



In This Issue

A Zionist View of Chanukah	1
From Rabbi Louis	2
President's Message	3
URJ Biennial	4
Chai	4
Obituary: Gerry Marks	6
Tzedakah	8
VVI Jewish Burial Society	8
Congregational Channukah Party	8
Greenfield-Hanevelt Oneg invitation	9
Emanu-El Calendar	9
It's not a Big Chicken	9
Look What Our Rabbi's Doing Now!	10
Adon Olam	10
The Holy Temple Menorah	10
Those We Remember	12
Calendar	12



A Zionist View on Chanukah



Golda Meir holding a menorah in the Poalei Zion tableau of "Jewish Rebirth" in Milwaukee, May 18, 1919 — exactly 29 years before the actual birth of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948 (Source: State Historical Society of Wisconsin)

From the very beginnings of the Zionist movement, the story of the Maccabees would serve as an inspiration. As Theodore Herzl wrote, "The Maccabees will rise again." Vladimir Jabotinsky similarly declared, "Yes, they have

arisen—the children of those whose ancestor was Judah, lion of the Maccabees." Similarly, Ahad Aham, founder of cultural Zionism, proclaimed, "We celebrate not only the consecration and renewal of the Temple, some two thousand years ago—but also the renewal and revival of this same Jewish nation, reviving its soul once again for a new life." David Ben-Gurion also believed Hanukkah is a major festival celebrating Jewish freedom.

The tale of the Maccabees, however, did not just serve as an inspiration for the Zionist movement but it also was incorporated into contemporary Zionist literature. For example, Leon Uris' book Exodus, which did much to promote Zionism within popular culture and to convince people to support Israel, referred to the Etzel and the Levi as "Maccabees," as a way to allude to the fact that the "New Jew" was a direct descendant of the Ancient Hebrews. According to the character David in Exodus, "Our very existence is a miracle. We outlived the Romans and the Greeks and even Hitler. We have outlived every oppressor and we will outlive the British Empire." Thus, the example of the Maccabees was utilized to its fullest as an example of how the Jewish people could succeed to gain independence once again.

Hannah Szenes, the famous Hungarian Jewish Zionist poet, in a poem called Hanukkah, made a similar point: "It is Chanukkah and the candle flames fare; And all Jewish hearts beat, [Cont'd. p.5.](#)

RABBI

Louis Sutker
ravenlws@shaw.ca

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Reva Hutkin
bubbareva@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Amanda Gafter-Ricks
amanda.gafter-ricks@gov.bc.ca

PAST PRESIDENT

Neal Wasser
wassfamvic@telus.net

TREASURER

Morris Bleviss
Morris@Bleviss.com

SECRETARY

Joel Fagan
faganis@shaw.ca

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Dorothy Torontow
d2t2@shaw.ca

Hal Yacowar
hny@shaw.ca

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Sharon Shalinsky
gillean@shaw.ca

NEWSLETTER

Julie Elizabeth
madrona623@gmail.com

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Amanda Gafter-Ricks
amanda.gafter-ricks@gov.bc.ca

Katrina Hanevelt
klgreenfh@gmail.com

RITUAL AFFAIRS

Julie Elizabeth
madrona623@gmail.com

WEBSITE

<http://www.kolotmayimreformtemple.com>

From Rabbi Louis



Chanukah came early this year and there was no overlap with Christmas as there often is. Both are festivals of light and both involve gift giving. That is pretty much it in terms of their overlap. Certainly the origins of the two are very different and the difference tends to emphasize some of the differences between Judaism and Christianity as spiritual paths.

On the other hand there is another similarity, namely that for most people both of these are secular holidays. The anniversary of the birth of Yehoshua and recognition of the Hasmonean battle to preserve a certain aspect of Jewish life are rarely part of the celebration. We have also managed to secularize the Pagan holiday of All Hallows Eve, better known as Halloween, and Purim has also been semi-secularized, which given its nature it is easy to do.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. Certainly the overlap of gift giving gives non-Jews a way of relating to Chanukah. Halloween also has a gift giving emphasis as does our holiday of Purim. Some of the Hindu, Buddhist and Moslem holidays also emphasize gift giving. The secularization of these holidays makes it easier for spiritually intermarried families to relate to each other's holiday and neutralizes the competition between them.

In many ways this secularization actually lies behind the holiday of Chanukah. There were many Jews at that time who had abandoned aspects of Jewish observance and had become thoroughly Hellenized. They lived in a highly Hellenized culture with many good qualities and abandoned Jewish tradition. Of course, the ruler, Antiochus also forbade Jewish practice, which led to the rebellion which, in some ways, was a civil war between Jewish factions. A recent survey in the USA, of religious practice showed that of those Jews who identify as non-religious 67 percent state that they have "no religion".

In our day we find a delicate balance in place for most people in Jewish life. Synagogue membership is generally down except for certain pockets of geography. The dominant modes of Western thought are Universal rather than Particular. The tendency is to overthrow or ignore the books that tell our story, rather than to wrestle with the discomfort, dive beneath the surface and see where one story may subvert another.

My wish is for Kolot Mayim members is to become a generation of learners and to wrestle with the texts that we [Continued p. 3.](#)

President's Message



It is with a heavy heart that I write my President's Message. The passing of Gerry Marks has left a hole in my heart and in that of the congregation as well. He was our much beloved patriarch. I am so glad Julie and I were able to visit and say our goodbyes.

We are just back from Mexico where we spent two weeks in Ixtapa, a very hot and humid part of the country. We came home via Calgary to minus thirteen and snow! It was quite a shock to say the least. However, it is good to be home, especially as we had no internet for two weeks and have a lot of catching up ahead of us.

On a happier note, we are here in time to celebrate Channukah with the congregation, family and friends. It is always fun to play dreidel with our grandchild who ultimately gets to keep all the chocolate gelt.

I hope everyone has been dropping off packaged/canned food for our tzedakah box. The cold weather is now upon us and the disadvantaged depend on us for sustenance more than ever.

Have you thought about sponsoring an Oneg? It is a great way to honour someone or an event or celebrate a milestone. Bring your friends and family, supply some food and we will offer tea, coffee, juice and Rennie's beautiful china to beautify your event.

An At-Home event is a great way to get to know one another in a smaller setting. These can be anything from a discussion of something currently topical, a movie, a story telling or musical jam, etc. Let your imagination run wild. Only light refreshments need be served.

Our Rabbi Search Committee is at work trying to meet the current needs of our congregation. I am looking forward to hearing about their findings and about how we might be impacted by what they discover.

Chag Sameach Channukah!

Until next time,

Reva

From Rabbi Louis, continued from page 2. have inherited that sometimes this wrestling leaves us a little limp. Please let me know your ideas as to how to turn this into reality.

r. Louis



U .R .J . BIENNIAL
December 11-15, 2013 - San Diego, CA

Biennial is where Reform Jews gather to learn, pray, share ideas, dance and sing, hear from inspiring guest speakers, reunite with old friends, make new connections, and make decisions about the policies of the Reform Movement. The Biennial and the Women of Reform Judaism Assembly will take place at the San Diego Convention Center

Discounted Biennial Room Blocks will be Available at: Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina and Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego Early Bird Registration will open early Summer 2013. This Biennial will also celebrate the Women of Reform Judaism's Centennial Anniversary. Sign up for Biennial Updates at <http://urj.org/biennial13/>.

Exciting Speakers: Hear from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, NY Times Food Editor Mark Bittman, Anat Hoffman, Rick Reilly, Ruth Calderon, Ilyse Hogue, Jay Feinberg, and many others.

KM Board has approved two bursaries of \$500.00 to assist members to attend! Apply immediately to Treasurer, Morris Bleviss at <Morris@Bleviss.com>.

Chai חיי

Kolot Mayim has several funds to which you may earmark your donations. They are: Chai (General Fund), Religious School Fund, Social Action Fund, and Parochet (Ark Curtain) Fund. Undirected donations will go into the Chai.

The following donations have been received since the last Voice.

PAROCHET (ARK CURTAIN) FUND

Arlette Baker

Happy birthday to Arline Leshner - Julie Elizabeth & Reva Hutkin

Happy birthday to Dorothy Torontow - Julie Elizabeth & Reva Hutkin

In memory of Gerry Marks - Julie Elizabeth & Reva Hutkin

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In memory of my father, Gerry Marks - Lynne Marks

In appreciation of the Trop Woprkshop - Karen-Marie Perry

CHAI FUND

Arthur Goldman

Happy birthday to Dorothy Torontow - Anne & Joe Gougeon-Ryant, Peter & Meriel Barwin

In memory of Gerry Marks - Joel & Sandy Fagan, Ann & Joe Gougeon-Ryant, Morris Bleviss



[A Zionist View on Chanukah, continued from p. 1.](#) throb, bear; We recall the image of heroes; the disappeared ancient peoples; the period of pharaohs, the Greek oppression; neither could break our will for expression; we took the Torah, took it with us; we drew faith from it into all of us; we walked through the plains hungry and thirsty; but G-d was with us, so we were never lonely; And we who stem from such ancestry; should not despair but continue to fight; as we are reassured by the candle light; do not quail Israel, there is still hope."

In 1912, Zerubavel, a distinguished Jewish poet and Labor Zionist leader, proposed that Zionists should utilize Mod'in as a site of pilgrimage and to identify with it as part of the Zionist struggle to establish an independent Jewish state. Like Szenes and Uris, he saw a direct link between modern Jewish heroes who were fighting for Israel's independence at that time and the Maccabees. Indeed, since the end of 1903, school children did make pilgrimages to Mod'in during Hanukkah. In addition, Shaul Tchernichowski, a prominent Hebrew poet of the early 20th century, wrote, "Where are they, the holy ones? Where are the Maccabees? All Israel is holy. You are the Maccabee!"

Indeed, such declarations by Zionist leaders and poets have also made their way into Israeli music. For example, the popular Hanukkah song *Mi Y'Malel* was written in the early 20th century by Menashe Ravina. This song proclaims, "Who can retell the things that befell us? Who can count them? / In every generation a hero or sage came to our aid! Hark! At this time of year in days of yore; Maccabees the Temple did restore; and today we sing a song of praise; to the heroes of our own days."

It is not surprising that Hanukkah is a major theme in proclamations by Zionist leaders and made its way into Zionist literature, Zionist poetry, and Israeli music. As the Israeli scholar Mordechai Nisan claimed, "The exceptional story of the Maccabee rebellion and victory against the Greek Syrian Seleucid Empire, beginning in 167 BCE in the foothills of Samaria, provided Theodor Herzl in 1896 CE with an inspiring model for the modern Jewish national renaissance. Some fifty years later, as Herzl predicted, Zionism became a concrete physical reality with the political founding of the state of Israel in 1948. Ever since, Maccabee has become a household word in Israel, referring to such sundry things as beer and basketball."

As these texts demonstrate, there are many parallels between the establishment of Israel and the Maccabean Revolt. According to Nisan, "The Hasmoneans were zealots for Torah and Zion when they launched their fight for freedom against the Greek imperialists in Judea. In the 1940s within British-mandate Palestine, a small but principled Brit Ha-hashmonayim namesake movement propagated a similar campaign against foreign rule in Eretz-Israel. Time had not altered the basic parameters characterizing Jewish existence in the homeland."

By Rachel Avraham <<http://unitedwithisrael.org/zionist-view-on-hanukkah/>>



*The Board of Directors, and membership, of Kolot Mayim
wishes the Marks-Blakely family
our heartfelt condolences on the loss of their father and grandfather,
Gerry Marks.*



Gerald Samuel Marks was born on February 13, 1930 in Cape Town, South Africa, and died in Victoria General Hospital in Victoria, B.C., in the early morning hours of November 2nd, 2013. He grew up, one of five children of Shimon and Annie Marks, in the midst of the vibrant immigrant Jewish community of Woodstock, Cape Town. After completing high school Gerry spent a year in what was then Palestine in 1946-47, an experience that had a lifelong impact on him. He then did his BSc and MSc at the University of Cape Town, before going on to complete a Ph.D. in organic chemistry at Oxford University in the early 1950s. While completing his doctorate he courted and became engaged to Marion Tobias, the love of his life, also of Cape Town, who was visiting in England at the time.

After marriage, Gerry and Marion lived in Johannesburg for a year, before moving first to Ottawa in 1956 for an NRC postdoctoral fellowship, then on to Chicago for another postdoctoral fellowship, and then to London England for three years, where Gerry and Marion's two children, Lynne and Saul, were born. Soon after Saul's birth, in 1962, Gerry was offered a tenure track position in the department of Pharmacology at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He moved up rapidly at the U of A, becoming a full professor by 1967. In 1969 he was offered the Headship of the Department of Pharmacology at Queen's University, and the family moved again. Gerry built the department at Queen's up from very modest beginnings to a cohesive unit that became known across Canada and internationally for its teaching and research. He also had great integrity from the beginning of his career, in not permitting any influence by drug companies on his department or his students, and was well known for his assignment for medical students in which they were required to assess the legitimacy of drug company advertising for a particular medication. Gerry had a brilliant scientific career with major contributions in a number of fields. He made particularly important contributions in two areas of research — the pharmacology of porphyrin metabolism and pharmacology of the gasotransmitters. His work in the former has led to significant advances in our understanding of how some drugs can be activated to attack the body's mechanisms for drug elimination. In this field, where he published his book, Heme and Chlorophyll, he was a world resource. His work in the pharmacology of gasotransmitters led to opening up a new field of research that explores how certain gases, such as carbon monoxide, are made continuously by the human body, and how they regulate a wide variety of bodily functions. Throughout his research career, Gerry was a great mentor of students and postdoctoral fellows, as well as his younger colleagues. His numerous research publications are a legacy that will serve the biomedical research community, especially that of pharmacology, forever. Gerry was also a wonderful and inspiring university teacher who won the Queen's Alumni Award for Teaching, and put a lot of time into mentoring students and junior colleagues with their teaching. While in Kingston he was active in curling, golf and in the Jewish community, and as someone with a strong sense of social justice, he fully supported his beloved wife Marion in all of her work with gay rights. Gerry was also known, by his colleagues, students, friends and family for his



*Yit'gadal v'yit'kadash ...
may his memory be for a blessing.*

warmth, patience, kindness, integrity, generosity and sense of humour. His jokes and stories about growing up in an immigrant Jewish community brought to life a world that is no more. Eight years ago Gerry and Marion moved once more, to Victoria, British Columbia, to be with their daughter Lynne, son-in-law John, and most particularly their grandchildren Dori and Mira. Gerry's grandchildren gave him much joy, and he taught them a great deal about Jewish history and culture at a very personal level, and much more about how to be a true mensch, lessons that will remain with them forever. *Gerry's daughter, Lynne, added the following to the above Obit which appeared in the Times Colonist.*

My dad was never much of a believer – I asked him once if he believed in an afterlife, and he said that he believed that the way he would live on would be through his children and grandchildren. At the same time, Jewish culture, Jewish history and Jewish religious practice were very important to him. As Dr. Ted Rosenberg said to me the week my dad was in the hospital after his stroke – it was who he was “through and through”. My dad was raised in an immigrant Jewish neighbourhood in Cape Town. He went to cheder (Hebrew school) every day after school, and learned excellent Hebrew, as well as all of the prayers, and a great deal of Torah and Jewish history. His grandfather had helped found the local shul, and his father went to shul every day – except Saturday, when there was too much work in the shop.

As my dad got older, he became more and more involved in local synagogues in his community. In Kingston he played an active role in the newly formed Reform synagogue, serving as president and in other executive positions over the years. When he made his last move – to Victoria in 2005 -- he immediately became actively involved in Kolot Mayim. He and my mother Marion went regularly to Friday night services. The congregation soon realized that my dad had a great deal to offer in terms of knowledge of Hebrew and of the prayers, and he was quickly enlisted in the ritual committee, and was soon taking his turn in leading services in rotation with other knowledgeable members of the congregation. After only a few years in Victoria he became President of the congregation. He enjoyed working with members of the community, and dealing with the politics and ironies present in any shul, although sometimes the job of President was a bit taxing, as his care for my mother took more and more of his time. After he ceased to be president, he was often on the ritual committee, and he continued to be a very regular attender at Friday night services, both before and after my mother's death. As I sometimes witnessed on the much less frequent occasions when I attended services, my dad was very warm and welcoming to any and all new attendees at services.



After he died, a number of people mentioned that with his inclusive and friendly manner he had immediately made them feel a welcome part of the congregation. He enjoyed the services, and he enjoyed the people, taking a keen interest in what was happening in the congregation, and always providing me with the latest gossip about the community. In addition to leading services, which he did less in the last few years, any Friday night that he attended services (which was almost every Friday night), he was expected to recite the Kiddush over the wine. He sang the complete prayer, in his South African inflected Hebrew, a melody he had learned in cheder in the 1930s, a melody that had been used for centuries before him in the shtetls of Eastern Europe. While I have found it hard to attend services at Kolot Mayim after his death, as his presence remains palpable to me in that context, it is also heartwarming to be in the presence of those I know are also missing such a vital part of their community.

Tzedakah: A way of life.

**Kolot Mayim
Supports Food Bank**

Hundreds of people rely on the various food banks in town. Torah tells us to leave the four corners of our fields for those in need; today, this could be translated to mean the 4 corners of our shopping carts!

I urge everyone to bring a little something to Shul on Fridays for our Tzedakah Box. We support two food banks: Jewish Family Services and the James Bay Community Project Food Bank. There are often sales at the various stores, so surely, one could find a can or package for under a dollar. Check for case lot sales; you could bring one can from the case each week. If everyone brought one can each week, it would go a long way to helping those in need. Thank you for your support.

**Congregational Channukah Party
Somewhat Successful**

Thanks to the efforts of our newly created phone tree, members turned up for our Channukah Family Service and Dinner. Unfortunately, they all came at different times.

As Chair of the Ritual Committee and the one who passed on the information to the Phone Tree Volunteers, I have to take full responsibility for the glitch. It was decided at the Ritual Affairs Committee that Rabbi Louis would lead a short (half hour) service **before** the dinner, and that a sing song and dreidel playing would follow the dinner. Due to jet lag and lack of sleep prior to the RAC meeting, I got it wrong. I am very sorry for this misinformation.

However, we did enjoy a brief Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by a delicious meal, including the JCCV Deli's yummy latkes. Later arrivers, thinking they were skipping the meal and coming for the service, schmoozed and enjoyed dessert. We were delighted to see Bill & Eva Katz, and we even had a newcomer who learned the fine art of dreidel-spinning! BTW, never play with Jack Shalinsky: he sits on horseshoes!

My thanks to Rabbi Louis for a lovely service and sing-song, to Joel Fagan for arranging for the latkes, dreidels and gelt, to Rennie Parrish for his usual 'service' with a smile, and to Lynn Greenhough for leading the Marks/Blakely family and us in an impromptu Kaddish for our beloved Gerry, and to Katrina Hannevelt for getting the Phone Tree up and working. Thanks also to all the volunteer callers. **Julie**

**The Victoria and
Vancouver Island
Jewish Burial
Society**

The Jewish Burial Society of Victoria and Vancouver Island is a service organization founded to assist all Jews with end of life requirements. We administer four totally separate and distinct sections in the Hatley Memorial Gardens and provide space for all persuasions of Jewish life from orthodox to secular, complete with cremation if specified.

The Society works with the Victoria Chevrah Kadisha in preparation of the body for burial, and works with the family in all ways to ensure that the concern and embrace of the entire community for the bereaved.

While we are a non profit Society, regrestfully, end of life does not respect one's pocketbook, and costs are dear. There is a small membership charge that must be paid to become a member of our Society, and arrangements for this, and for burial requirements may be made at any time. We recommend dealing with one's self and saving the pain and expense of the survivors at a very stressful time.

For additional information on a highly confidential basis, call Joel Fagan (250 477-2006), Jack Shalinsky (250 477-1012), or Michael Goldberg (250 598-9094).

**Jerry and Corky
Greenfield**

are coming from Washington State
to celebrate their

50th Wedding Anniversary

with us.

Jay and Katrina Hannevelt

will host an Oneg in their honour

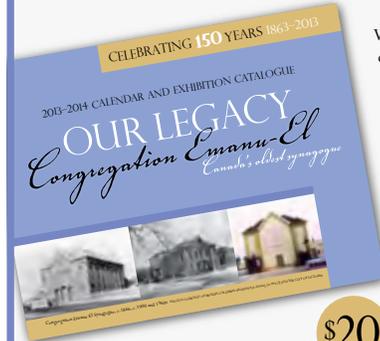
on Friday December 20th.

Everyone is welcome.

*Please come and help us
celebrate this Simcha.*

**The New Year is Coming!
Are you looking for a Jewish
calendar for your home or as a gift?**

To help celebrate our 150th anniversary, we have a 16-month wall calendar, beginning September 2013 complete with Jewish dates, beautiful photographs and accompanying text.



When in Victoria, come by and visit us.

“OUR LEGACY” Exhibit of historic and contemporary memorabilia, textiles and Judaica will be open until September 22.

\$20

SHRINK-WRAPPED
AND READY
FOR MAILING

Congregation Emanu-El, 1461 Blanshard Street, Victoria BC V8W 2J3
Telephone 250-382-0615. To order: info@congregationemanu-el.ca

It's Not a Big Chicken



If there is one thing that is guaranteed to be in supermarkets in November, it's turkey! In fact, many supermarkets even give them away to promote large purchases of other groceries.

As you put the turkey into the oven, take a moment to think about the significance of that bird. Did you know that a vast amount of rabbinic ink has been expended in discussing the kosher status of turkey?!

While the Torah specifically identifies those features that make animals and fish kosher (chews cud and split hooves for animals, scales and fins for fish), it does not specify the identifying features of a kosher bird. Instead it states that one may eat “all the clean birds,” and then lists only the birds which one may not eat (Deuteronomy 14:11-20). This has created a problem because not all the birds identified in the Torah's prohibited list are known today. The Code of Jewish Law (Shulchan Aruch completed in 1563) therefore ruled that only those birds traditionally known to be eaten by Jewish communities were allowed. This included chicken and ducks.

The turkey, however, was not a traditional bird. Turkeys are indigenous to the “New World” and were not seen by European Jews until explorers brought them back from America. As turkeys became more common fare in the general European community, the rabbis began to receive questions about the bird's kosher status. The turkey, which shares many similarities to other known kosher birds – the nature of their stomach, the shape of their beak, the structure of their feet, and that they were not predatory – was deemed kosher by almost all authorities.

So go ahead. Stuff the bird!



Look what our Rabbi's doing now! Volunteering at Our Place. Rumour has it that he burned his hand while ladling hot soup the other day. Be careful, Rabbi!

Photo courtesy of Penny Tennenhouse.

Adon Olam

A short hymn that summarizes the Jewish understanding of God.

By Tamar Fox

Adon Olam is a short piyut or liturgical poem that is recited at various times in the prayer service, but it is best known for coming at the end of Shabbat morning liturgy.

Two different versions exist, a shorter, 10-line version is commonly recited in Ashkenazic congregations, while a longer 14-line version is popular in Sephardic congregations. Both versions focus on the themes of an eternal God, and the speaker's absolute faith in God's providence.

Adon Olam references some of the most famous lines in Psalm 23. Where the psalm says, "I fear no evil for You are with me," Adon Olam repeats, "God is with me, I have no fear." Where the psalmist exalts that "my cup runneth over" Adon Olam refers [Cont'd. p.11](#)



The Holy Temple Menorah

Background Originally, in the Holy Temple, the Menorah was a seven-branched candelabra beaten out of a solid piece of gold. As one of the sacred vessels, the High Priest lit the Menorah every day in the southern part of the Holy Temple. Only pure, fresh olive oil of the highest quality was suitable to light the Menorah.

Symbolism As its unique design communicates, the Menorah endures as a symbol of Divine light spreading throughout the world. To this end, God commanded that the Menorah's goblets be turned upside down on their stems, emphasizing the importance of spreading light to others. This design reflects the Menorah's exact purpose in the Holy Temple, which was to spread the light of Godliness to the entire world, not to illuminate the Temple itself.

The seven lamps of the Menorah also allude to knowledge, with six of the branches representing human wisdom, guided by the center branch of Divine light. To this day, the Menorah's design and the ideas it communicates endure as an inspiration for universal enlightenment.

Since God dictated the creation of the Menorah from 100 percent pure gold, our sages deduced that we must strive for "solid gold" with regard to our motives and behavior. In other words, our shining character traits on the inside should reflect the holy actions we take on the outside, and vice versa. In this way, the Menorah teaches us to bring out every soul's inner Divine light so that we shine internally and externally.

The Menorah's structure also inspires us to embrace holiness. The Menorah begins with a central stem that branches outwards, just as our demeanor, behavior, personality, and especially good deeds should branch out and influence others to illuminate the world around us.

<http://unitedwithisrael.org/>



Adon Olam, continued from p. 10 to God as “my cup of life.” These descriptions of a personal, attentive God dovetail nicely with the piyut’s use of the singular first person. Though the entire congregation in a synagogue often recites it together, the message of Adon Olam is that God is present in the day to day lives of every individual.

The first two words, Adon Olam, are the subject of some debate. Adon means master, or lord, but olam has some ambiguity. In the Bible, olam means ancient, eternal, or everlasting. In modern Hebrew olam means world or universe.

Some translations choose to interpret the first two words as Eternal Lord, in keeping with the biblical Hebrew, and this fits nicely with the rest of the line, that extols God’s presence in the world before any living thing was created. Other translations use the more conventional Master of the Universe, in keeping with the rabbinic Hebrew, emphasizing the theme of dominion which returns later in the sixth line of the prayer.

Traditionally, the authorship of Adon Olam is attributed to Solomon ibn Gabirol, an 11th century Spanish poet and philosopher. However, there is no evidence that he actually wrote it, and some scholars believe the hymn to be at least a century older, going back to the Babylonian Jewish community. It has been part of the Ashkenazic liturgy since the 14th century.

Adon Olam appears many times in the Jewish liturgy. It is part of the morning blessings said at the beginning of each day, and it is said at the end of the musaf service on Shabbat and holiday mornings. Some communities also say it at the close of services on Friday and holiday evenings, and Adon Olam is part of the short series of prayers recited before going to bed at night. One theory about Adon Olam is that it was first written as a piyut to be read before going to sleep because the penultimate line (in the Ashkenazic version) is, “I place my spirit in God’s care, when I wake as when I sleep.” The prayer is also said at the close of Kol Nidre services on the eve of Yom Kippur.

There are countless melodies for Adon Olam, and in some communities it is common to sing the prayer to a timely secular melody (Yankee Doodle on Fourth of July weekend, or Taxman on the week before Tax Day). In many communities children are invited up to the bimah to help lead Adon Olam.

Tamar Fox is an associate editor at MyJewishLearning.com. She has an MFA in fiction writing from Vanderbilt University, and a BA from the University of Iowa. She has worked as the editor of the religion blog at Jewcy.com. She spent a summer as a fellow at Yeshivat Hadar, and was a Senior Apprentice Artist for four years at Gallery 37 in Chicago. <myjewishlearning.com>





OBSERVED DATE	CIVIL DATE YEAR OF DEATH	HEBREW DATE YEAR OF DEATH	NAME	RELATIONSHIP	MOURNER
December 1, 2013	December, 1994	Unknown	Anna Duchin	GrandMother of	Marla Yacowar
December 1, 2013	December 1, 1999	23 Kislev 5760	Morris Hanson	Father of	Anne Hanson Finger
December 2, 2013	December 2, 2008	5 Kislev 5768	Lois Yake	Mother of	Elizabeth Yake
December 3, 2013	December 3, 2004	20 Kislev 5765	James Jardine	Brother of	June Kadonoff
December 6, 2013	December 6, 2010	28 Kislev 5771	Gillean Chase	Friend of	Julie & Reva
December 10, 2013	December 10, 1998	21 Kislev 5759	Janet Devor	Mother of	Aaron Devor
December 10, 2013	December 10, 2001	25 Kislev 5762	John Parrish	Father of	Rennie Parrish
December 10, 2013	December 10, 1991	3 Tevet 5762	Kevin Coleman	Husband of	Michele Butot
December 11, 2013	December 11 2007	2 Tevet 5768	Kathy O'Connell	Sister of	Dan O'Connell
December 11, 2013	December 11 2008	14 Kislev 5769	Zen Glesby	Friend of	The Congregation
December 12, 2013	December 12, 1971	24 Kislev 5732	Mildred Shnay	Mother of	Frederica Bowden
December 14, 2013	December 14, 2006	23 Kislev 5767	Jim Storey	Step-Father of	Martin Hergt
December 17, 2013	December 17, 2009	30 Kislev 5770	Margot Cummings	Cousin of	Rennie Parrish
December 17, 2013	December 17, 1999	8 Tevet 5760	Nancy Phyllis Mundinger	Sister of	Julie Elizabeth
December 18, 2013	December 18, 2005	17 Kislev 5766	Gertrude Laing	GrandMother of	Jenny Laing
December 23, 2013	December 23, 2008	26 Kislev 5769	Max Spigelman	GrandFather of	Avrael Perreault
December 24, 2013	December 24, 2002	19 Tevet 5763	Marlene Gordon	Mother of	Hugh Gordon
December 25, 2013	January 11, 1980	22 Tevet 5740	Edward Quinn	Father of	Susan Halpert
December 26, 2013	December 26, 2004	14 Tevet 5765	Henri Cunow	Life Partner	Lesley Wicks
December 27, 2013	December 27 1995	4 Tevet 5756	Ruth Haidt	Mother of	Wendy Rolph
December 28, 2013	December 28, 1987	7 Tevet 5748	Michael Kelley	Foster Brother of	Jenny Laing
December 28, 2013	December 28, 2012	15 Tevet 5773	Michael Laub	Cousin of	Joel Fagan
December 29, 2013	December 29, 2003	4 Tevet 5764	Marion Small	Aunt of	Rennie Parrish

Click Here for the newsletter archives

December 2013							Kislev-Tevet 5774						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 28 Kislev	2 29	3 30	Rosh Chodesh 4 1 Tevet	5 2	7:30 pm K.Shabbat Service led by Joel Fagan	6 3	Vayigash	7 4					
8 5	9 6	10 7	11 8	12 9	7:30 pm Service led by Michael Gans	13 10	Vayechhi	14 11					
15 12	16 13	17 14	18 15	19 16	7:30 pm K.Shabbat Service led by Rabbi Louis Oneg sponsored by Jay & Katrina Hanevelt	20 17	Shemot	21 18					
22 19	23 20	24 21	25 22	26 23	7:30 pm K.Shabbat Service led by Julie & Reva	27 24	Vaera	28 25					
29 26	30 27	31 28											
<p>Rabbi Louis will be with us when the squares are white.</p>													