

CONGREGATION DORSHEI TZEDEK

An Affiliate of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

1326 Washington Street, West Newton, MA 02465 617-965-0330

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Heshvan-Kislev 5762

November 2001



Teachings from the Sukkah

by Rabbi Toba Spitzer

As I began to jot down ideas for this column, I was sitting in my *sukkah* on an unseasonably warm fall day, watching sunlight filtered through cornstalks playing on the cloth walls of my little hut in the backyard. Now it is a week later, Sukkot has ended, and a sense of great instability is in the air as bombs fall over Afghanistan.

Although by the time you read this, events will have gone in directions that I can't foresee at this moment, I'd like to take this space to reflect on some of the questions and challenges that face us in this difficult and strange moment. Although Sukkot is past, there are teachings from the *sukkah* that are worth bringing into these uncertain days.

The *sukkah* is both a structure and a symbol. Just as the *matzah* of Passover incorporates two disparate meanings—as a symbol both of slavery and of liberation—so too does the *sukkah* mean two things at once. On the one hand, the *sukkah* is a vulnerable structure, temporary in time (it's up for just seven days a year) and open to the elements. By living within its open walls and under its porous roof for a week, we are viscerally reminded of the reality of our openness to the world around us. This year, that message comes home to us in painful and complicated ways. Everything in this moment has a fragile quality; it is hard to know where we are heading. A simple plane trip is tinged with anxiety; planning ahead more than a few days seems difficult. Vulnerability has become our common theme. We truly feel the reality of living in a *sukkah*, exposed perhaps in ways that we have not felt before.

Yet the *sukkah* is also a profound symbol of faith and security. As we come out of the intensely reflective period of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—having worked hard to remove those obstacles that keep us from connecting to the Godliness in ourselves, in others, in the world around us—we come into the joyful, open space of the *sukkah*.

The tradition understands the *sukkah* as a space where we are able to enjoy a kind of closeness to divinity that is unique to this time of year. We sit in the *sukkah* knowing that ultimately our security is not provided by walls or a roof, but by a deep and lasting connection to the Source of Life which is the ground of our own being, the Power which connects us to all living beings on the planet.

This teaching I think can be helpful as we move through this difficult time. We have seen the horror that results when, out of fear and uncertainty and desperation, individuals turn towards violence and hate. We are challenged to turn our own fear and uncertainty in more positive, loving directions. We are challenged to ground ourselves in the Godliness that already exists and that is waiting to be discovered in our lives: in loving relationship, in caring for children, in spiritual practice, in attending to the health of our bodies, in doing positive work in the world. We are challenged not to be overcome by anxiety or denial or anger, but rather to remind ourselves each and every day of the blessing of life that is given to us, and to remember that the source of that blessing is good.

On the High Holydays we use the imagery of a "book" that is being written for the new year, a book in which is written our actions and our destiny. A strange new book is being written in 5762, one that feels unfamiliar and unstable and yet may hold new possibilities within it. However small the

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print may seem, the integrity and quality of our daily actions are essential in the writing of this book. May each of us have the courage and wisdom to write with love and caring, with faith in the power of a Godliness that even in these difficult days continues to move through us. And may the Source of peace bring soon to us, and to all inhabitants of the world, peace and blessing and wholeness, the gift of *shalom*.

(with thanks to Halé Baycu Schatz, whose teaching is reflected in these words)

Rabbi Spitzer does not have regular office hours, but is available to talk about any spiritual, religious, or personal issues that you might want to discuss. Please call her directly to make an appointment, at 617-924-6242.

If you missed hearing Rabbi Spitzer's High Holyday talks, or would like to read them again, they are now available on the Dorshei Tzedek website: go to <http://townonline.koz.com/visit/dorsheitzedek>, and click on "Divrei Torah".

Now that the newsletter is published monthly, Rabbi Toba Spitzer's column and the Co-President's column will usually appear in alternate months.

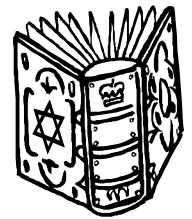
Chesed Committee

The Chesed Committee will now have two functioning sub-committees: Susan Manheim (781-449-2984) will continue to be the point person to contact when members of the community express a need of support in terms of a meal, sick visit, or shiva call. The second part of the Chesed Committee will be focusing on the study of what Chesed (loving kindness) means for our congregation and how much our members want and are able to give. Meetings began last spring to begin looking more closely at Chesed in our community. Our next meeting is on **Sunday, November 4, at 10 am**. If you would like to be part of the discussion of what Chesed means to Congregation Dorshei Tzedek, please contact Lisa Port White (617-924-6326; ldpw@rcn.com).

News from our School

by Cindy Shulak-Rome

Our Dorshei Tzedek Religious School is off to a great start for 5762. It has been a joy to welcome many new students, as well as our returning students. We are blessed to have a terrific staff, including returning teachers Lesley Chapman and Miranda Phillips, and four new staff members who all come to us with previous teaching experience: Amy Leichtner, Meg Berenson, Ilana Blatt-Eisengardt and Liz Offen. We have a total of 95 students in our school and on any Tuesday or Thursday afternoon you'll find the building abuzz with activity. Kitah Vav (6th grade) recently had a classroom debate as to whether we should rewrite the Torah or keep the original Torah, each child in Kitah Gimel (3rd grade) created their own new species of animal, while Kitah Dalet decorated t-shirts in honor of Simchat Torah.



For those of you who are regular attendees at Shabbat morning services, you will notice that our Kitah Aleph and Kitah Bet students (1st and 2nd grade) end their class by joining the congregation for Kiddush. This is an opportunity for the children to begin to get a sense of the larger Dorshei Tzedek community as we come together on Shabbat.

This year we are beginning our first Post B'nei Mitzvah Program. This program is open to students in Grades 8-10 who have had their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The program will be taught by Rabbi Toba and will consist of different mini-courses as well as a few community-building social activities. The mini-courses we are offering this year include "Ethical Debates and Jewish Disagreements", offering the students a chance to study and debate important ethical issues of our day through a Jewish lens, and "Jewish Environmental Action"; an opportunity to combine study and social action in partnership with a Roxbury-based environmental organization.

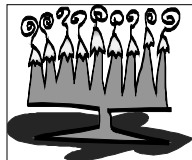
We have not yet found an Education Director to replace Judith Wolfman, but in the meantime I am happy to be serving as Interim Ed Director, and will continue to do so until we hire someone. It is very exciting to work together with this group of teachers and experience first hand the dedication and innovation they bring to their classrooms. Please don't hesitate to call me (617-965-0330 ext. 4) if you have any questions, or if you would like to schedule a visit and see for yourself what is happening at the Dorshei Tzedek Religious School!



Erev Shabbat Family Services



On the first (or so) **Friday** of most months, we welcome Shabbat with a musical, all-ages Erev Shabbat family service, from **6-7 pm** at the Unitarian Society. Mark your calendars: the dates for the year 5762 are **November 2, December 7, January 4, February 1, March 1, April 5, May 10, and June 7.**



Save the Date! Chanukah is Coming Soon!



The always-fabulous Dorshei Tzedek Chanukah Celebration will be held on **Sunday, December 9, 5 - 7 pm**, the first night of Chanukah! Join us for candle-lighting, latkes, and holiday fun for all ages.



B'nei Mitzvah Celebrations



Jack Schiff

We look forward to celebrating Jack's Bar Mitzvah on **Saturday, November 10** with the Dorshei Tzedek community. Jack is the son of Susan Manheim and Andrew Schiff and the brother of Hannah Schiff. Jack is in the seventh grade and his interests include soccer and music. For the past year, he has been an enthusiastic volunteer at Family Table. We hope that you will join us on the 10th.

—Andrew Schiff and Susan Manheim

Julia and Sam Pashall

Julia and Sam Pashall are being called to the Torah on **November 17** (the day after their thirteenth birthday) to mark their B'nei Mitzvah. Ironically, or perhaps meaningfully, this is Shabbat *Toldot*, which tells the story of the twins Esau and Jacob.

Sam Pashall, a seventh grader at Brown Middle School, is a thoughtful, perceptive, fun-loving and very social person who is an avid sports player and fan. He particularly loves playing soccer. With Ben Weiner's attuned guidance and tutoring, Sam has learned a great deal about Judaism. As Sam has prepared to be Bar Mitzvah, his interest in justice, fairness and community service has grown. For his *tikkun olam* project he and some of his Dorshei Tzedek classmates worked with toddlers at the McLaughlin Center in Dorchester.

Julia Pashall, a seventh grader at Brown Middle School, is known for her sense of humor and her keen insight into people and social issues. She enjoys singing and acting. As a member of Dorshei Tzedek's first formal class, Julia has been one of the pioneers at our religious school. For her *tikkun olam* project Julia worked at the McLaughlin Center with her brother. She is also very interested in helping abused children.

The centerpieces from Sam and Julia's party will be donated to Transition House, a shelter in Cambridge.

—Ellen Pashall

Todah Rabah

A very big *todah rabah*, thank you, to all the Dorshei Tzedek members who helped make our High Holy Days this year run so smoothly and wonderfully.

First and foremost, to our magnificent coordinators, Cliff Cohen and Lissy Medvedow. Many thanks to Barbara and Jerry Zolit and Emily Saltz for coordinating the food; to Abby Cohen, Theresa St. John-Siegel, and Laurie Gould for coordinating the children's programming; to Elaine Pollack, Kelli Kirshtein, Matilda Bruckner and all the other members of the Ritual committee for their help coordinating services; to all the Torah and Haftarah readers; to all those who helped lead services—Miranda Phillips; Judy and Chayim Herzig-Marx, Dan Rome, Elana Rome, Karen Arnold, Elaine Pollack, Amy Goldsmith, Rebecca Holohan, Zach Rubin-Rattet, Hannah Epstein, Rose Friedman, and Zach Demuth; to Louise Enoch for the beautiful flowers; to Ellen Pashall and Clifford Goldsmith for coordinating set-up and ushering (and to all of our Board members for ushering and greeting); to Roberta Carson and Meryl Kahn for publicity; to all those who helped with set-up and clean-up (our apologies if we've missed anyone!): Mark Bronstein, Stan and Jackie Fleischman, Alan Epstein, Ira Fader, Jeff Fortgang, Rob Greenly, Carolyn Fine Friedman, Nancy Blumberg, Melanie Forman, Janet Boguslaw, Paul Hattis, Michael Cohen, John Holohan, Steven Ansolabehere, Amy Mazur, Stacey Chacker, David Pincus, and Laura Willis; and to all the parents who put in some time in child care.

Running and organizing our High Holy Days services is a huge task, and it only happens with the efforts of many—so thanks to everyone who pitched in and made these days so successful!

Naming Ceremonies

Please join us at Shabbat morning services, **November 3, at 9:45 am**, as we give Abram, son of Judith Wine and Aileen Cronin, his Hebrew name and officially welcome him to the community.



On **December 8** at Shabbat morning services, we will give Sowmya, daughter of Susan Hart, her Hebrew name. Please join us for the celebration!

Chanting and Meditation Service

The first Chanting and Meditation service of 5762 will be held on **Shabbat morning, December 15, at 9:45 am**. Please join us for this contemplative service that combines singing, silence, and Torah study (no meditation experience necessary!).

שלום Membership

Welcome to our new members

Andrew and Katherine Shi and their mother **Donna Webber** joined Dorshei Tzedek this summer. Donna has lived in Boston for over 20 years, having lived previously in Providence, NYC and Montreal. Her husband, Daniel Shi, was born in Anshan, China and has lived in the US since 1987. Donna is the Manuscripts Librarian in the Rare Books and Special Collections department of the Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Daniel is a Systems Administrator at Solidworks in Concord. Andy is a third grader and Katie just began kindergarten at Burr Elementary. Andy has been attending school at Dorshei Tzedek and the family has participated in many holiday celebrations, so although they are new members they feel part of the community.

They look forward to being more involved in other aspects of life in the congregation.

Share Your Sight: Did you know that your eyesight can be as valuable to others as it is for you? VISION Community Services, at the Massachusetts Association for the Blind, needs volunteers to read or shop with a blind neighbor, to help that person maintain independence. Two or three hours per week and a desire to help is all you need; hours are flexible. We'll provide the training and support. Opportunities are available throughout most of Massachusetts. To get started in your community, call Donna Bailey at 1-800-852-3029, or visit our volunteer page at www.mablind.org.



November Calendar



Reminder: Members' Meeting

Please mark your calendars for **Sunday evening, November 4, 7:15 pm**, for the first Members' Meeting of the year. Every household is encouraged to send at least one representative to this important meeting. We will devote most of the meeting to the topic of space, including results of the parlor meetings. We will discuss short-term (next two years) and longer-term options.

Date	Time	Event	Setup/Cleanup and Notes
Fri Nov 2	6 - 7 pm	Erev Shabbat Family Service (see page 3)	Carol Sklar, Peter Hess
Sat Nov 3	9:45 am	Shabbat Morning Services <i>Wine/Cronin naming ceremony</i> (see page 4)	Ricky Greenly, Michael Kajen
Sat Nov 3	10 am - 12 noon	Kitah Alef and Kitah Bet Classes	
Sun Nov 4	10 am - 12 noon	Chesed Study Group (see page 2)	<i>At the home of Lisa Port White</i>
Sun Nov 4	2 - 4 pm	Gan Family Program	
Sun Nov 4	7:15 pm	Member's Meeting	David Felson, Ami Gordon, Elaine Landes
Tue Nov 6	7:45 - 9:15 pm	Adult Ed: Introduction to Reconstructionism	(see page 7)
Wed Nov 7	6 - 8:30 pm	Post B'nei Mitzvah Class	
Sat Nov 10	8:45 - 9:45 am	Adult Ed: Torah Study	(see page 7)
Sat Nov 10	9:45 am - 1 pm	Bar Mitzvah of Jack Schiff (see page 3)	Debbie Sher, Tessa Goldsmith
Tue Nov 13	7:45 - 9:15 pm	Adult Ed: Introduction To Reconstructionism	(see page 7)
Wed Nov 14	6 - 8:30 pm	Post B'nei Mitzvah Class	
Fri Nov 16	6 - 8 pm	Kitah Dalet Shabbat Seder	
Sat Nov 17	9:45 am - 1 pm	Bar/Bat Mitzvah of Sam and Julia Pashall (see page 3)	Ora Gladstone, Linette Liebling
Sat Nov 17	10 am - 12 noon	Kitot Alef Family Education Kitah Bet Classes	
Sun Nov 18	2 - 4 pm	Kitah Gimel Family Education	
Tue Nov 20	7:45 - 9:15 pm	Adult Ed: Introduction To Reconstructionism	(see page 7)
Thu Nov 22		<i>No School (Thanksgiving)</i>	
Sat Nov 24 *	9:45 am	Shabbat Morning Services	Beth Green, Dinah Moeller, Jeff Sacks
Wed Nov 28	6 - 8:30 pm	Post B'nei Mitzvah Class	
Fri Nov 30	6 - 8 pm	Kitah Gimel Shabbat Seder	

Events and services are held at the Unitarian Universalist Society, 1326 Washington Street, West Newton, unless otherwise noted. An asterisk (*) denotes Rabbi Spitzer's weekend off. Free child care is available during Shabbat morning



December Calendar



Please check the December newsletter when it arrives for changes and additions to this schedule.

Date	Time	Event	Setup/Cleanup and Notes
Sat Dec 1	9:45 am	Shabbat Morning Services (Today only, at Room 111, Second Church, 60 Highland Street, just up and across the street from the Unitarian Society. Childcare will be	Tom Kuh, Meryl Kahn, Jeff Katz, Jonathan Kahn-Leavitt
Sat Dec 1	10 am - 12 noon	Kitah Alef and Kitah Bet Classes	
Sun Dec 2	2 - 4 pm	Kitah Gan Family Program (Room 111, Second Church)	
Sun Dec 2	2 - 4 pm	Kitah Vav Family Education	
Tue Dec 4		No School—Staff in-service training	
Wed Dec 5	6 - 8:30 pm	Post B'nei Mitzvah Class	
Fri Dec 7	6 - 7 pm	Erev Shabbat Family Service	Hope Kellman, Kathy Pillsbury
Sat Dec 8	8:45 – 9:45 am	Adult Education: Torah Study	(see page 7)
Sat Dec 8	9:45 am	Shabbat Morning Services <i>Hart naming ceremony (see page 4)</i>	Steve Leonard, Esther Kohn
Sat Dec 8	10 am - 12 noon	Kitah Bet Family Education	
Sun Dec 9	5 - 7 pm	Chanukah Party <i>First night of Chanukah</i>	Laura Katz, Howard Kaufman, Sally Kolodkin, Sherwood Ives, Susan Nitkin, Joan LaBrecque, Susan Manheim, Phyllis Sandell
Wed Dec 12	6 - 8:30 pm	Post B'nei Mitzvah Class	
Sat Dec 15	9:45 am	Chanting and Meditation Service	Lisa Samelson, Theresa St. John- Siegel
Sat Dec 15	10 am – 12 noon	Kitah Alef and Kitah Bet Classes	
Wed Dec 19	6 - 8:30 pm	Post B'nei Mitzvah Class	
Sat Dec 22	9:45 am	Shabbat Morning Services	Jodi Sugerman-Brozan, Jill Volk, Judith Wine
Tue Dec 25		No School (Winter Break)	
Thu Dec 27		No School (Winter Break)	
Sat Dec 29 *	9:45 am	Shabbat Morning Services	Karobi Sachs, Gail Leicher, Brian O'Connell

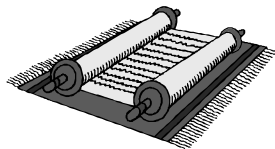
Adult Education

Shabbat Morning Study with Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Saturday mornings, 8:45-9:40 am
at the Unitarian Society, West Newton

Fall/Winter Dates: November 10, December 8,
January 5, February 9, March 16

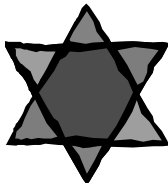
In our Shabbat morning study this year, we will explore the weekly Torah portion with the help of a variety of commentators, ancient and modern, including rabbinic midrash, the medieval commentator Rashi, Hassidic interpretations, and modern feminist insights. All texts will be provided in English translation, and no previous experience with text study is necessary! A pre-reading of the week's Torah portion is helpful but not required. Bring your own coffee/tea and join us for this early morning prelude to the Shabbat service! (no fee)



Introduction to Reconstructionist Judaism with Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Tuesday evenings, November 6, 13, and 20
7:45 – 9:15 pm

at the Unitarian Society, West Newton



Happy to belong to a Reconstructionist congregation, but wondering what this movement is all about? Interested in exploring Judaism from a Reconstructionist approach? This is the class for you! We will explore the thoughts of Mordecai Kaplan, founder of Reconstructionism, and discuss Reconstructionist approaches to key issues of living as a Jew: how we understand and talk about God, the Reconstructionist rejection of "chosen-ness," and the "reconstruction" of Jewish liturgy and ritual. Free for members; \$10/class for non-members (\$25 for entire series).

Contributions General Fund

Ruth and Aaron Seidman

In honor of our new grandson, Edward "Teddy" Rudolph Seidman, son of Ilana Mainelli and Dan Seidman

Leo and Karin Sprecher

Tessa and Clifford Goldsmith

In memory of Clifford's grandfather, Ron Nailand

In honor of Chayim Herzig-Marx's birthday

In honor of Mark Farber's birthday

Gladys and Harold Jacober

In honor of Nancy Gertz, with wishes for a good health and a new year

Matilda and Edward Bruckner

Phyllis and David Farber

In thanks for the valuable effect Dorshei Tzedek has on the lives of our family—Mark Farber, Sherry Katz, Nate, and Jake

Kelli Kirshtein and Wendy Angus

in appreciation of the Dorshei Tzedek community for the warm welcome given our son, Benjamin

Holy Book Fund

Steffi and Eric Karp

In honor of all the new babies

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Barbara and Sheldon Magaliff

Mazel Tov

Mazel tov to Karen Wasserman and Betsy Hinden on the birth of Henry Micah, with many wishes for his continued healing.

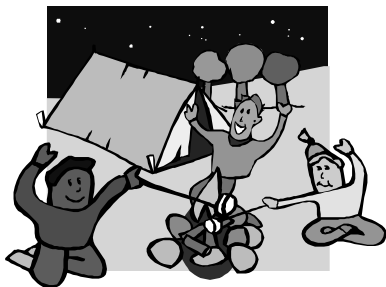
Mazel tov to our most recent b'not mitzvah—Stella Rose Isaacs, Anna Bresnick and Anna Kahn-Leavitt—and to their families!

Mazel tov to new members Marc Steinberg and Linda Hsu on the birth of Hannah, who came into the world on

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JRF Summer Camp



The summer of 2002 will be a first for the JRF Summer Camp. The camp will be open to students in 5th, 6th, and 7th grades, and will be located on the campus of Camp Henry Horner in Ingleside, Illinois.

While a long way from Boston, it promises to be an exciting and innovative program: a unique opportunity to spend a summer in a Jewish Reconstructionist environment learning and living the values that Reconstructionism promotes. Many of us know first-hand that a great Jewish camp experience has no equal when it comes to solidifying connections to Judaism.

We have copies of the camp brochure in the office, or you can find more info on the JRF website, www.jrf.org. Try the idea on for size!

JRF Northeast Shabbaton

It's not too late to register for the Northeast Regional Shabbaton, **November 9-11** at Camp Isabella Freedman in the Berkshires. Discover Reconstructionist life outside of Dorshei Tzedek! The regional Shabbaton is a wonderful weekend of study, celebration, and prayer with Reconstructionist rabbis and congregants from throughout the Northeast. If you are interested in attending, please contact JRF-NY (212-870-2483 or www.jrf.org).



Turkey Tzedakah Drive

Family Table, Greater Boston's Jewish Food Pantry, is seeking donations to help provide needy Jewish families in the Boston area with a meaningful Thanksgiving celebration. Family Table is asking for tax-deductible contributions of \$18 by **November 10** to "Family Table," c/o Congregation Kehillat Israel, 384 Harvard Street, Brookline MA 02446. Recipient families will receive a food voucher for a kosher turkey and fixings prior to the holiday. If you would like to volunteer on one of Family Table's distribution days, please call (our very own!) Barbara Zolit at 617-566-0333.