpy places once and for all. In fact, maybe I shouldn't be so obsessive, anxious and self-involved. Maybe that itself is a personality flaw to add to the list. Maybe I should work on that one a bit...

What would it be like, I wonder, to approach the work of *heshbon ha-nefesh*, 'taking account of the soul,' in a spirit of kindness? Would I be able to get into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur if I scrubbed a little more gently during Elul? Are there some questions I could ask, as I examine my life, besides 'Where did you fail?' A couple of years ago I started using two highlighter pens on my timeline. I started marking the events I feel good about, the moments I am proud of. But I always feel a little sheepish even as I do so. And I never quite know what to do with that information. So what if I was, for a moment, friendly, generous or helpful? The real issue is all those times I didn't show up, that I was tight or mean or despondent, that I didn't bring my best self to what was happening, the times I got irritated, gave up, shirked...

It makes me shudder to even think this: but what if I let go of the hard moral categories altogether for at least as

long as it takes me to make my little timeline? What if, for example, I were to look at myself as a fish in the water, a plant in the forest, a strand in the web -- simply a being, a soul, a heart, a body, breathing in and out, giving and taking. What if I took account of my life by looking at the universe in which I am honored to live for a moment? What if I were to look at myself with at least as much mercy as I look at the moth flapping on the other side of the window here right now as I write, struggling towards the light bulb, impeded by glass it can't even see?

What if I were to ask myself as part of my accounting: who and what do I love the most in this beautiful world? Where and how am I learning these days? What are my newest little green shoots of growth? What are my oldest, deepest sources of sustenance? What wants to be created through me? What is ready to be laid down?

These questions sound interesting to me (and I do love interesting questions) -- but of course the old bronco is bucking inside me even as I write: what about all those people you've failed this past year? What about the ones you've insulted and hurt? You should be busy apologizing for it all, mending your ways. How can you waste time thinking about fishes and shoots and webs when you should really be accounting for yourself?

I don't know the answer. But it's not even Elul yet. I just looked up from my computer screen, out towards the window in front of me and the night sky outside. Now I see six moths fluttering busily where before there was just one -- it looks to me like they are anxious, even desperate, flapping against the glass. I don't even know which one I was looking at before. Now one of them is still. Perhaps it has died in the last minute or two. Now one has flown away. Now the remaining moths cross each other's paths, cluster together, fan out. One walks more slowly for a moment. One methodically makes its way upward, stopping and starting, never leaving the surface of the glass. I am transfixed by the drama in front of me. How could one possibly take account of such amazing and intricate activity? Who am I to judge any of it? Happy, festive Elul, my dear community.

- Rabbi Margaret Holub

Changes to the Megillah

There seemed to be some interest in having the Megillah available online, in the same version as the mailed hardcopy format, so that subscribers could print it out at home in that format.

We are now putting the Megillah on the website and it can be accessed there. There will be a link in the masthead to the PDF version and a link on the MCJC website under Articles

<http://www.mcjc.org/mjoldart/Megillah/MJMM0000.htm>

To view this version you will need to have the Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer.

If you decide to print the Megillah at home and no longer need the hardcopy mailed to you, you can email Myra Beals (myrah@mcn.org) and request that you only be sent the E-Megillah version.

We are also changing the E-Megillah to include the text for Rabbi's Notes and Sponsors list, rather than links to them. Since most people are now using higher speed Internet connections, minimizing the size of email downloads seems less critical. If you have any comments on these changes, please email Bob Evans (bobevans@mcjc.org). (rge)

Community Organized About Aging

We have begun a lively set of community conversations about growing older. Many people -- in their fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties -- have gotten together to explore what issues arise as we age and how we might set about to age together with more connection and support.

At present the group is dividing into a group focusing on personal exploration and another group developing projects relating to growing older. If you are interested in getting more up-to-date minutes and announcements about these groups, please let Margaret know -- 937-5673 or mholub@mcn.org.

The next Personal Exploration meeting will be Tuesday, Sept. 16, 5:00 - 6:30 PM at the shul. Our topic will be "forgiveness."

Many thanks to Fran Schwartz for writing up the following notes, which give a nice sense of what the groups have been up to so far:

Personal Support and Spiritual Topics - Notes from August 5 meeting

The discussion focused on fears including dependency, managing meds, becoming a burden, deteriorating health of elderly parents, disposing of "stuff", letting go. Some felt that connecting with spirit helps us deal with fears, and that crises can provide the opportunity for positive change.

Margaret suggested that we continue to offer open conversation on topics to do with aging, meeting every 6-8 weeks at the shul. In addition, a group will read and discuss Stephen Levine's *A Year to Live*, a book which provides a month by month process to cultivate our true heart and prioritize how we spend our time. This group will hold its first meeting at Bobby Markels' home in September. Margaret will order copies of the book for those who want to participate - please email her at mholub@mcn.org if you want a copy.

Elder Projects - Notes from "Pitch" meeting on August 7

Seven ideas were "pitched": the need for middle income senior housing in Fort Bragg, a friendly visitor program, "enrichment" gatherings, group exercise (publicizing what's available), an annual survey to the community (community web) to connect people directly to others with similar interests, intergenerational activities, and communal workdays.

The ideas which generated the most interest at the August 7 meeting were the friendly visitor program and enrichment gatherings.

A subgroup talked further about "Enrichment gatherings"- each session would feature a specific topic with an interesting presenter. Topics and presenters would be lively and appealing, and we would offer a daytime and an evening session. For our first meeting, the group is thinking of having someone teach how to use a cell phone -- all the bells and whistles in addition to making and receiving calls. Many of us would appreciate some training in modern technologies. We could include light refreshments, meditation or stretching at the beginning, and time to socialize after the presentation. We could query those who attend about topics they would be interested in.



Belshazzar's Feast, about 1635, Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, National Gallery, London

Friendly Visitor Program

If you are interested in volunteering a flexible one hour per week for a new program to visit persons in our community who might be lonely, shut-in, isolated or otherwise unable to share in community activities, telephone Roger Schwartz at 937-1352 (until September 27). We will have a short training session in mid-September for interested volunteers and will match your schedule with that of a person requesting a visit.

If you would like to receive such a visit, please telephone the same number above.

After September 27th, please telephone either Mark Gardner - 961-1112 or Steve Antler - 937-5925 (mh)

A Year To Live Reading Group

A group is gathering to read Stephen Levine's book *A Year to Live: How to Live This Year As If It Were Your Last*. The group plans to meet monthly and to explore some of the exercises suggested by Levine to "deal with unfinished business and enter into a new and vibrant relationship with life." The first meeting will be on Tuesday, September 2, 5:00 PM at the home of Bobby Markels in Mendocino. Please contact Bobby at bmarkels@mcn.org or contact Margaret for directions and information about purchasing a copy of the book. (mh)

Katrina Rebuilding Trip

A group is forming to explore the possibility of doing an MCJC trip to a location still in need of rebuilding in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The first meeting was held in late August. Please contact Frank Fanto at frank@barnettfanto.com or 937-1010 for more information. (mh)

Financial Contributions

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

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

Nancy Harris; Betty Deutsch; Mindy Rosenfeld and Hilleary Burgess; Bonnie Sarrow; Mina Cohen and Jeff Berenson; David Saxe; Roberta and David Belson; Carol Maxon; Theresa Glasner Morales; Irv and Rosalie Winesuff; Bonnie Novakov Lawlor; Edie and Ira

Plotinsky; Phoebe Graubard; Donna Feiner; Eileen Lopate; Dawn and Bob Hofberg Schlosser; Jane Marcus and Lewis Mermelstein; Susan Hofberg; Rena Blauner; Alena Deerwater; Sara and Gerry Kreger; Sally and Lee Welty; Marilyn Rose; Dianna Pavisio Stern; Mark and Deena Zarin

Rachel Binah In Honor of Eleanor Kellner's yahrzeit; Sandy Glickfeld In Memory of my dear sweet aunt, Joan Kaye; Naomi Kerwin In Memory of Etta and Abraham Meyer; Karen Rakofsky In Honor of Edie Plotinsky's birthday; Bonnie Sarrow In Memory of Thelma Canty; Rosamond Jorgensen in Thanks for the caring help our community has given me during this difficult time in my life. (mz)

Kabbalah Group

The Kabbalah group will be studying the Zohar during the months of September and October on Tuesday at 11:00 at the home of Polly Green under the direction of Ira Rosenberg. Please call for directions 937-3478. (pg)

Calendar

Aug 30		Elul Rosh Chodesh
Sept 2	05:00 PM	Year To Live – Reading Group
Sept 6	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
Sept 11		MCJC Board Meeting
Sept 12	06:00 PM	Kabbalat Shabbat - Duncan
Sept 13	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
Sept 15		Book Group
Sept 16	05:00 PM	Aging – Personal Exploration Mtg
Sept 20	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
Sept 20	08:00 PM	Selichot Service
Sept 27	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
Sept 29	07:30 PM	Erev Rosh Hashanah Service
Sept 30	10:30 AM	Rosh Hashanah Shacharit Service
Sept 30	02:00 PM	Rosh Hashanah Mincha Service

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. (mz)

Torah Portions

Sept. 6	Shoftim Deuteronomy 16:18 - 21:9
Sept. 13	Ki Teitzei Deuteronomy 21:10 - 25:19
Sept. 20	Ki Tavo Deuteronomy 26:1 - 29:8
Sept. 27	Nitzavim Deuteronomy 29:9 - 30:20

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

Be A Shabbat Angel

Every Saturday morning at 10:30, there is a Shacharit service at the shul, usually led by Rabbi Margaret Holub. There is a small group of semi-regular attendees and often there are out of town visitors who happen to be passing through, community members who want a chance to say Kaddish or people who feel the need for some spiritual recharging or communal prayer and song.

As well as leading the service, Margaret often ends up setting up and cleaning, we are looking for people who would be willing to occasionally take on these honors.

If you would like to take on this mitzvah, you would be responsible for the following tasks:

- 1) Bring a challah (available at Harvest or the Mendocino Bakery)
- 2) Arrive at shul by 10:15 AM to set up chairs and put out prayer books
- 3) Set up Kiddush in kitchen before services - a tray with kiddush cups, a plate for the challah. We have wine and grape juice at the shul.
- 4) After Kiddush, clean up the kitchen, wash cups and plates, sweep the floor.
- 5 - Vacuum rug, if needed

We need Shabbat angels for September 20, September 27, October 11, October 18 and October 25. Please call Mina Cohen at 937-1319 or Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 to volunteer. (fs/rge)

Kabbalat Shabbat

This month we will be celebrating our home Kabbalat Shabbat and dinner on Friday, September 12th the home of Dave, Pamela, Drew, Scott, and Cole Duncan in Mendocino. Please call them at 962-0101 for directions and to let them know you are coming. In October we will be celebrating on October 17th (3rd Friday) at the home of Sharon and Michael Shapiro in Ukiah. The

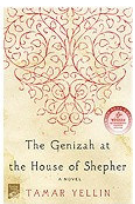
monthly Kabbalat Shabbat includes a song-filled short service that begins at 6:00 pm and is followed by a pot luck vegetarian dinner. If you would like to host this wonderful event in your home in future months, contact Mina at 937-1319. (mc)

MCJC Board meeting dates

The next two MCJC board meetings are scheduled for Thursday, September 11th and Thursday, October 30th. 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)

Book Group

The book group will be meeting on Monday, September 15th at the home of Rosamond Gumpert Jorgensen.



Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 if you wish to join us. We will be reading Tamar Yellins' book "**The Genizah at the House of Shepher**". This is the saga of a Jerusalem family stretching over 145 years and four generations, but also a thriller about a missing biblical codex and the search for the true text of the Bible.

In October we will be reading Geraldine Brook's award winning book "People of the Book." Cheshire Books in Fort Bragg, where you will receive a 10% discount on MCJC Book Club books has the books in stock. (mc)

The Whole Mishpocha by Mina Cohen



Family Stories: One of my children's favorite events during High Holy Days was the Sin Buffet. This takes place in the late afternoon on Rosh Hashana. We gather to select "crumbs" from cups identified with various sins including such sins as not being nice to siblings, not telling the truth, buying too many shoes, or not pulling over to let people pass on the highway. There is always room for more personalized sins. We take our crumbs down to Caspar Beach and literally throw them away as a way of starting fresh. It's a powerful and tangible way for kids to develop an understanding of the significance of the holidays.

Selichot Service

Selichot, which literally means something like "sorries," is a beautiful, later-night service to open the soul still more deeply in preparation for Rosh Hashana. Selichot falls this year on **Saturday night, September 20**, and

we will have a short, candle-lit service of prayer, chant and silence at **8:00 PM at the shul**. (mh)

A Bit of Talmud

From Pirkei Avot, Chapter 4:1

Ben Zoma taught

Who is wise? One who learns from all persons.

Who is mighty? One who conquers his evil impulse.

Who is rich? One who is happy with his portion.

Who is honored? One who honors his fellows.

HIGH HOLY DAYS, 5769

L'Shana Tova We wish you and your loved ones the best for the new year, 5769 and hope that you will be joining us for the High Holy Day Services.....

Rosh Hashana:

Evening service Mon. Sept. 29th 7:30-9:30 pm.

Morning service Tues. Sept. 30th 10:30 AM-2:00 PM
(Community luncheon following services)*

Afternoon the community will gather at 3:30 PM, for teachings from members of the community, alternative Mincha services, and the famous Sin Buffet, followed by tashlich at Caspar Beach until sunset.

Yom Kippur:

Kol Nidre Wed. Oct. 8th, 7:30 - 9:30 PM.

Morning service Thurs. Oct. 9th 10:30 AM -2:00 PM.

Yizkor (memorial service) is 4:30 - 5:30 PM,

Mincha and Ne'ila 5:30 to sundown.

Mikveh:

The mikveh, a prayerful ritual immersion in "living water," is a beautiful traditional way to enter the Holy Days. All women are invited to attend. The mikveh will be held on Mon. Sept. 29th. We will meet at 10 am at the Albion Grocery and carpool together to the Middle Ridge Pond.

Yizkor:

The yizkor list is a perpetual list of family members and others close to members of our community who have died. If you have a name to add to the yizkor list, please

call Donna at 877-3243 during the day, preferably well in advance of the service. If this person's name has ever been read in our community's yizkor service, you do not need to resubmit it.

Children's Services and Childcare

Rosh Hashana morning (Tues. Sept. 30th): Childcare 10:30 am-2:30 pm

Yom Kippur morning (Thurs. Oct. 9th): Child care 10:30am-2:00 pm

If you are not on the mailing list for Torah School and would like information about our upcoming program contact Jessica Grinberg at 937-2115.

General Information:

We anticipate that the shul will be crowded. We encourage you to come early. If you are an elder or disabled, requiring assistance or transportation or if you can provide this assistance during the holidays please call the shul at 964-6146 by Sunday, September 21st^h.

We are suggesting a contribution of \$150.00 for each adult who is not a contributing member of MCJC. This contribution will help cover costs to the community for providing High Holy Day services. We request that this be paid in advance and sent to P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA. 95456. Alternately, you can mail your contribution afterwards to the above address. As always, no one will be turned away for lack of funds, so please contribute what you can. It is traditional not to handle or discuss money on the holidays. Please make it possible for everyone in our community to worship without having to handle money by sending your payment in advance. If you have any financial questions please call Mark Zarlin, our treasurer at 937-0341.

*** Rosh Hashana Lunch:**

Following services on Rosh Hashana before the afternoon service, many people choose to remain at the shul to rest and eat lunch together. If you plan to have lunch at the shul please bring a vegetarian cold dish that can serve 8-10 people. Everything else will be provided.

Breaking the fast:

It is customary to break the Yom Kippur fast with a festive meal. We encourage you to invite friends and family to break fast with you following Yom Kippur services. If you would be willing to have additional guests, please call and leave a message at 964-6146 and let us know how many you can host. We particularly need a host whose home is wheelchair accessible. An announcement will be made at Yom Kippur services

about locations of break-fasts. Please bring a veggie dish to share if you are planning to attend a break-fast. Everyone is welcome to attend the break-fasts.

Are you Having a Sukkah This Year:

Each year we let the community know about opportunities to "Le'Shev Ba'Sukkah." If you are planning to have a sukkah and would welcome visitors to it please let Mina know as much ahead of time as possible at 937-1319 so it can be published in the Megillah. Sukkot this year begins on the evening of October 13th and ends at sundown on Oct. 20th.

Mazon Hunger Campaign:

"Corners of Our Fields" For the last eight years, thousands of Jews have given life to the tradition of tzedakah and tikkun olam by supporting a High Holy Days appeal that seeks funds for Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger. Our community is a partner with Mazon. The appeal has raised more than \$4.4 million and over 6 million pounds of food. As you look inward during these High Holy Days, Mazon asks that you reach outward to all those in need. Please give to Mazon what you would have spent to feed yourself and your family on Yom Kippur. Our own food bank in Fort Bragg has been a grant recipient from Mazon. Send your donations to 1990 S. Beverly Dr., Suite 260, Los Angeles 90025. You can access Mazon at www.mazon.org.



The Mendocino Maven

I hope that all of you enjoyed your summer. It is generally a quiet time for the Jewish community before the start of Elul and the High Holy Days. We did celebrate Lag B'Omer, but rather than a bonfire at the beach, because of the weather, we picnicked in the shul. A small group gathered at the shul to observe Tisha B'Av, the day that commemorates the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and other tragedies for the Jewish people. I hear that the Women's Retreat was once again a lovely experience and was graced by a visit from Ella Russell, Rosamond Gumpert, and Laura Lapidus.

The Mendocino Jewish Community welcomes Laura Lapidus to the north coast. Laura, who will be 95 in November, has relocated from the warm shores of Florida, opting for life in the Albion Nation with her daughter, Sydelle, for the next adventurous stage in her life. Canasta anyone?

Rosamond Gumpert Jorgenson has asked me to remind her many email correspondents that she is online again, her new email address is auntrosie@mcn.org, and that she would love to hear from you.

A Touch of Yiddish

Here are a few Yiddishisms, that you might find handy:

Ainer iz a ligen, tzvai iz ligen, drei iz politik
(One lie is a lie, two are lies, but three is politics)

A baizeh tsung is erger fun a schlechter hant
(A wicked tongue is worse than an evil hand)

Ven me zol Got danken far guts, volt nit zein kain tseit tsu baklogen zich oif shlects
(If we thanked God for the good things, there wouldn't be time to weep over the bad)

Der tsoren iz in hartsen a doren
(Anger is like a thorn in the heart)

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Community Care (rides, help when ill)	Karen Rakofsky *	937-5522	nerak@mcn.org
Outreach (new to the community)	Donna Montag*	877-3243	montag@mcn.org
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Name and Address Changes, Subscriptions	Myra Beals		myrah@mcn.org

* = board member

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