



January 2024  
Vol. 46, Issue 4

# Hakol • הקול

## Responding to Antisemitism

By Rabbi Benjamin Barnett

I know that many in our community feel less safe right now. It's deeply concerning. In my opinion, though, much of the Jewish community's response to antisemitism feels counterproductive and even harmful. What I write here will be incomplete, but I want to generate conversation about how to respond in the most effective ways. As always, I invite any responses.

According to the ADL, there has been an almost 400% rise in antisemitic incidents since October 7. They divide these into assault, harassment, vandalism, and "Anti-Israel Rallies with Overt Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism and/or Expressions of Support for Terror." That category, which represents close to half of the incidents, is quite ambiguous. I don't know how they determine the criteria, but I suspect they include most rallies for Palestinian solidarity, as do many other Jewish organizations. In a recent email, Marc Blattner's first example of "antisemitic and anti-Israel incidents" was an action for ceasefire on Hanukkah. As I shared with Marc (and I appreciate that he's been very open to conversation when I've responded to his messages), I was at that action. I didn't align with everything I heard, but it was a gathering of Jews who love being Jewish, using Jewish ritual to call for an end to the violence in Gaza. Even if one disagrees with them, what they are doing shouldn't be confused with antisemitism.

There is antisemitism present in the Palestinian solidarity movement. Certainly among some there is igno-



Havurah kindergartners celebrated Tu B'Shvat in 2014. This year, the Havurah Climate Action Team is sponsoring a film-screening meet-up at the Clinton Street Theater on Jan. 8 ([RSVP](#)) and a Tu B'Shvat Seder near Tryon Creek Park on Jan. 21 ([RSVP](#), space limited).

rance about Jewish history. We need to be diligent about identifying that, and clear in parsing out what is antisemitism and what isn't. Because many people advocating for Palestinians have reached conclusions through careful analysis, without antagonism toward Jews.

Don't get me wrong: whatever the percentage increase is, it's concerning. But we need to be much more discerning in order to work toward truly making ourselves safer.

I recommend Rabbi Jay Michaelson's [analysis](#) of the congressional hearing with the university presidents, in which he writes: "As a vulnerable minority, Jews are safer in a country that values reflection, tolerance, education and reason — none of which our self-appointed guardians are displaying right now. Antisemitism is real, but...We are being exploited by people who do not have our best interests at heart."

For me, this leads to one of the key ingredients for responding to antisemitism: solidarity. As much as possible we should be addressing antisemitism alongside Islamophobia and anti-Arab hatred.

The most troubling manifestations of antisemitism, as has been true over these past several years, are vandalism, harassment, and physical attacks. Toward that end, Havurah leaders remain in continual contact with the Secure Communities Network, monitoring threats and helping us discern if we need to expand our security.

One of the most essential things for us to do right now is celebrate our Jewishness. To gather with each other for ritual, learning, and community, as we have been doing for many generations. To care for each other as we embrace Jewish life together. This, to me, should be at the heart of any response.

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## Havurah Simchas

**Email happy  
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info@havurahshalom.org



# Hakol • הקול

The Voice of Havurah Shalom  
Portland's Jewish Reconstructionist Community

825 NW 18th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97209-2333  
503.248.4662  
havurahshalom.org

### Hakol Contribution Deadline

Thursday, January 18

### Havurah Website Calendar

### Weekly Email (Hineinu)

### Contribution Deadline

Tuesdays by Noon

### Misheberach List Form

**Havurah Shalom:** Our mission is to provide a vibrant, diverse, participatory Jewish community steeped in spirituality, learning, and acts of social responsibility.

## Shabbat: Saturday Mornings

### **Weekly Torah Study**

*9 am, Saturdays, Havurah Shalom and Zoom Room Bet*

An in-depth look at the weekly Torah reading, led by congregants. No prior knowledge or study is necessary.

### **Shabbat Morning**

*10 am, Saturdays, Havurah Shalom and Zoom Room Aleph*

All are welcome at our Shabbat services, including b'nei mitzvah services.

## B'nei Mitzvah

Havurah will call to the Torah the following B'nei Mitzvah:

January 13

### **Sophie Wice-Budner**

Child of Leila Wice & Miriam Budner

January 27

### **Ellora Thornley**

Child of Aviv Castro & Ben Thornley

January 27

### **Stella Reid**

Child of Monica Froman-Reid & Daniel Reid

Please join us in celebration.

## Condolences

**Bob Choderker**, a Havurah member in past years and friend to many, passed away November 9.

**Sarah Simon**, mother of Barbara Simon, grandmother of Alison Donin and Daniel Donin, passed away November 17.

**Jacob Hyman**, brother of Leah Dawkins, brother-in-law of Will Dawkins, uncle of Sidney, passed away November 27.

**Colonel Jonathan Boyd Dodson (Retired)**, brother of

Jenni Besen and uncle of Samuel Besen and Elisheba Besen, passed away December 7.

**Teresa Barbachano Hernandez**, grandmother of Natasha (Nava) Sherwood Barbachano, great-grandmother of Ephraim, Liam, Ethan and Alia Hale, passed away December 20.

**Myra Rapkin Besen**, mother of Aaron Besen, mother-in-law of Jenni Besen, bubbie of Samuel and Elisheba, passed away December 22 at the age of 95.

# CELEBRATIONS

## Two Havurah Tu B'Shvat Gatherings (Jan. 8 and Jan. 21)

### ***Burned: Are Trees the New Coal?* Movie Screening**

*6:45 pm meet-up; 7 pm to 9 pm film, Monday,  
January 8 – Clinton Street Theater*

[Learn More & RSVP](#)

### **Tu B'Shvat Seder**

*1 pm to 3 pm, Sunday, January 21 - Tryon Creek  
State Natural Area visitors' center / Farm nearby*

[Learn More & RSVP](#)

## Two Havurah Gatherings for Martin Luther King Day (Jan. 15)

### **Racial Justice Movie Event: I Am MLK Jr.**

*3 pm to 6 pm, Monday, January 15 – Havurah  
Shalom*

Please RSVP for this movie event by Friday, Jan.  
12 so we can order sufficient pizza for everyone.

[Learn More & RSVP](#)

### **Let's Sing Songs of Peace and Justice**

*7 pm to 8:30 pm, Monday, January 15 – Havurah  
Shalom*

[Learn More & RSVP](#)

## Come join for our Kabbalat Shabbat Celebration: *Friday, January 12*

**Kabbalat Shabbat Celebrations**—a family-friendly oneg followed by a service led by Rabbi Benjamin and Havurah musicians, with dinner afterward. Our monthly Kabbalat Shabbat celebrations take place on the second Friday of each month, October through May. *6 pm Oneg, 6:30 Service, 7:30 Dinner.* All are welcome!

***Helping Out at the Celebration:*** Havurahniks, can you help out at the January Kabbalat Shabbat Celebration? Volunteering at Kabbalat Shabbat can be a nice way to connect with other Havurahniks, and many helping hands are needed to make Kabbalat Shabbat a success each month.

[Click here](#) to explore available volunteer shifts, which start at just 15 minutes.

***Oneg and Service:*** The oneg (6 pm) and service (6:30 pm) do not require an RSVP/registration. All are welcome.

***Dinner:*** If you wish to stay for the dinner portion (7:30 pm), you [must RSVP/register here](#)—while dinner slots are still available. The suggested donation for dinner is \$18 per adult meal.

***Cancelling Dinner Reservations:*** If you registered for the January 12, 2024 dinner and have since determined that you won't be able to make it, please email Tara Anderson (tara@havurahshalom.org) as soon as possible. Please include "Kabbalat Shabbat Dinner Cancellation" in the subject line of your email. Please also make sure to list the names of all people who are canceling in your party.

# CELEBRATIONS/TIKKUN OLAM

## Tu B'Shevat with Havurah Shalom

By Harriet Cooke and HCAT

*Trees in a forest forge a Oneness called the wood-wide web ... Research demonstrates trees are much more than competitive crusaders for themselves. They are members of a connected, caring, communicating, relating community. ... Only people who understand trees are capable of protecting them.*

— From *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben

500 years ago, Jewish mystics, called Kabbalists, started the original Tu B'Shevat seder. This midwinter celebration marks the time when the sap begins to rise, before the visible signs of spring emerge. The kabbalists said blessings, ate the fruits and nuts of the trees from the land of Israel, studied the Torah and the Talmud, and wove their studies into the spiritual Tree of Life.

Since then, Jewish communities have created Tu B'Shevat celebrations to honor our connections to trees. Often, trees are planted in honor of Tu B'Shevat. At Havurah,

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### **Havurah Climate Action Team (HCAT)**

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the Climate Action Team (HCAT) takes this time to connect to the central place of trees for the life on our planet, their role in maintaining a livable climate, the threats to our trees, and how we can help protect and sustain healthy forests and trees.

This year, HCAT invites our community to celebrate Tu B'Shevat for a family friendly seder at Tryon Life Farm. We'll hike from Tryon State Park visitors center to the farm where we will hold the seder before hiking back to the park. The hike is about 20 to 30 minutes one way and includes a slope down to the creek and up to the farm. For those unable to hike a slope, limited parking is available at the farm and off of Boones Ferry Road at the entrance to the farm. The farm is rugged and not wheelchair accessible.

**Please be sure to [RSVP](#) for the Jan. 21 seder, as space is limited.** The seder is set to take place from 1 pm to 3 pm on Sunday, January 21.

For questions about the seder, contact [Harriet Cooke](#).

**Also in honor of Tu B' Shevat we hope you will join us Jan. 8 , (6:45 pm meet-up beforehand; film scheduled for 7 p.m.) at Clinton Street Theater to watch the film *Burned*, a timely film about the threat that industrial biomass plants pose to our forests. Discussion will follow, including how we can help stop a proposed plant in Longview Washington.**

More details about the film *Burned* can be found [here](#). Information about biomass can be found [here](#).

**[RSVP](#) if you'd like to meet up with other Havurahniks at this film event.** Also, contact [Harriet Cooke](#) if you're interested in car-pooling.

For more opportunities for climate action, including upcoming opportunities to join in issue-based lobbying efforts, join us at our monthly HCAT meeting on the fourth Monday of each month at 5 p.m. in Zoom Room Gimel.

Tu B' Shevat blessings to you all and the trees!





# CELEBRATIONS/TIKKUN OLAM

## Two Martin Luther King Day Events at Havurah — Join Us!

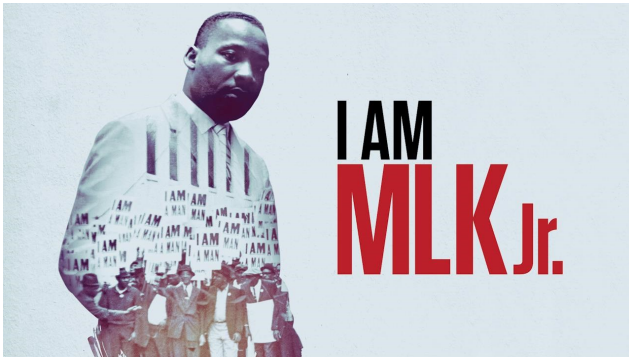
Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup> commemorates the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. Havurah Shalom will be organizing two events to celebrate his life and work on Martin Luther King Day.

The Havurah Racial Justice Committee will host the movie “I Am Martin Luther King Jr.” starting at 3 pm. The movie will be shown at Havurah, followed by a discussion and food.

The Music Committee will host “Sing Songs of Peace and Justice” at 7 pm.

*See below for more details and to RSVP.*

*First:*



### MLK Movie Event: I Am MLK Jr.

Havurah Shalom will celebrate MLK Day by showing the feature-length (1:35 hrs.) film “I Am MLK Jr.”, that tells the story of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the important beginnings of the Civil Rights movement. Teenage members in particular, their families, and all other members are invited for this opportunity to connect our lives with the struggle for freedom and equality.

**When: January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 3 p.m.**

What: Pizza and movie celebrating MLK Day 2024

Where: Havurah Shalom

**Please RSVP by Jan. 12 so we can order sufficient pizza.**



*Followed by:*

### Let's Sing Songs of Peace and Justice!

This is a time for anyone who enjoys singing to circle and join voices together (no expertise needed, just the willingness to sing)

**Monday evening, January 15<sup>th</sup> from 7 - 8:30 PM**  
in recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
and our deep desire to see peace and justice honored in our world

**Please RSVP**

*Mark your calendar for additional upcoming dates to sing: March 18: Women's Voices (By, For, About)  
May 20: Musicals (Jewish composers, librettists)*

# HAVURAH SHALOM

## Gate Proposed. Questions, Answers and Opportunities to Comment.

### *A Message from the Gate Resolution Work Group*

On December 12, 2023, the Gate Resolution Work Group (GRWG) including Joel Bettridge, Makom Cluster lead; Ben Walters, Co-Chair of the Safety Committee; and David Kertzner, Co-President, along with staff members Adela Basayne, Rachel Pollak and Carrie Kirschner proposed that the Havurah Steering Committee approve the installation of a gate in the courtyard entrance walkway and one at the Kearney Street exit.

- [Read the Gate Proposal](#)
- [Read a Q&A about the Gate Proposal](#)

### **Gate Resolution Work Group**

**Opportunities for members to ask questions and comment** in advance of Steering voting on the proposal on January 9, 2024 include the last of three community-wide hybrid meetings (at Havurah and on Zoom) on January 4 at 7 p.m.

The GRWG has also reached out to committees and groups who use the building regularly. Contact [David Kertzner](#) with questions.

The proposal is the culmination of, first, the Courtyard Task Force and, later, the GRWG over twenty months in meetings, research, and

conversations with experts and Havurah leaders, staff, and membership. Articles about activity in the courtyard and safety have appeared in Hakol. See [December 2022](#); [February 2023](#); [April 2023](#); and [July 2023](#).

If the proposal passes, installation will take place in early 2024.

We appreciate the efforts of our community to respond to this proposal and we will continue to work hard to ensure that our courtyard reflects the care we feel for our Havurah community and the neighborhood we belong to.

*(Editor's Note: This Hakol piece was also shared with Havurah members via the Hineinu email newsletter on Jan. 4.)*

## Want to submit a piece to *Hakol*?

All Havurah members can submit Hakol contributions via the Hakol submission form. The deadline for submissions is generally the third Thursday of the month prior to the month of publication, unless the submission due date has been extended (check the [Havurah calendar](#) to see if the Hakol deadline has been extended for a given month). The deadline for the February 2024 Hakol, which is published at the start of February, is Thursday, January 18.

Hakol submission instructions and guidelines can be found by clicking [here](#).

You can also access the Hakol submission form, including the submission guidelines, by following these steps:

- Go to HavurahShalom.org. Go to the drop-down menu for the News tab. *(You may need to hover your cursor over the word "News" to access the drop-down menu for the News tab.)* Click on Submit News & Requests. Click on the Hakol Submission Form.
- Within the Hakol Submission Form, you'll find a link to the Havurah Guidelines for Communications. Read the rest of the Hakol Submission Form itself as well, which further contains instructions regarding Hakol submissions. Submit your Hakol contribution.

To note, members submitting Hakol contributions may be asked for clarification and/or have their pieces edited. They may also be redirected to another publication or forum within the Havurah community. Such decisions, when made, are intended to be rooted in Havurah community-oriented and values-based editorial discretion as well as on Hakol publication guidelines specified online. Presently, Havurah staff and Havurah's Transparency and Inclusion Committee are working to establish clearer and more complete guidelines for Havurah publications. If you have questions about the Hakol submission process (or other questions related to Havurah publications), feel free to reach out to Tara Anderson, Havurah and Participation and Publications Coordinator ([tara@havurahshalom.org](mailto:tara@havurahshalom.org)). If you have questions for the Transparency and Inclusivity Committee at Havurah, direct your inquiries to the committee's email: [transparency@havurahshalom.org](mailto:transparency@havurahshalom.org).

## Sabbatical for Deborah Eisenbach-Budner

By Keren McCord, Vice President

Our beloved Education Director, Deborah Eisenbach-Budner, will be taking Sabbatical starting on February 26, 2024. She returns on June 30, 2024

During Deborah's time away, the wide-ranging demands of her position will be picked up by everyone, from our great staff to lay leaders, Shabbat School Co-Chairs and other congregants. If you have questions or anything you want to share with Deborah, please reach out before

'the last minute' as she will be quite busy tying up her work up before February 26th.

The word sabbatical traces back to the Hebrew word shabbat, of course – a day of rest. As we all know from being around our amazing staff, working for Havurah Shalom requires intensive performance, especially during peak periods such as the lead up to High Holidays and the beginning and end of the school year. Some staff are also on 'on call' for building and community needs, or pastoral emergencies. Paid holi-

days, vacations and sabbaticals are different forms of rest that compensate staff for their investment, helping them recharge. We all benefit from that!

Happily, and with a well of gratitude, we wish Deborah much-needed time away from our loving community to refresh, recharge and do whatever she needs and wants to do. We will be here and going strong when she returns, thanks in no small part to all she has given us.

Olam Chesed Yibaneh.

## Nominating Committee Updates for 2024

By Debbi Nadell

### *Nominating Committee for 2024 Steering Positions*

Havurah's Steering Committee terms begin with our fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Even though this is six months from now, the Nominating Committee has begun identifying candidates for the 2024 Steering Committee.

The following positions need to be filled for 2024:

- Vice President (four-year term)
- Treasurer
- Recording Secretary
- Limud (Learning) Cluster Lead
- Makom (Place) Cluster Lead
- Tikkun Olam (Social Action) Cluster Lead

Steering Committee members attend monthly meetings focused on setting policy, approving and managing the budget, and dealing with issues that arise in the community. Cluster Leads are also the liaison for

### *Nominating Committee*

committees in their focus area, ensuring committees are up to date congregational priorities and have additional support when needed.

We are looking for members who want to be more involved in our collaborative governance structure and work closely with other Steering members, committee chairs, and Havurah staff. Havurah's choice of the term Steering Committee is a deliberate one. We want our leaders to STEER the ship and help guide our growing community as members do the work to fulfill our mission and conduct congregational business in line with our values.

With the exception of the Vice President, all positions are for a two-year term running from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026. The Vice President is asked to make a four-year commitment, which will consist of one year as Vice President, two

years as Co-President and one year as Immediate Past President.

The Nominating Committee is happy to connect with any members who want to see the job descriptions for Steering roles or are interested in being part of the Steering Committee. Please contact one of us – Eve Berry, David Kertzner, Julia Lager-Mesulam, Debbi Nadell, Aaron Pearlman, Estee Segal, Ben Walters and Deborah Wise – via the Membership Directory for more information.

Havurah's Nominating Committee is a permanent committee. Our By-Laws spell out the requirements for the Nominating and Election process, including establishing the Nominating Committee and setting time periods for notifications.

We typically meet two or three times a year to identify positions to be filled, potential candidates and our timeline. Nominating Committee members call to speak with prospective nominees and help to guide them through the process. If you want to learn more about serving on the Nominating Committee, please contact Debbi Nadell.

## Book Group to Read Stories from a Life Spent Listening

From the beloved host of NPR's All Things Considered, a stirring memoir-in-essays that is also a love letter to journalism. In his first book, broadcaster Ari Shapiro takes us around the globe to reveal the stories behind narratives that are sometimes heartwarming, sometimes heartbreaking, but always poignant. He details his time traveling on Air Force One with President Obama, or following the path of Syrian refugees fleeing war, or learning from those fighting for social justice both at home and abroad. As the self-reinforcing bubbles we live in become more impenetrable, Ari Shapiro keeps seeking ways to help people listen to one another; to find connection and commonality with those who may seem different; to remind us that, before religion, or nationality, or politics, we are all

### January Book Led by Beth Kaye

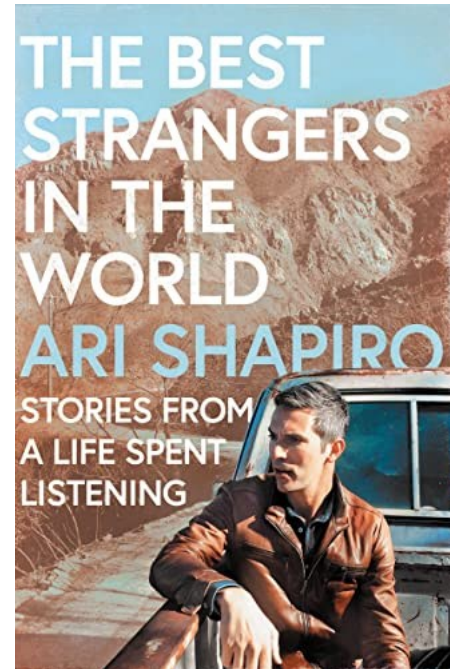
#### The Best Strangers in the World

by Ari Shapiro

Nonfiction, 256 pages

**Tuesday, January 23  
7 pm to 8:30 pm  
Zoom Room Bet**

human. *The Best Strangers in the World* is a testament to one journalist's passion for Considering All Things—and sharing what he finds with the rest of us.



Discussion led by Beth Kaye. Nonmembers welcome. RSVP for Zoom info. [RSVP](#) for Zoom info.

### Just Some of the Many Noteworthy Events Out in the Larger Jewish Community

*Check out some other opportunities out in the community featuring the involvement of Havurahniks.*

#### **Author Reading: Rebecca Clarren and The Cost of Free Land (Sponsored by Congregation Shir Tikvah)**

Click [here](#) to learn more and register to attend.

*7 pm to 9 pm on Monday, January 8 at the Eastside Jewish Commons*

#### **The January Lecture Series in Honor of Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday from Cedar Sinai.**

Click [here](#) or [here](#) to learn more.

*7pm on Thursdays, January 4 to January 25 at Cedar Sinai Park's Rose Schnitzer Manor Assisted Living.*

#### **The 24th Annual Community Havdalah Service, from the Jewish Women's Roundtable and Cedar Sinai Park.**

Click [here](#) or [here](#) to learn more.

*7 pm on Saturday, January 27 at Zidell Hall, Rose Schnitzer Manor Assisted Living, Cedar Sinai Park.*

#### **Avraham's Closet: Durable Medical Equipment Available for Lending (Congregation Neveh Shalom)**

Click [here](#) to learn more.

*This is an ongoing opportunity.*



# LIMUD

## View the Film *Israelism* at No Cost; Watch Panel Discussion

By Elinor Gollay and Harriet Cooke

The film *Israelism* is a powerful documentary that invites us to deeply reckon with the narratives many Jews have been taught and hold about Israel. Here is the [film's website](#).

Over the past year the film has been shown to sold-out audiences around the country, and there is now **an opportunity to see it at no cost** by registering for a panel discussion about the film.

On January 21 at noon Pacific Time, there will be an online panel discussion about the film with the producer, Eric Axelman, activist Simone Zimmerman, and University of Washington professor Lubna Al-

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### *Israel/Palestine* Committee

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zaroo, specialist in settler colonialism. The panel discussion will be moderated by journalist Peter Beinart and promises to be excellent — particularly now in light of recent events in Israel/Palestine.

Here is [a link](#) to a recent interview on MSNBC by Mehdi Hasan with Simone Zimmerman.

You can register for the panel discussion [here](#). In the confirmation email, there will be a link to watch the film for free *before* the panel discussion. If you cannot make the discussion, by registering you will

receive the recording.

The Havurah Shalom Israel/Palestine committee highly encourages our community to watch the film as we grapple with the situation in Israel/Palestine. The courage of the two young Jewish Americans to acknowledge a different truth than the one they have been taught is an inspiration to all of us to search for truth, and lift up a fuller truth on the path to a lasting peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

For additional information or questions about the *Israelism* event, please contact [Harriet Cooke](#).



Simone Zimmerman discusses *Israelism* on MSNBC's Mehdi Hasan Show.

# LIMUD

## Letter By Letter: Using the Alef Bet for Self Knowledge

By Andrine de La Rocha

*7 pm to 8:15 pm, Tuesdays, January 9 to February 6, 2024 — Zoom Room Heh*

Join Andrine on a deep dive into the Hebrew letters to illuminate new channels of understanding. Born from a passion for the Alef-Bet, along with years of study and contemplation, this class will explore how one might use the Hebrew letters as a tool to reveal your own inner wisdom. We'll take a careful look at the Hebrew letters to access their historical meanings, associations, numerical value, connections to Time, Space, and the Body/Soul, and more! Focusing on each letter can more deeply inform one's understanding of Hebrew, from common words to one's own name.

No knowledge of Hebrew is necessary (though welcome). This is *not* a course on how to read or write Hebrew, nor is it explicitly about mysticism or divination, but it weaves these elements in an exploration of the Hebrew letters and how one can use them for personal reflection and illumination, using resources from the Sefer Yetzirah (the ancient mystical Book of Creation), Torah, Talmud, and other cultural references and texts. Bring your curiosity and an open heart. Led by Andrine de la Rocha.

[Register for Letter by Letter: Using the Alef-Bet for Self-Knowledge](#)



## Kehillah Cluster Builds Community: You are Welcome to Connect and Get Involved

By Wendy Castineira,  
Kehillah Cluster Lead

The Kehillah cluster's goal is to bring people together in order to strengthen relationship bonds between Havurahniks. Various committee activities are dedicated to the welcoming and nurturing of all Havurah Shalom congregants and are open for all to join! We are always looking for interested people who want to make a difference.

**AlteRockers** is focused on bringing retired (or not) people together for social, cultural and educational purposes. A new look is coming for AlteRockers; stay tuned for more information in future editions of Hakol and Hineinu as the committee looks to expand participation for planning and organizing regular programming.

**History** preserves our artifacts so we can all share in its collective memory and experience. The website is growing as information is catalogued.

**Lotsa Helping Hands** provides essential services to members in need. The only requirement is a willingness to ask for help or be of service. No request is too small.

**Mahjong** offers running games on Monday and Wednesday at 1 pm in our building. Multigenerational members welcome!

**Neighborhoods** support activities within smaller communities of Havurahniks, based on geographical proximity. Some neighborhoods are thriving and some need support. If you are interested in meeting your neighbors and want to develop stronger ties within your local community but need some help organizing or planning an event, please reach out to committee leads.

**Welcoming** committee members plan and organize new and prospective member activities. A bagel nosh meet and greet was held last spring and another event will be planned as soon as possible. With so many new members, it is more important than ever to promote a sense of community so stay tuned for more opportunities to mingle. And who doesn't love a friendly face when you walk through our doors? Please sign on to be a part of our welcoming committee, all it takes is a willingness to show up and a smile!

**March Mishegoss** In addition to our regular committee programming, Kehillah is taking part in a March Mishegoss ... an afternoon of stories by and for the entire Havurah community with musical interludes and audience feedback.

**Save the date** and make sure to join in the fun on **Sunday, March 10**, when a few of our finest storytellers entertain and inspire us with tales of Jewish life past and present. March Mishegoss is one of a series of programs underscoring the role of "Havurah" as central to our Jewish community in keeping with this year's congregational theme. There will be light refreshments. Admission is free to all.

*Click on this link [for a full list of current leadership](#) at Havurah—including cluster, committee, and group leads. Havurahniks can sign in to the [member directory](#) to find contact info for the various group and committee leads. You can also find additional information on [Kehillah Cluster](#) groups and committees here.*

# AVODAH

## Havurah Music Jams Continue: Second Mondays!

Come play together in community! Bring your enthusiasm and your instrument! **The next jam is Monday, January 8 from 7 pm to 8:30 pm at Havurah Shalom in Room Pardes.** The jams will continue monthly on the second Monday of the month. Song sheets will be provided and include a mix of country, folk, Jewish folk, liturgical, and popular music. [\*\*RSVP\*\*](#) for the January 8 jam session. And look to the [\*\*Havurah calendar\*\*](#) for info on future second-Monday jam sessions.

## Weekly Torah Study: A Special Multi-synagogue Session on Jan. 20

***9 am to 10 am, Saturday, January 20 — Havurah Shalom and Zoom Room Bet***

An in-depth look at the weekly parsha; no prior knowledge or study is necessary. This is a wide-open discussion of the weekly parsha. All viewpoints are welcome as we try to draw lessons from the Torah. On January 20, the usual weekly Torah study will be supplemented by a joint, multi-synagogue Torah study led by Havurah's Emily Simon. Members of Havurah will be joined by members of Emek Shalom in Ashland. We may even have some folks joining us from other parts of the country and maybe the world. These combined Torah study events have always been informative and a good way to build the Jewish community. Join us!

## Making Loss Matter

***7 pm to 8 pm, Mondays, January 8 to February 12 — Zoom Room Bet***

This six-week online class is inspired by Rabbi David Wolpe's book *Making Loss Matter: Creating Meaning in Difficult Times*, which explores six kinds of loss — home, dreams, self, love, faith, and life. In his book, Rabbi Wolpe examines how we can use loss as a source of strength rather than despair, and as a generator of purpose and hope. Woven throughout each class session are teachings from a variety of traditional and contemporary Jewish sources, teachings from other traditions (particularly Buddhism), experiential practices, storytelling, and opportunities for self-reflection and chevruta/small-group discussion. Led by Tivona Reith, a retired hospice chaplain. **Notes:** (a) Participants are encouraged to pre-purchase the book (available used online) by early January 2024. Four free copies of the book have been made available at the Havurah Library on a first-come basis (by the end of December 2023), and there is one additional copy that can be checked out from the Havurah Library collection. (b) Each class session will be recorded, and information will be provided on how to access the recordings in case you miss a session. (c) A Google Docs space will be set up so class members can access self-reflection worksheets and other class materials. [\*\*Sign Up\*\*](#)

## Healing the Heart, Soothing the Soul

***5:30 pm to 7 pm, Thursdays, February 1 to March 14 — Zoom Room Dalet***

The Havurah Ma'avar Committee is offering a seven-week grief process support group for Havurah members. Chaplain Candi Wuhrman will facilitate this online group with a focus on the dying experience, the impact of the relationship, the things unsaid, making peace within ourselves, forgiveness, and continuing the relationship after death. The group is open to Havurah members at any stage and with any type of grief. The group will be limited to eight participants, and group participants are strongly encouraged to attend all sessions. Contact [\*\*Chaplain Candi Wuhrman\*\*](#) with any questions. [\*\*Sign Up\*\*](#)



## Not in Our Name

By David Newman

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland does not speak for all Portland-area Jews, despite its claims to the contrary. In his December 19, 2023 email (“Like Sands Through the Hourglass”) directed at the Jewish Community, Marc Blatner, CEO and President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, bemoans the rise of “antisemitic and anti-Israel incidents” taking place in our community. He goes on to identify a litany of unrelated incidents and statements that he identifies as examples of antisemitism. Unfortunately, by conflating true antisemitism—which is a threat to our community—with calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and justice for Palestinians, he both smears fellow Jews working for social justice and increases the threat we all face.

In his letter, he specifically singled

out an action organized by Jewish Voice for Peace that I took part in. On the last night of Chanukah, hundreds of mostly Jewish demonstrators shut down the Burnside Bridge for several hours. We lit a giant menorah, recited Jewish prayers, sang songs calling for peace, and listened to speeches calling for a ceasefire and justice for Palestinians. Approximately a dozen Havurah members participated in the action. To refer to those of us who participated in this event as “perpetrators” of antisemitism is not only offensive it is dangerous. There is nothing antisemitic about a group of Jews calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. There is nothing antisemitic about demanding that our government stop supporting war, even when that war involves Israel. There is nothing antisemitic about calling for an end to the occupation. There is nothing antisemitic about direct political action, even if it involves breaking the law. There is

nothing antisemitic about proclaiming that “every human being deserves to live a life of peace and dignity regardless of where they live” (as Blatner claims in his letter). And there is nothing antisemitic about Jews insisting that what is occurring in Gaza is not done in our name.

As a community of Jews, we should be concerned about the rise of antisemitism. We must be vigilant in our lookout for violence and threats of violence directed at Jews because they are Jews. When Blatner equates the action on the Burnside Bridge with bomb threats directed at synagogues, he endangers us all by fomenting confusion about what does and does not constitute a threat to our safety. When he claims that calls for peace are antisemitic, he does not speak for me or for many of the Jews I know.

Protestors gathered for a Jewish Voice for Peace-organized action on the Burnside Bridge on the last night of Chanukah in December 2023.



# Unprecedented Dissent of American Jewish Academics and Rabbis from Israeli Government Policies

By Joel Beinin

Before and since the horrific Hamas October 7 attack on Israel, North American Jewish scholars and rabbis have been publicly expressing exceptional levels of dissent from the actions of the Israeli government.

In August 2023, Israeli academics teaching at North American universities initiated a statement entitled “[The Elephant in the Room](#).” It highlighted the failure of the mass movement protesting the Israeli government’s assault on the independence of the judiciary to acknowledge that “there cannot be democracy for Jews in Israel as long as Palestinians live under a regime of [apartheid](#).” Nearly 2,900 people, including hundreds of prominent Jewish academics and over 100 rabbis, signed on to this statement.

Several days after “the horrific, violent and terrifying attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians” on October 7, [Synagogues Rising](#), “a national network of multiracial synagogues grounded in Jewish spiritual practice, ancestral wisdom, community care, and movements for justice,” called on President Biden and Congress “to not weaponize our grief to support the killing of Palestinian civilians.”

Twenty-four congregations and thousands of individuals endorsed this statement. Havurah Shalom did not endorse the statement, although Rabbi Benjamin and many members signed as individuals.

On December 7, the academics who formulated the Elephant in the Room statement called on President Biden to “[Stop the Assault on Gaza](#).” They asked the US to “lead the way in negotiating an **immediate and lasting ceasefire**, implementing a **hostage-prisoner exchange**, and supplying **urgent humanitarian aid to Gaza**”.... and to “**stop its unconditional support of Israel’s assault** on Gaza and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.”

The statement acknowledges the unbearable human toll, “with both sides committing grave violations of the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law. Some 1,200 Israelis were killed in the Hamas attack on October 7, close to 7,000 wounded, and 240 taken hostage. Hamas committed atrocious crimes that day, including [rape](#).”

Since then, Israeli bombing and ground action has killed nearly 20,000 Palestinians, about 70% of them women and children. Over 52,000 are wounded and thousands more are missing under the rubble.

Over 80 percent of Gaza’s 2.2 million residents are [starving, displaced](#), and deprived of [water, electricity](#), and medicine, a humanitarian disaster.

No context morally justifies either Hamas’s atrocities of October 7 or Israel’s devastation of civilian life in the Gaza Strip.

The appeal to Stop the Assault on Gaza acknowledges that the Palestinian history of “**75 years of displacement, 56 years of occupation, and 16 years of blockade** have generated an ever-worsening spiral of violence that **can only be stopped with a political solution**. Israel’s continued [apartheid](#) in the West Bank, [administrative detention](#) (jail without trial) of [2000](#) civilians, and [daily terrorizing](#) of Palestinians by [armed](#) settlers, are causing an escalation of violence. This historic **injustice continues unchecked because the US** allows Israel to flout binding [UN Security Council Resolutions](#).”

The statement concludes: “Two peoples live and will continue living between the Jordan river and the sea. The only way forward is recognizing the right of both to self-determination and full equality.” Nearly 1,600 signatories endorsed the statement as of mid-December.

## How Can Anyone Justify a Palestinian Justice Committee Now?

By Karen Mitzner

With the horrific attack by Hamas on Jewish citizens of Israel, my husband and I felt our hearts had been stabbed, our souls had been cleaved in half, and our psyches had been stunned into grief and newfound depths of sorrow. We learned that dear friends had had relatives kidnapped; children and adults were ripped apart; and Israel had gone on high alert and declared war on Hamas.

Perhaps like many of you, we grieved an Israel as we once had seen it: a very beautiful country, filled with highly intelligent, industrious, and creative people who had built a sophisticated, even glorious, world around themselves.

But our souls were being torn because we also saw the agony upon which our Jewish world had been built, the agony of an indigenous people.

For a variety of complicated reasons, including horrible leadership and a culture of violence, some Palestinians became criminally insane, detached from the reality that Jewish people were human beings as much as Palestinians were human beings.

As well, the conditions in which Gazans live cut them off, almost entirely, from any Jews except armed and lethally dangerous soldiers in the largest open-air prison in the world. Children are killed for throwing stones. Often people are humiliated, sometimes brutalized, or, rarely, even killed. Gazan children often experience the thwarting of their hopes and dreams and ambitions; they may feel an inchoate hunger to grow and learn, but instead are often deprived of educational opportunities. Eighty percent of young Gazans know only unemployment. There is hunger, water shortages, and lack of adequate medical care in Gaza, when talented Palestinians in Israel make up fifty percent of Israel's doctors.

These conditions in part are the result of unwise, self-interested, corrupt leadership for both Israelis and Palestinians. Trauma on both sides also has been a major contributing factor to the cycles of violence, hatred, and distrust.

Amidst this, my husband and I have found that we have needed to examine our blindness to Palestinians' reality, and, as such, we have felt compelled to ask ourselves questions like these: How did we come to be cut off from the fundamental reality that Palestinians were also human beings, human beings like us? Were we distant toward Palestinian suffering because the people were not quite real, emotionally real, spiritually real? Only Jewish suffering, trauma, and triumph were real to us. Did we stuff Palestinians into our own valley of the dry bones?

For us, we feel that a Palestinian Justice Committee at Havurah is something we must help bring into being.

**Rabbi Amelia Wolf, a product of Havurah (child of Havurahniks Lisa Rackner and Rabbi Joey Wolf), recently delivered a drash called "Vayeshev, Yosef's Brothers, and Gaza," which was published on the website of T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights and widely shared:**

"After Yosef's brothers cast Yosef down into the pit, they were hungry. The Torah tells us they sat down for a meal. A picnic at the edge of the pit.

The commentators tell us that in their own eyes they were acting righteously. They say that they were good, righteous people in general, and had they any inkling of the wrongs they were committing as their brother languished in the earth, they would have fasted, not feasted.

They didn't know. They didn't know.

The commentators teach that the brothers were really and truly afraid of Yosef. ..."

**Click on the link to read the rest of Rav Amelia's drash: [Vayeshev, Yosef's Brothers, and Gaza](#).**



## The Darmani Family Looks Ahead to 2024

By Michael Rice

Zakrullah, Horia, and Zoya Darmani arrived in Portland in May 2022. The Havurah community partnered with Lutheran Community Services Northwest to support the family, including their move to an apartment on Division Street, generous furniture donations, transportation to Horia's classes at Portland Community College, social gatherings, and frequent visits from members of our Afghan Family Support Group.

Zakrullah now works at Catholic Community Services in immigrant support. Zakrullah and Horia really enjoy going to natural areas and

### Sanctuary Committee

parks in Portland, and a favorite is the Rose Garden. Horia continues to get A's in her English classes at Portland Community College. Zakrullah plays soccer in a local league. Zoya, who will be two in April, easily navigates the "Cocomelon" preschool channel on their smartphone.

Zakrullah and Horia also carry the stress and deep concern for their extended families still in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Family Support

Group is now focused on rental assistance for the Darmanis. Out of the Havurah Refugee and Immigrant Fund, we covered their rent through December 2023. Now, we are extending rental support through March 2024. We are seeking to raise \$4,000 for the Refugee and Immigrant Fund to assure this important help for the Darmanis.

To make a donation, please go to the [Refugee and Immigrant Fund on the Havurah website](#). Donations to the Refugee & Immigrant Fund are tax-deductible.

Our community's generosity has sustained the Darmani family. The Darmanis and the Afghan Family Support Group thank everyone.



Horia and Zoya Darmani enjoy time outside (*above*).  
Zakrullah, Horia, and Zoya Darmani take a seated photo (*right*).



# HAVURAH SHALOM

## Reflections

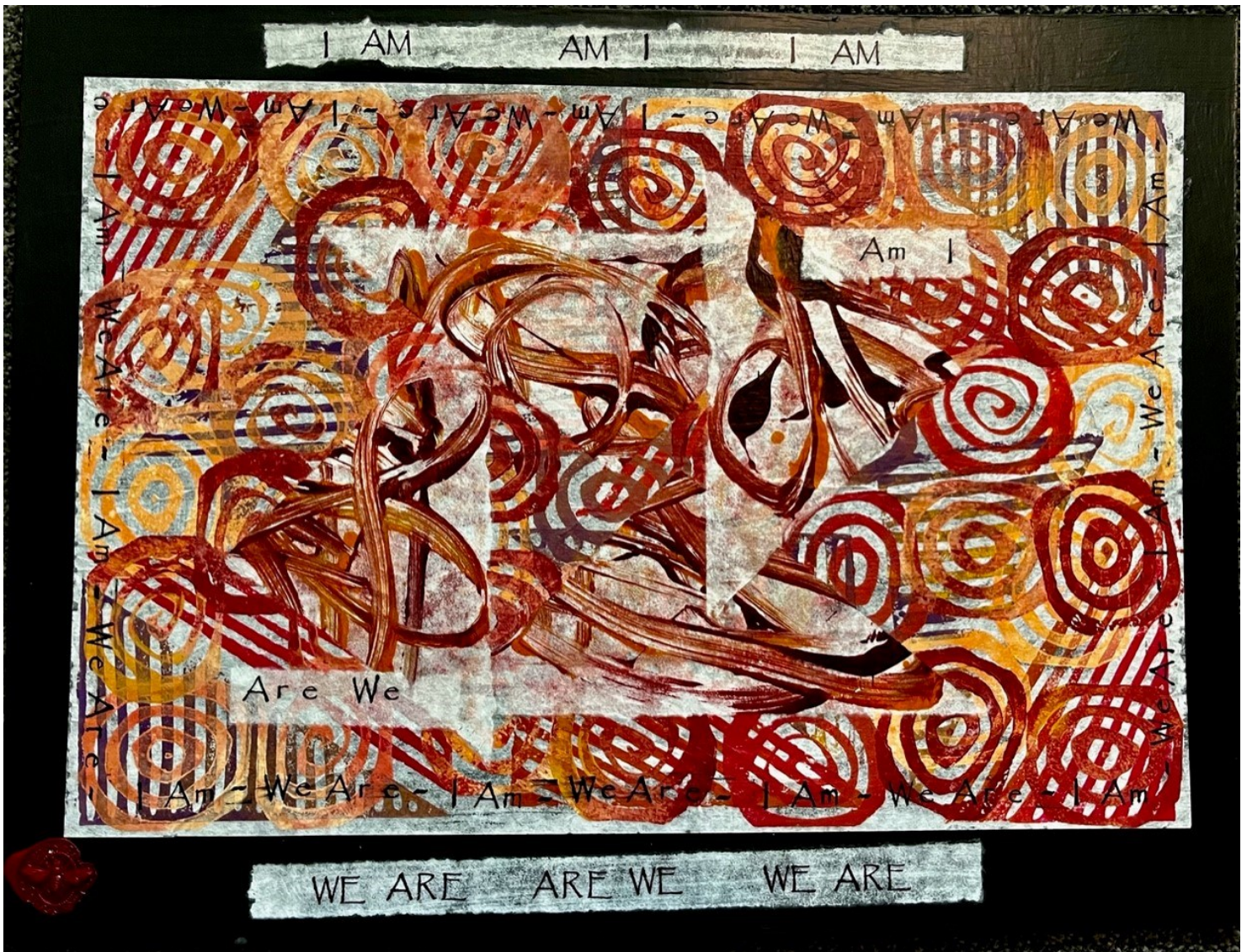
As shared in the last few issues of Hakol, several talented Havurahnik artists submit works in response to Havurah's call for artistic reflections as 5783 was drawing to a close and we approached the Days of Awe. You'll find the work of featured Havurahnik artist **Bija Gutoff** on the following two pages of this issue of Hakol,

Bija Gutoff

"I Am / We Are"

Print, ink, paint and rice paper on Canson board

15 inches by 20 inches





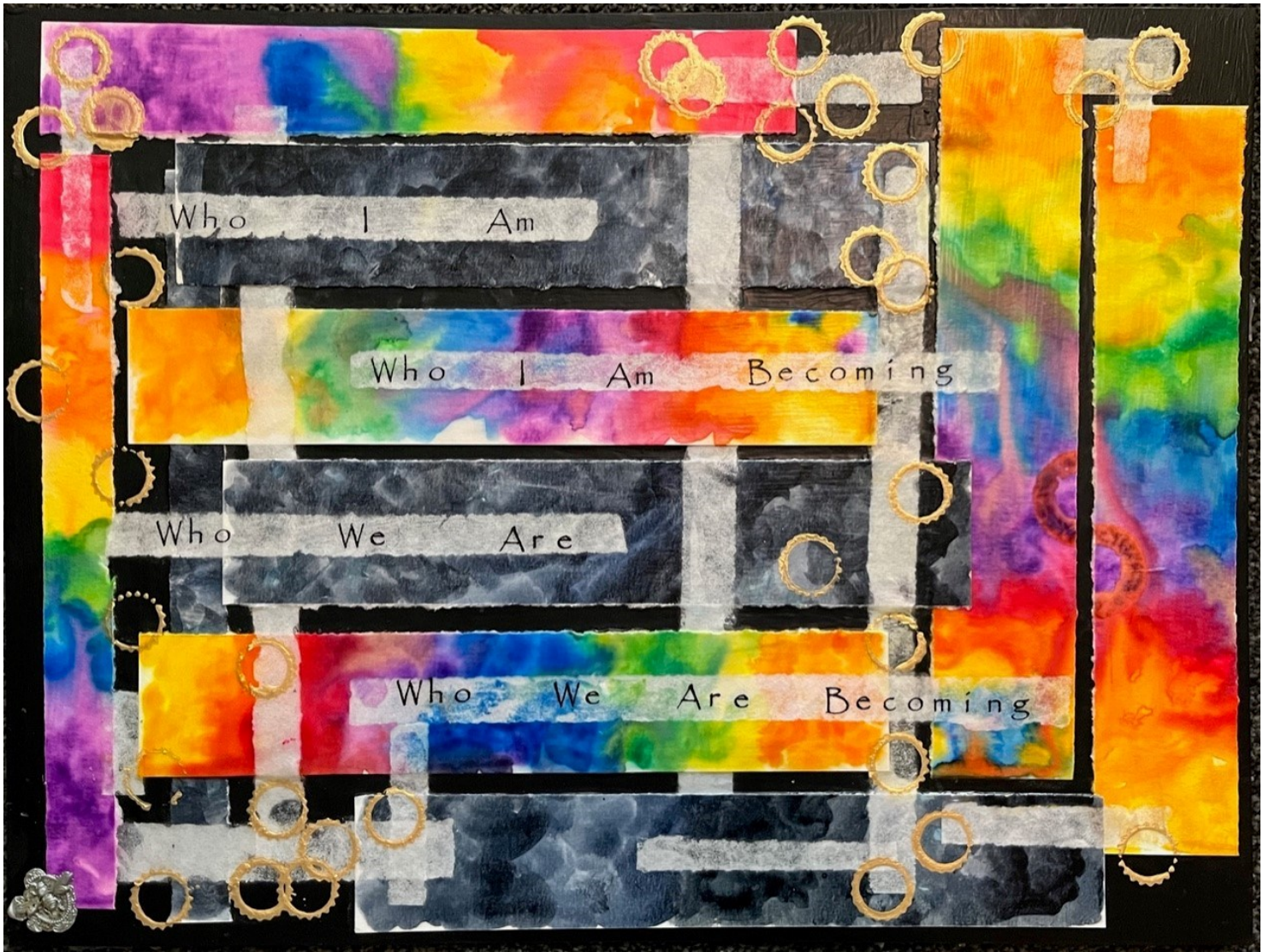
# HAVURAH SHALOM

**Bija Gutoff**

“Becoming”

Watercolor, collage, print and rice paper on Canson board

15 inches by 20 inches



## ***Editor's Note:***

Havurahniks, if you would like to contact [Bija Gutoff](#) about her art, click on her name and log in to view her information in the Havurah member directory. (You can also access any Havurah member in the directory by logging in to the HavurahShalom.org website, going to/hovering over the Contact tab, clicking on Member Directory in the drop-down menu, and entering the name of the person you wish to contact.)

Additionally, you can see more of Bija Gutoff's artwork at Good Samaritan Medical Center, which is very close to Havurah Shalom, in the lower-level lobby of Building 3 (1120 NW 22nd Avenue, Portland, Oregon) and Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center Cancer Healing Center (2211 NE 139th Street, Vancouver, Washington) in Medical Office Building B on the first floor.

Bija's work is being presented at those two locations for one year (approximately September 2023 through September 2024) through the Legacy Artist-in-Residence Program, and is accessible whenever those buildings are open.

Check out [this article](#) in *The Columbian* to learn more about Bija Gutoff's involvement in the Legacy Artist-in-Residence Program.

## Gratitudes to Havurahniks!

By Loree Devery,  
Immediate Past President

In this cold time of year, let us be grateful for the welcoming warmth of our Havurah community. Here are some of the Havurahniks whom we thank this month.

Gratitude to **Gloria Halper** for her long-term commitment to the Poverty & Homelessness committee, her attention to details, and her willingness to try her best to keep our chat group focused. Her leadership is much appreciated.

**Jon Bagley and Kathy Gordon** for their leadership with the movie discussion.

**Kathy Gordon and Barbara Gundle** for their leadership with the book group.

Gratitude to HCAT co-chair **Elianne Lieberman**, “Who keeps us moving along and picks up the piec-

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### *Steering Committee*

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es I drop. Thanks Elianne!”

**Karen St. Clair** for providing connections between the group that developed the RVR harm process and the AR&B as we move into implementation.

To **Herman Asarnow** for his considerable efforts on the Havurah video

Gratitude to the **Transparency & Inclusivity Committee** for their collaborative efforts for problem solving.

Appreciation to the contributors to the Hanukkah Party - Committee leads **Adele Thompson, Jen Litwin and Ted Scheinman** for their help in making the Chanukah party a suc-

cessful and festive event. Staff liaison **Tara Anderson** for working on publications and general assistance for the Chanukah party. **Elianne Lieberman and Gloria Halper** for running the gift swap table and HCAT for a successful clothes drive. Congregation members **Beth and Sarah Shreve** for organizing and monitoring the crafts table and **Chaim and Chava Wolin** for providing uplifting music.

Thanks to **Edward Hershey** for stepping up as committee co-chair of the Alta Rockers.

To the many, many people not mentioned here for their contributions of time and energy to Havurah – thank you! We value all of your contributions and participation. If there are any appreciations you want to share in the future, send them to me, **Loree Devery**.



# HAVURAH SHALOM

## Tributes

### General Contributions

Susan Baillet and Herman Asarnow, in honor of the wise leadership in trying times of Oren Kosansky, David Kertzner, Loree Devery, and Keren McCord.

Leatrice Kaplan in memory of my husband, Bernard M. Kaplan, and my brother, Bertram Auerbach.

### Havurah Endowment Fund

Lisa Rackner and Rabbi Joey Wolf, in honor of Arielle Lekach-Rosenberg's installation as Senior Rabbi of Shir Tikvah in Minneapolis.

### High Holidays Contributions

Daniel Lenski, in memory of Alice Sterling Honig.

### Campaign for Havurah Fund

Reena Lewis, in memory of Rachel Lewis and Roland Lewis.

Samuel Asarnow, in honor of Herman Asarnow and Susan Baillet.

### Spiritual Life Fund

Mimi Epstein, in loving memory of my mother, Olga Monoker.

### Cemetery Fund

Anonymous, in memory of Barry Sutton.

### Refugee and Immigrant Fund

Sheryl Horwitz, in memory of my father, Irving Horwitz.

