

The MCJC shul is located at 15071 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA.
Send mail to P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA 95456.

Call the MCJC at (707) 964-6146
email: sarah.nathe@gmail.com

website: <http://www.mcjc.org>

RABBI'S NOTES



I recently read--and then re-read and then sent to my friends and then read again--an essay by Leslie Jamison in the **New York Times Magazine** (1/21/2018) called "Get Angry." Jamison begins: "For years I described myself as someone who wasn't prone to anger. 'I don't get angry,' I said. 'I get sad'."

Many times I've said something similar about myself. Not usually "sad" in my case, but something more like withdrawn, aloof, quiet. I don't get angry; I pull inward while the roiling goes on around me. I watch other people misbehave, and I wait on the sidelines, with a little hidden eye roll, until they get it out of their undisciplined and undignified systems. "I don't get angry; I get superior" is my private pathology (which I'm secretly a little bit proud of).

But these behaviors aren't as private as we might think, says Jamison. She describes the social rewards of sadness and the penalties of anger, especially for women: literature and popular culture look at sad women as refined and delicate, while angry women are seen as messy, uncouth and dangerous. She says: "It's easy to misunderstand the self as private, when it's rarely private at all; it's always a public artifact, never fixed, perpetually sculpted by social forces."

I'd love to quote this whole essay here. Instead I'll report that I read it in the evening, tossed and turned with wild dreams all night and I woke up the next morning furious. I'd been worrying and fretting and trying to rise gracefully above a certain situation for months, and that morning I got out of bed and took the bull by the horns. I took a decisive step to solve the problem.

Good idea? I don't know. We'll see. But I do know that, by allowing myself to feel my anger, I extricated myself for a couple of days from that familiar morass of eye rolling and false nobility that is my fatal fallback. I'm happy about that.

Anger is spiritually controversial. There are persuasive arguments pro and con. I just now reread a little parable I have long loved, from **Everyday Zen** by Charlotte Joko Beck:

Suppose we are out on a lake and it's a bit foggy -- not too foggy, but a bit foggy -- and we're rowing along in our little boat and having a good time. And then, all of a sudden, coming out of the fog, there's this other rowboat and it's heading right at us. And... crash! Well, for a second we're really angry -- what is that fool doing? I just painted my boat! And here he comes -- crash! -- right into it. And then suddenly we notice that the rowboat is empty. What happens to our anger? Well, the anger collapses.... Now our encounters with life, with other people, with events, are like being bumped by an empty rowboat.

Meanwhile I find myself mulling the powerful title of an essay I read centuries ago, by the Christian liberation theologian Beverly Wildung Harrison: "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love." I can't find the book right now (what freaking empty rowboat has been coming and hiding my books!?), but I found this gorgeous passage online:

...what is authentic in the history of faith arises only out of the crucible of human struggle. This is the central, albeit controversial, methodological claim of all emergent liberation theologies. That the locus of divine revelation is in the concrete struggles of group and communities to lay hold of the gift of life and to unloose what thwarts life has astonishing implications for ethics. It means,

among other things, that we must learn what we are to know of love from immersion in the struggle for justice.

When I am sad or aloof or contemptuous, I do not engage in struggle. I watch from the shore while the boats crash into each other. Perhaps I think about some kind of gentle comfort I can offer once the boats sink and the rowers swim to shore. Sometimes, probably often, it is wise to avoid struggle, especially in the zone of personal relationships. Certainly in the public and political realm we are surrounded with bad examples of people acting from unexamined, untempered rage. I don't think that we need more acting out in our public realm at this time.

But then there are times to struggle, both in the private and public realms: times to intervene in a situation and try to make it better, times to get into the mud, swim out there into the deep water and give that renegade boat a push.



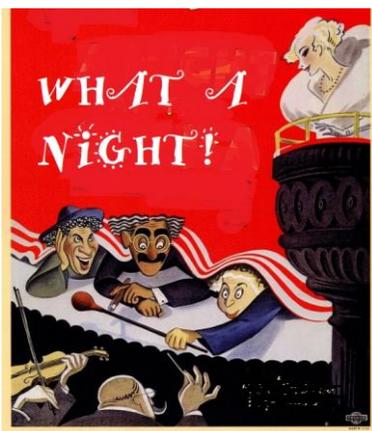
Yet even as I write this it occurs to me that I am reflecting on the wrong question. The question for me is not a strategic or ethical question about whether or not to be angry; it is about admitting that I am sometimes angry, however much I try to pretend that I am not. Caroline Isaacs, our community's friend and teacher of *Mussar* (the Jewish practice of cultivating soul qualities) talks about identifying the *middah*--the soul quality--that we need to work on in a given situation. I looked over several lists of *middot*: patience, generosity, humility, trust, moderation.... The one that I think best pertains to me right now, as I contemplate anger and reckon with my own, is *emet*, truth. I am a person--a woman, at that--who sometimes gets angry. Only when I concede that can I try to figure out how to move from anger towards generous and useful action or restraint from action.

Jamison writes: "Confronting my own aversion to anger asked me to shift from seeing it simply as an emotion to be felt, and toward understanding it as a tool to be used: part of a well-stocked arsenal."

Anger is "an owning of accountability," says Jamison. A tool which, used well, illuminates a world of mutual obligation, in which people are accountable to each other, I to you and you to me. It says that the boats on the pond are not empty. They have pilots, and all owe each other safety and space and comfort in the water. I hesitate to celebrate the tool of anger because overused anger sees everyone as a careless boater and every bruise as a sign of having been rammed. But I think I can be glad it has a place in my toolbox. There is, I think, a role for anger in waking me up in the morning and saying, "This ramming has to stop! Now!"

Good morning!

MAYHEM IN SHUSHAN



On Wednesday, February 28th, from 6:00-7:30-ish PM at the shul, we will celebrate Queen Esther and her starring role in the survival of the Persian Jews. The curtain will rise on a Purim spiel to top them all! It will soar to new levels of ridiculousness.

To join in, come in your top hat and tails, or your shimmering ball gown, or your sequined tux, and bring your opera glasses. If you have any musical instruments (including kazoos, two pot lids, or a bottle of beans), bring them along.

There will be a light dinner and our traditional delicious hamantaschen.

Casting call: if you want a starring role yourself, if you can almost hear the roar of the greasepaint and feel the heat of the spotlight, please contact Margaret at 937-5673 or mholub@mcn.org.

RESPECT FOR THE DEAD

For MCJC member Bob Evans, serving on the Hevra Kadisha and performing *Tahara* has been a very powerful experience. "I have been doing it for over 16 years and it has changed the way I think about death. It's also helped me to become more spiritually connected." According to Bob, the Jewish traditions for death and mourning are powerful and sensible practices:

- ◆ Bury the dead as soon as possible;
- ◆ Funerals should be simple and the same for both rich and poor;
- ◆ The Jewish community cares for the body (*met* or *metah*) with great respect, washing and dressing it in shrouds, and watching over it until the burial takes place;
- ◆ The *met* should be allowed to return to the dust whence it came as quickly and naturally as possible;
- ◆ After the burial, mourning is recognized as a lifelong process, with prescribed periods for the various states of grief.

Burial societies have existed within Jewish communities since at least 320 CE, when they were mentioned in the Talmud. A group within the Jewish community, the Hevra Kadisha (Holy Society), takes charge of the details and the body. It is a great kindness for a grieving family not to have to worry about the details of a funeral, to be allowed to grieve in a focused and undistracted way.

Ashkenazi Hevra Kadishas have been around since at least 1564 CE, when records show one chartered in Prague. During the early 20th century the funeral industry developed in the United States and many American Jews went along with the trend of turning care of the dead body over to a mortician. But Orthodox communities continued the Hevra Kadisha traditions.

In the 70s and 80s, in response to Jessica Mitford's book, *The American Way of Death*, and as part of a renewed interest in traditions, many Reform and Conservative congregations started Hevra Kadisha groups. MCJC was among them, with its Hevra Kadisha forming in 1990. Since 2000, there has been a national Chevra Kadisha organization, *Kavod v'Nichum* (Honor and Comfort).

Throughout Jewish History being a member of the Hevra Kadisha has been a great honor. These men and women are on call 24 hours a day to ensure that the laws and traditions of Jewish burial are followed. Their greatest concern is the modesty, dignity, and sensitive care of the deceased. Bob Evans says that, in some ways, it is the ultimate kindness, one without possibility of an earthly reward.

The MCJC Hevra Kadisha maintains a low profile, but comes together at times of need. Members perform a variety of functions depending on their capabilities and inclinations. People are always needed. They make phone calls (to alert the community that a funeral is scheduled), sit *Shomer* (stay with the casketed *met* in shifts until the burial), and perform *Tahara* (the washing and dressing of the *met*). If you are interested in serving or would like to know more, please contact Joan Katzeff (jkatzeff@mcn.org), Donna Montag (Montag@mcn.org), or Rabbi Margaret Holub (mholub@mcn.org).

KABBALAT SHABBAT



We will meet Friday, February 23rd at Paul and Joan Katzeff's house on Road 409 east of Caspar. To RSVP and get directions, please call 964-9161. In March we will be at the home of Carol and Jerry Greenberg in Mendocino.

All gatherings begin at 6:00 PM and include a short service with a vegetarian potluck following.

We need hosts starting in the fall; if you would like to offer your home for a Friday gathering, contact Mina Cohen at 937-1319 or mcohen@mcn.org.



READING HESCHEL TOGETHER

Our study group reading the beautiful teachings of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 5:30-7:00 PM at the shul. Our February meetings will be the 6th and 20th. This month we are reading the luminous *Man is not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion*. We ask for a \$36 donation from each participant, but no one will be turned away for less than that.

LEARN TO READ HEBREW IN ONE DAY



and friends at the Seder!

Mina Cohen will be teaching “While Standing on One Foot,” an ingenious and fun full-day course to learn the basics of reading Hebrew. The class will be Sunday, March 18th from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Breakfast will be served and we’ll make it a potluck vegetarian lunch. Since Passover begins on the 30th, this class offers a great opportunity to practice and impress your family

The cost for this class will be \$36; checks should be made payable to MCJC and mailed to P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA 95456. Since a textbook has to be prepared, you must RSVP for this class in advance. Deadline to RSVP is Sunday, March 4th. Even if you contacted Mina to let her know you were interested, you must now confirm that this date works for you. She can be reached at mcohen@mcn.org or (707) 937-1319.

ELDERS’ CONVERSATION

The Elders’ Conversation meets every second and fourth Tuesday, 2:30-4:30 PM at the shul. We will meet February 13th and 27th. The theme for the 13th will be “connection.” The theme for the 27th is TBA. As always, people of all ages are warmly welcome to attend.

IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

The MCJC Justice Group will meet on Thursday, February 15th, 5:30-7:30 PM at the shul. We have much justice to make! When the date gets closer, those on the Justice Group e-mail list will get an agenda; if you’d like to be on the list and aren’t already, please let Margaret know at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673.



Jeannette Rasker, one of the leading fund raisers and organizers of the *Citizen Scholarship Project*, has reported some disturbing news from Anne Thomas, the instructor of the Citizen Class offered by the Coastal Adult School, Fort Bragg Unified School District. Though all the students who submit the application to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service are legal immigrants, the national atmosphere of xenophobia is adversely affecting even legal immigrants. The wait between application acceptance and the exam is now roughly nine months, and the exam is just one step among extensive background checks and interviews that could make the most outstanding applicants hesitate to complete the process. Despite these obstacles, Anne hopes to see some new citizens from her student group in late spring or summer of this year. To date, the Justice Group has issued ten scholarships and has enough in the project’s fund for approximately 20 more. This ought to carry the project through 2018.

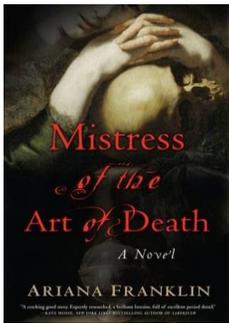
HOW TO EAT LIKE QUEEN ESTHER



Not only did Esther outwit the evil Haman and save the entire Jewish population of Persia, but, according to Judy Zeidler in the *Los Angeles Times*, she did it all as a vegetarian. Or, by today’s standards, a vegan. Tradition has it that, when Esther married King Ahasuerus and moved into the palace, in order to keep secretly kosher, she ate only fruits, nuts, beans and grains. Poppy and caraway seed pastries were her favorites. In keeping with this, when you celebrate Purim this year, think of a menu of socca, a spring salad of fennel and lima beans, mushroom-barley soup, and a caraway bundt cake. The

Provençal dish socca is made with ground chickpea flour, olive oil, and water. Along the Italian Riviera it is called farinata, and served at lunch topped with chopped tomatoes and capers. Accompany it with a Côtes de Provence dry rosé, and you will feel like you’re living in a palace.

BOOK GROUP



We will meet Monday, February 26th to discuss *Mistress of the Art of Death*, a novel by Ariana Franklin. In 1171 in Cambridge, England, four children have been murdered. Wrongly accused of the crimes, a small community of Jews threatened by Catholic mobs is given sanctuary by Henry II. To assist in proving their innocence, he summons an expert in the science of deduction and the art of death. She is Adelia, a prodigy from the Medical School of Salerno, who is forced to hide her identity and her purpose from the superstitious mobs. Sir Rowley Picot is one man who is willing to work with her, but his stake in the investigation makes him both an invaluable ally and a suspect as well.

From navigating Cambridge's perilous river paths to penetrating the dark shadows of the Church, Adelia's investigation will reveal not only the secrets of the dead, but also the far more dangerous ones buried by the living.

We meet at 2:00 PM; please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 for information on location. The books are available at Gallery Bookshop; you receive a 10% discount when you say you are in the MCJC book group.

MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:30 PM at the shul. The February meeting will be on Thursday, the 22nd. If you would like to attend, please leave a message on the phone at the shul, 964-6146.

THANKS TO NEWSLETTER MAILERS

Nona Smith and Art Weinger prepared the January newsletter for mailing. Such a mitzvah! If you volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, you can do it at home, or another spot of your choosing, in about two hours. Contact Sarah at 962-0565 or sarah.nathe@gmail.com.

MEGILLAH SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Mendocino *Megillah* is published in two formats: hardcopy and emailed PDF. You can subscribe to the hardcopy version and have it mailed to you, you can subscribe to the email version, or you can receive both. Any information on changes in mailing address, changes in email address, and changes in email notifications should be sent to Sarah Nathe at sarah.nathe@gmail.com. If you choose not to be a contributing member of MCJC, we request a \$25 annual fee for the *Megillah* hardcopy or email. You will also find the *Megillah* posted on the MCJC website at <http://www.mcjc.org>.

GREAT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS



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In honor of Rabbi Margaret Holub by Kent Hoffman; In honor of Alix Sabin's retirement from Bubbe & Janelle.

In memory of Jane Marcus by Jan & Marc Wasserman; In memory of Irv Kreisberg, father of Deena Zarin, on his passing in his 100th year by Marilyn Kreisberg; In memory of Irv Kreisberg by Mina Cohen and Dr. Jeff Berenson; In Memory of Kim Hayes by Susan Tubbesing & Sarah Nathe; In memory of Henrietta Freedman, Irv Winesuff's sister, by Mina Cohen & Dr. Jeff Berenson; In memory of Kim Hayes by Mina Cohen & Dr. Jeff Berenson; In memory of Emille Drooker, mother of Nancy Drooker, with much love from Sharyn Saslafsky & Jan Half;

To the Adele Saxe Tzedekah fund by Susan Tubbesing & Sarah Nathe.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE BUILDING

Pledges and contributions to the Capital Campaign have been received from the following: Susan & Gary Levenson-Palmer; Susan Tubbesing & Sarah Nathe; Karen & Leonardo Bowers; Rio Russell; Rachel Lahn; Dr Mark & Deana Apfel; Suzy Lampert; Theresa Glasner; Rick & Nancy Banker; Mindy Rosenfeld; Norm & Karen Rosen; Roger & Fran Schwartz; Carolyn Metz; Mark Gardner; Sharon Shapiro & family in honor of Michael Shapiro; Annie Lee; Holly Tannen; Susan Juster; Joan Selchau; Roslyn & Bruce Moore; Roz Keller; Fanshen Faber; Danny Mandelbaum & Benna Kolinsky; Rosalie & Art Holub; Herman Seidell; Marc Yasskin.



Thanks to all who have contributed, we have secured almost \$53,000 of our \$75,000 target. If you haven't yet donated, or are able to increase your support, now is the time! We hope to call all those who have not yet given so we can achieve 100% participation. Please indicate **Capital Campaign** on your check.

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP IN MCJC

Everyone who lives on the Mendocino Coast, and desires to be a member of MCJC, is one. The MCJC Board has set a goal of having every household become CONTRIBUTING members in 2018. We have memberships at Regular, Limited Income, and Family levels, as well as any level possible for you. Please mail your donations to MCJC, Box 291, Little River, CA 95456, or use PayPal on the MCJC website.

When you contribute in memory or honor of someone, an acknowledgment card will be sent to the individual or family. Please include their name and mailing address. Contact Donna Montag at montag@mcn.org

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Mendocino Megillah* is published monthly. The deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month before publication. The editor will include all appropriate material, space permitting, with the exception of copyrighted material lacking the permission of the author. Divergent opinions are welcome. Material printed in the *Megillah* does not necessarily represent the policy or opinions of the MCJC Board of Directors.

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Frankie's Pizza and Ice Cream Parlor: Homemade pizzas, Cowlick's ice cream, and other yummy things to nosh on. Beer and wine available. Live music weekly; all ages welcome. Open daily from 11:00 am - 9:00 pm at 44951 Ukiah Street, Mendocino, 937-2436. www.frankiesmendocino.com

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Phoebe Graubard: Attorney at Law. Wills, trusts, probate, conservatorships. 594 S. Franklin, Fort Bragg, 95437. 964-3525. www.phobelaw.com Member National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys. Wheelchair accessible.

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Raven Deerwater, EA, PhD: Tax practitioner. Specializing in families, home-based & small businesses, & non-profit organizations. 45121 Ukiah Street, Box 1786, Mendocino. Tel: 937-1099. Email: raven@taxpractitioner.com
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Outreach (new to the community)	Susan Tubbesing*	962-0565	susan.tubbesing@gmail.com
Culture (films/ speakers/ Women's Retreat)	Harriet Bye*	937-3622	bysawyer@mcn.org
Treasurer (finance and donations)	Donna Montag*	877-3243	montag@mcn.org
MCJC Website	Mina Cohen	937-1319	mcohen@mcn.org
Kabbalat Shabbat coordinator	Mina Cohen	937-1319	mcohen@mcn.org
Volunteer Coordinator	Susan Levenson-Palmer*	882-1750	slevensonpalmer@gmail.com
Building Maintenance	Marnie Press*	937-1905	marniepress@gmail.com
Secretary	Raven Deerwater*	964-8333	raven@taxpractitioner.com
Justice Group Treasurer	Nancy Harris*	964-4824	nancyh@mcn.org
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Name & Address, Subscription Changes	Sarah Nathe	962-0565	sarah.nathe@gmail.com
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