



Congregation Tikkun v'Or

Ithaca Reform Temple
Spirit • Community • Justice

Issue 228

* January - February 2022 * Tevet-Shevat-Adar 5782

טבת-שבט - אדר

Rabbi Shifrah Tobacman

דברי הרבא

Some Thoughts on Tu B'shevat and the Nature of Slowing Down:

It's winter. A time some animals hibernate, and some of us humans may feel like hibernating, too, even if the needs of our daily life don't fully allow for that.

And this particular year, we dive into our second winter with the uncertainties and modified social life imposed by COVID, climate change, and the ups and downs of our personal circumstances.

As you receive this newsletter, Tu B'shevat, the new year of trees, will be just weeks away, a time celebrating the rising of the sap in the trees. It's funny timing in a climate such as this. The holiday often occurs when everything is still frozen in this part of the world, being based as it is on the climate of ancient Israel. But we humans have our ways of adapting, and I expect we'll have a lovely Tu B'shevat celebration come January 16. (Watch the newsletter and e-news for details.)

As a recent transplant from California with Midwestern roots, I'm quickly finding my way back to the winter adaptations of my Ohio childhood and Illinois youth. So far, this has been a mild season, but I'm ready for when that changes. I have new boots, my old warm coats, smart wool socks, and scarves at the ready. But who really knows what the season will bring? Sure, it will be colder than other times of year, and likely grayer. But then again, we've had a surprising number of sunny days in December, and warmer temperatures than expected, even as others in the country saw unprecedented winter tornados. So with climate change accelerating, our illusions of certainty become less, well, certain.

What does Jewish tradition have to teach us about this kind of season, in this kind of time? After all, the ancient rabbis knew nothing about COVID, or human induced climate change, or, for that matter, what winter might be like in the northeastern region of North America. But they did know a few things about life's uncertainties, and about some of the earth's most lasting living entities — trees.

Hannah Elovitz of Hazon pointed out in a piece on Tu B'shevat that she wrote last year, that, "*The rhythms of Jewish tradition are very slow... We move very slowly – at the pace of centuries, at the pace of generations, at the pace of the multi-generational discourse of the Talmud and 'learning Torah.'* Only the trees, amidst living things, move at this pace."

The ancient rabbis knew about the need to preserve and honor the trees. So precious were the trees that the Talmud says:



Continued on page 2

“If you have a sapling in your hand, and someone should say to you that the Messiah has come, stay and complete the planting, and then go to greet the Messiah.”

– Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai (Talmud Bavli, Avot, 31b)

The rabbis, and Jewish tradition, also knew about the need to slow down. That’s why we have Shabbat every week as a reminder to care for ourselves, and each other, and to notice the beauty of the world around us. That’s why we have the shmita year, a time for the soil to rest and regenerate.

It seems that a critical message for humans of our era is to slow down. Ironically, this is so even as the circumstances of our world demand that we act quickly — for example to avert the worst impacts of climate change.

Now is a moment to discern what’s most important. To be like Rabbi Yochanan with a sapling in his hand when the messiah arrives with news of a new world; to be like the maple tree whose sap stays still, then rises very slowly, and only when the temperature of the air and soil and its own core is just right; to be slowed down like the tree’s sap when circumstances require this of us, while knowing that just when those circumstances will change is unknown, and still knowing the seasons will continue to move us.

Adult Education with Rabbi Shifrah

חינוך מבוגרים

Tu B’shevat: The New Year of Trees

Sunday, January 16, Time TBD, 2022

Celebrate the new year of trees with Tikkun V’or. We’re still figuring out if this will be a hybrid event available for attendance both in person and online, or online only. But either way, we’ll share a Tu B’shevat seder featuring songs, poetry, blessings, good company, and different types of fruits.

As Above, So Below

Sunday February 13, 6-7:30 pm

An Exploration of the Jewish Calendar, and Living on Land with What’s Below the Frozen Surface

In 2022, the month of Adar I happens in February when the ground tends to be frozen and many fish are hibernating beneath the ice. In a sense, it’s a gift of time, an opportunity to appreciate how we as humans can draw on the wisdom of Judaism and other traditions to celebrate the life that’s protected and nourished in the cold, including our own. It might even be a time to consider how we can best share the nourishment of land and water, here and across the planet, as things thaw again in the spring. Join us for an enriching exploration.

What is This for Me?

Sunday, February 27, Time TBD

A Listening Circle on Sharing Land in Israel/Palestine and the Planet as a Whole

Building off of the Dialogue on a Just and Sustainable Future for Israel / Palestine that TVO is co-hosting on February 20, we’ll hold a listening circle to hear each other’s fears, doubts, frustrations, hopes, visions, and dreams for what a just and sustainable future might mean, in Israel / Palestine, in the US, and elsewhere. This will be an opportunity to listen deeply beyond the usual rhetoric that frames our thinking, to hear each other’s concerns in a fuller way, and to better understand and clarify our own thoughts and beliefs in these uncertain and troubling times.

Shabbat and Holidays

שבת וחגים

Check your weekly TvO email for more details on all services. If there is a Zoom link in the email, the service is on Zoom. If there is a Zoom link *and* a sign up for in-person attendance, it is a hybrid program. Contact info@tikkunvor.org to be added to the email list.

Note that in January and February, Friday night services will begin at 7 pm.

Friday, January 7, 7-8:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) **Led by Rabbi Shifrah**
Parshah: Bo (Exodus 10:1 – 13:16)

Rest from your week and welcome Shabbat with song, prayer, and good company.

Friday, January 14, 7 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) **Led by Peter Silberman**

Friday, January 21, 7 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) **Led by Anne Brous**

Saturday, January 22, 10-11:30 am **Shabbat morning with Rabbi Shifrah**

Parshah: Yitro (Exodus 18:1 – 20:25)

Join us for a morning of song, prayer, and interesting conversation. We'll sing in the morning with gratitude and praise. Then we'll take out the Torah and explore the week's Torah portion.

Friday, January 28, 7 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) *Leader TBA*

Saturday, January 22, 10 am **Shabbat morning with Michael Margolin**
and the students of kitah vav and zayin (6th and 7th grade)

Friday, February 4, 7 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) **Led by Rabbi Shifrah**

Friday, February 11, 7 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) *Leader TBA*

Friday, February 18, 7 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) *Leader TBA*

Saturday, February 19, 10 am **Shabbat morning with Rabbi Shifrah**

Friday, February 25, 7 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) *Leader TBA*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 3 pm:

Yehezkel Landau and Jonathan Kuttab

Dialogue on a Just and Sustainable Future for Israel/Palestine

Our speakers, Jonathan Kuttab <<https://jonathankuttab.org>> and Yehezkel Landau <<http://landau-interfaith.com>>, are each long-term activists for justice and understanding. Jonathan has recently published a short book *Beyond the Two State Solution*, and Yehezkel is a religious Zionist peace activist who has specialized in Israel/Palestinian relations and interfaith work for over 35 years.

This program will be on Zoom -- the link will be available closer to the date.

Yehezkel's article "Can Zionism be Redeemed?" can be read in Tikkun <<https://www.tikkun.org/can-zionism-be-redeemed>>

Jonathan's new book *Beyond the Two State Solution* is not very long, and is available as a free download from his website: <https://jonathankuttab.org/2020/11/23/beyond-the-two-states-by-jonathan-kuttab/>

Other Ithaca area faith communities are being invited to co-sponsor and participate.

Our Dear Tikkun v'Or Community,

We've had an interesting ending to 2021 - as it looked like we were turning the corner, starting to hold events and services in person more, Covid threw us another curve ball; Omicron. We hope you and your families have been able to stay safe and healthy as we enter the new year.

We're getting to know Rabbi Shifrah through interesting adult education classes, holidays and Shabbat services, life cycle events, JLE meetings, and personal interactions and counseling. We encourage you to attend events and reach out to Rabbi Shifrah for your own personal connection.

We've been having many discussions at the board level since high holidays and we thought we would fill you in on some of the items we've been looking into. We're getting closer to an agreement with Greenspring Natural Cemetery to have a TvO section and look forward to sharing with you this perk of membership and meaningful aspect of our shared communal life cycles. Thanks to Lois Levitan for all her work with GreenSprings on our behalf!

We held a board retreat, facilitated by our own Abby Thomas (thank you Abby) and have started discussing a few key topics including communications. You'll likely notice some changes to upcoming newsletters along with some planned website improvements and capabilities. We've been discussing a members only section for quite some time and we are taking steps to make that happen. Thank you to Sue Merkel, Elly Frankel and Naomi Wilensky for working hard on examining how we can make improvements!

In addition to the formal modes of communication, we've heard the need to more informally connect with each other in the community and we are looking into that as well. The "Small Sparks" group has met and there are a handful of ideas folks are looking to move forward as we move into the coming year. Passionate TvO people with unique ideas = great community!

For the last several months a bylaws workgroup has been doing an in-depth analysis of our current bylaws. Tackling this task has been time consuming. Led by Martha Armstrong, workgroup members have been researching, bringing items regularly to the board for feedback, and working to clarify and improve our TvO guidance document(s).

The workgroup recently helped the board to execute a sexual harassment policy, something we should have had in place for a couple of years. We're currently working on compliance with NYS requirements to have all our employees, including JLE teachers and madrichim, as well as Board co-presidents and co-vice presidents go through sexual harassment training.

After some back and forth communication with the Tompkins County Workers Center, Tikkun v'Or is now officially certified by them as a Living Wage Employer. We're proud to be among 104 other Tompkins County employers who have earned this title.

Dues wise, we appreciate those who have taken the time to send in your renewals or to communicate with us. Thank you!

We'll be finalizing our membership list soon and if you are thinking of joining, you can find information by clicking on the "Join Us" section of our website tikkunvor.org, calling (607)256-1471 to talk with Sally Ezra, or emailing info@tikkunvor.org. If you have any questions about membership dues or you want to communicate with us, please don't hesitate to reach out at presidents_20@tikkunvor.org. We truly appreciate hearing from any and all of you!

We're looking forward to keeping you in the loop about board and community happenings and encourage you to read through this newsletter and check out the weekly e-news for upcoming services and programs offered by Rabbi Shifrah and others from our TvO community.

Enjoy the winter wonderland that is Ithaca and Tompkins County; we hope to connect with you soon.

Shawn Murphy & Nomi Talmi, Co-Presidents

In November we officially welcomed all of this year's new students: In Kitah Bet: Yogi; in Kitah Daled: Nate, Ben, Channi, Rhauri, and Harley, Theo; in Kitah Vav: Mona, Zach, and Sammy. Bruchim HaBayim! We're so glad to have you with us! Students received consecration certificates, gift certificates to [URJ summer camp program](#), and their own tzedakah boxes. Then in December we welcomed three more new students in Kitah Bet: Jonah, Aya, and Noga.

Thanks to Shira Reisman for leading us in activities to learn about hidden disabilities and empathy.

Thanks to Raia Gutman for talking with us about Jewish books and what we think what makes a book Jewish. Students in vav/zayin each have a copy of Liza Weimer's book *The Assignment* to read over the winter break. We'll be meeting with the author on Zoom on January 30.

In **Kitah bet/gimel** (second and third grade) **כיתה ב/ג** students shared what they are thankful for, and how both Jewish and secular holidays give us opportunities to think about gratitude. They noted that many of the *brachot* (blessings) are about saying thanks. They celebrated several birthdays recently too.

Kitah daled-heh **כיתה ד/ה** (fourth and fifth grade) played JewParty to review all they've learned so far this year. Students know the many items on the Shabbat "menu" -- candles, kiddush, challah, songs, special dinners, community services, and time to rest.

In **Kitah vav/zayin** **כיתה ו/ז** (sixth and seventh grade) studied *Parasha Vayishlach*, the story of Jacob wrestling with a stranger, and William Scott Goldberg, who transformed himself from an unsuccessful pro footballer into the WWE champion wrestler known as "Goldberg." In *Parasha Vayeishev*, they traced the ways Joseph's many-colored coat has been represented over the centuries. How did fashion designer Rudi Gernreich use clothes to help Americans free their bodies, reimagine gender, and re-envision the future? In *Parasha Vayechi*, students learned how Jacob gave his final blessing to his grandchildren, who ultimately became kings of Israel. They also talked about Isadore Guss, the Pickle King, and the children/grandchildren who ruled his multigenerational pickle empire on New York City's Lower East Side. This lesson included pickle-tasting, of course.

Vav/Zayin students led a lively Shabbat evening service in December, with each student leading at least one prayer, and all participating in a series of *tableau vivant* (living pictures) of the stories of Joseph. They'll be leading a Shabbat morning service on January 29 at 10 am.

There are no Jewish Learning Experience programs on Sundays January 2, February 20, and February 27, or on Wednesday, February 23.

Family JLE is having fun outside! In November they met with Rabbi Tziona at the Cornell Botanic Garden for a Shabbat nature hunt, and in December they met at Cayuga Nature Center for Chanukah Maccabee forest adventures and sufganiyot. The next programs are on January 8 and February 5.

It was great to see **Family JAM** families during Chanukah, on the many zoom candlelightings. We shared our favorite dreidels, Chanukah songs, and stories. Our next Family Jam program will be saying goodbye to Shabbat together, with havdalah on February 12. Details TBA.

Do you know that you can get **free Jewish books** every month? For ages birth-8, sign up for [PJ Library](#). For ages 9-12, sign up for [PJ Our Way](#). Thanks to IUAJC for being the local host of this program.

Summer Camp? Yes! Winter is the time to think about the summer! Contact naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org to find out about Jewish overnight summer camps and funding available from [One Happy Camper](#) and [IAUJC](#).

Feeding the Hungry: Machil Re'avim

מאכיל רעבים

Tikkun v'Or helps St. John's Community Services provide meals to those who need, by making 60 lunches for the 4th Thursday of each month.

Thanks to Sherry & Peter Burford, Paul Debbie, and the Enns family for making lunches in October. Thanks to Harriet & Howard London, Elly Frankel & Tom Frank, the Milstein-Touesnard family, and the Debbie family for making lunches in November.

If you would like to help please contact Dorothy Debbie at dorothynotwork@gmail.com or 272-3893. For those of you who would like to help out but can't make the lunches, you can still contribute financially by donating to the **TvO Feeding the Hungry Fund** to used to reimburse the person who buys the supplies.

Teens v'Or

תינו ואור

In December, Teen's v'Or had two small gatherings: Chanukah at Longview, and a Chanukah celebration at Tikkun v'Or. Teens are always welcome to join in; we hope to have some outdoor programs coming up soon.

– [Michael Margolin](#)

ASSISTANT FOR WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS: We're looking for an assistant teacher for Wednesday afternoons, 4:30-6 pm for the midweek vav/zayin class. Preferably someone who reads Hebrew and can work with individual students or small groups, and who can help supervise a very active group of 6th graders when !

Contact naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org

GREAT JEWISH BOOKS: This past summer, a bright, creative, and talented group of high school students (including TvO's Raia Gutman) from across the country came together over Zoom to read and discuss modern Jewish literature. The participants had lively and meaningful discussions, forging deep connections with the texts and with one another. Now in its ninth year, Great Jewish Books gives rising juniors and seniors the opportunity to explore the modern Jewish canon with top faculty in seminar-style classes. Students read a diverse selection of texts, meet award-winning authors, engage in social activities, and build lasting friendships. Every admitted participant receives a scholarship for the full cost of tuition, room, board, books, and special events. Apply by March 7, 2022.

To learn more about the program, visit [Great Jewish Books](#).

Contemplative Morning Services: Tuesdays from 8:30-9:30 a.m.

This weekly morning service, alive with music, poetry, prayer, quiet contemplation and a sense of community, has become a weekly anchor for many of us in these uncertain times.

Led by Lauren Korfine, Diana Levy, and Judy Saul. All are welcome!

Check your TvO weekly email or contact info@tikkunvor.org for the Zoom link.

Bereavement Support Group

The Bereavement Support Group of Congregation Tikkun v'Or assists members and others when they are anticipating the death of a loved one or following a death. Our *kavana* (intention) is to honor the spirit and traditions of Judaism, but also suggest ways to adapt traditional practices for modern times and for our multicultural community.

More information can be found on the Tikkun v'Or website under the "end of life" tab.

Email BereavementSupport@tikkunvor.org.

Condolences

תנחומים

Tikkun v'Or sends our condolences to Beth Cohen, on the death of her stepmother, Lila Cohen, on December 6. May her memory be a blessing.

Welcoming Committee

ועד החברות

Welcome to our newest members:

Colleen Barry and Andrew Epstein and their son Samuel
Catherine Shane

For more information about membership at TvO, contact
Lois Levitan loislevitan@gmail.com



Donors

צדקה

Many thanks to our recent donors:

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High Holidays:

Peter & Sherry Burford
Dorian Fine

Nediv Lev

Steve Hoffman & Carol Teelin

Thanks to the [IAUJC](#) (Ithaca Area United Jewish Community) for grants benefitting education, especially the scholarship fund.

Many Thanks

רב תודה

Thanks to:

Recent Shabbat leaders: Faith Rogow, Beth Cohen, Annie Wexler, Tony Gaenslen, Michael Margolin and the vav/zayin /6th and 7th grade students (Julia K, Tsadia B, Ozzie S, Dalia B, Sonia E, Maren G, Bram E, Eli W, Adam G, Samuel B, Zach B, Sally B, Zach L, Mona K, Josh K, Lionel M, Sammy E)

Thanks to Lauren Korfine and Marne Oshae for adding music to so many of our services;

Thank to Marnie Kamp and Ira Kamp for the audio-visual and tech expertise;

Recent zoom angels: Bobby Kleinberg, Laurie Willick, Denice Cassaro, Shawn Murphy, Peter Silberman;

Rabbi Shifrah for leading us for Shabbat services and adult education;

Thanks to our Chanukah candle lighting leaders: Rabbi Shifrah, Marnie Kamp, Ava Blankstein, and vav/zayin students.

Communication: New and Better!

Do you ever wish you knew a little more about what was going on behind the scenes at TvO? The TvO board has been discussing possible gaps in our congregation-wide communication and how to fill them. In the next few months, we hope to roll out an expanded and upgraded communication plan that has two goals. The first is for all TvO members to have an ongoing understanding of what is happening at the board level and within committees. The second is to create more ways to connect with one another as remote and hybrid gatherings continue.

While we are still ironing out plans, we wanted to offer a preview of what is in the discussion stage. Here are the potential changes:

- The official newsletter that is published every other month (what you are reading right now) may become a quarterly publication, or possibly phased out entirely.

- A new and different monthly newsletter would replace it, which would contain information about board discussions and decisions, committee reports, and short articles that help us get to know Rabbi Shifrah and each other. This would be in an email format and distributed only to TvO members.

- The weekly enews would continue as is, circulating to our full email list of almost 500 people.

- Some of the standard information shared in this bi-monthly newsletter would be placed more prominently on the TvO website. We are hoping the TvO website can become more of a go-to source for congregants.

- We are looking into starting a TvO listserv, where members can post questions, discuss ideas, share information, and more. There would be a set of rules and a moderator.

Ideas and help with these plans are welcome! Please contact [Sue Merkel](#) or [Elly Frankel](#) with thoughts and/or questions.



The Global Spotlight Initiative

Do you admire the work of an international organization that is supporting a Jewish cause or program somewhere in the world?

IAUJC invites you to nominate that organization for a new funding initiative.

Although IAUJC already supports international programs that assist communities in need — Dimona in Israel and Tbilisi in Georgia — these programs were selected by our board. **Now, The Global Spotlight Initiative invites YOU, our supporters, to nominate other needy programs or nonprofit organizations which are near and dear to your hearts.**

Each year, the IAUJC board will choose one or two organizations from among your nominees to receive up to \$2,000 from the year's international donations, which come from your "unrestricted" and Global Fund contributions.

With The Global Spotlight Initiative, we ask you to suggest to the board deserving programs that enhance one of the global aspects of IAUJC's mission:

- Supporting a vibrant Israel
- Caring for Jews in need around the world

To nominate your chosen organization or program, please use the form on the back of this flyer or fill out the form on our website:

<https://iaujc.org/nomination>. Completed forms should be mailed to IAUJC, PO Box 4214, Ithaca, NY 14852.

Nonprofits that are nominated must be registered as a 501(c)(3) with the IRS. All nominations are due by **February 1, 2022**.

For more information, contact Sherrie Negrea at sherrie@versatilewriting.com.

Although we cannot come together this year in person, let's try to recreate that time of slower pleasures in our present virtual world.

It will be our 23rd year of continuous gatherings.

AN EVENING OF JEWISH STORIES, POETRY AND MUSIC

Saturday, January 29th at 7:30 PM

Sponsored by the Temple Beth-El Arts Committee

Zoom Registration Link is found on 1/29 calendar page at <https://www.tbeithaca.org/calendar>

Adults and children should consider presenting stories, poems, music or skits under seven minutes duration. If you would like to present, please contact secretary@tbeithaca.org or call the temple at 607-273-5775

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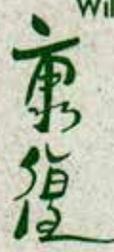
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Congregational Leadership

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For updated calendar information,
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**Tikkun v'Or Welcomes
Interfaith Families!**

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