

MAY - JUNE 2017

IYAR-SIVAN-TAMMUZ 5777



The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley)

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Please note: All submissions sent by the 20th of each month to Carol Rosenberg ([carolrosenberg@pacific.net](mailto:carolrosenberg@pacific.net))

## Coming Events

**Friday, May 12, 6:30 pm, Kabbalah Shabbat** service with Rabbi Josh followed by a potluck dairy supper

**Saturday, May 13, 10:00 a.m., Teaching** with Rabbi Josh

**Saturday, May 13, 10 a.m., KHE Tots** meeting at the shul

**Tuesday, May 30, 7:00 pm, Shavuot evening** of Torah experience through art, crafts, music, poetry, and reading The Book of Ruth. Potluck dairy supper with desserts. Please bring canned and packaged contributions for the local food bank.

*If you would like to host a lay-led Shabbat service and potluck at your home in June, July, or August, contact Sherrie Ebyam at 530-414-1104 or <[ebyam@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ebyam@sbcglobal.net)>*

## Possible subjects to study with Rabbi Josh

Please e-mail R. Josh to let him know what you would like to study in Saturday morning classes. Josh Jacobs-Velde <[rabbi.josh18@gmail.com](mailto:rabbi.josh18@gmail.com)>

### **Hasidic Wisdom on the Torah Portion**

In this class we'll get to know some of the great Hasidic authors and how they creatively and powerfully draw new meaning from the Torah text in ways that can profoundly speak to our own lives.

### **Introduction to the Zohar**

The Zohar is the magnum opus of medieval Kabbalah. It is a dynamic, difficult, juicy and exciting text. Together, we'll begin to open up some of its layers of meaning and tap into its creative flow.

### **Lesser-Known, but Extraordinary Jewish Archetypes**

We'll delve into the figures of Miriam, Elijah, Bruria (the great woman scholar of the Talmud) and King David, opening up their lives and exploring the wisdom they have for us now.

### **The Divine Feminine in Judaism**

This class will draw on teachings about the Shechinah as well as other ways the Divine Feminine has manifested in Jewish tradition. We'll also explore what it's like to pray with feminine God language.

### *Portion of the Week and Holidays*

May 6 - Achariel - Kedoshim  
May 13- Emor  
May 14 - Lag B'Omer  
May 20 - Behar- Bechukotai  
May 27 - Bamidbar  
May 30 - Erev Shavuot  
May 31 - Shavuot  
June 3 - Naso  
June 10 - Behaalotecha  
June 17 - Shelach  
June 24 - Korach  
July 1 - Chukat

### ***Opportunities for Tzedakah***

**Kol HaEmek** (the Voice of the Valley) is funded by your member dues as well as your generous contributions to a **number** of funds including

- 1) Building Fund
- 2) Religious School Fund
- 3) Scholarship Fund
- 4) General Fund
- 5) Honoring and Remembrance Board
- 6) Tzedekah Fund
- 7) Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- 8) The Marion and Sanford Frank Fund for feeding the hungry in Ukiah and Willits
- 9) Mazon -a Jewish Answer to Hunger

Call: David Koppel, 485-8910

**send checks to:**

**Kol HaEmek, P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470**

Mazel Tov and Congratulations to new parents Dan Sapoznick and Phoi Trann on the birth of their daughter Phoenix Tran Sapoznick. Congratulations to the new grandmother Carol Orton.

### **We Remember**

Jim Rowlan	May
Joel Green (Yossel)	May
Ben Rosenberg	May 1
Gerald Marans	May 1
Janet Fisher	May 2
Harry Bistrin	May 4
Harold Koppel	May 6
Elenore Feldman	May 9
Harriet Libby Domas	May 10
William X. Silva	May 15
Nancy Brooks-Miller	May 22
Julius Markowitz	May 26
Vera Meyerhoff	June
Daniel Rosenberg	June 1
Edward Wandrei	June 5
Helen Feinberg-Ginsburg	June 6
Sylvia Marans Elberg	June 12
Thelma Cohn	June 12
Joseph P. Suffel	June 21
Elliot Rivers	June 29
Natalie Wachspress	June 2
Jessica Anne Doctors	Iyar 16
Milton Fleiss	Iyar 8
Sidney Kowarski	Sivan 14
Herbert Rubin	Sivan 24
Beatrice Starosta Coren	Sivan 3
Harry Stanten	Sivan 6
Harry Rothschild	Sivan 7
Bernice Fleiss	Tammuz 27
Henry Lowenheim	Tammuz 15

Lee Wachs is holding his own, he sends good wishes to all of us  
This wonderful man, though very ill, is still making jokes!

**Donations to Kol HaEmek, February - March  
Thank You**

Judith M. Corwin  
Rachel Elkins and Dana Thibeau  
Judith Fuente and David Nelson - Food for the  
Homeless  
David Koppel and Linda Koppel - general + Food  
for the Homeless  
Nancy Horowitz Moilanen  
Elizabeth Raybee  
Marisa Sizemore and Alex Schulz  
Charlotte Rapport and David Rapport  
Carol D. Rosenberg - Purim  
Leon Springer and Nancy Marotta Springer  
Margo Frank and Marc Levine  
Darline Bergere and Josh Bergere  
Robin Sunbeam  
Leslie Jo Feldman  
Alan Sunbeam - Shul  
Andy Coren and Yvonne Coren  
Sherrie Ebyam and Carol Orton - Purim  
Ina Gordon and Edward P. Dick

**Thank You!**

**Many Thanks to the donors for our small  
but profitable Purim auction:**

Elizabeth Raybee  
Barry Vogel  
Adina Merenlender and Kerry Heise  
Carol Rosenberg  
Barbara Stanger

**Hosts needed for our Rabbis and Family**

Rabbis Josh and Daria are looking for host families where they can share the total Shabbat experience. A host family is needed for the weekend of May 12-13

If you can host a family of four from Friday afternoon through Saturday evening supper, please contact Sherrie Ebyam at 530-414-1104 or <[ebyam@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ebyam@sbcglobal.net)>

***Passover 2017***

*Thank you to Tara and Stuart Marcus; to our organizer and host Janae Stephens; and to Rabbi Josh, our leader for a wonderful Seder at Shambhala*

“This Pesach was different for me because it wasn't about family, and more about personal spirituality and community. So this Passover has been one of the most meaningful of my life and delightfully different. I enjoyed how Josh had time for us to talk with each other and take a moment of silence. Skipping parts of the Haggadah was fine, and expanding on some parts was fine. It didn't seem too long for me because I was consciously dedicating that time to the Pesach experience. It seemed that Rabbi Josh was very well prepared, but flexible for whatever changes came up. I'm so glad that I arrived early enough to help prepare, because that is always an essential part of Pesach for me, to be a participant, not an observer in the audience.

“The only suggestion I have for Rabbi Josh for next year is to maybe encourage more participation, and maybe ask specific people if they'd like to bring a special poem to replace a prayer, or lead a movement version of something.

“And maybe a few of us singers could get together beforehand and practice a few tunes we like so we can lead them.”

*Louisa Aronow*

## Shavuot 2017

Join us Tuesday evening, May 30, at 7:00 pm for a wonderful evening of revelation of Torah through art, crafts, music, poetry and reading The Book of Ruth

We will serve traditional dairy treats, blintzes, and cheesecake

## Shavu'ot

from the Judaism 101 website

*You shall count for yourselves -- from the day after the Shabbat, from the day when you bring the Omer of the waving grain seven Shabbats, they shall be complete. Until the day after the seventh sabbath you shall count, fifty days... You shall convoke on this very day -- there shall be a holy convocation for yourselves -- you shall do no laborious work; it is an eternal decree in your dwelling places for your generations.* Leviticus 21:15-16, 21

The Festival of Weeks is the second of the three major festivals with both historical and agricultural significance (the other two are [Passover](#) and [Sukkot](#)). Agriculturally, it commemorates the time when the first fruits were harvested and brought to the [Temple](#), and is known as Hag ha-Bikkurim (the Festival of the First Fruits). Historically, it celebrates the giving of the [Torah](#) at Mount Sinai, and is also known as Hag Matan Torateinu (the Festival of the Giving of Our Torah).

The period from Passover to Shavu'ot is a time of great anticipation. We count each of the days from the second day of Passover to the day before Shavu'ot, 49 days or 7 full weeks, hence the name of the festival. See [The Counting of the Omer](#). The counting reminds us of the important connection between Passover and Shavu'ot: Passover freed us physically from bondage, but the giving of the Torah on Shavu'ot redeemed us spiritually from our bondage to idolatry and immorality. Shavu'ot is also known as Pentecost, because it falls on the 50th day; however, Shavu'ot has no particular similarity to the Christian holiday of Pentecost, which occurs 50 days after their Spring holiday.

It is noteworthy that the holiday is called the time of the *giving* of the Torah, rather than the time of *receiving* of the Torah. The sages point out that we are constantly in the process of receiving the Torah, that we receive it every day, but it was first given at this time. Thus it is the giving, not the receiving, that makes this holiday significant.

Shavu'ot is not tied to a particular calendar date, but to a counting from Passover. Because the length of the months used to be variable, determined by observation (see [Jewish Calendar](#)), and there are two new moons between Passover and Shavu'ot, Shavu'ot could occur on the 5th or 6th of [Sivan](#). However, now that we have a mathematically determined calendar, and the months between Passover and Shavu'ot do not change length on the mathematical calendar, Shavu'ot is always on the 6th of Sivan (the 6th and 7th outside of [Israel](#). See [Extra Day of Holidays](#).)

It is customary to stay up the entire first night of Shavu'ot and study [Torah](#), then pray as early as possible in the morning.

It is customary to eat a dairy meal at least once during Shavu'ot. There are varying opinions as to why this is done. Some say it is a reminder of the promise regarding the [land of Israel](#), a land flowing with "milk and honey." According to another view, it is because our ancestors had just received the Torah (and the dietary laws therein), and did not have both meat and dairy dishes available.



## **Linda Koppel**

I was born in **San Jose, California on July 23, 1948.**

I have lived in Mendocino County since **1975.**

My favorite place in Mendocino County is **my house in Redwood Valley.**

I have given back to my community by **doing 25 years of family home daycare; acting as the “Shul Mom” (cleaning up after events at the shul); and teaching at Shul School.**

I am thankful for **our grandchildren and strong family and our wonderful, tightly-knit Mendocino County community.**

I am most proud of **the close relationship we (my husband David and I) have with our kids and our long-time friendships, particularly those in the Jewish community.**

My heroes are **Eleanor Roosevelt and Michelle Obama because of their commitment to bettering the lives of others and their belief in giving everyone a fair chance.**

Friends would describe me as **strong-willed, joyful, having a zest for life and a teacher at heart.**

If I could do something over, **I would finish college.**

I get the greatest joy from **helping children become independent.**

A historical figure I admire is **Maya Angelou.**

I worry about **hatred all around the world; prospects for peace; and long-standing issues affecting the future for young women like equal pay and paid family leave.**

My favorite movies or TV shows are **BBC mysteries and Masterpiece Theater.**

A talent I'd like to have is **being able to sing well.**

The most memorable trips I ever took were to **Ireland last spring and to Israel with Rabbi Shoshanah in 2006.**

If I have learned one thing, it is **to think before I speak.**

This is on my bucket list: **to see the Northern Lights and to finish compiling family histories.**

I have been most inspired in my life by **my mother, who was a truly self-made woman who grew up in the Depression, served as a WAC in WWII, and was a gifted seamstress.**

I wish more Jews would **have a stronger sense of community and be more responsible for rebuilding our local Jewish community.**

Something people would be surprised to know about me is **that when I was in school, I was trained to teach in a one-room schoolhouse.**

## To Go Deeper into Spirituality, Just . . . Relax? from Rabbi Josh

I write this the day after my return from a 10-day spiritual wilderness retreat in the Chiracahua Mountains of southeast Arizona. The experience included a five day solo “sacred passage” in a secluded valley, where our teacher, John Milton, has been taking people for over 30 years. John has created a wonderful spiritual path called the Way of Nature” ([www.sacredpassage.com](http://www.sacredpassage.com)), distilled from his many years of solo time in the wilderness, as well as his deep immersion in some of the world’s most profoundly enlightening, earth-connected lineages, such as Taoism, Dzogchen, Tantra, Vedanta and shamanic traditions.

There were many wonderful insights from my experience, but one I’m inspired to share with you now is the profound importance of relaxation on the spiritual path. Yes, relaxation--not something I’ve generally thought of as “spiritual.” I’ve done qigong and tai chi for a number of years, and the first principle of both these systems is: RELAX. Often, though, on the spiritual path, we don’t think of the centrality of relaxation. We might be working on cultivating a deeper connection to the Divine, seeking to open our hearts in prayer, touching stillness in meditation or remaining present and “in the flow” with whatever arises, but until these last 10 days, I had really overlooked the profound value of relaxation as a foundation for all other spiritual practices.

Think of how focused we have become in American spiritual culture on cultivating presence: witness the meteoric rise of mindfulness practice or Eckhart Tolle’s *The Power of Now* selling over 2 million copies. These are important developments that are having a profoundly positive effect on our broader culture. Yet, the part of John Milton’s point that really struck me is that “relaxation” is just as much of a core principle in spiritual practice as “presence.” Deep relaxation is not a “side thing” we might do (or not) on the way to the main event of our spiritual life, but is absolutely central and foundational. When we prematurely jump to the cultivation of presence, John argues the stress, tension, and contraction that we habitually hold act as a great barrier to full presence.

He suggested that perhaps our culture emphasizes presence to such a great degree because it is so obviously helpful to productivity in work. When we are focused and “in the now,” we are much better at getting the job done. The workforce productivity payoff is not nearly so clear with relaxation; people are generally not yet encouraged to do *shivasana* (the yoga deep relaxation pose) instead of an afternoon coffee break at the office.

Our most profound and regular Jewish opportunity to cultivate relaxation is, of course, Shabbat. The Hebrew word for deep rest and relaxation is *menucha*. The Shabbat *menucha* we celebrate and seek has the sense of deep and restorative rest. As a traditional Shabbat afternoon prayer puts it, “You’ve given us a *menucha* of love and giving, a *menucha* of truth and faith, a *menucha* of shalom and well-being, a *menucha* of calm and trust. A *menucha* of wholeness, one You take pleasure in...” (from the Siddur).

We need to, and are invited to, take that deep relaxation we cultivate on Shabbos into the rest of the week, and in fact our tradition teaches us to have a little bit of Shabbos in each day. Of the different Jewish communities I’ve served, the people of Kol HaEmek have probably been the most relaxed. Living in Mendocino County certainly helps! But it’s certainly possible for all of us to move even deeper into relaxation.

The core relaxation practice we worked with on our solo/sacred passage was doing a thorough body scan. The instruction was to first scan through the entire body, starting at the head, moving down to the feet, noting and discovering any areas of tension or contraction.

Then we would go back to each area we found tension, allow the mind to rest with the tension and gently relax into it, and allow it to soften. Ten minutes would probably be the minimum for this practice. A half hour would be more powerful. If you fall asleep while you're doing this (as I often do), when you wake up, just pick up where you left off in the body scan.

It is important, if at all possible, to do this practice lying directly on the Earth, or on a natural fiber blanket or mat placed on the Earth. (Synthetic fibers block much of Earth's vital energy, called *chiut* in Kabbalah, or *chi* in the Chinese system.) We can then feel the incredible support of Mother Earth below us, as we feel our tension being received by the Earth and used by her as fertilizer through this wondrous, transformative capacity that She has.

In Kabbalah, Divinity is understood as expressing itself through ten emanations or attributes, known as sefirot. The Earth represents the 10<sup>th</sup> sefirah, called malchut, and is understood as the full flowering of the Divine creative capacity. So when we are offering up our tension in this way, we can visualize it being received by the Divine as an offering, an offering that liberates us.

Ideally, we can do this relaxation practice at least a few times during the week, and then take some more spacious time on Shabbat to go more deeply into rest and relaxation. If you already have a meditation or prayer practice, this is a simple, yet powerful complement that can open new doors to deepen your practice.

May we all bring a deeper sense of *menucha* into our often hectic lives!  
Amen.

Josh Jacobs-Velde  
Rabbi and Co-Founder of the Zmanim Jewish community  
Sebastopol, CA

[www.zmanim-seasons.org](http://www.zmanim-seasons.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/zmanim.seasons>

Rabbi, Kol HaEmek  
Redwood Valley, CA  
[www.KolHaEmek.org](http://www.KolHaEmek.org)

No one can keep us from carrying God  
Wherever we go.  
(Hafiz, transl. Daniel Landinsky)



**Kol HaEmek MCJC-Inland**  
**P.O. Box 416,**  
**Redwood Valley, CA 95470**

Our purpose is to create an environment in which Jewish culture, religion and spiritual life can flourish, to perpetuate and renew our Jewish connections with ourselves and our homes, within our community and the world.

- To provide space for religious study and prayer
- To share life cycle events through meaningful Jewish traditions
- To sponsor Jewish education for all ages
- To be inclusive of all partnerships and family configurations
- To include interfaith families and Jews-by-choice
- To network with other Jewish communities
- To educate and share our culture with other Mendocino County residents
- To be a foundation for *Tikkun olam* (healing the world) as a community through socially just actions and by Mitzvot
- To offer our membership in exchange for financial or other contributions and allow all to participate, regardless of ability to pay

## **Kol HaEmek Information & Resources**

### **Kol HaEmek**

**(707) 468-4536**

### **Board Members**

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Brit Mila: Doctors willing to do circumcisions in their office or your home; Robert Gitlin D.O. (465-7406),

Sam Goldberg (463-8000; Jeremy Mann (463-8000)

Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial)) Helen Sizemore (367-0250)

Community support: Willits, Divora Stern (459-9052), Ukiah, Margo Frank (463-1834)

Interfaith Council: Cassie Gibson (468-5351)

Rabbinical Services/Special Ceremonies: Rabbi Josh Jacobs-Velde <[rabbi.josh18@gmail.com](mailto:rabbi.josh18@gmail.com)> tel. 508-499-1631