

B'Shalom בְּשָׁלוֹם

Volume 10, No. 2

News from Havurat Shalom

Sh'vat 5770/January 2010

Connect with the Hav!

Thanks to the efforts of a few web-savvy members, you can now keep tabs on Havurat Shalom via Facebook, and Twitter (@havnik).

Our detailed calendar of public events, including services, meals, classes, children's programming, and candle-lighting times for Somerville can be found at:

<http://calendar.thehav.org>



Shabbat Services

Friday nights

6:30 pm during Standard Time
(through March 14, 2010)

7:00 pm during Daylight Savings
(March 14 - November 7)

Saturday mornings

10:00 am every Saturday morning except for a few select weekends during the year when the Havurah is on retreat – see calendar

“Services at Havurat Shalom are egalitarian, lay-led and usually involve a lot of singing.”

An Unusual Shabbat Morning

Larry Rosenwald

Saturday, November 21st, I was leading davening and did an experiment I'd been thinking about for a while: to replace everything between the morning blessings and *Shochan Ad* with a garland of poems, poems that seemed somehow psalm-like, poems that corresponded to particular psalms or prayers, poems that pushed against particular psalms and prayers, poems in multiple languages, poems written by us or by other people. At *Shochan Ad*, I thought, we'd return to the siddur.

As is characteristic of the Hav, what happened was different from what I'm imagined, and richer - more poems, more discussions of poems, more places in the service where poems were read, such a wealth of poems and conversations that I ended up leaving out some of the poems I'd brought with me - to be saved for the next time round, I think, because my own judgment at any rate was that we could do this all over again with new poems, new conversations, new counterpoint between poetry and davening, new energy.

Here's the list of the poems that got read by me, and the places where they were read, to the extent that I can remember:

- Avrom Sutskever, tr. Richard Fein, "Deer by the Red Sea," at the beginning of *Pesukey Dezimra*.
- Christopher Smart, *Jubilate Agno* (a section of his consideration of his cat Geoffrey).
- Robert Pinsky, "Pilgrimage," in relation to *Beruchah She'amrah*.
- Denise Levertov, "Making Peace," just before Psalm 122, the one that has "pray for the peace of Jerusalem."
- Muriel Rukeyser, "Poem."
- Kadia Molodowska, tr. Kathryn Hellerstein, "Sabbath Song," in dialogue with Ps. 92, the song of the Sabbath day.
- Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" (a section of the long catalogue in section 15 of the poem), in response to Ps. 148, the great halleluyah catalogue.
- Kenneth Koch, "To Breath," in response to the *Nishmat*, "let every thing that has breath praise God."

Plus: Nina read T.S. Eliot's "The Naming of Cats" in counterpoint with the *Barechu* (making two cat poems in one morning), and three of her liturgical poems, "Depth Perception" (a perfect preface to *El Eden*), "Apprenticed by Love" (at *Ahava Rabah*) and "Who is like you in Silence" (at the *Mi Chamocha*).

And some others read other poems whose names I can't recall, and contributed wonderful remarks I couldn't summarize, and my only real regret that morning was forgetting to include Adrienne Rich's "Tattered Kaddish" right before the mourners' kaddish at the end.

What Havniks Do When It's Not Shabbat:
Meryl Becker, Adult ESL Teacher and Thespian

As many people at the Havurah know, I teach English to adult immigrants at SCALE (Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences) in Somerville. What most people don't know is that I've been doing drama with my students for about 10 years, mostly with plays on historical topics that I wrote myself. My students practice the plays and perform them for other classes. I used to do this as part of my regular ESL class, but last year we got a grant for me to teach a separate theater class for students drawn from the ESL, GED, and literacy classes. We put on one play I wrote about immigrants coming to America, and another one on the 60's for about 100 students and the staff.

This year the program has expanded in a very exciting way. My school, along with MASSCOSH (Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health) and The Welcome Project in Somerville, applied for, and received, a grant from MassHumanities for my theater class to put on a play about occupational safety, mostly around lead poisoning in construction. A theater professor at Tufts and her class will give us staging advice and help with publicity. I wrote the play over the summer, but the students and I will probably make some changes as we go along. Also, this time not only will we perform the play at SCALE, but there will also be a public performance at the Peabody House in Somerville on May 21. So now you know what's going on with me, and I hope I'll see you all at the performance on May 21!

Falling in Love with Havurat Shalom
Heidi Friedman

I was raised assimilated with no Jewish education.

In high school, I started going to the local Reform synagogue Friday nights because the service was mostly in English. I attended with a sense of trepidation and guilt. As my family didn't belong to the synagogue, I felt like a thief. When my grandfather died, I (thought I) knew I was supposed to say the mourner's kaddish. But I didn't know the words. This added to my feelings of loss.

In college, I went to the Hillel's Reform minyan Friday nights when I wasn't at the contra dance. My new friend Shalom Flank was also to be found in both those places. After graduation, he

and I moved to Somerville and went to Harvard Hillel's Reform minyan. We liked going to Shabbat services together. And so it was that when he discovered a terrific (for him) new Jewish community – Havurat Shalom – I was reluctantly dragged along.

By that time, I'd acquired some modern Hebrew and could sort of make my way through a service. I caught on to the fact that the first and last few lines of prayers were being read aloud and you were on your own in the middle. But not only were the melodies different, the *Hebrew* was different! That was the big stumbling block and boy did it make me grouchy.

At the same time, since college I'd been drawn to feminist and queer Judaism. I subscribed to *Lilith*. I read *Nice Jewish Girls*. I don't recall exactly how it happened, but one day I *got* that at Havurat Shalom, the Hebrew was annoyingly different because *half the references to God and half the references to the community were in the feminine!* I was hooked.

Although I davened at Havurat Shalom regularly, and became an associate member as soon as that was instituted, I probably wouldn't have joined if I hadn't become disabled. My chronic illness forced me out of graduate school. Looking around for some anchor in that storm, some way to still feel like I was contributing something, I joined the Havurah.

I loved the values I found there: trying not to have a hierarchical power structure but rather taking the time to make decisions by consensus; being lay-led; having almost no paid staff and being run by volunteers; giving sanctuary to an El Salvadoran refugee. Havurat Shalom was the first community I belonged to where straight, gay, bi and lesbian folks all mixed without tension. It was where I learned about tzedakah, was encouraged to learn new skills (like how to lead services), absorbed Jewish education, and where I continue to learn how to be a better member of a tight-knit community.

In 1998, the house I was renting an apartment in burned down. A friend who'd been visiting me from out of town was seriously injured. Two cats died. My sister and I lost almost all of our worldly possessions. The extended Havurah community gave me money, let me live with them, visited my injured friend in the hospital, searched the neighborhood for cats, set up a calendar of people available each day for phone support,

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Havurah Calendar for January – August 2010

Please join us throughout the year for Shabbat services, meals, holidays, and children's programming. Friday night and Saturday morning services occur weekly, unless noted. See p. 1 for weekly Shabbat service times.

January 2010

Friday 22 – Saturday 23 There will be **no services** as the Havurah will be on retreat

Friday 29 6:30 PM Tu B'Shevat Seder/Class led by Ilana Streit; includes catered dinner

February 2010

Saturday 6 Children's Service; *open lunch after services*

Friday 12 dinner in a member's home

Friday 19 *open dinner after services*

Friday 19 NOON DEADLINE to RSVP* for catered dinner on February 26

Friday 26 6:30 PM services followed by catered dinner and class

Saturday 27 6:30 PM Megillah reading & Purim spiel

March 2010

Saturday 6 Children's Service; *open lunch after services*

Friday 12 dinner in a member's home

Friday 19 *open dinner after services*

Friday 26 6:30 PM services; *No dinner/class.*

Tuesday 30 11:00 AM Passover services beginning with Barechu.

April 2010

Saturday 3 Children's Service; *NO open lunch after services (due to Pesach)*

Monday 5 10:00 AM Services for seventh day Passover, including Yizkor

Friday 9 dinner in a member's home

Friday 16 *open dinner after services*

Friday 23 DEADLINE to RSVP* for dinner and class on April 30

Friday 30 7:00 PM services followed by catered dinner and class

May 2010

Saturday 1 Children's Service; *open lunch after services*

Friday 7 dinner in a member's home

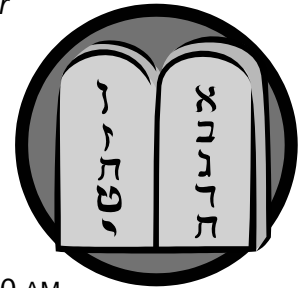
Friday 14 *open dinner after services*

Tuesday 18 11:30 PM Erev Shavuot service followed by Tikkun Leyl Shavuot (all-night study session)

Wednesday 19 5:00 AM Shavuot Shacharit; 11:00 AM Intergenerational Shavuot service

Friday 21 NOON DEADLINE to RSVP* for dinner and class on Friday 28

Friday 28 7:00 PM services followed by catered dinner and class



June 2010

Saturday 5 Children's Service; *open lunch after services*

Friday 11 dinner in a member's home

Friday 18 NOON DEADLINE to RSVP* for catered meal on June 25.

Friday 18 *open dinner after services*

Friday 25 7:00 PM services followed by catered dinner and class

July 2010

Saturday 3 *open lunch after services*

Friday 9 dinner in a member's home

Friday 16 *open dinner after services*

Monday 19 9:00 PM Tisha B'Av reading of Eicha

Friday 23 NOON DEADLINE to RSVP* for catered meal on July 30.

Friday 30 7:00 PM services followed by catered dinner and class

* To RSVP for events or classes, e-mail registrar@thehav.org or call 617-623-3376 and leave a message.

Purim: A Primer

Hebrew name means: Lots.

Refers to Esther 3:7, in which the villain Haman draws lots to set the date for the Jews' destruction.

What's it about? Celebration of a narrow escape from genocide described in the biblical Book of Esther.

Pronounce it: Poor-im.

Foods: Triangular pastries called [hamantashen](#) (Haman's pockets), named for the bad guy in the Book of Esther. Some Jews also eat other foods with things hidden inside, like dumplings, other sweets and goodies, and alcohol.

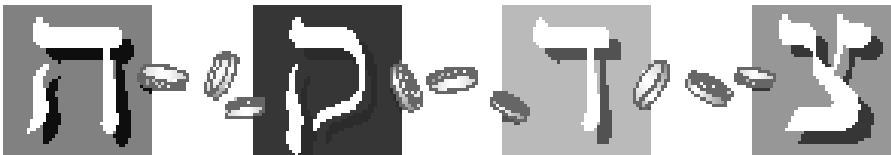


Activities: On Purim we read the Book of Esther, wear costumes, eat triangular cookies and other treats, and use noisemakers. It's also traditional to give money to charity, send anonymous packages of goodies to your friends (called mishloach manot or shaloch mones) and to get drunk. This is a minor holiday in that there is no traditional obligation not to work.

Symbols of Holiday: Masks, costumes, noisemakers called graggers, hamantashen.

Greeting? Happy Purim or Purim Sameah

Ruth Abrams, Havnik & Managing Editor of InterfaithFamily.com
(Reprinted with permission)



Tzedakah Update

Dear friends,

As many of you know, my work as a case manager for Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership has gotten more challenging both personally and professionally in the current economic climate. In the past year, state budget cuts have threatened state vouchers and eliminated emergency assistance funds for individuals and families struggling to pay rent. At the same time, the number of families accessing the overflowing state shelter system has risen dramatically. As of September of this year 1,001 families are living in motel rooms compared to 77 in September of 2007. Individuals and families are also experiencing poverty and homelessness for the first time after a job loss, illness or foreclosure.

In addition to my work as a case manager with some of the most vulnerable in the 30 cities and towns MBHP serves, I have chosen to run the 2010 Boston Marathon to raise \$10,000 for the Housing Supports Program at MBHP. For so many of those that I meet with every day, a rental subsidy, if available, simply isn't enough. Case management, utility assistance and other services are critical to making sure that our clients have successful tenancies.

In 2008, Carolyn and I made a \$1000 per year, 3 year commitment to MBHP. Join us in making a significant commitment to keeping individuals and families housed throughout the Greater Boston area in the coming year. I believe everyone deserves a place to call home - and together we can make that a reality. This April I hope to set significant personal records in the marathon and in fundraising but I can't do it without you. Together we can create a circle of giving that will reach the \$10,000 goal and beyond.

Many thanks,

Jesse Edsell-Vetter

Learn more & donate at <http://www.firstgiving.com/jesseedsellvetter>

Or send checks to: Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
125 Lincoln Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02111-2503

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drove me around, lent me a car, made me laugh, donated furniture, attended my saying goodbye ritual at the site of the burned down house. They offered and did more than I can list. It was an amazing experience of being taken care of. My sister and I had been planning to move to western Mass. together. She took the disruption of the fire to get out of town. I found that I couldn't leave Havurat Shalom.

So when, a decade later, my husband unexpectedly died, I *knew* that the Havurah would be there for me, and it has been and still is. And the Havurah is not just good in a crisis. We're also good at celebrating aufrufs and weddings, brises and baby namings, birthdays and housewarmings. And yes, sometimes we get on each others nerves. But all in all, I'm proud of Havurat Shalom and honored to be a member.

Childcare & Children's Programming

We provide childcare most Saturdays September-June, starting at 10:15 a.m. for children 18 months and older on a first come, first served basis. If you have questions or want to confirm childcare, contact Angela at 617-623-3376 or info@thehav.org.

Havurat Shalom offers children's services for 4-9 year olds on the first Saturday of the month from November through June, corresponding to the time of the Torah service at the adult minyan (approximately 11:30).

Open Meals at the Hav

On the first Saturday of each month the Havurah holds a vegetarian/dairy potluck brunch after services. Two Fridays later, an informal, vegetarian potluck dinner is held after Friday evening services. Newcomers are always welcome. No RSVP is necessary for regular open meals.

Meals In Member Homes

Havurah members host monthly meals in their homes. Contact the Hav for more information and to RSVP, minimum one week before the event.

Dinner and a Class after Services

In addition to the pot luck meals, Havurat Shalom offers monthly Friday evening classes after services, accompanied by a catered dinner. Classes are listed in the calendar, with more information to come via the email lists and other publicity as they approach. Dinner and the class are free, but **registration is required at minimum eight days beforehand.** For info or to RSVP, e-mail registrar@thehav.org or call 617-623-3376.

Accessibility

Havurat Shalom is committed to disability access. The Havurah is crowded on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, so it helps us to know your access needs in advance. If you need disability accommodations, fill out and return the form below. Our High Holiday Disability Access Coordinators will do their best to respond to access needs. We want to accommodate you. For more info, contact Ruth at 617-623-3376 or info@thehav.org.

Please Avoid Scents

We ask you to refrain from wearing perfume, cologne or aftershave to all Havurah activities so people with chemical sensitivity or with allergies can also attend

✂ Questions? call: 617-623-3376 web: www.TheHav.org write: info@TheHav.org

Donations, Class Registration and Disability Accommodations

Please fill out and return this form to: Havurat Shalom, 113 College Avenue, Somerville, MA 02144. 617-623-3376.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ E-mail address _____

Enclosed is a donation for:

- Havurat Shalom's General Fund.
- The Tzedakah Fund.
- The ASL Interpreter Fund.

Please send me _____ copies of *Siddur Birkat Shalom* @ \$18.00 each.

Please send me a description of Havurat Shalom's disability access.

Please add me to your mailing list (two newsletters per year)

Please add me to your email list (weekly update of events)

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____ (please pay less if you can't afford the full amount)



Mazal Tov!

Cat and Cole Dvar got married in September 2009.

Larry Rosenwald officiated at the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth Schwan-Rosenwald to Katie Hogan on October 31, 2009.

Meryl Becker's granddaughter Annessia Jimenez-Rezendes (Neci) was Bat Mitzvah, Saturday, December 5, 2009.

Maida Tilchen's debut novel *Land Beyond Maps* (Savvy Press) won the 2009 New Mexico Book Award for Gay/Lesbian (GLBT) Book.

We Mourn Recent Losses in our Community

Michael Alterman's aunt Julie Bennet died in August, 2009.

Maida Tilchen's father George Tilchen died October 29, 2009.

Fred Brandes (Ephraim ben Dovid v' Gittel), stepfather of Aaron Brandes died December 7, 2009.



Havurat Shalom

113 College Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144
www.TheHav.org

