



# THE VOICE OF KOL EMET

November 2009



## Forgive Us Our Virtues

By Rabbi Howard Cove  
[rabbicove@kolemet.org](mailto:rabbicove@kolemet.org)

Fifty years ago, Vardis Fisher wrote a novel with the ironic title, *Forgive Us Our Virtues*. It is a title calculated to puncture the balloon of moral smugness. It reminds us of the harm we so often inflict with the best of intentions, and with the noblest of instincts.

A poignant illustration of this truth is found in the *Sidrah, Vayeshev*. It tells of the bitter feelings that tore apart Jacob's family – a family riddled by gossip, envy, and hatred. Only narrowly do Joseph's brothers avoid killing him, and instead they sell him into slavery. Then they practice the cruelest of all deceptions; they convince Jacob that Joseph is dead.

What was it that so terribly splintered this family? Love! Yes, a father's discriminating love. Jacob, the Torah tells us, "loved Joseph more than all his children... and he made him a coat of many colors. And when his brothers saw their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him. (Gen. 27:3-4).

Had Jacob realized the destructive power of his misplaced love, perhaps he might have prayed: "Forgive us our virtues."

One of the distressing truths about human nature is that there is no virtue that cannot be turned into a vice; no quality which is immune to corruption.

Surely, we would say, fervent religious zeal is a laudable virtue. And yet, anyone who has read Jewish history knows how exorbitant has been the price we have paid for the religious zeal of those who sought to convert us to their faith. They resorted to all manner of coercion and torture and bribery to "persuade" us, and when these failed; when they could not win our souls, they often destroyed our bodies or expelled us from countries we had served faithfully and enriched abundantly with our industry and our genius.

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Did any of our tormentors in a mood of repentance ever pause to pray: "Forgive us our virtues"?

As we come a little closer to home and pause to examine our own lives, we find so many sins which we commit with the best of intentions.

Surely, our love for our children is a noble virtue. But, when we see parents express this love by trying to solve all their children's problems, permitting them to carry no burdens, take no risk, make no decisions, shoulder no responsibility, submit to no discipline; when we see fathers so obsessed with providing for their family's exaggerated security needs that they sacrifice their health, their leisure and sometimes even their integrity, we should be moved to pray: "forgive us our virtues."

Surely, tolerance is a virtue. But, when we become tolerant of the intolerable; when we accept passively circumstances and conditions which should fill us with flaming protest and hot indignation; when we remain

calmly indifferent to public corruption and betrayal; surely it is time to pray, "forgive us our virtues."

Righteousness too easily degenerates into self-righteousness. Candor is frequently a mask for cruelty. Caution can become timidity. Freedom can turn into license. Self-confidence can become arrogance. Humility can become servility. Curiosity makes a good scientist, but a bad neighbor.

Small wonder then, that a keen observer of the mysterious workings of human nature has written: "the enterprise of living means reckoning with the ravages of virtue as well as those of vice. The evil in the world comes not only from unbridled wrong, but also from unbridled good." From time to time we might pause to consider whether we should pray: Forgive us our virtues.



**From The President**

**By Lisa G. O'Rourke**  
[president@kolemet.org](mailto:president@kolemet.org)

### **Making Connections at Kol Emet**

Many dedicated individuals here at Kol Emet are working together to enrich the experience of all members of the congregation by creating programs that provide an opportunity for us to engage and connect with one another. By participating in these programs, you have a chance to you meet a new face and form new friendships. My hope is that our community becomes more connected by taking advantage of the opportunities these great programs provide. I encourage you to participate in any way you can, whether it is a Friday night or Saturday morning service, a family education program, or Torah study with the Rabbis to name a few. Here are some upcoming events in which you can get more connected to Kol Emet.

**Kol Emet's Annual Mitzvah Day – Sunday, 11/1**  
Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup> - various times from 7:30a-3:00p at Kol Emet

Mitzvah Day is a day of service during which volunteers throughout the nation perform one of Judaism's core values: tikkun olam, or repairing the world. Mitzvah Day has become an important date on the Kol Emet community calendar. The only prerequisites are energy and enthusiasm. Bring a friend, join a friend, meet new friends!

**Sisterhood Opening Member Brunch – Sunday 11/8**  
Join the women in our community for a lox breakfast and shopping galore. Jewelry, Handbags, Judaica, Artwork and Chocolate!! 10:30am-1:00pm in the Kol Emet Social Hall.

### **Interfaith Shabbat – Friday, 11/13**

Kol Emet seeks to be welcoming and supportive of interfaith families. Join in a dialogue with Rabbi Cove and Rev. Megan Sutker, a member of Kol Emet, around the question "Where Do We Meet?" With humor, humility, and open hearts, we will talk about navigating life in interfaith families, and in our interfaith culture. A dairy pot-luck dinner at Kol Emet will begin at 6:00pm followed by Shabbat services.

### **Got Israel On Your Mind? Preliminary Meeting – Tuesday, 12/8**

Join other congregants for a preliminary meeting to discuss interest in a trip to Israel, 7:00pm at the home of Jill and David Gordon.

### **"The Shuk" - Israeli Rock Band Live in Concert at Kol Emet – Wednesday, 12/16**

The Shuk is an Israeli rock band that travels the world. Its theme is to preserve traditional music, perpetuate and celebrate Jewish heritage and create innovative new music.

...Save the date!

### **A Synaplex Event – Friday, 12/18**

Engage in a special Shabbat program and celebrate with your friends, families, and the Kol Emet Community as we celebrate the 8<sup>th</sup> night of Hanukkah.

Pot Luck Dinner 5:30pm,

Abbreviated Service 6:45pm,

Program for both adults and children 7:00pm,

Dessert and Jewish Trivia\_for all 8:30pm.

...Save the date!



**From Carrie**

**By Carrie Shames Walinsky**  
**Kol Emet Educational Director**  
[cwalinsky@kolemet.org](mailto:cwalinsky@kolemet.org)

This month seemed to be quite a challenge to decide on what topic I should write. I could write about our amazing Preschool and the patience, love and nurturing our staff provides for children and parents alike. When you have a moment, visit our downstairs lobby, and see our monthly documentation presentations on Jewish Values and Emergent Curriculum. Emergent Curriculum was developed in Reggio Emilio, Italy after World War II. The concept focuses on children's interests as the curriculum base as opposed to a pre-designed curriculum. The beauty of Emergent Curriculum is the energy, excitement, and interest it generates. This month, the Kindergarten class was fascinated with maps. They designed their own maps, read scavenger hunt maps, and thought out what would be included in a city plan. You might ask: what did they learn? In actuality, their unit, which they designed and the teachers scaffold through guidance and direction; resulted in all the basic precepts of Early Childhood education being covered from math (counting, graphing, spatial relationships) to literature (writing, reading and phonemic awareness). It is worth the walk downstairs!

I could also share with you the tremendous restructuring our Religious School has experienced through tribes. In the short month that has passed, we have seen more involvement of our Rabbis. We have celebrated the new month (Rosh Chodesh) as older students mentored younger students in prayer services. Our staff communicates weekly through emails, and our students have shown great pride in their tribe names. In general, we have had a great start! In addition, Confirmation is preparing for their first weekend retreat on November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. The student participation has been outstanding, and they are actively involved in planning their own learning weekend.

But what I really want to write about does not have to do with our most active synagogue members (your children), but rather all I have observed as we move forward and try our best to accept, involve and help improve our community. I hear the word "heal" a lot, almost daily. However, I am not sure "heal" is the correct word. A very active and vibrant part of Kol Emet left our community in pain and disappointment. "Heal" means to make better. As a person who suffered a devastating loss (my sister died when I was 36), I know I cannot heal. Likewise, these people will not heal. They, like me, will need to learn to live, accept and grow from the pain they feel. I have been so impressed with all the outreach and caring our new board has displayed. Every decision is discussed in great detail and debate. It is truly the

Reconstructionist Way to discuss, process, contemplate and decide. This process takes tremendous patience and active listening. I commend the board, and they need your support and admiration for the very difficult position in which they are placed.

What happened under this roof was very ugly and cruel. Kol Emet lost a piece of their soul and character. We all need time. Time to process, grow, and contemplate what occurred. Time to learn from our mistakes, and know what needs to be done, and to accept what happened. Time does not heal; it teaches us to live with the pain, move forward, learn from our mistakes, and become stronger.

This past month, we read the Torah portion dealing with Jacob and Esau; two brothers who fought in the womb, and throughout their lives. But, the Rabbis teach us that they, too, were able to make amends after many years.

I hope that we can all learn from our Torah, and take the time to learn to live and accept what transpired this past summer. But, most importantly, we need to become a better and more cohesive "Kehillah Kedosha," or Holy Community.

## Announcements

### From Carrie – Enrichment Program for Religious School

There are some amazing yet best kept secrets at Kol Emet which I wanted to share with you. Several years ago, I was approached by a group of families interested in an Enrichment Program for Religious School. After research and interviews, we created the bi-monthly Enrichment Program on Sundays. These small classes practice emergent curriculum. Emergent curriculum is student-directed learning. In other words, the students discuss their interests and teachers guide the learning. So, what comes out of this unique process? Aside from a love of Jewish learning and beautiful experiences, I'd like to share with you highlights of past years:

- The enrichment classes led Shabbat Services;
- They created their own service;
- They cooked dinner for their families and wrote their own liturgy;
- They participated in the Jewish Relief Agency and Mitzvah Day;
- The older Enrichment Classes studied and presented units on Israel and the Holocaust;
- The younger Enrichment Classes learned the Hebrew language;
- Together, both classes spent several Saturday evenings at teachers' homes watching Jewish values movies such as "Keeping up with the Steins."

I share all this with you because we hope this program will grow. If your child or you have any interest, please

call or join us for a delightful Sunday morning experience. If you would like to speak with parents of Enrichment students, I would be happy to share their phone numbers with you. In Pirke Avot there is a saying, "Where is learning, there is wisdom." I encourage and invite you to invest in your child's education just a little more and reap the benefits tenfold!

### **Preschool Committee - Come Be Heard**

Please meet in Carrie's office to discuss what's on your mind and hear what's on Carrie's!

Last Wednesday of each month at 10:30 AM (next meeting October 28<sup>th</sup>, then next is November 25<sup>th</sup>.)

Contact: Early Education Chairperson Dina Bortnichak  
215 295-1646 or [Dina@Bortnichak.com](mailto:Dina@Bortnichak.com)

### **Religious School PTO**

*WANTED: Vendors for Religious School Holiday Shop.*  
Do you own a business? Have a craft for sale? If so, consider renting a space on Wednesday Nov. 18th. (4:45 to 8:30 pm) \$10.00 per space and vendors must provide their own table. You keep all of your profits! The congregation is invited to shop for all of your holiday gifts. We have several vendors signed up already: purses, jewelry, t-shirts, Tastefully Simple and accessories will be available. This event is open to the entire congregation! If interested, please contact Randi Davis or Meryl Shoneman.

Have you seen the brand new Jewish American Girl Doll? Her name is Rebecca Rubin and she can belong to you (or your daughter, granddaughter, niece, etc!) The Religious School PTO is holding a raffle and you could win a brand new Rebecca Rubin doll! She is a \$115.00 value!

Raffle tickets are available for \$1.00 a piece or 7 tickets for \$5.00. To purchase tickets, please place a check in the Religious School PTO mailbox (in the office) indicating the number of tickets we should fill out on your behalf, your name, phone number and e-mail address. The drawing will be held on November 19th and the winner notified on the 20th! Just in time for Chanukah! The doll will be on display at the children's holiday shop (Nov. 17th, 18th and 19th). You are welcome to purchase tickets on those nights as well. This raffle is open to the entire congregation. Support the PTO and make someone you love very happy this Chanukah!

### **Sisterhood**

Come join Sisterhood for its opening brunch, a fun day filled with great food and great shopping. The brunch is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 8 in the Social Hall. We'll have lox and bagels from Famous Deli of Holland, and vendors including Visual Effects Jewelry and Zephyr Gallery. Cost is included in your Sisterhood dues. If you haven't joined yet, or you would

like to bring a friend, the cost is \$18 a person and can be paid at the door. Please RSVP to Ellie Fisher at [fishned333@aol.com](mailto:fishned333@aol.com) or Fran Rosenbaum at [fran\\_rosenbaum@mulberribush.com](mailto:fran_rosenbaum@mulberribush.com). Hope to see you all there!

### **Youth Group**

Does your child say he doesn't know the kids in other Religious School classes?

Would you like your child to meet other Kol Emet kids?

Does your child like to have fun?

If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions, encourage your child come to one of our Youth Group events! We have two groups—the Junior Group for 4th & 5th graders and the Senior Group for 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Both groups have several fun activities planned for the year such as bowling, roller skating and movies. We will also be starting our volunteer program at Manor Care in Lower Makefield on Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, from 7:00-8:00 pm, which is a wonderful way for the kids to not only socialize but do a mitzvah as well.

On Sunday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Senior Youth Group is invited to a laser tag party at Ultrazone in Bensalem. Stay tuned to the Weekly Whisper and e-mail blasts for more information.

We hope to see your child at one of our upcoming events!!

### **Kol Emet Confirmation Program**

I'm sure you've heard that there are some changes to the Kol Emet Confirmation program this year. The most notable change is that Confirmation classes don't start until December and will meet every week, Wednesdays 6:30-8:30pm, until March. Kol Emet has also added three overnight retreats, two at Kol Emet and one at Camp JRF in the late spring. These changes were made to enrich and enhance the confirmation program.

One of the key values that we seek to experience through these retreats is Kol Emet's value of Kehillah Kedoshah--Sacred Community. We know that one of the reasons students come to confirmation is to be with their friends. That is exactly the point--we want to give the students and greater opportunity to be with their Kol Emet friends, but bond together and to learn together as a Kehillah Kedoshah. We hope that it is these connections, among other things, that will keep our students connected to Kol Emet as a community and encourage them to make Jewish choices throughout their lifetimes.

The first retreat is open to ALL Kol Emet 8-10th graders, even if you have not enrolled in confirmation. See the Kol Emet web site for more information and to register. <http://www.kolemet.org/Retreat1.asp>

## DONATION LIST

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Nathan Savitz	Rabbi's Discretionary	Paul Savitz
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Harold Roth	Building	Rona Hoffman & Ed Cutler
William E. Green	Rabbi's Discretionary	Bobbie Green
Glenn Rosenberg	Building	Adina, Roy, Josh & Alyssa Rosenberg

<b>In Honor of</b>	<b>Fund</b>	<b>Donor</b>
Sue & Alan Kaplan (Mazel Tov on New Home)	Rabbi's Discretionary	Jacki & David Folkman
Bar Mitzvah of Nathan O'Rourke	Mitzvah	Melody & Stan Katz
Bar Mitzvah of Nathan O'Rourke	Prayer Book	Carol & Harold Kaplan
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Owen Leshner	Rabbi's Discretionary	Jacki & David Folkman

### **Condolences To**

Helene Blacker, on the passing of her beloved cousin, Peggy Hibner

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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/nov\\_09\\_Voice.pdf](http://www.kolemet.org/documents/nov_09_Voice.pdf)) and past issues (<http://www.kolemet.org/monthly.asp>).
- <http://www.kolemet.org/>: Our place on the web. Includes the calendar (<http://www.kolemet.org/calendar.asp>).
- The Whisper: Weekly Email of upcoming events at Kol Emet and in the Jewish community. (<http://www.kolemet.org/weekly.asp>)
- Religious school: Materials sent home with your children every week.
- Shouts: Emails sent to alert you to imminent events and meetings.
- Congregational Meetings: Meet at Kol Emet to both listen to and be heard by your Board

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 <mailto:office@kolemet.org>.

## Mazel Tov to All of Kol Emet's November Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays

### Anniversaries

Day	Couple	Yrs
1	David & Beth Katz	11
2	Edward Cutler & Rona Hoffman	6
2	Scott & Linda Shander	12
3	Marc & Eileen Schwartz	18
4	Bradley & Megan Sutker	8
4	Richard & Jill Weiss	19
6	Geoffrey & Cheryl Gilmore	16
9	John & Andrea Deodati	12
12	Steve & Audrey Kortick	15
14	Tom & Carolyn Mako	15
14	Greg & Nina Mauro	16
15	David & Cindy Harris	17
16	Andrew & Sandee Clibanoff	23
17	Jim Tamura & Sara Organic	18
18	Brad & Sherri Fink	24
21	Eric & Debra Broitman	17
23	Norman & Carol Picker	19
23	Dave & Meryl Shoneman	26
23	Michael Sokoloff & Carol Marke	17
25	Roy & Adina Rosenberg	37
25	Marc & Mary Waldman	20
29	Alan & Wendy Tucker	34

### Birthdays

Day	Name
1	Dana Tamura
1	Mr. Alan Tucker
2	Mr. Edgar House
2	Sima Seidman
3	Alexander Bloch
3	Mrs. Amy Hampel
3	Danielle Lean
3	Ms. Sandra Silverman
4	Lauren Berest
4	Taya Cohen
4	Jared Gaynor
4	Adele Goldberg
4	Ryan Zuckerman
5	Ms. Ronni Fuchs
5	Alexis Leon
5	Ethan Vegotsky
6	Dr. Leonard Schwartz
6	Mr. Cary Weiss
7	Mrs. Deena Catalano
7	Ms. Sherree DeCovny
7	Audrey Goldberg
7	Mrs. Jill Holzberg
7	Mrs. Lisa Waldman
9	Mrs. Cheryl Schram
10	Josh Goldinger
10	Sophia Sproul
10	Noah Stein
10	Avery Wong
11	Samuel Epstein
11	Benjamin Harrison
11	Mr. Simon Potter
11	Mrs. Debra Stein
11	Marly Young
13	Samantha Brown
13	Olivia Kortick
14	Matt Fishman
15	Mrs. Beth Biros
15	Mr. Mark Edelman
15	Mrs. Elyce Rosen
15	Emily Rosenthal
15	Mrs. Gail Vladimir
16	Warren Asplen
16	Brooke Cady
16	Dr. Andrew Harrison
16	Nathan Olhasso

### Birthdays

Day	Name
16	Mrs. Kristin Weiss
17	Daniel Levien
17	Kyle McCormick
17	Thomas Morris
18	Lauryn Cove
18	Brian Soffer
18	Marissa Weinstein
19	Shayna Friedman
20	Dr. Debra Frank
20	David Levien
20	Mrs. Alla Nedelman
20	Ava Nusblatt
20	Mr. Eric Schwartz
20	Mr. Burton Sutker
20	Mrs. Ellen Weiner
21	Dr. Bruce Biskin
21	Justin Horvitz
21	Nancy Santarsiero
24	Justin Friedman
24	Alexa Matson
24	Isabelle Matson
24	Mr. Lenn Yeger
25	Lauren D'Amelia
25	Rebecca Leon
26	Andrew Cooper
26	Mr. Henry Grynberg
26	Mrs. Holly Soffer
26	Hannah Weiss
27	Mrs. Denise Brooks
27	Alex Friedman
27	Gabriella Pearson
27	Andrew Sachs
27	Mrs. Leatrice Weiss-Miller
28	Mrs. Maya Boguslavsky
28	Mrs. Julie Stein
29	Diana Fields
29	Mrs. Maggie Myers
29	Mr. Ethan Shiller
30	Mark Berger
30	Devyn Rothrock

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**TUTORING AND COLLEGE COACHING**

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**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.

Your listing will include:

**Name of Company**

**Address** (if business has a store-front location)

**Contact** (Phone, Email, and/or Web Address)

**50 word description**

Cost is \$10/issue.

## CONGREGATION KOL EMET CONTACT INFORMATION

Rabbi	Rabbi Howard Cove ( <a href="mailto:rabbicove@kolemet.org">rabbicove@kolemet.org</a> )	215-493-8522 ext. 101
Associate Rabbi	Rabbi Susan Schein ( <a href="mailto:rabbischein@kolemet.org">rabbischein@kolemet.org</a> )	215-493-8522 ext. 112
Executive Director	Bob Frey ( <a href="mailto:bfrey@kolemet.org">bfrey@kolemet.org</a> )	215-493-8522 ext. 113
Educational Director	Carrie Walinsky ( <a href="mailto:cwalinsky@kolemet.org">cwalinsky@kolemet.org</a> )	215-493-8522 ext. 103
Assistant Preschool Director	Susan Kaplan ( <a href="mailto:skaplan@kolemet.org">skaplan@kolemet.org</a> )	215-493-8522 ext. 103
Office Administrator	Judi Pogachefsky ( <a href="mailto:office@kolemet.org">office@kolemet.org</a> )	215-493-8522 ext. 100
President	Lisa O' Rourke ( <a href="mailto:president@kolemet.org">president@kolemet.org</a> )	215-295-9212
Vice President	Lisa Shiller ( <a href="mailto:elizshiller@yahoo.com">elizshiller@yahoo.com</a> )	215-493-0708
Vice President	Chuck Weiner ( <a href="mailto:charles@charlesweinerlaw.com">charles@charlesweinerlaw.com</a> )	215-932-0424
Secretary	Melody Katz ( <a href="mailto:mhekatz@verizon.net">mhekatz@verizon.net</a> )	215-752-7705
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