



THE VOICE OF KOL EMET

April 2009



“Letting Go”

By Rabbi Howard Cove
rabbicove@kolemet.org

In the Spring of 1948, David Ben Gurion arrived for a meeting of the Provisional State Council, which was the precursor of the Knesset. He was stopped at the entrance by guards who had been given explicit directions that no one was to be let in without identification and without an invitation. Ben Gurion was not just anyone; he was the person who created the Provisional State Council!

Ben Gurion's assistants were furious. How dare those guards require identification from the man who created this institution, whose meeting he was about to attend? However, Ben Gurion silenced their objections. He told them that the guards were right, and he dug around in his pockets until he found the invitation and showed his identification, after which he and his assistants were admitted into the hall.

What Ben Gurion was teaching his assistants that day was that it made no difference that he was the creator of the council. Once the council was created, the members had the right to formulate their own rules, and to enforce them. The rules applied to Ben Gurion; therefore, he needed to follow them.

A similar lesson is demonstrated in the Torah. In the chapters dealing with the construction of the Mishkan, found in the book of Shemot, G-d instructs Moses on exactly how to build the portable synagogue that the ancient Israelites carried with them.

The text gives us the impression that Moses did most of the work. *Vayichal Moshe et hamilacha* – Moses finished the work on the Mishkan. From a series of some 33 verses, you get the sense that Moses, and only Moses, took responsibility for arranging everything. Just when the dedication ceremony begins, the text says, “the

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cloud of glory covered the Mishkan, and the presence of the Lord filled the tabernacle and Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting.”

How can this be? Our tradition tells us how much Moses was invested in the construction of the Mishkan and how he could not enter it. Like Ben Gurion, Moses is denied access to his creation.

The Torah teaches us a rule of life, a rule that many of us have to learn at some point, that if you have the blessing of creating or giving birth to something, it doesn't necessarily belong to you. A novelist writes a book and sells it to Hollywood to be made into a movie – but it is the movie's director that decides how to adapt the novel into the movie.

A man may work for many years to build up a company and then retires. He turns the business over to his children, who will run the company in the way that they see fit. The man has no right to say that it was he who started the company; therefore, you will run it my way. The company is no longer his, and he must accept that fact.

The clearest example of this truth is the dynamics with our own children. We literally give them life, and yet there comes a point when your children want to live their own life, in their own way. No parent has the right to say, "I created you – you must live your life the way I want you to."

The supreme example of letting go what you have created is G-d. According to the Jewish mystical tradition, all that is, was originally a part of G-d. If so, how could there be creation? The Kabbalists say that G-d performed an act of *tsimtsum*. G-d withdrew in order to make room for the world. Ever since, G-d stands outside the world and lets creatures do as they see fit, instead of controlling them. Can you imagine how hard it must be for G-d to let the creatures he has made do things their own way; sometimes harming each other, and harming the planet? Like all parents, G-d must let go.

Shalom,
Rabbi Cove



"Removing the Chametz"

By Rabbi Susan Schein
rabbischein@kolemet.org

In late February, my home was burglarized. I returned home not long after the burglars had fled to discover that my computer, back-up drive, camera, I-pod, jewelry, etc., were all gone. Since then, I have had to deal with the unpleasant consequences of this incident: police report, insurance, replacing essential items...

While I had enough perspective to immediately give thanks that the intruders did not trash my home or harm my cat, this incident has affected me emotionally. In the intervening weeks, I have experienced many of the classic stages of grief: denial, anger, depression, and – slowly -- acceptance.

As *Pesach* approaches, I can't help but think about this incident through the lens of our tradition. The vast majority of us celebrate the festival with our family and friends around the Seder table, yet much of the Passover experience takes place before the Seder, even before the cooking marathon. Yes, weeks before *Pesach*, many Jews begin to remove the *chametz* (leavened foods, such as bread, pasta, cakes, cookies) from our kitchens and homes. The elimination of *chametz* at *Pesach* may simply seem like a stricter form of every day *kashrut* (keeping kosher), whereby certain

foods, such as pork and shellfish, may not be eaten. In reality, not eating *chametz* at *Pesach* is quite different from every day *kashrut*, because it is not that a particular ingredient, such as flour, is forbidden. After all, *matzah* consists simply of flour and water! No, at *Pesach*, it is *chametz* -- flour which has risen -- that may not be eaten or owned.

Why is *chametz* forbidden at *Pesach*? For the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *chametz* is a symbol of the puffiness and haughtiness of ego and self-importance. For Rabbi Moses Maimonides, the great medieval legal scholar and philosopher, it symbolizes that which does not belong, which keeps us away from G-d's service. For the prominent 17th century Italian kabbalist and philosopher, Rabbi Moses Luzzato, *chametz* is symbolic of the evil urge. For Rabbi Shefa Gold, a contemporary spiritual leader, "*chametz* is the sourness, often unconscious, the residue from suffering, disappointment." For my friend, Rabbi Rosalind Glazer, *chametz* represents "the ways in which we've... allowed our hearts to become hardened, like Pharaohs, and indifferent to suffering."

And, so, in anticipation of Passover, the season of our liberation, we remove the *chametz* not only from our homes but also from our hearts. The clearing, cleaning and burning of *chametz* before *Pesach* is the physical equivalent to the inner *teshuvah* ("turning" or "repentance") that we do in preparation for the High Holidays. As Rabbi Michael Strassfeld teaches: "*Chametz* reminds us that we must not be possessed by our possessions – even the most basic possession, our food. *Chametz* cannot be hidden away during *Pesach*; it must be removed, taken out of our lives. We must be freed from all those things we possess, which in fact possess us."

I still hope that the police will find my stolen belongings and return them to me. But, as I prepare for Passover, I know that it is only I who can free myself from my own *chametz*, the haughtiness of ego, the urges, the disappointments and the indifference which possess me and keep me from serving G-d with an open and pure heart.

Chag Kasher v'Sameach!

Wishing you and your family a Happy and *Chametz*-free Passover!



President's Message

By Alan Kotzen
President of Congregation Kol Emet
president@kolemet.org

A reprise of one of my favorite poems:

Spring has sprung,
The grass is ris.
I wonder where
Da birdies is.

Spring is here and with it comes rebirth and renewal. The trees sprout new leaves, the flowers bloom, the grass grows and the robins raise their young. The Phils begin defense of their baseball crown, the Eagles prepare for another monumental draft and Kol Emet I and II take the softball field again. Congregation Kol Emet welcomed the spring with an amazing 25th Anniversary Weekend – celebrating the past and looking to the future.

Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman, our first Scholar-in-Residence, shared with us his views on the Transformation of American Judaism: Ethnic to Spiritual – the Search for an Adult Relationship with Judaism. His message, delivered with warmth, humor and stark reality, was inspiring, motivating and revitalizing. The vision of Kol Emet is to engage its members, create connections and enrich their lives. Everyone who had the opportunity to interact with Rabbi Hoffman walked away with a renewed feeling of engagement, enrichment and connection.

Kol Emet also celebrated rebirth and renewal with the announcement and approval of the slate of officers and directors for 2009-2010. A wonderful, hard-working and committed group of individuals, who have only the best interest of Kol Emet at heart, will take the helm of leadership in June. Let's welcome them and offer them our full support as they prepare to take Kol Emet into the next decade.

Passover will be here shortly, too. As we sit around the Seder table and recall our past while we consider our present, let's be grateful for the blessings in our lives – our family, our friends and our place of worship and sanctuary, Kol Emet.

A zissen Pesach to all.



From Carrie

By Carrie Shames Walinsky
Kol Emet Educational Director
cwalinsky@kolemet.org

Happy April to all and of course a *Zeesin* Pesach! The students are singing their hearts and souls out in our hallways as we prepare for the holiday that surveys tell us is the most popular celebrated holiday for the Jewish people.

Have you ever wondered why the Seder is a tradition that has been part of our heritage for well over 2500 years? Perhaps it has all the right ingredients: first it involves the entire family, second it tells a story, third it involves food, and fourth it has the flexibility to be as creative as you choose to be. Whatever the secret to Passover's success, I wish we could bottle it and apply it to all the Jewish holidays. I have always felt bad for those poor neglected holidays such as Shavuot that are barely a blip on the Jewish celebration screen.

This leads me to believe that we have lost the art of sharing celebrations as a community. Yes, we celebrate family milestones, birthdays, etc., but many lifecycle events and holidays that could be shared with our Jewish community are forgotten. Often Rabbi Cove speaks about his frustrations as Bar/Bat Mitzvah season rolls around. He states that every week he feels like he speaks to a new congregation and how he wishes members of our synagogue would share in the celebrations of our children as a community. One should never feel that they are not invited to a service; they are open to everyone to receive a boost of spiritual fulfillment. I must say that our grade level services this year have been, to my memory, the best that have ever been attended. Perhaps it is the economy or perhaps we need more nourishment for our souls. Whatever it is, Jewish holidays and Shabbat give us the opportunity to keep in contact with family and friends in a natural, non-technological way. Yes, we can call, email or Twitter, but to see and connect with someone face to face is truly quality time.

As we enter the Spring season, I remind you that registration for the next school year is just around the corner. I insist, beg and encourage you to read the registration letter and be sure to fill out the intake form correctly. I so dislike disappointing people, so please know that by filling out and reading the forms it will help with many of those issues.

Remember too that Kamp Kol Emet is entering its 8th season. If you know any beautiful children ages 2-5 that would enjoy a day of fun and outdoor adventure, please share our information. In many ways we are the best-kept secret in Bucks County!

Finally, and on a personal note, Mazel Tov to Kol Emet's founding members, past presidents, current board and future leaders, on 25 years of kindness, appreciation and respectability. It is a pleasure to be part of a positive Jewish community.

Kol Emet Community

Adult Education

Rabbi Schein's one-year Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah class is gearing up for the grand finale morning service scheduled for May 23rd at 9:30am. Our beloved rabbis also offer other advanced Hebrew classes. Art Finkle's Hebrew spirituality class is ongoing twice monthly with seven dedicated students whose feedback has been great. Carrie Walinsky's Preschool monthly PTO Book Club is off and running providing sound advice based on the latest literature for raising our most priceless treasures, our children. Two weekly Torah / Jewish Cultural study groups have been meeting faithfully for years and are presently under the careful guidance of Sherree DeCovny and Rabbi Howard Cove.

We have had plenty of events since the high holidays. The 5th Annual Pot Luck Adult Sukkah Dinner in October with Rabbi Schein and coordinated by Dara Bortman was fun for all, with delicious potluck shared between 28 congregants. Bob Marburg organized another fine outing at the Play & Players Theater for "This Is The Week That Is" in November. Rae Koosman organized a Financial Aid Advisory Panel with Carol Jacobs, Director of College Guidance Barrack Hebrew Academy, and Greg Mitton, Financial Aid Expert from Muhlenberg College, in November addressing multiple opportunities to make college more affordable in these very challenging times.

Dynamic speaker, Jonathan Maberry, a two-time Bram Stoker Award winner, Martial Arts Master and inductee into the Martial Arts Hall of Fame, gave a very enlightening lecture in November at our first *dinner & discussion* on how not to become a victim. He has been training law enforcement for decades on how to subdue a criminal without harming themselves or the assailant.

Special thanks to the hard work of Grant & Elaine Kalson in organizing our second *dinner & discussion*. The play "The Jewish Wife" performed by Sharon Sigal & Arnold Kendall in December in our social hall. Forty congregants participated in a riveting discussion on the life of an interfaith couple in the 1930's Nazi Germany.

Finally, our 3rd *dinner & discussion* topped them all when fellow congregant, Joel Naroff, one of the country's top economists, gave a lively lecture and interactive discussion in February on understanding the economic crisis with approximately 70 congregants in attendance.



Above from left to right: Milton Koosman, Eric Gressen and Joel Naroff at the Feb. 27th dinner and discussion.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Adult Education Director for the last 4 years at Kol Emet. I have had the honor to work with many congregants, educators including our two Rabbis, and teacher extraordinaire, Art Finkle in putting together a curriculum chock full of learning opportunities. In addition, Bob Frey, Judi Pogachefsky, and more recently, Nadine Moses, have been a pleasure to interact with these past few years.

My committee has successfully run panel discussions, speaker series, Sukkah dinners, movie nights and days at the theater. Personal thanks to our present members: Neil Baumgarten, Bill Blacker, Tracy Costigan, Art Finkle, Robert Glatzer, Mitchell Goldberg, Howard Greenberg, Dayna Henry, Mark Henry, Grant Kalson, Alan Kaplan, Rae Koosman, Bob Marburg, Ron Satz, and Burt Sutker.

Please consider attending the next opportunity in adult education at Kol Emet when Sharim V'Sharot, a local choir performing Jewish choral music in Hebrew, English and Yiddish, entertains us on Sunday, May 31st at 3pm.

If you have any suggestions regarding future events or topics, please don't hesitate to send us an e-mail or give us a call. Information regarding the committee is available on the Kol Emet web site. We are all volunteers and welcome new ideas, new faces, and new energy!

For more information please contact:

Eric Gressen

215-497-9075

ericgressen@comcast.net

Sisterhood

The Sisterhood had a great "girls night out"; Wow! There are some talented women in our Sisterhood. The pottery painted at Color Me Mine was wonderful. Do not forget the "end of year dinner" taking place on May 27th at Florentino's on State Street in Newtown, at 7pm. The cost for the evening is \$36. Please RSVP to Susan Mogilefsky at 215-702-1722 or smogil@comcast.net by May 7th. I hope to see many of my "sisters" at this event. Wishing everyone a Happy Passover.

For more information please contact:

Lisa Waldman
215-504-4670
Lisalqt@aol.com

Religious School PTO

Looking for volunteers to assist on the evening of Aleph Consecration on May 15th. If you are the parent of an Aleph student, please consider giving some of your time to make the evening a memorable one. Individuals are needed for set up and clean up. Drop an e-mail to the office if you can volunteer for May 15th.

For more information please contact:

Meryl Shoneman
215-321-2381
shonemanfamily@comcast.net

Communication - Economic Pressures

Down the block from each of us sits a house with an unemployed adult inside – many of them our fellow congregants, friends and family. We all want to help them, but *how*? Well it doesn't take your money or a job opening to make the difference... it takes information sharing. All you need to do *now* is learn how to connect with them. We have a Kol Emet website to do just that. Please surf our private Wiki site to learn what you can do to help. To surf the site contact Brad for the login information. <http://KEcareerrecon.wetpaint.com>

For more information on how to help please contact:

Brad Pedrow
bpedrow@gmail.com

Announcements

Social Action Shabbat

On Friday, April 24th, Kol Emet's Social Action Shabbat will cover the topic of Domestic Violence. Every day, four to five women die in the United States due to domestic violence. The *National Domestic Violence Hotline* and *loveisrespect*, the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, saw a dramatic rise in calls at the end of 2008. Like the community at large, wife abuse in the

Jewish community occurs in all socio-economic levels regardless of background and level of education. As well, no denomination within Judaism is immune; wife abuse occurs in the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist segments of the community.

Linda Meisel, executive director of the Jewish Family & Children's Service of Princeton Mercer Bucks (JFCS) will address the congregation. JFCS is a comprehensive, non-discriminatory social service agency providing affordable, accessible services to a diverse community in need. Ms. Meisel will speak specifically about Project SARAH (Stop Abusive Relationships At Home), designed to address domestic violence. Project SARAH focuses on awareness through community activities, brochures and other materials that provide basic information and resources on domestic abuse and places for help. It addresses prevention through a teen dating relationship prevention program developed specifically for Jewish high school students. It intervenes through mental health and case management services provided as part of the regular JFCS clinical services by professionals who are specially trained and have expertise in addressing domestic violence and related problems. Additionally financial assistance and access to a safe house are provided to victims of abuse.

For more information please contact:

Howard Greenberg
hymizzy@aol.com

Simplified Scrip Program

Buy Gift Cards for the *Passover Food Drive* and for your *favorite retailers* and raise money for Kol Emet! Now you can order on-line, any time, to have gift cards for ACME, ShopRite, Giant, Genuardi's, Whole Foods, Regal Cinemas, Macy's and hundreds of other retailers delivered directly to your home within 7 days!

You spend the face value of the card to do your regular monthly shopping & gift-giving while Kol Emet receives a percentage of the value you spend. Check it out and start contributing to Kol Emet now at <http://www.kolemet.org/ScripMain.asp>.

For more information please contact:

Claudie Williams
215-801-8272
claudiewilliams@verizon.net

Mazel Tov to all of Kol Emet's May Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays

May Wedding Anniversaries

<u>Day</u>	<u>Couple</u>	
1	David & Anne Steinberg	15 years
6	David & Sharon Collopy	17 years
6	Michael & Amy Fitzsimmons	20 years
6	Steve Schoenbaum & Gigi Arnold	20 years
10	Fred & Fran Weiner	23 years
10	Bob Wilczynski & Barbara Shonberg	28 years
15	Dino & Mindy Martin	9 years
16	Edward & Michelle Goldberg	10 years
16	Stan & Melody Katz	27 years
16	Eric & Evalyn Malakoff	22 years
16	Rich & Helene Pizzi	27 years
17	Daniel & Deborah Greenberg	11 years
17	Ethan & Lisa Shiller	17 years
18	David & Jacki Folkman	35 years
18	Ori Zviklin & Susan Rosner	23 years
19	Ken Cottrill & Sherree DeCovny	25 years
20	Jay & Lori Frank	30 years
20	Eric & Barb Shipon	19 years
21	Steven & Sherry Horowitz	20 years
23	Ken & Lisa Snyder	22 years
23	Jay & Lori Weinstein	16 years
24	Richard & Kay Braun	9 years
24	Glenn & Barbara Cohen	22 years
24	Michael & Cindy Epstein	12 years
24	Ken Goldstein & Bette Sovinee	28 years
24	Brian & Debra Stein	11 years
24	Craig & Susan Stein	17 years
25	David & Dina Bortnichak	12 years
25	Richard & Alla Nedelman	7 years
25	Edward & Gayle Sproul	29 years
26	Troy & Staci Brown	13 years
26	Andrew & Heather Finkle	7 years
26	Bill & Dawn Hirsch	19 years
26	Dan & June Wasserstrom	18 years
27	Mitchell & Sherry Friedman	19 years
27	Howard & Allyson Goldberg	18 years
27	Scott & Claudie Williams	30 years
28	Michael & Sherri Leon	21 years
28	Simon Potter & Julie Press	21 years
29	Seth & Wendy Kursman	15 years
29	Howie & Renee Lee	26 years
29	Steve Santarsiero & Ronni Fuchs	15 years
30	Jeff Goldberg & Nancy Gordon	10 years
30	Scott & Maria Goldinger	11 years
31	Joshua & Cynthia Friedman	17 years
31	Scott & Maria Goldinger	11 years

May Birthdays

<u>Day</u>	<u>Name</u>
1	Eddie Brooks
1	Sophia Cramer
1	Alison Frank
1	Evan Kortick
1	David Levy
1	Jared Schwartz
1	Lesley Wons
2	Avikshit Aich
2	Brett Schwartz
3	Andrew Hornstein
3	Alec Pizzi
4	Aaron Goldstein
5	Morgen Rosen
6	Brandon Gold
7	Joshua Baumgarten
7	Morgan Brod
7	Jeffrey Kardos
8	Jennifer Catalano
8	Ava Marandola
9	Colby Brown
9	Lexi Shipon
9	Stephanie Shoneman
10	Lindsay Connors
10	Ross Schwartz
11	Jacob Leibowitz
12	Gregory Levy
12	Jake Mako
12	Josie Stephens
13	Jordan Fash

May Birthdays

<u>Day</u>	<u>Name</u>
13	Alex Potter
14	Mia Armbruster
14	Bianca Becker
15	Amanda Kauffman
15	Jessica Martin
15	Lauren Shain
16	Connor DAmelia
16	Ian Lachow
17	Zenon Petro
17	Arielle Sodowick
20	Rena Paoni
20	Brandon Shain
21	Lucas Cohen
21	Micah Katz
21	Michael Snyder
22	Nicole Blaustein
22	Billy Santarsiero
23	Danielle Cady
23	Jeremy Fash
23	Ethan Stein
23	Emily Tucker
26	Shane Brackup
26	Brendan Cohen
26	Brandon Wasserstrom
29	Mitchell Gold
30	Ryan Albuck
30	Jake Hymson
30	Jessica Seitchick
31	Morgan Pearson

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 This gift is to be in **honor** of: _____ This gift is to be in **memory** of: _____

Send to: Congregation Kol Emet •1360 Oxford Valley Road•Yardley, PA 19067

Staying Informed at Kol Emet

There are many ways we try to keep you informed:

- The Voice: [This Newsletter](http://www.kolemet.org/documents/apr_09_Voice.pdf) (http://www.kolemet.org/documents/apr_09_Voice.pdf)
- www.kolemet.org: Our place on the web. Includes the [calendar](http://www.kolemet.org/calendar.asp) (http://www.kolemet.org/calendar.asp)
- The Whisper: [Weekly Email](http://www.kolemet.org/weekly.asp) (http://www.kolemet.org/weekly.asp)
- Religious school: Materials sent home with your children every week

Make sure all the adults in your family get The Weekly Whisper e-mail.

If your family has more than one e-mail address, please feel free to sign-up your multiple addresses. To get The Whisper, send an e-mail to office@kolemet.org.

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Robin Frank

Attention Kol Emet Business Owners
Advertise in this Newsletter

In the spirit of building community, The Voice includes text advertisements from Kol Emet congregants who have businesses offering products and services. Text ads only, no business cards or graphics. In addition to your text, we will list your name (if not included in your copy) so the reader knows which Kol Emet congregant is involved in the business.

A listing will include:

Name of Company

Address (if business has a store-front location)

Contact (Phone and/or Email and/or Website Address)

Description (50 word maximum)

Cost is just \$10/issue.

Send information to the Kol Emet Office (office@kolemet.org) by the 1st of the month for a listing in the next issue.

CONGREGATION KOL EMET CONTACT INFORMATION

Rabbi	Rabbi Howard Cove (rabbicove@kolemet.org)	215-493-8522 ext. 101
Associate Rabbi	Rabbi Susan Schein (rabbischein@kolemet.org)	215-493-8522 ext. 112
Executive Director	Bob Frey (bfrey@kolemet.org)	215-493-8522 ext. 113
Educational Director	Carrie Walinsky (cwalinsky@kolemet.org)	215-493-8522 ext. 103
Assistant Preschool Director	Susan Kaplan (skaplan@kolemet.org)	215-493-8522 ext. 103
Office Administrator	Judi Pogachefsky (office@kolemet.org)	215-493-8522 ext. 100
President	Alan Kotzen (president@kolemet.org)	215-357-6994
Vice President	Dara Bortman (daramarkb@mail.com)	215-493-0708
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Adult Education	Eric Gressen (ericgressen@comcast.net)	215-497-9075
Communications	Brad Pedrow (bpedrow@gmail.com)	215-321-7890
Community Relations	Sherree DeCovney (sdecovny@decovny.com)	215-493-5837
Finance	Steve Gross (steve.gross@mercerc.com)	215-493-8884
House	David Shoneman (david.shoneman@thomson.net)	215-321-2381
Long Range Planning	Robin Terr (rlterr@hotmail.com)	215-493-0301
Membership	Maggie Myers (amejmyers@comcast.net)	215-295-7581
Pre-School PTO	Risha Neil (rishaneil@aol.com)	215-428-1884
Religious School PTO	Meryl Shoneman (shonemanfamily@comcast.net)	215-321-2381
Ritual	David Folkman (djfracer@aol.com)	215-860-3678
Social Action	Wendy Jacobson-Simon (wellwatched@comcast.net)	215-321-1465
Sisterhood	Lisa Waldman (lisalqt@aol.com)	215-504-4670
Men's Club	Neil Baumgarten (nbaumgarten@vseinc.com)	215-321-3447
Youth Programming	Lisa Shiller (elizshiller@yahoo.com)	215-493-6822
Hilltoppers	Judy Kaufman (hjkman@comcast.net)	215-579-5950