

Rabbi Sholom Mimran dortikvah.org/rabbi

Contact info Office: 843-410-5989 rabbi@dortikvah.org

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Is The Seder Time Wrong?

I think we have all been celebrating the Seder nights at the wrong time! If we travel back 3335 years to the first Seder night during the exodus year, we were not yet actually free.

We were freed after the plague of the firstborns, i.e. right after חצות – midnight,

which also happens to be the exact time we are particular to finish the core of our Seder by. We actually only left at dawn, at which time even the five great Tannaim we read about in the Haggadah finished discussing the exodus story.

This seems paradoxical. At the Seder we are obligated to lean and drink four cups of wine to demonstrate חירות – freedom. Meanwhile, at this time during the actual liberation year, we hadn't left Egypt and weren't even freed yet. This would be like Americans celebrating their victory over the British (③) on the 3rd of July rather than the 4th when actually declared independence!?

The profound message we learn (based on Maharal) is that, in the hours leading up to them being freed, our ancestors were prepared spiritually for the nissim that were about to occur. A nation that had been enslaved for 210 years had taken the Egyptian idol, tied it to their bedposts before then slaughtering it and putting the blood publicly on their doorposts.

Moreover, if the seder were after the redemption, it would merely be commemorative when, in fact, we are instructed to relive it, as we say at the end of the Haggadah, 'In every generation, one must see oneself as though they personally left Egypt'. What we are really doing is re-enacting the experience, one which will hopefully give us inspiration for the entire year.

Wishing you all a Kosher and joyous Passover,

Sholom S. Mimran

Shabbat Times

TZAV (Shabbat HaGadol)

FRIDAY MARCH 31

6:50pm - Mincha/Maariv 7:21pm - Candle Lighting

SATURDAY APRIL 1

9:00am - Shacharit

6:55pm - Mincha/S"SH

8:18pm - Maariv/Havdalah

CHOL HAMOED PESACH

FRIDAY APRIL 7

6:10pm - Mincha/Maariv

7:26pm - Candle Lighting

SATURDAY APRIL 8

9:00am - Shacharit

7:00pm - Mincha/S"SH

8:23pm - Maariv/Havdalah

SHMINI (Shabbat Mevarchim)

FRIDAY APRIL 14

7:00pm - Mincha/Maariv

7:31pm - Candle Lighting

SATURDAY APRIL 15

9:00am - Shacharit

7:05pm - Mincha/S"SH

8:28pm - Maariv/Havdalah

TAZRIA-METZORA

FRIDAY APRIL 21

7:00pm - Mincha/Maariv

7:31pm - Candle Lighting

SATURDAY APRIL 22

9:00am - Shacharit

7:05pm - Mincha/S"SH

8:34pm - Maariv/Havdalah

ACHREI MOT-KEDOSHIM

FRIDAY APRIL 28

7:10pm - Mincha/Maariv

7:41pm - Candle Lighting

SATURDAY APRIL 29

9:00am - Shacharit

7:15pm - Mincha/S"SH

8:40pm - Maariv/Havdalah

APRIL 2023 CALENDAR

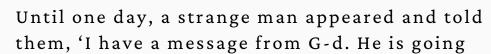
| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | | 3/31 7:00a Shacharit 12:00p Daf Yomi 6:50p Erev Shabbat Mincha | 1 9:00a Shacharit 12:00p Daf Yomi 6:55p Mincha 8:18p Maariv |
| 2 8:30a Shacharit 10:00a Pre- Pesach Kashering 6:10p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | 3 7:00a Shacharit 6:10p Mincha & Maariv 7:30p Hebrew Course 8:30p Daf Yomi | 4 7:00a Shacharit 6:10p Mincha & Maariv 8:19p Bedikat Chametz | 5 EREV PESACH Taanit Bechorot 7:00a Shacharit & Siyum 10:00a Chametz Sale & Burn 7:25p Mincha / Maariv / Candle Lighting 8:20p Seder Begins | 6 PESACH 9:30a Shacharit 7:25p Mincha / Yom Tov Class 8:00p Maariv 8:21p Candle Lighting 8:30p Communal Seder | 7 PESACH Omer 1 9:30a Shacharit 6:10p Erev Shabbat Mincha 7:26p Candle Lighting | 8 C'H Pesach Omer 2 9:00a Shacharit 12:00p Daf Yomi 7:00p Mincha 8:23p Maariv |
| 9 C'H Pesach Omer 3 8:30a Shacharit 6:10p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | 10 C'H Pesach Omer 4 7:00a Shacharit 6:10p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | 11 C'H Pesach Omer 5 7:00a Shacharit 7:00p Mincha / Yom Tov Maariv 7:29p Candle Lighting | 12 PESACH Omer 6 9:00a Shacharit 6:10p Mincha & Maariv 8:25p Candle Lighting | 13 PESACH Omer 7 9:00a Shacharit / Yizkor 7:30p Mincha / Closing Class 8:27 Maariv | 14 Omer 8 7:00a Shacharit 12:00p Daf Yomi 7:00p Erev Shabbat Mincha 7:31p Candle Lighting | 15 Shabbat Mevarchim Omer 9 9:00a Shacharit 10:00a TOT Shabbat 6:35p Tehilim Class 7:05p Mincha 8:28p Maariv |
| 16 Omer 10 8:30a Shacharit 9:30a Family Day Trip 6:15p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | 17 Omer 11 7:00a Shacharit 6:15p Mincha & Maariv 7:30p Hebrew Course 8:30p Daf Yomi | 18 YOM HASHOAH Omer 12 7:00a Shacharit 6:15p Mincha & Maariv 7:30p Prayer Study 8:30p Daf Yomi | 19 Omer 13 7:00a Shacharit 6:15p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | 20 Omer 14 7:00a Shacharit 6:15p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | 21 Rosh Chodesh Omer 15 6:45a Shacharit 12:00p Daf Yomi 7:05p Erev Shabbat Mincha 7:16p Candle Lighting 8:00p Friday Night Dinner | 22 Omer 16 9:00a Shacharit 12:00p Daf Yomi 6:40p Tehilim Class 7:10p Mincha 8:34p Maariv |
| 23 Omer 17 8:30a Shacharit 6:20p Mincha & Maariv 6:20p Ladies' Lounge 8:30p Daf Yomi | 24 Omer 18 7:00a Shacharit 6:20p Mincha & Maariv 7:30p Hebrew Course 8:30p Daf Yomi | 7:00a Shacharit 6:20p Mincha & Maariv 7:30p Prayer Study 8:30p Daf Yomi | 26 YOM HA'ATZMAUT Omer 20 7:00a Shacharit 4:00p Yom HaAtzmaut BBQ 6:20p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | 27 Omer 21 7:00a Shacharit 6:20p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | 28 Omer 22 7:00a Shacharit 12:00p Daf Yomi 7:10p Erev Shabbat Mincha 7:41p Candle Lighting | 29 Omer 23 9:00a Shacharit 12:00p Daf Yomi 6:45p Tehilim Class 7:15p Mincha 8:40p Maariv |
| 30 Omer 24 8:30a Shacharit 6:25p Mincha & Maariv 8:30p Daf Yomi | | | | | | |

MONTHLY MUSINGS

dortikvah.org/rebbetzins-blog

Nissan: Hold your Head High Zahava Mimran

Long ago, a nation of princes was enslaved. Employed in backbreaking labor and subjugated with harsh abuse, beatings, and even deaths, they were forced to build cities and serve their captors. Day after day, year after year the oppression grew upon them, until they no longer recalled their lofty roots.





to free you from this country amidst many wonders and miracles. And then He's going to give you the land that He promised to your fathers.' Yet they couldn't hear him through their sorrow and suffering.

But then lo and behold, miracles did occur. The river turned to blood, frogs exploded everywhere, and the Jewish nation realized that there was indeed an all-powerful G-d, who loved them and would take them out. And so He did, after one last dreadful plague where every eldest son in Egypt died.

Finally, after these awe-inspiring miracles, the Jews left Egypt. They set out through the desert to receive the Torah and reach their promised land, and these former battered slaves now held their heads up with pride. They knew that they had a G-d who would do anything for them, even split the sea if need be, and they accepted His reign over them. They were a nation born.

And indeed, this month of Nissan which always occurs in the spring is one of growth and rebirth. It is the first month in our counting of the months of the year, and it signifies the birth of our nation as believers in G-d. This Emunah – belief - that the Jews acquired throughout the redemption is what formed them into the Jewish nation and what readied them to follow G-d's every word and commandment.

For at the beginning of everything is Emuna. It's the first step to leading a Jewish life and it's based on the fact that we saw the miracles that G-d did for us in Egypt and His revelation to us at Mount Sinai. It's a belief so strong that we were ready to follow G-d faithfully around the desert for forty years and accept every word of His Torah without questioning, because we know that He is there.



As we know, the zodiac symbol of the month of Nissan is a lamb, and it is also a lamb that we are commanded to bring as a Passover sacrifice. Although we associate sheep with being passive followers, it seems that they have reason to be so. Sheep know that they have a shepherd who looks after them and they trust him. They know that they are better off when they follow their shepherd who feeds them and gives them to drink and wards off the wolf who lurks in the shadows.

We too have a shepherd who watches over us constantly. King David wrote in true beautiful simplicity, 'Hashem Roi Lo Echsar' – 'G-d is my shepherd and I will not want.' He continues with the beautiful words, 'Gam ki elech begei tzalmavet lo irah ra ki atta imadi.' 'Therefore, even when I walk through the valley of deepest shadows I will not fear evil because You are with me.'

It is not a passive, easy act to follow G-d and accept His leadership upon yourself. In fact, it takes great courage, determination, and perseverance in the face of a world which is telling you to just let it go. To relinquish control of your life and hand over the reins to a higher power. Yet when we draw upon our belief in G-d and His might, and the miracles He has performed for us so many times throughout our history, we can rely on this faith to pull us through.

Nissan is therefore the month of belief, a month of establishing our faith in our G-d and then acting upon it. There are so many Jews who are otherwise secular yet they still hark back to Pesach, year after year. Because in their hearts, they still carry that belief in G-d. And perhaps this is why it is on Pesach that we have the specific mitzvah of telling our children about the slavery in Egypt and of passing down our legacy. Because when you believe it until it hurts, then you will pass it on to your children. You will care enough to instill it into their hearts, and to make sure that they too follow their shepherd.

This Pesach as we celebrate our freedom, let us remember; We've chosen our G-d, we've seen His miracles and we've accepted His Torah. Now let's hold up our heads and be proud of it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DOR TIKVAH GALLERY

Click the ALBUMS to see the photos and videos from last month's events.
See the Photo of the Month at the end of the newsletter!

Check out the albums for all of our recent events on our Gallery page at dortikvah.org/gallery

If you have pictures you would like to share, email them to info@dortikvah.org.





EREV SHABBAT UPDATE

We have a new time for Friday Mincha / Kabbalat Shabbat / Maariv. Read Rabbi Mimran's Halachic Responsa about this **HERE**.

BIRKAT HA'ILANOT Blessing for Blossoming Trees



We make a special blessing for trees blossoming in the month of Nissan.

The text of the Beracha is <u>HERE</u> and can currently be made in the Goldberg Memorial Courtyard at Dor Tikvah.



Mezuzot are available for purchase, including a limited number of hand-crafted mezuzot by Marvin Katzen. If interested, contact info@dortikvah.org



We still have some opportunities available for sponsorship and dedication.

Contact David for details at dmr964@yahoo.com



PESACH



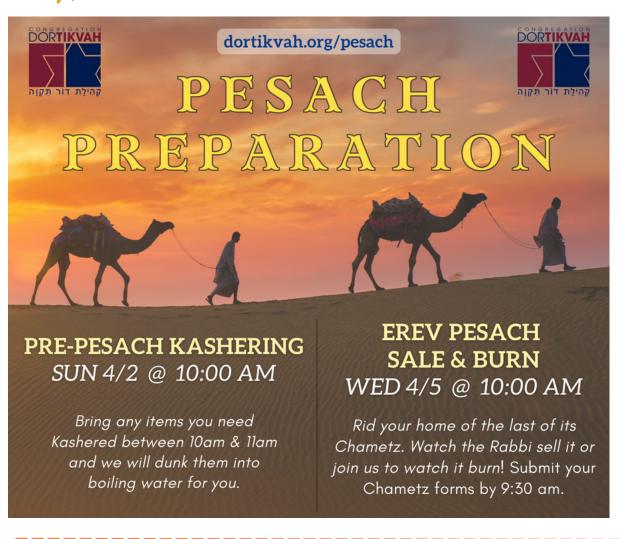
Passover is here and Dor Tikvah has all the resources and opportunities to celebrate to the fullest!

GET THE FULL SCHEDULE AND EVERYTHING ELSE

YOU NEED AT

dortikvah.org/pesach

PRINT FULL SCHEDULE HERE



There's always so much to do before Passover starts! We are here to help you get your home ready. Bring us your utensils to Kasher, your Chametz to burn, and your POA Forms to sell.



CHAMETZ SALE FORMS

are easily available ONLINE at dortikvah.org/chametz

Due by Wednesday, April 5 @ 9:30 AM

SUBMIT ONLINE FORM

MA'OT CHITIM - WHEAT MONEY

It's a widespread custom to give money (Kimcha D'Pischa) to help the less fortunate have provisions for Pesach. **DONATE ONLINE** to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. The money will be distributed to locals in need (עניי עירך).





PESACH



SHMURAH MATZAH PICKUP

For those who ordered Matzah through Dor Tikvah, orders are now available during open office pickup or after Minyan.

Pickup at the Dor Tikvah Office is open Fri. March 31st and Mon. April 3rd 9am - 3pm. Please make sure to collect as you ordered. If there are any issues or questions, call Rabbi Mimran's office at 843-410-5989



OU PASSOVER GUIDE

DORTIKVAH

Grab your copy at Dor Tikvah.

Everyone in your home want their own? Be greedy - they're free!

The OU Guide has halachic times, Kosher products, articles, FAQs, and more. See more guides and resources on our <u>Pesach Page</u>



PESACH MADE EASY CLASS

There's still time to watch Rabbi Mimran's Pesach Crash Course! <u>CLICK HERE</u>



PESACH



KOSHER NOTICE

The only local catering under the supervision of the Vaad HaKashrut in Charleston (Kosher Commission of Charleston) over Pesach is <u>Dining In Inc.</u>

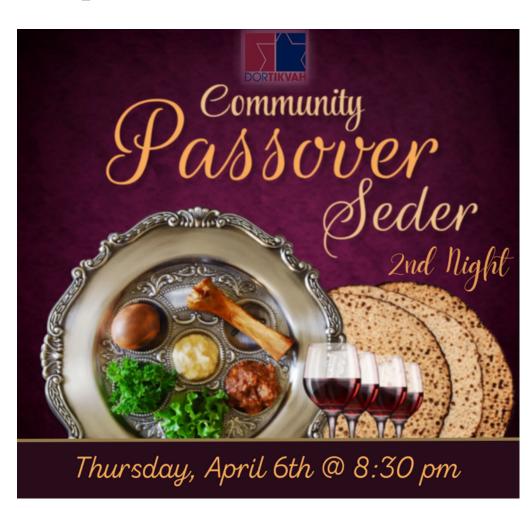




COMMUNITY 2ND NIGHT SEDER Thursday, April 6 @ 8:30 pm

"All who are hungry, come and eat; all who are needy come and celebrate Passover."

Are you still looking for a 2nd Night Seder? We still have a couple of seats left at our tables. Contact rabbi@dortikvah.org for details.



KOSHER COOKING

with Susan Weintrob

A Seder Side: Roasted Vegetables







Roasted vegetables are one of the best ways to eat veggies. Even vegetables you may not like are transformed when grilled or roasted, bringing out a natural sweetness that is so delicious. The roasted vegetables can be served with almost any protein: grilled, roasted or baked beef, chicken or other poultry, fish, and with almost any grain for Sepharadim, quinoa for Ashkenazim. Make as many or as little as you like. Make many varied vegetables, as I did here, or choose a few. If you need to reheat to serve, crisp the veggies in the oven rather than microwave to keep the same texture. Make extra—I nibbled as I took the veggies out of the oven!! So good! A great and attractive side dish or first course for a Seder or any meal of Passover.

PRO TIPS:

Herbs: I used rosemary, which wintered over in my herb garden. Try thyme, basil, sage, parsley or a combination of your favorite herbs. If you don't have fresh, use dried.

Kosher for Passover: Omit green beans if you follow Ashkenazi traditions.

Other veggies: Almost any vegetable can be roasted. Here are a few examples: asparagus, broccoli, butternut or acorn squash, cauliflower, fennel, mushrooms, okra, parsnips, radishes, rutabaga, shallots, sweet potatoes, turnips. There are roasting time charts on-line, which are helpful in determining cooking times and which veggies to put together on a cooking tray.



expandthetable.net/ roasted-vegetables

More great and kosher recipes on <u>expandthetable.net</u> Happy cooking!

YOUTH EVENTS & PROGRAMS

TOT SHABBAT!

Ages 3-12 pray, play, sing, snack, and win exciting prizes at our monthly TOT SHABBAT!

May 20th June 17th August 12th **April 15th**

Children hold a special place in our hearts here at Dor Tikvah.

Our youth program continues to grow and strengthen, just like your kids. See more on **Dor Tikvah Youth**. #DTYouth

Get your kids involved by contacting youth@dortikvah.org



Join us for playing, learning, and Kiddush.

Every Shabbat morning @ 10 am.

Babysitting starts at 9 am.

While the adults are in services, the kids have fun with friends and our Dor Tikvah Youth leaders, playing games, singing songs, and learning through creative projects.

שַבַּת שַלוֹם

Help Upgrade Our Youth Rooms!



If you have any items you think may be useful or fun in invigorating our youth rooms, please contact Avi Monderer, at youth@dortikvah.org





Tickets are available again until April 11th!

Journey with us on a convoy to Riverbanks Zoo for a wildlife family fun day with a picnic lunch from Dining In!

Get tickets and details at dortikvah.org/zoo

JOIN THE ADVENTURE

Thank you to Southern NSCY for partnering with us on our past and future events.



Dor Tikvah Youth programming is funded in part by support from the Charleston Jewish Federation and the Annual Community Campaign.



EVENTS & PROGRAMS

FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER - YOM HA'ATZMAUT



A delicious meal with Israeli flair! Join us for this Pre-Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration!

For questions, contact Rabbi Mimran at rabbi@dortikvah.org

ADULTS - \$25.00 KIDS - \$12.50 3 & UNDER - FREE FAMILY - \$60.00 SPONSOR - \$139.00 Friday, April 21 @ 8:00 pm

Join us for a delicious meal with Israeli flair, plus great company at our pre-Yom HaAtzmaut celebration!

GET TICKETS NOW

RSVP BY TUES. APRIL 18TH

RSVP by April 18th at dortikvah.org/FND



THE LADIES' LOUNGE: SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, April 23 @ 6:30 pm

Join us each month as we experience new things whilst learning about ourselves and one another. Join the FACEBOOK GROUP to RSVP to events and get more details.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT BBQ

Wednesday, April 26

@ 4:00 pm

Save the date! Celebrate Israel Independence Day with the entire community at this fun and free event!



EVENTS & PROGRAMS

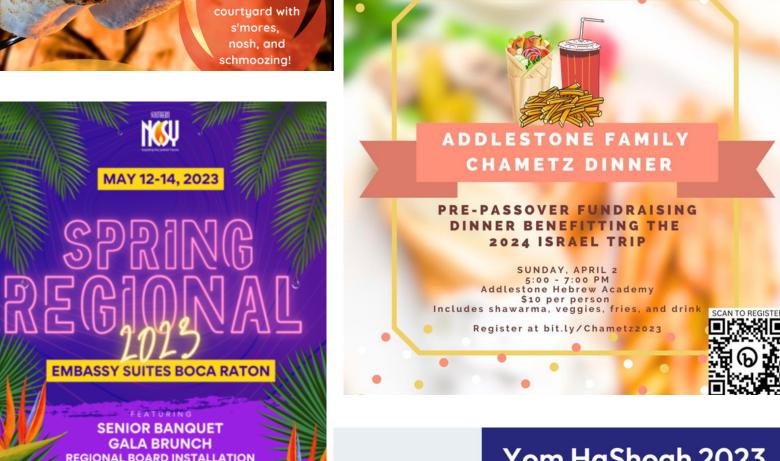


LAG B'ONFIRE

Monday, May 8 @ 8:00 pm

Celebrate Lag B'Omer by getting cozy by the bonfire in the Dor Tikvah Courtyard!

IN THE COMMUNITY







Yom HaShoah 2023

THROUGH THEIR VOICES: STORIES OF SURVIVAL CARRIED ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

April 23, 2023 at 2 PM Charleston Gaillard Center 95 Calhoun Street Charleston, SC 29401

Please join the Charleston Jewish Federations REMEMBER Program for the annual Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance Program with Keynote speaker Harry Schneider, a Holocaust survivor.

If you have any questions please reach out to remember@jewishcharleston.org

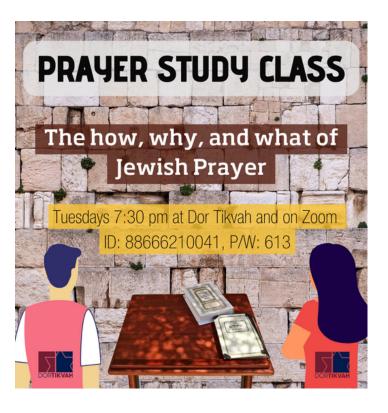
tinyurl.com/yomhashoah23

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

We have regular opportunities for all ages and types to connect spiritually, master prayer, learn Hebrew, or explore our heritage.

WEEKLY CLASSES





SHABBAT MEVARCHIM IYYAR

SHMINI

Friday, April 15th

7:00p - Mincha / Kabbalat Shabbat / Maariv

Saturday, April 19th

9:00a - Shacharit 9:45a - TOT Shabbat



11:30a - Enhanced Kiddush



12:00p - Daf Yomi 6:35p - Tehilim Class



7:05p - Mincha / Seuda Shelishit 8:28p - Count Omer 8:28p - Maariv / Havdalah

DAF YOMI

Sun - Thur @ 8:30 pm, Fri @ 12:00pm - Zoom: bit.ly/CHSdafyomi Shabbat @ 12:00 pm - The Gilston Chapel

With Rabbi Sholom Mimran & Dr. Joe Rubin

APRIL LIFE CYCLES

Birthdays

- 3 Linda Kirshstein
 - 3 Ryan Barger
 - 4- Robert Barger
 - 4- Wade Manaker
- 11 Peter Rosenthal
- 14- Ben-Zion Bronshtein
 - 15 Dina Schager
- 17 Karen Elena Rubin Jaffe
 - 19 Nechama Alon
 - 30 Charles Steinert

To ensure acknowledgment of your family's yahrzeits, birthdays, and anniversaries, please make sure those sections of your Shulcloud account are completed and up-to-date. Manage your account at dortikvah.org/member

Yahrzeits

3 - Bruce Korenthal

Brother of Linda Gilston

5 - Joseph Chase

Brother-in-Law of Leah Chase

11 - Otto Kramer

Father of Edward Kramer

12 - Jacque Kerbel

Friend of Nathan Kirshstein

13 - Harriet Jacobson Manaker

Mother of Wade Manaker

15 - Esther Toledano

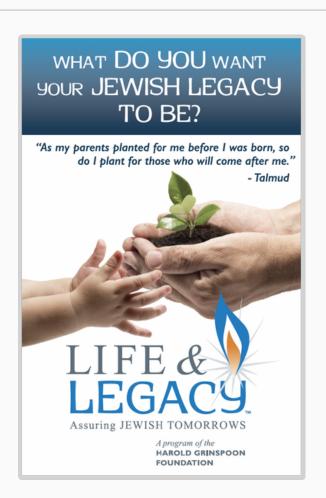
Mother of Penny Bronshtein

17 - Isaac Solomon Oberman

Grandfather of Marvin Katzen

25 - Julius Moses Katzen

Father of Marvin Katzen





Dor Tikvah benefits from an annual allocation from the Charleston Community Campaign to support our YOUTH program. Pledging or giving to the Campaign helps provide our community with the resources needed here at home, in Israel, and wherever help is needed most. Give now or pledge here.

SPONSORSHIPS

April Kiddush

4/1 - Rick Shecter

In celebration of last month's Simchas of Rick's birthday and granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah

4/6 (Pesach I) - Available 4/13 (Pesach VIII) - Available

4/7 (Pesach II) - Available 4/15 - Available

4/8 (Ch"H Pesach) - Available 4/22 - Available

4/12 (Pesach VII) - Available 4/29 - Available

Sunday Shacharit

Thank you to Ari & Rachel Volk for sponsoring Sunday Donuts for the year in honor of the Dor Tikvah community!

Honor a meaningful event or special person in your life by sponsoring a kiddush or Sunday refreshments. **If interested, contact info@dortikvah.org.**Thank you for your support!

Enhanced Kiddushes are every Shabbat Mevarchim. Sponsorships listed in gold are Enhanced Kiddushes.

March Kiddush

3/4 - Linda Scheer

Happy 60th to me!!

3/11 - The Cappell Family

In honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Aviva Cappell.

3/18 - Leah Chase

In memory of her beloved husband, Philip H. Chase at yahrzeit time.

3/25 - Sarah-Rachel Sribnick

In honor of her parents, Marian & Greg Yarus.

MARCH TZEDAKAH

Thank you to our generous donors this past month! We appreciate all of your contributions!

Contributions to Dor Tikvah can be made at <u>dortikvah.org/donate</u> or by mail to 1645 Raoul Wallenberg Blvd., Charleston, SC 29407

Thank you for your support! Donations of \$10 + will be acknowledged in all of our newsletters.

In Appreciation

Ron Cohen

of a warm and welcoming Shabbos!

In Honor

Lori & Slade Gleaton

of Linda Scheer's special birthday

Judi & Ted Corsaro

of Rabbi & Zahava Mimran

Linda Scheer

of Marcie Rosenberg

Marian & Greg Yarus

of Marcie Rosenberg's role in NYBS

Susan Weintrob

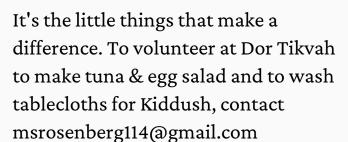
of Aviva Cappell's Bat Mitzvah

Leah Chase

of Aviva Cappell's Bat Mitzvah

Donate

Lend a hand!



<u>General</u>

Nir Shalit

Penny & Ben-Zion Bronshtein

Shabbos House

Francine Cappell

In Memory

Linda & David Gilston

of Linda's mother, Bernice Salowe at yahrzeit time

of Linda's brother, Bruce Richard Korenthal at yahrzeit time

TREE OF LIFE





Our Tree is growing beautifully!
Easily purchase your own leaf or
branch sponsorships with our
online form at dortikvah.org/TOL



Or you can fill out

THIS FORM and return it to Dor

Tikvah.

REFUAH SHLEMA

- Alexsandra bat Gavrielle
- Aspen Moshe Carmona
- Avigdor Shlomo ben Chaya Roiza
- Binyamin Selman
- Chana Leah bat Miriam
- Dovid ben Heiman
- Elimelekh Daniel ben Raziel
- Esther bat Alitza
- Hodel bat Raozel
- Joyce Williams
- Linda H. Milligan
- Michaela Ester bat Kayla Devora
- Mordechai Nathan ben Simcha
- Nachama Chana bat Tzippira Rachel
- Pamela Hoffman
- Refael ben Ita Faigel
- Sarah Rachel bat Miriam Ruth
- Simcha ben Ettie
- Sura bat Oudis
- Sura Leah bat Muriel (Leni Sue Reiss)
- Talia bat Shoshana
- Yael Bracha bat Pnina
- Yehudit Shulamit bat Bryna (Judy Hammond)

To have a name added or removed from the list, contact infoedortikvah.org

The Sixth Child: The One Who Has Returned by Susan Weintrob

"As I was explaining to the two Hillel officers I met the other day, I feel somewhat bad for calling myself a Jew. I never was Bar Mitzvahed...heck, I quit Sunday school at the age of 10...I don't think I could tell you a thing about Judaism. Lately, however, over the past few years, I've felt this drive to begin religious education again. My mom's side of the family is Jewish, though my parents are now Baptist. It's very confusing, and sometimes I just wonder if it isn't already too late to start over. If it isn't too late... I don't know where to begin."

In my role as Faculty Advisor to our local Hillel, I was contacted by many college students and faculty who were interested in Judaism. Some were doing research. Some were dating Jews. One stands out in my mind; he was none of these. "Keith" wrote me the above note.

This is not the first time I heard similar stories from students. During one semester, two students told me that one parent had been born Jewish, had converted and thus the home had become Christian. But the students felt a pull towards Judaism and the Jewish people. Their parents did not want to discuss Judaism. So the students came to me. What made these students feel Jewish in any way?

I recently heard a story that was even stranger. An individual I met told me that neither he nor his mother were raised Jewish. Yet throughout his childhood, "Jimmy" felt that he was Jewish. He continuously asked his mother, who denied it. One day, when his grandmother was near death, she called them both to her bedside. "I am Jewish," she told them. She had left Europe before the horrors of the Holocaust had overtaken her but had lost many in her family. Determined that none of her family should suffer because of being Jewish, she had told no one who she was and started a new life in the United States.

Why on her deathbed would she reveal this secret? I felt as if the story had come from Spain, in the cruel years of the Inquisition. But it had occurred in Indiana, where I had lived for 20 years. More curious was why after two generations would Jimmy want to be Jewish? We spoke after a Hillel Shabbat Service that he attended. He knew nothing of being Jewish except for what he read but he said he always knew he was Jewish. "It was a relief when my grandmother told me."

I thought about Keith (whose note I included at the beginning of this article) a great deal during the week as I prepared for Passover. I thought of him as I cleaned out my refrigerator. I thought of him as I vacuumed the crumbs from my couch. I thought of him as I listened to my son practice the Four Questions. How could I help this young man?

I thought of all of this when I wrote back to him. I am convinced that warmth and friendliness towards those interested in the Jewish people, for whatever reason, is the correct "minhag" or tradition.

Therefore, when Keith had reached out to the Jewish people through me, I responded in a welcoming manner. I told him that he had already become a Bar Mitzvah when he was 13 and didn't need a ceremony. I told him it was never too late. He was still hesitant and wrote back that he wasn't sure he should attend Hillel events. I muddled over this for several days. What could I say to him that would convince him?

I remembered a conversation that my husband and I had with our friend, Indianapolis Chabad Rabbi Avi Grossbaum. We were discussing individuals who had returned to a greater religious observance from assimilation. Were they all baalei t'shu-va, returnees? Some after all had never really "left" Judaism, we had said, thinking of ourselves.

To explain what return meant to even practicing Jews, Rabbi Grossbaum replied that he liked to think of himself as returning each day, that is, each day attempting to become a better Jew. So in that sense, all are returnees. Then I knew what I should tell Keith.

I wrote to him that the rabbis tell us that those who return are to be considered even more righteous than those who have never left, because their road is so much more difficult. And that each of us should try to return each day, to become better people and better Jews. In his reply, he copied out what I had written. He said he'd been very moved and had decided he would like to attend our events.

I remember reading a suggestion that at the Passover Seder we should amend the section of the Four Sons or Children (Wise, Wicked, Simple, and One who does not know how to ask) by creating a Fifth Child who is not even present. This sad scenario is too often the case, with intermarriage and assimilation taking their toll on the Jewish community.

As I thought of this student and others like him and their desire to reclaim a tradition that had been lost to them, a different change to these categories came to mind, one that is positive and affirming. In addition to remembering the absent one, we should welcome the Sixth Child, the one who has returned.

Note: This article was previously published as part of my weekly column, L'dor v'Dor in The Jewish Post and Opinion and the Jewish Press. I have modified it for republishing for Dor Tikvah.

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Purim Megillah Reading 5783

March 6, 2023

Purim service and celebration featuring Captain Mimran and our festive guests!

Photo credit: Slade Gleaton

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