

Hakol

The Voice



A Publication of Congregation B'nai Tikvah

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NISAN-IYAR, 5754

RABBI'S MESSAGE MEZZUZOT!

"And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart... and you shall inscribe them upon the doorposts of your homes and upon your gates." Deut. 6

The practice of affixing a parchment containing the Biblical verse of the Shma to the doorposts of our house is one of the best known of all God's commandments. A significant majority of Jews, whatever their level of religious observance, understands the importance of performing this act. For some of us, affixing a Mezzuzah is a statement of Jewish pride, an affirmation of Jewish identity. For others, it also entails a spiritual commitment to maintaining a home where God's presence can be deeply felt.

While the mitzvah of Mezzuzah is widely observed, many Jews are unaware of their proper procedures for affixing and maintaining their Mezzuzot. Consequently, I have decided to devote this month's column to some of the laws of Mezzuzot.

continued...

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My recent messages contain a Shabbat Shalom excerpt from the previous month's Torah reading.

Last week I appointed Gary Tinkel as a Chairperson of the nominating committee. Torah parsha Kee Tissa struck me as an appropriate commentary on the ensuing political process. This excerpt comes courtesy of our Rabbi Warmflash from a sermon by Rabbi Neil Scheindlin.

It is the things we do for ourselves, rather than those others give us, which matter most to us in the long run. The effort which goes into the making creates an added commitment. Consider, for example, the stone tablets on which God engraved the Ten Commandments. The Torah records that they were made by God as well as written by Him. Moses brought that set of tablets down from Mt. Sinai. But when he saw the Israelites worshipping the molten calf, Moses threw them to the ground and shattered them.

Later, after God decided to forgive Israel and re-establish the covenant with them, God called Moses back up Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah once again. But this time God said to him to carve two stone tablets like the first pair, "and I will write on them the things that were on the first set, which you broke."

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Rabbi's Message (continued)

1. A Mezzuzah is a parchment which is customarily placed in some sort of box or cover called a "Bayit" and attached to the right hand door post. It should be affixed at adult eye level and positioned diagonally with the top pointing slightly into the house or room.

2. A Mezzuzah must be handwritten by a competent scribe. Printed or photocopied mezzuzot are not kosher because they were not written by someone who was aware of their spiritual significance. They have no religious validity. Needless to say, an empty case without a scroll is not a Mezzuzah at all.

3. A Mezzuzah should be put up on every doorway in the house consisting of two upright posts and a lintel. The only exceptions are bathrooms or garage doorways. For those who are unable to fulfill this mitzvah completely, I would suggest that at least the external doors to the house and all the bedroom doors should have mezzuzot.

4. Mezzuzot should be checked regularly every seven years to be sure that they are still intact and that their lettering has not deteriorated. This is particularly important with respect to Mezzuzot attached to outside doors.

The act of affixing and checking Mezzuzot can be a positive Jewish experience for the whole family. It is especially meaningful for young children. I urge you to put up Mezzuzot in your home where

they are lacking and to recheck those which have been up for a long time. In addition, I suggest that you take the time to reattach those which are improperly attached, especially those which are not at eye level or have been accidentally placed on the left hand door post.

If you would like to renew your commitment to the mitzvah Mezzuzah, I would help. If you have any questions just call me. If necessary, I will gladly come to your home and help you fulfill this important mitzvah.

President's Message (continued) "Kee Tissa"

As Rashi comments, God is saying to Moses in effect, "You broke the first ones; you do the work of making yourself new ones." The midrash suggests that God was altogether happy with Moses' breaking of the first pair of tablets. He wanted Moses to appreciate the labor that would go into carving two tablets out of raw stone, so that the next time he would not be so quick to destroy them.

It was this second set of tablets which lasted. The first set, which God handed Moses ready-made, soon was broken. But the second set, the product of Moses' own hard labor, survived. With that set, Moses began to teach the Torah to the people of Israel.

Moses' experience with the tablets resembles our experience of forming a Jewish identity. The Torah here shows us that our Jewishness lasts only when we carve it out of our own efforts. A religion which is ready-made, bought off the rack filled by our predecessors, will not fit us as well as it should. We will not take adequate care of it, so it will fall apart with relative ease. But a religion which we sew out of the

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cloth of our own experience will fit perfectly. We will want to take good care of it and preserve it for a long time.

Every Jew has to work at making a Judaism for him or herself. While we must begin with the insights of those who came before us, we cannot simply take the religion others hand us, unchanged. The Baal Shem Tov, Hasidism's founder, made this point in an explanation of the opening paragraph of the Amidah. Why does the prayer mention separately that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Isn't it sufficient to say that He is the God of our ancestors? The Baal Shem explains that the liturgy is making the point that the God of Abraham was not the God of Isaac, nor the God of Jacob. Each of them understood the Creator differently; each of them had a relationship to God that was unique to him.

The same is true for each of us. Each of us must discover our own special way of relating to God. He has to be Elohai, our God, as well as Elohai Avotainu, the God of our ancestors. If He is only the God of our ancestors, we may well conclude that He is not ours, and leave Him to them. Only when we believe that He is truly our God, will we worship Him and try to understand and carry out His will.

--Rabbi Neal Scheindlin

So it is with being part of a congregation. The more you do, the more you want to do. Many of our board members and committee people have been active for a long time. Some burn out, some just get tired or stale. Synagogues, like any human enterprise, need new blood and ideas with their accompanying enthusiasm. Therefore, we need you -- as many as will volunteer to make B'nai Tikvah your synagogue and thereby come closer to God.

-- Jack Mailman, President

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL UPDATE

I hope that you all enjoyed a very lovely Pesach this year. We celebrated in so many different ways in our religious school: our kindergarten class made Seder sachts with the help of their parents, our Alef class enjoyed a model seder led by the Hey class, the Bet classes enjoyed model seders with their parents; Gimel class, together with their parents, had a station to station seder as well as a charoset tasting (yum-yum!). The Dalet classes searched and searched for clues, using their haggadah, in their Passover Scavenger Hunt. A good time was had by all.

I would like to congratulate all of the students who participated in the Read-a-thon: Noah Levin, Audrey Levine, Alexander Brown and Sasha Brown each collected between \$25.00 and \$49.99 for The Jewish Braille Institute. Erica Marcus, Talya Reed and July Stevens each brought in between \$50.00 and \$99.99 for the Jewish Braille Institute.

We'd like to say Todah Rabah for your donations and Yashar Koach for reading all of those books. All in all we were able to send \$347.00 to the Jewish Braille Institute.

A few weeks ago we gave out our second report card for this year. I'd like to congratulate all of the children who received perfect report cards in "general" skills, academic areas or attendance:

Congratulations to the following students for having continued...

Religious School (continued)

perfect attendance for this marking period:

Rachel Wolf	Alef 1
Allison Gordon	Alef 2
Michael Hass	Alef 3
Michael Hirsch	Alef 3
Lauren Frumkin	Bet 1
Jason Surks	Bet 2
Adam Zweig	Bet 2
Mitchell Matuson	Gimel
Rachel Kane	Gimel
Lauren Horowitz	Dalet
Elyse Abschutz	Dalet
Alexander Jacob	Dalet
Danielle Bradus	Hey
Lisa Offenber	Hey
Stacey Offenber	Hey

The following students deserve a Mazel Tov on making Rabbi's List for this marking period:

Maya Behar	Alef 1
Jeremy Bohmstein	Alef 3
Alexander Brown	Alef 1
Gabriel Harkov	Alef 1
Audrey Levine	Alef 1
Erica Marcus	Alef 2
Erin Marx	Alef 1
Shaun Matuson	Alef 1
Lindsey Portnoy	Alef 3
Aaron Teitelbaum	Alef 1
Amy Trooskin	Alef 3
Rachel Wolf	Alef 1

Shelly Calem	Gimel 2
Steven Halpern	Gimel 2
Jared Helfer	Gimel 2
Rachel Kane	Gimel 1
Puya Nili	Gimel 1
Rebecca Rosenfeld	Gimel 2
Jenell Weitz	Gimel 2

Jeffrey Heller	Dalet 1
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Cliff Harris	Hey 1
Lisa Kane	Hey 2
Ryan Leo	Hey 2
Avi Olitzky	Hey 2
Brad Rosen	Hey 1
Amy Schwartz	Hey 1

These students have received our highest honor. Congratulations for making the Rabbi's List with Distinction. Yashar Koach!

Jordan Diatlo	Alef 1
Jonathan Dumoff	Alef 2
Alison Gordon	Alef 2
Jessica Halpern	Alef 2
Michael Hass	Alef 3
Michael Hirsch	Alef 3
Kevin Kornfeld	Alef 2
Rachel Latinsky	Alef 1
Courtney Murray	Alef 2
Steven Rekant	Alef 2
Ian Silverii	Alef 2
Emily Sokol	Alef 2
Peri Sokol	Alef 2
David Weiss	Alef 2

Taryn Bradus	Bet 2
David Gurney	Bet 2
Rebecca Stoloff	Bet 1

Danielle Bradus	Hey 1
Erica Kaufman	Hey 1
Lisa Offenber	Hey 1
Stacey Offenber	Hey 1

If any parent has not yet returned their child's report card envelope, please sign it and return it to your child's teacher.

Registration material for September 1994 have been mailed out. Your registration forms are due the week of April 18, 1994. Please read the instructions carefully and return the forms by mail only, postmarked April 18th through April 25th, 1994. If you have not received your registration material, please contact the education office at 297-0993, any weekday after 1:00 pm.

We are looking forward to a warm and delightful spring at Congregation B'nai Tikvah's Religious School. Thank you

Religious School (continued)

all for all of your help and cooperation this year

Shalom L'Hitraot,
Vickie Lynn Amron

WINNER'S CIRCLE

The winners of the 50/50 lottery held during this year's Purim Carnival were present to claim their prize.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 50/50 lottery as well as to everybody who attended the Purim Carnival in general. All the proceeds benefit our youth program--U.S.Y. and Kadima.

See you next year!

NURSERY SCHOOL NOTES

Our annual Tots Shabbat is planned for April. Those able to stay up late are invited to Friday night services with their parents and will sing a few songs on the bima.

We are planning to celebrate Israel's 46th birthday with a birthday cake, songs, related crafts and stories about the country.

A train ride to New Brunswick and lunch at Jerusalem Pizza is planned for the younger set, as well as a library trip for the very youngest groups.

Lag B'omer picnics are planned for all the classes at the end of the month.

Our Mommy Stay & Play Day is almost finished and Daddy will

have his turn on a Sunday very soon.

Our sincere thanks to Drs. Hinda Liebeskind and James Kelly of Lens 'n Eye for the school's eye screening; Rachel Shaneson for the school's hearing screening; and Betty DeFusco & Associates for the speech screening.

Our 1994-1995 school registration has been completed. However, we still have several spaces left for the three afternoon Pre-Kindergarten, which is our newest addition, as well as openings for children ages 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 (two and three day spots). If you or your friends are interested, please call the nursery school office to place your name on the mailing list, at 297-0295.

OUT-OF-THE MOUTHS OF BABES:

One day at lunch one of the children was busy asking the teacher a lot of questions. Finally the teacher said, "You know, you ask a great many questions" to which the child responded, "I'm a kid, I'm suppose to ask a lot of questions--that's my job!"

Overheard in one of the classes was this comment: "Why are we having a birthday for President Washington and President Lincoln if they're dead?"

Joan Shames, Director

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JEWISH PARENTING

By Dorothy Cohen

Over the last nine months the Torah Lishmah Community Education Committee has presented several successful workshops for Jewish parents of young children. Together we've explored talking to children about God, as well as the topics of death and illness.

The most recent workshop delved into ways of celebrating Shabbat with our kids. The workshop was based, in part, on a publication entitled *Shabbat Shalom, Young Children and Their Parents Celebrating Together on Friday Night* by Lyndall Miller, published by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's Commission on Jewish Education. The publication contains Shabbat preparation tips, blessings, recipes, songs, activities and even a bibliography of books on the subject for children and adults. It's great! If you would like a copy of your own, you can purchase one by calling the synagogue office. The price is \$2.00

The next Parenting Workshop will focus on issues relevant to parents with older children--**INTERDATING and INTERMARRIAGE.**

We are always interested in knowing what topics are of interest to you. Perhaps you would like a re-run of a past subject? We would particularly like subjects of interest to parents of children 8-13 years of age. Please let us know by dropping a note in the office, attention: Torah Lishmah Community Education Committee.

WE'RE OFF TO THE JEWISH MUSEUM

On Sunday, May 1st, join us for a bus trip to the newly renovated Jewish Museum (which is under the auspices of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism), along with a stop for brunch at Ratner's Dairy Restaurant. Brunch is dutch treat.

Cost (includes bus ticket and museum admission) is \$18 for adults and \$10 for children twelve and under.

The bus will depart from B'nai Tikvah at 9:30 AM sharp.

Please contact the synagogue office at 297-0696 for ticket purchases and if anyone has additional questions.

ABOUT US

Lot's wife is falling!--
Visitors to Israel are invariably curious to see the famed pillar of salt that was once Mrs. Lot (Genesis 19:17-26). Tour guides obligingly point to the towering rock column near the Dead Sea, while cameras click busily away. But the pillar is now leaning dangerously, and some fear it will topple one of these days. After all, the salty rocks of this mountain area are subject to heavy rains and are in an earthquake area with much tectonic movement. Also, Mrs. Lot is no spring chicken, but is a very old lady now (geologically, perhaps 20,000 years; and biblically, perhaps 5,000 years of age). So, maybe she's entitled to shed her salty tears or to wither away with age.

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ABOUT US (continued)

Germany--His mother left Germany as a thirteen year old when the Nazis came to power. Now, approximately sixty years later, that young Jewish refugee's son, Richard Holbrooke, is the United States Ambassador to Germany.

Japan--The late Japanese diplomat, Sempo Sugihara, was Consul to Lithuania in 1939-1940, and defied orders from his government to close the consulate. Instead, risking his life and his career, he issued transit visas enabling 5,000 Jews to escape the Nazis by going to the Far East. Now, a memorial park in Yahozu, Japan, is being dedicated in his honor.

Burma--A group of 39 Jews, claiming to be descendants of the lost tribe of Manashe, has emigrated to Israel, after undergoing formal conversion to Judaism. The group, all single people between the ages of 17 to 30, has received new immigrant status.

Thailand--Her Majesty Princess Shulaboran, explaining that she had "repeatedly heard of the sweet tomatoes which grow in the Israeli desert", has requested a large shipment, plus plants and growing instructions from the Ramat Hanegev experimental agricultural station.

New Jersey Devils--Hockey player David Emma of the N.J. Devils team, has found special meaning in Hanukkah this past December. When he ran short of wax for his hockey sticks, a production assistant gave him Hanukkah candles to use.

Subsequently, he scored two goals in a 5 to 2 victory over the Edmonton Oilers. There is a moral to this story somewhere, yes?

Bagels--We promised you more about our contribution to world culture, when we first wrote a year or so ago. So, here's a tale... According to the authors of Essen und Fressen, Neanderthal Man used a cement-like small ring as a weapon. When hurled at an enemy, it either (a) killed him, (b) stunned him, or (c) so intrigued him by its aroma that he had to stop and taste it, thereby making capture inevitable. This stone-age ring was called "the pacifier", and evolved into you-know-what. More coming, in future HaKol issues.

Thoughts on the making of future Jewish Leaders--Quote from Perry London, Dean of the Graduate School of Psychology, Rutgers University: "The possibility of affecting Jewish identity through experiences at a Jewish Community Center, in a youth movement, a summer camp, on an Israel trip or at a national convention may be greater than in the classroom. Perhaps we should redefine what is a 'Jewish educational agency' and allocate more funds to a broader range of agencies and activities."

L'hitraot,
Mili Rosloff

WHO ME? SPONSOR A KIDDUSH?

Yes! Anyone can help to sponsor an Oneg Shabbat on Friday night or a Kiddush on Saturday morning for ANY reason. The usual reasons are: family birthdays, wedding anniversaries, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, or baby namings.

However, there are many other occasions you could celebrate with your fellow congregants--the anniversary of your wedding engagement, when you first met your spouse, a new job, your long awaited retirement, your child's first step, the day your "last" child left home, your first aliyah, moving to a new home, the anniversary of your Bar or Bat Mitzvah, a clean house or just because you want to!

Last, but not least, one may want to sponsor a kiddush in memory of their loved one(s)--this would be an honor to their memory and for us as a community. Please think of an appropriate reason and call! We, as a congregation, would greatly benefit from the opportunity of sharing your family's nachas or memories.

For information on price and scheduling, please call our dedicated **volunteer**, Deborah Spigner at 545-8457.

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Lisa & Garry Warner for their daughter Jessica Gabrielle's naming.

Mona & Barry Portnoy in honor of their son Steven's Bar Mitzvah.

Fran & Mark Kaufman in honor of their daughter Erica's Bat Mitzvah.

MY APOLOGIES!!!

From last Passover to this Passover, I did a lot of soul searching. I listened to your complaints, your criticisms, and your suggestions. I thought I had the perfect solution: a Passover Food Sale using Tova's Kitchen as a resource for food. I could then offer our Congregation a bigger variety of food, an ample supply, catered Sedar meals, fresh meat and poultry—all at competitive prices. Sounded great and B'nai Tikvah would make a nice profit. Tova's Kosher Kitchen agreed to not only give B'nai Tikvah a commission but Tova's would deliver ALL meat & poultry orders to each persons home—at PRE-PASSOVER prices!

Promises were made, promises were broken.

Unfortunately, I can't apologize for Tova's incompetence—the late start on the 1st day of the food sale, unfilled orders, incomplete orders, no home delivery, and delivery of all baked goods to the synagogue 1 1/2 hours late.

I can't apologize for Tova. I do apologize for putting my trust in him.

Elliott Danto

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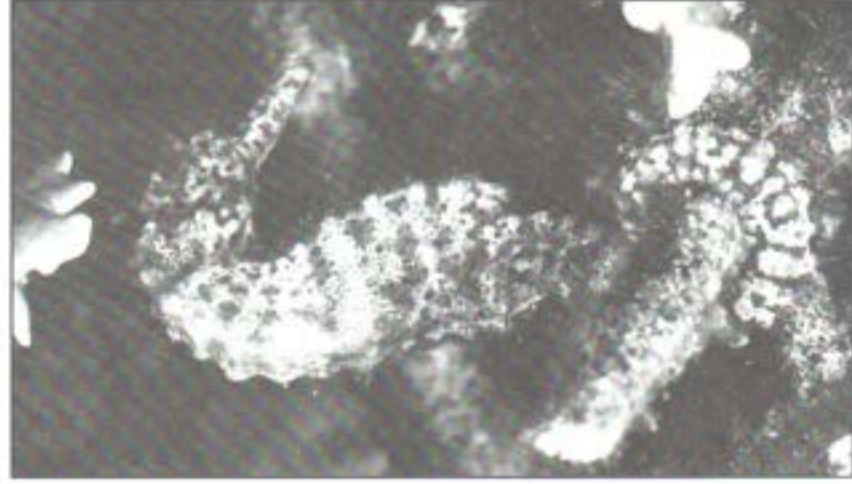
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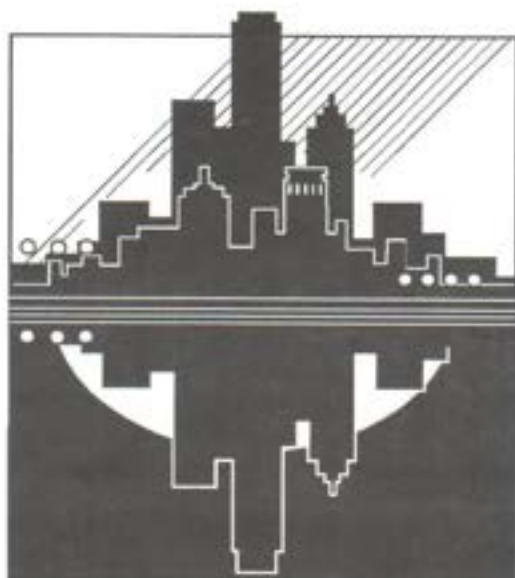
February Review

Toe tapping, hand clapping and singing along dominated our February joint meeting with Sisterhood. We hired Mark Levy to entertain us with folk songs in Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino.

Special Note

Dear Friends,

Thank you to all those who participated in the Yom HaShoah remembrance on April 7. Placing the Yellow Candle in your window gave truth the the statement of "They didn't die in vain". The Holocaust must not be forgotten so that it will never happen again. We plan to make this an annual event.



Future Activities

Meeting May 15, 1994

Angus Gillespie, a professor at Rutgers University, will be giving a talk on "Ethnicity in New Jersey". He will provide us with some solid information, insights and a few laughs on the ethnic diversity of New Jersey. The state of New Jersey is comprised of some 113 ethnic groups.

Special Breakfast June 5, 1994

Sam Rosenzweig has been our Torah Reader extraordinaire for many years. We will host a breakfast, with a side order of roasting, in his honor. See the enclosed flyer for further details and reservation information.



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SISTERHOOD CONNECTION

APR. Meeting Features Rabbi Warm-flash: Reflections of a No Longer Very Young Rabbi on 16 Years in the Pulpit

Date: Sun., Apr. 10

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Synagogue

Breakfast will be served.

ANNUAL FASHION SHOW

We are looking forward to the best ever Sisterhood Fashion Show. Join us Thursday, May 19, to enjoy fashions by "Madeline Shrank" located on Main Street in Metuchen. Models will show special occasion, sport, and weekend wear in sizes 6-22, including petites. Sponsored with Sisterhood of Congregation Beth Chaim of East Windsor.

Thoughts on Yom Ha-Shoah (Apr. 7)

Yom Ha-Shoah commemorates the death of six million Jews in the Holocaust, one of the saddest periods in Jewish history...One of the best ways to give meaning to the day is to read some of the writings of the victims and to be inspired by their courage and belief in God. Anne Frank's familiar words...teach us to appreciate the good in everyone:

"I know it's terrible, trying to have any faith...when people are doing such horrible things..but you know what I sometimes think? I think the world may be going through a phase. It'll pass, maybe not for hundreds of years, but some day...I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart."

This inscription, found on the wall of a cellar in Cologne, Germany, where Jews hid from the Nazis, reassures our faith in God:

"I believe in the sun even when it is not shining.I believe in love when feeling it not.I believe in God even when He is silent."

May Yom Ha-Shoah be a day of memory and inspiration. May we listen and understand the cries of suffering humanity and may those words and images touch our souls so that we can be better for it.

Excerpt from d'var torah by Susan F. Lodish, Wynnewood, PA.

WANTED: YOUR FAVORITE RECIPES

Sisterhood plans to publish a brand new cookbook and needs exciting, low fat, delicious, kosher recipes. If you have a tried and true favorite, send it to Sisterhood c/o Synagogue Office.

THANKS!

Much thanks to all who ordered Purim baskets, wine, and Passover cake. We hope you enjoyed your purchases (and holidays) and appreciate your support!

LOG B'OMER

Watch for our flyer on a Sisterhood sponsored children's singalong in celebration of Log B'Omer.

GO FOR IT! SEND A LEAGRAM!

(Hilda Kaufman 422-0687)

PRESENTING...DEAR NANA



HaKol is pleased to present this new column, soon to be syndicated nationally. Nana welcomes all your questions. Write to her c/o HaKol.

Dear Nana: This year there was such pandemonium at our Passover Seder. For the past few years we have moved towards a more traditional Seder. And every year my sister complains about how long we wait before eating. This year she was impossible; she yelled and demanded that we dispense with the ritual mumbo jumbo. How can we have a more peaceful experience next year? Frazzled in Franklin Park.

Dear Frazzled: Decide how you want to do your Seder. Then let your sister know about your rules and how serious you are. If she doesn't wish to abide by your beliefs, tell her firmly but lovingly, although you enjoy her company, she should spend a different holiday or occasion with you instead. By no means compromise your beliefs.

Dear Nana: This year after we hid the afikomen, the dog ate it. We haven't ended our Seder yet. Help! Stuck at the Seder.

Dear Stuck: For God's sake, Bubeleh, break off another piece of matzoh (but only if you've finished all your vegetables) and begin Birkhat HaMazon. Next year in Jerusalem!

WILL IT BE ENOUGH?

by Gigi Cohen

It happened on Pesach
one foggy seder night
we went to a home, and
there in plain sight,
was pretzels and corn
chips -- a goyim's
delight?
To the table we went,
it was catered by Ben
They said he was kosher--
I'm not sure when.
The table was lovely
the seder plate there
it all seemed in order
we hadn't a care.
That is, of course, until
we looked down
And saw a Haggadah
Which was hardly profound
It spoke of the "orthodox"
and what "they would do"
it told of a Pharaoh and,
oh yes, of "those" Jews.
We pointed out problems
Different books -- we gave hints
we sang the three verses
(of Dayenu)
the book bothered to print.
The poor were not welcomed,
Elijah not there,
so much was missing
which we tried to share.
And suddenly I realized
as I read in despair
this Haggadah, for our hosts
was really quite fair.
There were just 20 steps --
the Hebrew easy to read
it hardly interrupted the game on TV.
The gift shop suggested
this book was "just right",
to run through the basics
and get through the night.

And then through the fog,
as we wandered back home.
I realized why together
we seek faith all alone.
Dayenu is personal --
the goals that we set.
Dayenu is ours --
to achieve or forget.
Dayenu is choices --
and we look to our friends,
for guidelines and rules --
which may break and may bend.
The road often branching
our choices are rough.
Is what we do nothing --
or will it be enough?

CONDOLENCES TO:

Dave Stern on the loss of his father, Irving Stern.

Zola Runyon on the loss of her brother.

MAZEL TOV TO:

Alan & Judith Wolfers on the birth of their son, Andrew Scott.

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** Submissions for any Hakol must be in the Synagogue office by the first of the previous month. For instance, the May deadline for HaKol will be April 1, and the June deadline is May 1. Please note that the last HaKol of the fiscal year will be the June edition.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER 1994 EDITION OF HAKOL, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, IS FRIDAY, JULY 22nd. This is due to Rosh Hashanah which begins Monday evening, September 5th.

** We welcome all written contributions. Any submissions which the editors find inappropriate, will be turned over to the Rabbi and/or President for final approval.

** Suggestions for improving this monthly bulletin are also welcome.

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