

Happy New Year!

The new year began not with a bang but with a beautiful baby naming ceremony at our January Shabbat services in honour of Noah. As Shana Malinsky and Kathryn Eve looked on with radiant smiles, Rabbi Eli welcomed the newest member of our circle with a blessing and communal best wishes. As Noah prepares to step into the world, DJC member Sheri Cohen stood up and shared reflections sparked by her 50th birthday in a D'var Torah that was honest, heartfelt and inspiring.

With such a rich beginning, you might think Noah and Sheri would be a hard act to follow. Fear not. We've been cobbling together a series of events large and small that will keep you as engaged as you want to be. For all the particulars, please read ahead for specifics or watch for details in upcoming newsletters.

What's In a Name?

Rabbi Eli Kukla



This month Jewish communities all over the world have just completed reading the book of Genesis and begun the book of Exodus. This second book of the Torah is all about resisting oppression. An important message of the book is lost when we use its English name. The English name "Exodus" highlights leaving Egypt, the main event of the book. The Hebrew name, *Shemot*, "Names," points to what the book is really about -- the failure to know people "by name" leads to slavery and oppression, while the recognition of others' true names plants the seeds of freedom.

In last week's portion, the book of Genesis closes with each of Joseph's brothers being named individually. However, with the passing of generations, we are told of a significant change: "A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph [*asher lo yada et Yosef*] . . ." (Exodus 1:8). The failure to know Joseph "by name" is the reason given in the Torah for the Egyptians' ruthless treatment of the Jews and why they were imposing forced labor upon them (Exodus 1:9–14).

The Jews had become nameless members of a group to which the Egyptians could scapegoat and enslave. Rabbi Nancy Weiner writes: "The refusal to acknowledge one's name, one's individuality, is but the first step in a process that allows for devaluation, prejudice, and oppression to develop and thrive, a

process as old as the first chapters of Exodus and as fresh as this week's front page news."

The first few chapters of the book of Exodus do not just tell the story of alienation and slavery, but also describe how the seeds of freedom were planted. The Pharaoh decreed that all male Israelites should be killed at birth. If all the Egyptians had followed Pharaoh's orders Jewish history would have ended right there. But two Egyptian midwives, Shifra and Puah, engaged in civil disobedience and shelter and protect the infants.

In the terse Torah very few women are identified by name – we never learn the name of Lot's daughters or Noah's wife. So, why are these two Egyptian midwives mentioned by name? I think it is because they risked their lives for the sake of the individuality of these foreign babies. They do not see them as a problem to be eliminated, but a story waiting to unfold and the Torah honors this choice by remembering them by name, signaling the uniqueness of their individual stories.

Here at the DJC many of us know each other by name, by face, by story. This is one of the things that has historically built this community and made us so vibrant. It is what makes people feel like they are entering a community that is doing something human and different when they walk in the doors of our services and events. However, our community is growing quickly and even some of the most long-standing leaders of the DJC might find that there are new "nameless" faces at services each month. And new members may feel overwhelmed by a room full of people none of whom they know by name. Take a moment to get to know the names of the people sitting next to you at services or Torah study and you take a step towards building a more interconnected and sustainable world. Next month on Friday, February 2 our Shabbat service will be followed by a potluck and brief program for new and long-standing members to get to know each others' names in the fullest sense of the word. If you are new to the DJC and want a chance to get to meet new people please join us, and if you are a long-standing member who wants to get to know some of the new faces please join us!

As the Torah teaches knowing each other "by name", by face, by quirks, by habits and by unique individuality is the first step to changing the world!

Please Join Us...

What: *What's In a Name?* An evening for new and long-standing members to get to know each other "by name"

When: Friday, **February 2, 8:00pm** (following services)

Where: Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Avenue, following service

What to Bring: A vegetarian potluck dish to share, friends who are new members, prospective members or long-standing members who would like to get to know new folks!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A reminder that we are having our AGM on **Thursday, January 25** at Riverdale Presbyterian Church, 662 Pape Avenue, **7:30pm**. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the financial statements, appoint auditors, elect a Board of Directors and transact such further business as may properly be brought before the meeting.



Still Listening... *DJC member Jordan Zaitzow:* "The DJC listening campaign recently ran their third successful monthly planning session on Sunday, January 7th. After a collaborative 3 months, the group is continuing to show signs of internal strength and unity, and holds great expectations for community possibilities. The one-on-one listening sessions being conducted throughout the congregation have been positive endeavors which are working to produce a clearer focus on the collective visions of the DJC. I feel incredibly lucky to have a hand in this project, and have used the opportunity of the listening initiative to become personally and actively involved in the DJC in a positive and contributive way.

In February, we are sending three members of the listening campaign's core group with Rabbi Eli to San Francisco to attend K'hilot K'doshot: Holy Congregations, Just Communities: Jewish Funds For Justice's second national gathering of synagogues involved in congregation-based community organizing. As one of the attendees, I am incredibly excited about this experience,

and getting a wider and more diverse perspective on what is going on within congregation-based action groups and networks across North America.” *If you would like to have a 1-1 conversation, please contact Kathy at info@djctoronto.com or call 416-580-6303.*

Shabbat Shalom!

We are continuing our Friday evening, in-home Shabbat services. All are welcome, adults and children. If you are a newcomer to our community, this is a good way to meet DJC members. Finger food contributions are welcome as we nosh and socialize after the service.

Where: At the home of Helen Cohn, 141 Simpson Avenue,
1 block north of Gerrard

When: Friday, **January 19th**

RSVP: 416-462-9882.



If you would like to volunteer your home for a Friday evening service, contact Diana Chastain at dianach@allstream.net or **416 465-0635**.

LEARN TO READ HEBREW IN 6 HOURS!!!

There's still time to register by January 31--*please note location change

Once again the DJC is offering a 6-hour 'Hebrew Marathon' taught by Nirit Gruber. This is a great opportunity for you to learn to read Hebrew and to launch any further Hebrew study you may be doing. The program is being offered through the DJC Jewish School and is open to Jewish School children in grades 5, 6, and 7 and their parents, as well as anyone else in the DJC community who might be interested.

The program works especially well when kids and parents attend together – and so we encourage kids (grade 5 and older) to attend with their parents.

When

Saturday, February 17th and Saturday, February 24th
10:00 am to 1:00 pm both days

Where

* Ms Miriam's, 583 A Danforth Avenue (just next to Sun Valley; ring the buzzer at the left of the door).

Cost

\$25 per person for the both days

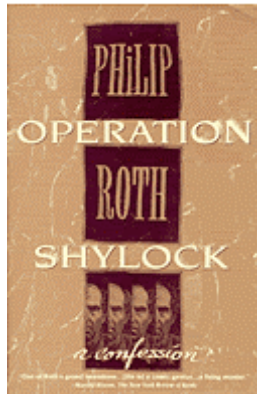
Registration

Please contact Nadya Burton at nburton@ryerson.ca by January 31st; for further information please e-mail or call Nadya 416 538-9949.

Read all about it!

Continuing our tradition of presenting exceptional speakers in "hamesheh" settings, Jacques Kornberg, professor emeritus at the University of Toronto and teacher of Holocaust studies, led the DJC Book club on November 22 at our second meeting of the season in a discussion based upon Primo Levi's last book, The Drowned And The Saved that was both erudite and accessible as well as intellectually provocative and socially engaging. The DJC Book club would also like to thank our leader, Jill Solnicki for generously hosting the event. It was her gracious hospitality, along with the great turn-out, new faces, active discussion and chance to kibitz with each other over delicious nibblies that made the evening the success it was.

That's what we want our book club to do. Get people talking. Get people talking to each other, and, if we're lucky, shaking up our world. Please think about joining us at our next meeting on January 30, when Derek Penslar will be leading us in a discussion of Philip Roth's, Operation Shylock.



Tuesday, January 30, 2007
OPERATION SHYLOCK, BY PHILIP ROTH
FACILITATOR: DEREK PENSLAR

Philip Roth's "Operation Shylock" is an absurdist story that blurs fact and fiction, involving the character of Roth and a Roth impostor who is promoting reverse Zionism. Through the novel, Roth explores the tensions of his identity as a writer, as a Jew, and as a human being. Written in '93 at the time of the First Intifada and the Demjanjuk trial, the concerns and challenges are certainly as relevant today.

Derek Penslar is Samuel Zacks Professor of Jewish History and the director of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. His publications focus on Jewish political, economic and cultural life in modern Europe, particularly Germany, and on Zionism and the state of Israel. Among his many books are "Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe" (2001), and "Israel in History: The Jewish state in Comparative Perspective"(2006). This fall he is the Nachshon Visiting Professor of Israel Studies at Harvard.

If you want to join the club, please contact Kathy: info@djctoronto.com

Thanks for taking the time to do the DJC survey:

"Thanks to everyone who responded to our survey. It is gratifying to see that we are on the right track! We are reminded of the great diversity in our community, and greatly appreciate the many constructive and thoughtful comments you made. The board is reviewing all of them, both positive and negative. We are constantly striving to make the DJC better and it is with your help that we will accomplish our goals. The survey results will be published in our next newsletter." *Mark Zaret, DJC president*

Please mark your calendars!

Rabbi Eli's 2007 visit dates JANUARY-JUNE	
January/February	31-7
March	5-12
April	9-16
May	6-13
June	tba



We're planning for SNOW...

The Adult Programming committee is organizing a cross country ski day on **Sunday, February 4th from 1:00pm - 4:30pm** at Dagmar Ski Resort. Directions are available at www.skidagmar.com. We will meet at the side of the cross country hut, where you buy tickets and can rent equipment. When you're done with skiing, we'll meet for hot chocolate at the downhill ski hut, just a few metres away.

Rates:

Trail Tickets Regular Rate
Adult 18-59 \$ 14.00
Intermediate 13-17 \$ 13.00
Junior 6-12/Senior 60+ \$ 12.00
Children 5 and under \$10.00 with a purchase of any Adult ticket (Ratio 1-1) I.D. required for all skiers.

283 DANFORTH AVENUE
 TORONTO, ONTARIO
 M4K 1N2

Rentals:

Complete rental \$ 25.00
 * Skis, Boots, and Poles may be rented separately

TEL: (416) 580-6303
info@djctoronto.com

DJC Community Seder



We're planning a community Seder for **Tuesday, April 10** to mark the end of Passover. Please look for more details in our upcoming newsletters.

On that note, anyone who is interested in working on an alternative Haggadah can contact Joanne Hunter at midlearth@sympatico.ca. The plan is to begin by putting together a supplement to go with the regular Haggadah. Anyone interested can join the group and bring any materials they wish to incorporate.

January/ February Calendar www.djctoronto.com

Thursday, **January 25** - Annual General meeting, **7:30pm** at Riverdale Presbyterian Church, 662 Pape Avenue (side door, follow steps down to the basement).

Tuesday, **January 30** - Book Club meeting at **7:30pm**, to discuss *Operation Shylock*, by Philip Roth, facilitator: Derek Penslar.

Friday, **February 2** - Shabbat service, **6:30pm** at Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Avenue- Hurndale entrance (corner of Jackman/ Hurndale). Rabbi Eli Kukla leading. [Free childcare provided.](#)

Friday, **February 2** - What's In a Name? **8:00pm** at Eastminster. An evening for new and long-standing members to get to know each other by name. Vegetarian potluck to follow services and *What's In a Name*.

Saturday, **February 3** - Torah Study with Rabbi Eli Kukla, **10:30am** at Riverdale Presbyterian, 662 Pape Avenue (side door, follow steps down to the basement).