



Where shall we go?

This week's parasha takes us from the mythical creation stories of Adam and Noah to the foundational story of our people. We learn of the journey of our first patriarch Avraham, who will later be claimed by Christianity and Islam as well. Avram, as he is known at the beginning of the parasha, is told to go forth, not just on a physical journey "to the land which God will show him", but also a spiritual journey, there "to be a blessing". The story does not relate God's reason for choosing Avram for this mission to go to a new land and begin a new people. Through the tradition of midrash we try to understand Avram's merit for this mission. The most well known tells that Avram destroyed his father's idols, exposing the shortfalls of idolatry.

In addition, there is another, less well-known rabbinic story of covenantal beginnings worth reading closely. This midrash reads:

God said to Avram, "Go forth from your land" (Gen. 12:1) . . . R. Isaac said: To what may this be compared? To a man who was traveling from place to place when he saw a building in flames. "Is it possible that the building lacks a person to look after it?" Avram wondered. The owner of the building looked out and said, "I am the owner of the building." (Genesis Rabbah 29:1)

The tradition generally interprets this story as claiming that the world belongs to God and God has absolute power over it, and that Avram was the first to know this truth. But there are other interpretations as well. In his book *Radical Then, Radical Now*, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks points out that the Owner of the palace (God) claims ownership of the palace while choosing to allow it to go up in smoke.

Sacks interprets the parable as the mission statement of Judaism, with the Owner calling out for help. God made the palace, humans set it ablaze, and only they can put it out. Avram asks, "where are you?" and God replies, "I am here, where are you?" Humans ask God, "Why did you abandon the world" and God responds, "Why did you abandon Me?" Rabbi Sacks says that humanity's task is to extinguish the flames of immorality and bloodshed and restore the world to the harmonious and sacred place it was intended to be." (See <https://parashapoems.wordpress.com/2013/10/11/lech-lecha-the-burning-palace/>)

However, there is a textual problem with Sacks' interpretation, for the midrash is more complicated. In the parable, Avram's question is understood as asking not just about ownership, but guidance, for it continues on with this passage: "Is it conceivable that the world is without a guide?" God looks out the window and says, "I am the Guide, the Sovereign of the Universe." And thus God says to Avram, "Get you out of your homeland, your native city, your parent's home." This is how the midrash ends. Avram is not told to put out the fire; he is commanded to keep on walking.

continued over...

MAZAL TOV

Teva Porat on his
Bar Mitzvah
(*New Sanctuary*)

**Yonah Festinger &
Campbell Young** on the
naming of their baby
Eden Festinger Young
(*New Sanctuary*)

**Jeremy Etkind &
Sophie Parker** on the
naming of their baby,
Winnie Leo Etkind
(*Neuweg*)

CANDLE LIGHTING

Friday 6:53pm

Saturday 7:51pm

TORAH (page 69)

Genesis 12:1 - 17:27

HAFTARAH (page 94)

Isaiah 40:27 - 41:16

SHABBAT SERVICES

Erev Shabbat

- 6:15pm -
Masorti Service
(*Neuweg*)
- 6:15pm - *Shabbat Live*
(*New Sanctuary*)

Shabbat Morning

- 9:00am -
Masorti service
(*New Sanctuary*)
- 10:00am -
Progressive service
(*Neuweg*)

Renewal Shabbat Meditations

9am-10am - Shabbat
Mornings in October
(*Neuweg*)

Morning Minyan

Mon and Thurs at 6:45am
(*New Sanctuary*)

Avram is told to leave his homeland, his birth town and his parents' home all behind to start a new society in a new land. This story was told thousands of years ago, when our planet was still open to exploration and the building of "new frontiers" and "new societies". We no longer have that luxury. Just this week at Emanuel Synagogue, as part of our transitioning to a spiritual and cultural community centre, we heard from Tom Sanderson, an international security consultant and adjunct professor with expertise in global trends, political risk, intelligence, terrorism and organized crime and former director of the Transnational Threats Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Sanderson commented on the rampant corruption of governments around the world, the demise of democratic institutions in many countries, and the perils of a changing climate on basic human resources of water and food. This is a planetary crises, no longer a crisis for one man in one town in one part of the world. There is nowhere to go.

So if the journey can no longer be physical, if the problems we face are global, then the solutions to those problems require primarily a spiritual response, one based in values. As Jews we base those values in Torah, but as Jews we understand these values must be shared human values to have universal impact. Whenever one travels the world, one sees most people – regardless of their ethnicity, sexuality, religiosity or any other way in which we may be "categorized" – do share core values. Most people want to live in a peaceful society, which is fair in its application of law and its distribution of wealth. Most people want to live with clean air, clean water, green spaces, decent shelter and sufficient food. Alas, this is not the world in which we live. Avram was told to keep on walking when his land was beyond repair. We no longer have this luxury.

This is why Tikkun Olam - repairing the world – is our spiritual journey and moral imperative. So where should we go? We have nowhere to go but home, that home first symbolized in the Garden of Eden, in which we live with awareness of our environment, our duty for its care, from each and every animal with whom we share this garden, to the deep realisation of what it means to be our "brother's keeper". Only then will we have fulfilled the spiritual imperative our founding ancestor's spiritual journey "to be a blessing."

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Jeffrey B. Kamins OAM



*Rabbi Jeffrey B. Kamins OAM
Arno & Hella Seefeldt Rabbinic Chair*



Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio



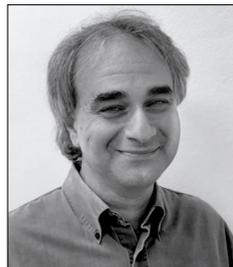
Rabbi Rafi Kaiserblueth



Rabbi Dr Orna Triguboff



*Rev. Sam Zwarenstein
Director of Communal Engagement*



Cantor George Mordecai

The ACO Returns!

**On November 26,
the Australian
Chamber
Orchestra is
returning to
Emanuel
Synagogue -
keep the date!
Tickets on sale
soon.**

WHAT'S ON

Kef Kids - Fridays from 4:00pm-5:30pm - returns this Friday, 19 October

***Conversations about Israel* - every Monday from 10:00am-11:30am**

This Monday October 22, Professor Colin Shindler - ***Israel: The Road to Power - 1917 to the present***

Colin Shindler is Emeritus Professor, School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. His areas of expertise include the Israel Right and the European Left. He is visiting Sydney as the Mandelbaum Scholar in Residence.

SMALL CHANGES, BIG DIFFERENCES

Sunday October 21st from 7:00pm
Inspiring stories and practical ideas

Featuring keynote speakers: **Judy Friedlander** from *Food Faith* and **Shira Sebban**
Sometimes we see the problems of the world and they seem so overwhelming, we wonder what we can do. Join us for a chance to hear from some of our congregants who have made changes big and small and each one has changed the world.

More information: tinyurl.com/smallchangesbig

***Border Politics* movie**

Sunday 28 October from 7:00pm

In this fascinating documentary, leading Australian human rights barrister Julian Burnside travels the globe to investigate the role that anti-terrorism legislation is playing not only in the lives of the displaced, but all of us. Producer Lois Harris will present the movie.

Book now: tinyurl.com/borderfilm

Shabbat Project at Emanuel

On the 26th and 27th October, the Emanuel Synagogue community will join 1 million Jews around the world in celebrating Shabbat.

Thursday 25 October from 6:00pm - Challah Bake

Bring your friends, children and grandchildren. Join Rabbi Ninio and Reverend Zwarenstein - come along and learn to knead and bake challah. We will supply everything you need. *Everyone is welcome to this free event* but please register to help planning.

Friday 26 October following service at 6:15pm - Shabbat Project Dinner

Join us after erev Shabbat services for a special communal dinner with delicious food, great company and a beautiful Shabbat atmosphere. Bookings essential.

Saturday 27 October from 9:00am-10:00am - Kabbalah Meditation classes

Rabbi Dr Orna Triguboff will be teaching a free Jewish Mindfulness session. All welcome.

Saturday 27 October from 10:00am-12:00pm - **The Heart of Prayer**

Join us as we seek a deeper, more intimate encounter with the Shabbat morning service. Open to beginners of all ages and those wishing to improve their appreciation of the liturgy.

For more information and bookings, see: emanuel.org.au/Shabbat-project

IN MEMORY

There are mourners in our community to whom we extend our sincerest sympathies on the death of their loved ones.

Shiva: Carole Solomon, Else Weiss, Giorgio Mario Ventura, Mirja Perheentupa
Shloshim: Isaac Abramowitz, Ronald Coppel, Joe Barrington, Valerie Lonstein, Becky Goliger, Helen Zwarenstein, Malka Kayla bat David, Janos Bonta, Sophie Diamond, Alfred Parker, Arthur Eizenberg

This week we observe the Yahrzeits of (observed by):

* Memorial Light

- Minnie Ackerman** (Nicole Emdur-Apps, Faye Emdur)
Avram Ben Chaim Eliezer (Marc Lane)
Asher Capelluto (Rosy Elterman)
Jason Davey (Lavinia Fuller, Anthea Hemphill)
Rebecca (Becky) Diamond (Lynne Perl)
Claire Douek (Diane Grant)
Rivka Douek (Isaac Douek)
Harry Duchen (Rose Novis)
* **Kurt Dukes** (Claire Dukes, Richard Dukes)
Samuel Faigen (Betty Kohane)
* **Ismar Frankenstein**
Henry Gayst (Lloyd Gayst)
Ernst Glaser (Peter Glaser)
* **Victor Golden**
Max Goldstein (John Goldstein)
Rachel Green (David Green)
Edna Haber (Richard Haber)
Sam Hadjes (Myriam Romano)
Esther Jacobson (Joan Bornstein)
Archie Maurice Jacobson (Joan Bornstein)
Esther Jacobson (Eileen Goldberg)
Archie Maurice Jacobson (Sylvia Lenny)
Zona Jessup (Steve Rubner)
George Kater (Judy Kater)
Helen Kleinlehrer (Aron Kleinlehrer, Robert Kleinlehrer, Esther Kleinlehrer-Goldie)
Betty Kremer (Edward Kremer)
Frank Kubie (Esther Kubie-Madar)
Thelma Ivy Laurie (Del Freed)
Paul Levy (Lynette Levy)
- Shikah Lyubarsky** (Regina Shusterman)
* **Gleness Messiah** (Karen Fried, Mark Fried)
Zanetta Miller (Debbie Warnock)
Saadia Moryosef (Rami Moryosef)
Lily Moss (Eleanor Sebel)
Edith Levine Myers (John Cooper)
Sheila Narunsky (Leslie Narunsky)
Sarah Rodgim (Rosalind Ihaka)
* **Thea Rosenberg-Beer**
Anne Roth (John Roth)
* **Dagobert Rybaczewski**
* **John Harris Samuels**
Lesley Schetzer (Louis Schetzer)
Felix Schwarz (Susanne Freeman, Ronald Schwarz)
Ruvim Shneidman (Yakov Shneidman)
Mariu Sicouri (Maya Hirsch)
Perla Pana Slutsky (Edward Kremer)
Boris Suster (Lisa Collins)
Zofia Sznicer (Stella Freund)
Eva Werksman (Myrna Lewis)
Russell Whitmont (Randolph Baral, Yadida Sekel, Scott Whitmont, Steph Whitmont)
Naomi Whitmont (Randolph Baral, Yadida Sekel, Scott Whitmont, Steph Whitmont)
Sadie Wingerin (Elana Leigh, Belinda Levy)
* **Abraham Wolfson**
Minka Wolman Veal (Karina Veal)
Peggy Woolf (Harold Woolf)
Helen Wrublewski (Suanne Adelman, Harry Wrublewski)

Shoah remembrance: Leon Leidner was born in Sambor, Poland in 1866 and lived there until when she was murdered in Molokovo, Russia during the Holocaust.