



Kol Aleph

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THE VOICE
OF ALEPH:
ALLIANCE
FOR JEWISH
RENEWAL

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ALEPH Kallah Awakens the Jewish Soul

Lorne Mallin

More than 700 Jews returned to their homes across the United States and around the world from a remarkable experience at the 10th International ALEPH Kallah. Many expressed renewed enthusiasm for their Judaism after the weeklong gathering held from June 30 to July 6th, 2003 at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA.

"I was taken to depths of davenning (prayer) that opened places inside I have never known before," said Carol Ann Fried of Vancouver, B.C., a board member of Or Shalom, one of about 50 communities affiliated with ALEPH. The Kallah, which means "gathering" in Hebrew, is held every two years. The next ALEPH Kallah will take place somewhere on the east coast of the US in July, 2005.

It was the seventh Kallah for Terry Gips of Minneapolis, MN. "I wouldn't miss it as it brings together the leading stars of Jewish renewal from around the world to celebrate, learn, pray and play together," he said. "I have never experienced anything like it, an instant community of people who care about spirituality, tikkun olam and celebrating the diverse tapestry of Jewish life and practice," said Gips, co-

founder of a Jewish renewal minyan, Shir HaNeshamah.

Linda Zweig, Director of Programs for the Jewish Community Center of the Desert in Palm Springs, CA, said the participants formed a community with a renewal vision of Judaism that is inclusive, welcoming and joyous. "On a personal level I studied fascinating Jewish texts, finding myself dancing within them. I experienced the Divine within me and I brought it all home in an expanded heart," she said.

The Kallah offered a choice of 45 week-long morning and afternoon classes plus a selection of one or two session workshops in lieu of an afternoon class. Classes were as varied as "Moving Jewish Communities: Tools For Bringing Dance Into Text Study, Prayer and Activism," led by choreographer Liz Lerman, a MacArthur Fellow, and "The Sword and the Plowshare as Tools of Tikkun Olam: Nonviolence and Violence in Jewish Thought and Action," taught by author Rabbi Arthur Waskow, head of ALEPH's Shalom Center.

Other topics ranged from text study to meditation, music, arts and spirit based activism. In keeping with ALEPH's

commitment to environmentalism and giving something back to the local community, volunteers could opt to spend an afternoon restoring a nearby salmon habitat.

Arlene Goldbard, of Berkeley, CA, vice chair of ALEPH, said she took a class on Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, an early Hasidic master. "He said the antidote to despair is to remember the world to come. How do you remember what hasn't happened yet? By experiencing little foretastes of paradise in the holy moments of this world. For me, the Kallah was one holy moment after another, enough to fill my tank till the next ALEPH Kallah in 2005."

Tamar Jacobs of San Jose, CA, said it was a difficult time for her because her husband Alvin had passed away only a few months before the Kallah. "People were very warm and nurturing and many reached out to comfort me." Mrs. Jacobs was particularly impressed by her class with Rabbi Mordechai Gafni. "He is a gifted speaker, basing his teachings on the Torah, Talmud and the Kabbalah. He went so deep into the material that I was not the only one in class who cried."

(Continued on page 3)

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Dear Ones

At ALEPH we are feeling that so much has changed for the better. Kallah was wonderful, full of the energies of elders and children, Americans, Canadians, and the many who joined us from Europe, Israel and South America. The learning was deep, the davvenen varied and high, the cabaret amazing, and the respect for how ALEPH serves appears to be growing. Elsewhere in these pages, you will see reports of successes, signs of growth, and maturation.

At the same time, we are deeply troubled by what is happening in this wonderful and beautiful world of ours. It is hard to know for sure whether we have abandoned our concern for the environment. Is American military involvement around the world helping to bring peace and security to others or is it a misguided attempt to protect our wasteful consumption patterns? The exhausting roller coaster ride of the "road map" for peace in the Middle East, has us hoping one day that the terror will end and the next day has us despairing. Will these two peoples, Israeli Jews and Palestinians, alike in so many ways, ever be able to let go of this conflict? I live part-time on an island where people collectively and consciously work to balance a comfortable life with a responsible one. Hornby island draws the same complex combination of individuals found anywhere in North America - mixed ages, income levels, values, ethnicities, and races. Some stay year round, others visit for days, weeks or months at a time. In fact everyone is encouraged to see themselves as a visitor and behave accordingly. Water is adequate, even in a dry summer like this one, provided it is used consciously.

In summer, fish are caught in the surrounding waters, organic vegetables are grown on local farms and blackberries are everywhere. There is music, good music, almost every night played by locals who make their living every possible way except through the music itself. Every night 20-50 people gather on the beach to watch the spectacular sunset provided by G!d - each one unique, costing only our appreciation for our daily gifts. When you read inside about Reb Zalman's concept of t'shuvat ha-s'vivah, remember that it is not about becoming martyrs to the environment, just as fasting on Yom Kippur is not about denial and suffering. As the real purpose of the Yom Kippur fast is to allow us to focus, angelically, on an appreciation of our own purity, on a simplicity in living and an openness to our relationship with G!d, so does our t'shuvat, our turning and returning to the world, show us the multiple ways we can feel wealthy and blessed, as we consume less and appreciate more.

We are entering the year 5764, tav-shin-samech-dalet. T'hay sh'nat seeya'atah d-shmayah, may it be the year of experiencing true help from heaven as we struggle to be joyous representatives of the Holy One and bring peace and balance to our troubled world.

Reb Daniel Siegel
Rabbinic Director, ALEPH

From this we learn that when one suspects his neighbor of a fault which was not committed, the one must beg forgiveness; and there is more, the one must bless the neighbor, as it says, *And the God of Israel grant your request.*

R. Eleazar
Talmud - Berachot 31b



From the Rabbinic Director

From the Chair

David Steinmetz, Chair of The ALEPH Board

Recently a well respected ALEPH/Jewish renewal leader wondered aloud if Jewish renewal is as relevant today as it once was. Furthermore he asked if it were still relevant, from where would opportunities for new leadership emerge? Important questions, well worth evaluating, especially now in the High Holiday season. When I look at ALEPH's current work I have no doubt of the relevance of Jewish renewal, now more than ever. I am also impressed by the many venues we provide for developing new leadership as ALEPH serves all generations in our communities. The ALEPH Sage-ing project will provide space for our older generations

to share their wisdom and experience with our younger generations. The Caravan project enables ALEPH leaders to visit local ALEPH communities as well as communities without a renewal presence and expose people to the spiritual possibilities in Judaism. The Keshet program supports twenty to mid thirty year olds in deepening their Jewish connection and growing into leadership roles. The ALEPH Rabbinical program trains and ordains our emerging spiritual leadership. The newest part of our vision is developing an educational initiative for our children, to enrich the Jewish experience of our youngest generation while they are growing up. All of these

programs serve our newly reenergized ALEPH communities. I ask you is ALEPH and Jewish renewal relevant today? Are we providing opportunities for emerging leadership to develop across all generation and communities? I think the answer is a resounding yes to both questions. With God's help and your support we can share in the relevance and continuing growth of ALEPH and Jewish renewal. Wishing you a High Holiday season full of peace and meaningful transformation.

Shanah Tovah,
David

Preparing for 5764 Introduction to the Teachings for the Days of Awe

Rabbi Daniel Seigel

We are told that sins are divided into two major categories. The first are "bayn adam l-chavayro," between people. The second are "bayn adam la-makom: between a person and G'd. On Yom Kippur we seek forgiveness for those wrongs committed against G'd. For those between us and others, we can only seek forgiveness from G'd when we have first received it from the person we harmed.

In his booklet, "A Guide for Starting Your New Incarnation: Teachings on the Modern Meaning of T'shuvah," available from the ALEPH ReSources Catalog (www.aleph.org), Reb Zalman suggested a different, three part division which takes into account the changes in our thinking resulting from the

paradigm shift we are all experiencing. In his approach, we look not at two different realms of reality, the human and the divine, but rather at concentric circles representing different levels of the way in which our human selves interact with the Divine. Rather than thinking about the Divine and the human as separate, we think instead of the Divine permeating all realities, from the most intimate to the most grand.

You will see on pages 4 and 5 that Reb Zalman proposes that we think about our behavioral shortcomings first by what we need to do for the wrongs we commit against ourselves, "t'shuvat ha-guf." Next, we think of the t'shuvah needed in the network of our primary relationships, "t'shuvat ha-chevrah."

Third, we think about our shortcomings and the t'shuvah needed for the way in which we relate to the larger systems that support us, "t'shuvat ha-s'vivah." Reb Zalman also hints at a fourth level, that of t'shuvah for our consciousness itself.

At the beginning of the summer, the ALEPH board asked itself and the members of the Spiritual Advisory Council to look at this reformulation of the classical approach to t'shuvah and to comment on whatever part of it struck them. You will see selected responses along side the text on pages 4 and 5. We hope that you find them useful in your personal and communal preparations and observance of the Yamim Noraim, the Days of Awe. (Turn the page for the teachings.)

ALEPH Kallah

(Continued from Page 1)

Yehudah Winter, of Portland, OR, was moved by his class on "Broken Hearts and Shattered Vessels: The Mystical Quest for Healing and Wholeness," taught by psychotherapist Estelle Frankel. "As part of the healing we did in my morning class, I made a clay plaque of the priest's praying hands and

decorated them with bits of shattered mirrors and round stones, symbolizing that though I felt shattered, I was becoming whole again," Winter said. "One of the lessons in class was that we see the fractures in our life when we are too close to it, but, when we draw back, we see its wholeness and perfection."

Among the highlights at the Kallah was the daily choice of eight different morning services, schmoozing in the

courtyard, the Shabbat afternoon performance by the Kids Kallah, and the ALEPH Cabaret, featuring many well known and loved Jewish renewal performing artists.

Participants could also enjoy shopping in the Kallah gift shop, which featured hundreds of books and recordings as well as a stunning array of Judaica and art from t-shirts to tallises, musical instruments, ritual objects and more. A

(Continued on page 7)

Preparing for the Days of Awe

I accept that my life is exactly as it needs to be at this moment. That does not mean that I do not labor mightily to change things in my life or in myself. But it does mean that I know that I have exactly the amount of energy and wisdom to make the changes I need. It means that I know that while I have some control over everything that will happen tomorrow - I have zero control over what happened yesterday and that indeed everything happened exactly as it needed to happen. Every place you've been you needed to be!! This is how I understand T'shuva. It is a commitment to enormous effort in regard to tomorrow, even as I fully accept yesterday. Rabbi Mordechai Gafni

B'sayver pahneem: Beyond the toxicity of the natural environment is our own, personal toxicity. This goes beyond being pleasant. Worldwide we are becoming a culture of the individual. Interpersonal contact is less civil and more demeaning. I see less patience. I see less graciousness. T'shuvah here can include raising your consciousness about those who are around you. Is my behavior stepping on toes, or is it opening doors? Am I making room for the grace of others? Rabbi Steven Silvern

For optimal harmony with the planet we must eschew purchase of goods produced unsustainably. Consumer demand drives destruction of the Pacific Northwest redwood and fir forests and the resultant degradation of salmon streams. To preserve and restore sensitive eco-systems across the world, we must do t'shuvah ha-k'neeyot — the t'shuvah of buying. Then "all the trees of the forest shall sing for joy." Rabbi Naomi Steinberg

T'shuvah

As a person becomes more and more healed, more and more sensitive, s/he also becomes more sensitive to feelings . . . As the t'shuvah/repentance in *shahannah* / time and *nefesh* / person begins to take hold, as we become more healed and more sensitive by virtue of the process we undergo during the times set aside for reflection, we develop a need to bring our t'shuvah into actualization in every aspect of our personal and communal lives. This is known as *b'chol d'rahchechah dah'ay'hoo* / know God on every path you walk (Proverbs 3:6), or bringing my Judaism "down to earth," in the words of Rabbi Arthur Waskow. The more sensitive I become to the process of t'shuvah, the more it calls for a realigning of how I live on the practical level . . . Now that I have finally been able to do a little bit of cleaning and become more sensitive to what's going on, my sense of being realigned wants to be expressed more and more in life and not merely in ideas.

T'shuvah Hah-S'veevah / Re-balancing the Ecology

T'shuvah Hah-S'veevah has two components: interpersonal and ecological. As social beings, we ask ourselves, "How do I walk down the street? Do I greet people *b'sayver pahneem yahfot* / pleasantly, with a nice face, or do I walk as though I want to shield myself from eye contact?"

As beings in relationship with the earth, we ask ourselves, "What kind of car am I going to get? How much gas do I want to use? How much pollution am I willing to cause? When should I take public transportation and leave the car at home?" We need to create opportunities to recalibrate ourselves to optimal harmony with the planet, because we are already in trouble.

On a daily basis, we can locate an opportunity for rebalancing our natural world, for t'shuvah hah-s'veevah when we say the second paragraph of the *sh'mah*. ("If then, you obey the commandments, I will grant the rain for your land in season" Deut. 11:13-21.) On an annual basis, *tahshleech* gives a special opportunity to do t'shuvah hah-s'veevah, directed by the phrase: *v-tahshleech b-m'tsoolot yahm et kol chahtotahm* / and cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19). Most people think that *tahshleech* is about throwing away. However, from an eco-kosher point of view, this no longer makes sense. Prior to ecology we thought that we could throw things away. Now we realize that we cannot throw anything away; that there is no "away." Instead, what we cast out needs to be neutralized, it needs to be made biodegradable, so that it can be recycled without causing additional pollution. In order to do this, any *ahvayrah*/ sin that I'm throwing away needs to have a moment of, "What did I learn, what good did this *ahvayrah* do for me?"

Realigning: To realign means more than straightening or correcting course. It is positioning to remove a separation or a deviation. This calls to mind at-one-ment (Strassfeld, 1985). We seek to make our ways at one with the One. Each path can be aligned, made One. We remove the separation by our walk, not just by our talk. Rabbi Steven Silvern

If poverty requires us to conserve limited resources due to necessity, then wealth must be its opposite - the ability to consume resources as though they were infinite. When poor, meat at a meal is the mark of luxury. When the best we can do is chicken dinner on Shabbat, then meat several times a week must be a show of wealth. When water had to be carried from a well in jugs, a person's level of poverty was measured by how far s/he lived from the well. You can be sure that poor people used less water. Our water once froze for six months. I had to carry two five gallon pails (100 pounds total) uphill from the well each time we ran out. It was amazing how little water we discovered we needed! With water piped into our homes we run it when not necessary—yet another way we show our wealth.

Collectively we are like an individual who has received a large inheritance - like someone who has moved from a long life in poverty to enormous wealth in a short time. At some point, however, the inheritor realizes that the bounty is nearly gone, no matter how vast it seemed to be. The choice becomes whether to finish spending it down and return to poverty, writing stories and songs lamenting the passing of our wealth, or to invest the remainder in a way that allows it to both sustain us and begin to grow again. Rabbi Daniel Siegel

(Continued on page 5)

Preparing for the Days of Awe

(Continued from page 4)

Birchot hah-shahchahr: We learn from the Shulchan Aruch that the morning blessings were not part of the service, but a recognition of our alignment with divinity in our daily morning activity. We can take back the recognition from service and put it into our daily routine by recognizing where each of our bodily acts are in alignment. When we are, bodily, out of line we can focus our attention and intention to realign. Rabbi Steven Silvern

Teshuva is not just about the Soul. It is much deeper and much broader. Teshuva happens on all the levels of reality, in all the arenas where the One manifests itself in the many.

In addition to the categories mentioned by Reb Zalman of personal (emotional, mental, spiritual), body (physical and neurological) and interpersonal (relationship with others, community, and morality) teshuva, we can add tshuvat tzibbur sevivati upoliti-healing on the level of our cultural, political and social structures, including educational, civic, nation, state and global institutions.

On Yom Kippor we can commit to a form of teshuva practice that fits our lives for the rest of the year. In making this commitment we reclaim our full holiness, which is rooted in our full uniqueness. For a comprehensive practice you simply pick a form from each of the four levels of teshuva. Practice each with deep intention and you are on your way. Reclaiming our selves and mapping our teshuva-literally our re-turn to self-practice is what makes Yom Kippur according to the tradition a time of such great joy.

Rabbi Mordechai Gafni

Mature: Means, ripe, ready. We feel as though we are ready. Tshuvah here is being ready to admit that, perhaps, we are not as ready as we thought we were. Even in old age, are we really ready to look closely at our relationships? Rabbi Steven Silvern

T'shuvah Hah-Guf / The Body Does T'shuvah

In our Jewish tradition, we haven't done very much about developing the know-how to enhance physical harmony . . . Today, knowing what we do about nutrition, what acupuncturists are saying, what we can learn from people who do colonic irrigation, from all the different therapies, and the effects on overall health when you practice tai chi or forms of yoga, when you look at the whole picture you get the sense that we have such a plethora of tools available to us to tune up the *guf/* body. On a daily basis, we have the opportunity to reflect on *t'shuvah hah-guf* during the part of the morning service called *birchot hah-shahchahr / the morning blessings.*

T'shuvat Hah-Chevrah / Correcting the Web of Relationships

We finish adolescence and feel really mature. If we are not living in our parents' home, we feel so much more advanced than when we were at home. Then comes the moment when we go home for Thanksgiving, and all the old habits kick in, stuff that I have with my parents and with my siblings. (The issue of siblings has recently come out as being more *kovay'ah / more what determines people's character than their relationships with their parents.)* What happens is that early family patterns continue to have a strong influence on adult behavior; *ayn bahyit ahsher ayn shahm* dysfunctionality, there is no *mishpahchah / family without some dysfunctionality.*

The question is, when do we look at that? And because of the *k'lal / general principle that the only way to get it together is together, it doesn't pay merely to look alone. One really has to go into a t'shuvah mode with other members of the family and look at the dysfunctionalities to see what it takes to relieve some of the stresses, to make a more functional mishpahchah. That also applies to the workspace, the people with whom I'm working, with colleagues, with teachers and students.*

Our global family, our *gantse mishpacha*, seems to be taking dysfunctionality to new depths. When we sit together as partners, seeking in good faith to correct those aspects of relationship that impede the flow of love, kindness, and mercy, that is the highest form of *t'shuvah*, because the desire to reorient and repair is embraced wholeheartedly, in love and awe. Such dialogue is founded on a sense of deep equality, not that we are all the same, but that regardless of our missteps, a soul equally pure burns within each of us, and all share the potential to live in that knowledge. Sometimes, this recognition of equality is not present, obviating true dialogue. Many of us have the feeling that the mighty presidents and cabinet officers, corporate chiefs and generals are not the least bit interested in what befalls the rest of us, let alone what we have to say about it. We may be relatives in the human family, but it often feels as if these powerful brothers see us as poor relations or even objects, inconsequential and dispensable. At last January's OhaLaH meeting, Reb Zalman spoke of our obligation to rebuke the evil-doer. Whether out of cynicism, fatigue, internalized powerlessness, an excess of moral relativism or fear of retribution (my personal favorite), we too often neglect the *tochecha*, the rebuke that is an essential part of the Days of Awe. I recall an image of Reb Zalman's that affected me powerfully: that even in the most extreme circumstances, even standing in the "showers" at Auschwitz, it is possible to turn to the Nazi guard and say "I still consider you a member of the human community, and I want to tell you that what you are doing is wrong." Rather than distancing the recipient, this type of admonition recalls us to connection, evoking relatedness and kindling the hope of *t'shuvah*. It can never be known whether such a rebuke will awaken the spark of conscience in a bully's breast, but this much we know: without living up to the obligation to rebuke those who are harming the human family, the possibility of redemption recedes. Arlene Goldbard



ALEPH in action

ALEPH Ordains Seven Rabbis and a Spiritual Director

By Debra Kolodny

Matching its largest graduating class, the ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal Rabbinic Program ordained seven rabbis and one mashpia ruchanit-spiritual director, on Sunday, August 3. All were honored at a ceremony at Elat Chayyim, the Jewish Retreat Center in upstate NY. Each of the talented musmachim (ones who have been ordained) bring a decade or more of distinguished professional service to this new career.

ALEPH is delighted to see this impressive group of new rabbis move more deeply into the service of their hearts. Guided expertly through their individually tailored programs of study by the Dean of the Rabbinic Program, Rabbi Marcia Prager, these talented Jewish professionals are a harbinger of a bright future for the renewal of Judaism:

Rabbi Tsurah August, who honed her organizational and management skills as the president of a management consulting firm, and her leadership and teaching skills as a choreographer, performer, educator and arts administrator specializing in interdisciplinary arts prior to her ordination. Tsurah received smicha from the Academy for Jewish Religion in New York City this past May. While pursuing her rabbinic studies, she studied Clinical Pastoral Education with the Jewish Institute of the HealthCare Chaplaincy in NYC. For the past 3 years she was the Acting Advisor to Jewish Students at Vassar College, working with students and staff to help make Jewish life vibrant and meaningful. She is a founding team member of Transitional Keys, an organization

devoted to developing resources for elders in long-term care settings, through the use of ritual and the arts.

Allison Berlinger, who graduated with her BA in Jewish Studies with a concentration in Rabbinics from the University of Judaism. Upon her graduation from the UJ Allison attended the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Allison is currently the Principal of the Brotherhood Synagogue Religious School in Gramercy Park, NY.

Naomi Mara Hyman, who is the Director of Education for Temple B'nai Israel in Easton, MD and the Director of Shiviti: A Gateway to Jewish Contemplative Practice. She holds an M.A. in Jewish Studies from Gratz College and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Pittsburgh. She also has certifications in Jewish Communal Studies and Para-chaplaincy. The author of *Biblical Women in the Midrash: A Sourcebook* (Jason Aronson, Inc., 1997), Naomi is also the co-editor (with Rabbi Arthur Waskow and Ari Alon) of *Trees, Earth and Torah: A Tu B'Shvat Anthology* (Jewish Publication Society, 1999).

Raachel Jurovics, who is the founding Project Coordinator for B'yachad, an intercongregational community service agency. In January 2003, she received smicha as a mashpia ruchani (spiritual director) from Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, and she currently serves as Program Director for Temple Beth Or, a 500-member-family Reform congregation, in addition to her private practice in spiritual direction.



Alicia Fleissig Magal, who received her B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College in French, and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Wesleyan University. She held several creative positions in the Jewish community, including: Director of the Commission on Jewish Arts at the Jewish Federation Council, Education Coordinator for the Skirball Jewish Museum, and Program Director of Temple Emanuel in Beverly Hills. She received ordination in the first class of rabbinical students at the Academy for Jewish Religion in Los Angeles, California in the spring of 2003.

Reuben Modek, who was born in Israel and became an enthusiastic participant with the Renewal Havurah Movement in the 1980's. He acted as leader, artist, and activist with both the Boulder Gesher Or Havurah and the Philadelphia Pnai Or Havurah. Reuben received certification in Otiyot Hayyot, Living Letters, a dance and movement meditation based on the shapes of the Hebrew alphabet created by Judith Goldfarb. He has been teaching seminars in this discipline internationally.

Shula Stevens, who graduated from Mills College, Oakland, CA, with BA in Fine Arts and was a professional harpist. She apprenticed for eight years to master Hazzan Carl K Naluai, Jr. in Sacramento, CA. She is completing her Master's Thesis on "Interaction of the Taamim with the Narrative Line of Torah - Spiritual Insights" at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA. Shula has worked as an educator, hazzan, and student rabbi for 13 years, serving in Reform and Conservative congregations.

Reb Zalman says:

While I could not be physically present at the latest group of ordinands, I was with them on the phone. They are some of the most bright, spiritual, savvy and dedicated rabbis I had the honor of transmitting to. They bring seasoned life experience together with intensive study and expert knowledge to their task. Thank God, I get a glimpse now of what others will yet see in



them, and what I see makes me deeply happy.

In addition to the above new rabbis, **Rayzl Feuer** received smicha as a Mashpia Ruchani (Spiritual Guide). She is already leading a newly formed chavura.

The ALEPH Rabbinic Program continues to grow. Several new projects and programs have been initiated and others strengthened as we continue to develop and enrich our rigorous curriculum. These projects include teleconference

courses. The Rabbinic Pastor Program, the Cantorial Track and the Davvenen Leadership Training Program. Visit these websites to learn more.

ALEPH Rabbinic Program:
www.aleph.org

Check out our Alumni at:
www.alephstudents.homestead.com/alumni.html

Teleconference courses:
www.alephrabbinic.homestead.com

Davvenen Leadership Training Institute:
www.DLTI.homestead.com

ALEPH Rabbinic Director, Rabbi Daniel Siegel's Kavanah for the Semicha Ceremony

I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to me (Exodus 19:4)

For who else is such a great nation that has God so near to it as Yhvh our God in all our calling? (Deut. 4:7)

We are the people called from the slavery of Egypt, carried on the wings of Sh'chinah, to be among those who witness to the presence of the Divine in this world.

And so, Moshe received Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Y'hoshu'a, who in turn transmitted Torah to the elders who transmitted Torah to the prophets who in turn transmitted it to the men of the great assembly.

Over time, the linearity of this transmission, the laying on of hands, s'micha, from one generation of men to another, became diffused as we wandered, spread out over the world, and as the number of our teachers who nourished disciples grew.

For many, being a rabbi finally became a degree, a measure of the intellectual mastery of a body of material which, in turn, conferred power and authority.

For us, becoming a rabbi means acknowledging a belonging to a lineage, an expression of a willingness to serve others as both model and guide of spiritual practice and development in this moment of a great shifting of paradigms.

Today, we welcome our latest initiates into the new lineage of Jewish spiritual renewal – drawing deeply on the wisdom of those who have preceded us and particularly on the devotional mystics of Eastern European Hassidism, given first expression and form by our beloved Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. Now, we lay the hands of s'micha, of trust and confidence, on both women and men equally, with loving regard for multiple possibilities of sexual orientation and life choices, in keeping with our commitment to

voluntary negotiation of the dynamic, ever fluctuating balance between individual practice and communal cohesion.

Miriam received Torah at Sinai and passed it to Machlah, No'a, Chaglah, Milkah and Tirzah, the daughters of Zelaphchad, who passed it to Devorah who gave it to Hanna who passed it to Michal bat Shaul, eventually received by B'ruriah and transmitted to Hannah Rachel of Ludemeria and, now, surfacing again, walking side by side and sharing the light equally with the parallel lineage of men with which we began. We are humbly grateful for this moment of living in the fulfillment of our age-old dream:

May the light of the moon be like the light of the sun and like the light of the seven days of Creation.

May the lights of men and women, in all their multiple, varied and wonderful forms, grow ever stronger in the bond of open partnership.

Amen.

ALEPH Kallah

(Continued from page 3)

best seller was the extraordinary new CD, "Life of the Worlds," by Cantor Richard Kaplan, of Oakland, CA, which is available on-line at this site: www.soundswrite.com. For Jean Katz of Los Angeles, the Kallah was a family affair. "The greatest highlight of the Kallah for me and my husband was that it served as a three-generation family

camp for us, our son and daughter-in-law, and six-year-old grandson," she said. "Our grandson was so happy in the Kids' Kallah that he cried, 'I want to be in child care,' when we wanted to take him out to dinner with us one night."

Our sages teach us that Olam HaBa, the World to Come will be just like the world we currently inhabit, except that we will perceive it differently, fully

awake to the interconnectedness of all things and beings. ALEPH's intention in designing the Kallah is to provide a taste of Olam Haba, not as an escape from a troubled world but as space and time for renewing our spirits, hope and commitment so that we can go back into our daily lives inspired and energized to live more fully in the presence of G!d. By all reports, the 2003 Kallah fulfilled our highest expectations.

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