

# TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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## From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Dennis Jones

### Peace in the Middle East???

In my January article in the TBS newsletter, I shared how I have turned to interfaith dialogue and understanding to address many of the complex issues that 21<sup>st</sup> century society wrestles with. As you will recall, I endorsed the approach Bruce Feiler recommends in his wonderful book, *Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths*. Feiler contends that common values resulting from the major western religions' reverence for the patriarch, Abraham, might establish a foundation for at least beginning dialogue on some of the complicated issues that divide humankind. He calls it at the very least "the seed of hope." I found it quite serendipitous that the very next book I read after submitting last month's article suggested that same possibility. More about that in a minute.

You know, as a rabbi I am frequently asked by both colleagues from other faiths, and by students, to explain the complexities of the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I guess those asking assume that as a Jewish spiritual leader, I should be an expert on the founding of the state of Israel and on the competing claims of the Israeli Jews and Palestinians in the Holy Land. Well, I most certainly am not!! But, in an effort to familiarize myself more fully with the claims of each side I have read two riveting books. I will review first one here in this issue of *The Bulletin*, and the second book in The March Issue. The first book is by a Jewish Israeli citizen living in East Jerusalem. The other is by a Palestinian who was born and raised in Gaza.

As is frequently the case, the book I am reviewing in this article was recommended to me by our Temple president, Susan Goldstein. The book is *Letters to my Palestinian Neighbor* by Yossi Klein Halevi (HarperCollins, New York, 2018). Klein Halevi is an American-born Jewish writer who has lived in Jerusalem since 1982. He is a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of Jerusalem, whose mission, is “to strengthen Jewish peoplehood, identity, and pluralism; to enhance the Jewish and democratic character of Israel; and to ensure that Judaism is a compelling force for good in the 21st century” (<https://www.hartman.org.il/>). Partnering with Imam Abdullah Antelpi of Duke University, Klein Halevi also co-directs the Hartman Institute’s Muslim Leadership Initiative.

In 1990, as a soldier in the Israeli military, Klein Halevi served a stint on patrol in the Gaza refugee camp at Nusseirat. Almost a decade later, in 1998, Klein Halevi returned to Nusseirat, this time as a “pilgrim.” Klein Halevi set out on the pilgrimage into Gaza and the West Bank to explore the faiths of his Muslim and Christian neighbors in the Holy Land. He was not so much interested in understanding their theology as he was in experiencing their personal devotional lives. In Klein Halevi’s words, “My goal was to see whether Jews and Muslims could share something of God’s presence, could be religious people together in this of all places, where God’s Name is so often invoked to justify abomination.” (*Letters to my Palestinian Neighbor*, p. 4)

Klein Halevi is a deeply religious person. He states, “For me, the only notion more ludicrous than the existence of a Divine being that created and sustains us is the notion that this miracle of life, of consciousness is coincidence” (p. 8). In the first several of his “letters” he summarizes his view of Jewish history, faith, and ethos for his imagined “Palestinian neighbor.” These chapters were a very reinforcing read for me, as Klein Halevi’s views so closely parallel my own. Don’t you love it when that happens!?

Klein Halevi, in a very concise and readable way traces the evolution of Judaism from its beginning as a nomadic tribal/family faith into the universal expression of beliefs and ethics that it is today, while still retaining its family and faith elements. According to Klein Halevi, “The synagogue became a substitute for the Temple, prayer a substitute for animal sacrifices—a major step forward in the spiritual evolution of Judaism” (p. 31).

Since Judaism is both a family and a faith, Klein Halevi asserts, “The purpose of Judaism is to sanctify one people with the goal of sanctifying all peoples” (p. 53). I found this part of Klein Halevi’s treatise particularly exciting and uplifting. He goes on to explain that while the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam are all universalistic in their approach, Judaism is distinct from the other two faiths in one particular way. Both Christianity and Islam envision a future world where all humankind will eventually *convert* to their way. “In the Jewish dream of the future, all of humanity will recognize the unity of existence and ascend on pilgrimage to the ‘house of God’ in Jerusalem. But **Judaism has no expectation that humanity will become Jewish**” (pp. 54-55, emphasis mine). Klein Halevi goes on to tout that since Judaism is a faith intended for one family to share the vision of the Creator God with the rest of humankind, it has remained far more tolerant of the validity of other faith traditions.

Klein Halevi passionately lays out the yearning in the Jewish soul for the return to the Holy Land while in exile. He shares with his Palestinian neighbor how deeply rooted that longing is in our scriptures, rabbinical writings, and prayers. Klein Halevi attempts to convey to his Palestinian neighbor that for nearly two thousand years, most of which were years of trouble and persecution for the Jewish people, the return to a land of their own was only a dream. Like me, Klein Halevi considers the rebirth of the state of Israel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the resurrection of the Hebrew language as a national language to be the fulfillment of prophesy and a miracle. Yet, Klein Halevi’s sincerity is palpable when he expresses his grief and anguish over the difficulties that the Jews’ return to the land has caused the Palestinians who called it home for so many years, particularly those who were displaced in 1948 and 1967. That grief and anguish was the basis of Klein Halevi’s pilgrimage into Gaza and the West Bank in 1998 and is the basis of his reaching out to his Palestinian neighbors in this book. As a part of that appeal, Klein Halevi points to Abraham. He states, “Both our traditions note that Abraham/Ibrahim was buried by Isaac and Ishmael, who overcame their rivalry to honor their father. . . . Perhaps the memory of [their] hospitality [towards each other] can help us find a way to accommodate each other’s presence in the land” (p. 153).

I was thrilled to find, that like myself, Klein Halevi proposes a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders as the best path toward peace. He sees that as the fair sharing of the land to which **both Jews and Palestinians have valid but competing claims**. Klein Halevi admits that this solution is a tough sell to both sides, since many Israelis envision a “greater Israel” based on boundaries described in the Bible and ancient history, and many Palestinians cling to the hope of a Jewish-free Palestine that is all under their own control. That is why Klein Halevi is so committed to both sides entering into **honest dialogue about their needs, hopes, and dreams**. The one thing Klein Halevi requests from his Palestinian neighbors is that they do not deny his right to exist in the land. As he puts it, “Criticism of Israeli policies, of course, isn’t anti-Semitic. . . . But denying Israel’s right to exist, turning the Jewish state into the world’s criminal, and trying to isolate it from the community of nations—that fits the classic anti-Semitic pattern” (p. 185).

Here is where it gets really interesting. Klein Halevi closes his book with a chapter containing a dozen or so letters from Palestinians back to him in response to his request for dialogue—giving his Palestinian neighbors the last word. Many of those letters brought tears to my eyes. I thanked Adonai for the faith, kindness, and grace they expressed, even when disagreeing with Klein Halevi on some of his facts. The

closing chapter, actually the entire book, renewed my belief that in time the **moderates on both sides** might prevail and facilitate a transition into a time of peace, yes, even in the Middle East. *Ken yehi ratzon* —May this be God's will!!

## President's Message

Susan Goldstein, President

Dearest TBS Family,

What a month! We're still in virtual worship land. Hopefully, the Reopening Committee will be able to recommend at least limited in-person worship by March. Your Board of Trustees is meeting (via Zoom) on Wednesday, February 16th, and we'd appreciate your sharing any issues you'd like us to consider. Please email me at [susanejgoldstein@gmail.com](mailto:susanejgoldstein@gmail.com) if there's something on your mind.

And on the online learning scene, Limmud eFestival is coming up. There will be five days of learning from February 27th through March 3rd. Sessions will be at various times throughout each day. I don't know all of the presenters, but I do have a favorite: Dr. Ron Wolfson. Ron is an acclaimed professor, author, and Jewish community coach. I've been privileged to learn with him in person on many occasions, and he's really quite awesome! Check out his books, *Relational Judaism*, and *The Spirituality of Welcoming*.

Next on our calendar: Purim! Looking forward to meeting with Sisterhood President, Sheri Stock, and Rabbi Dennis to consider the possibilities.

Also look forward to seeing you on screen on Saturday, February 12th, at 10:00 am for Shabbat morning services.

*Shalom,*

Susan

## TBS Sisterhood

Sheri Stock, Sisterhood President

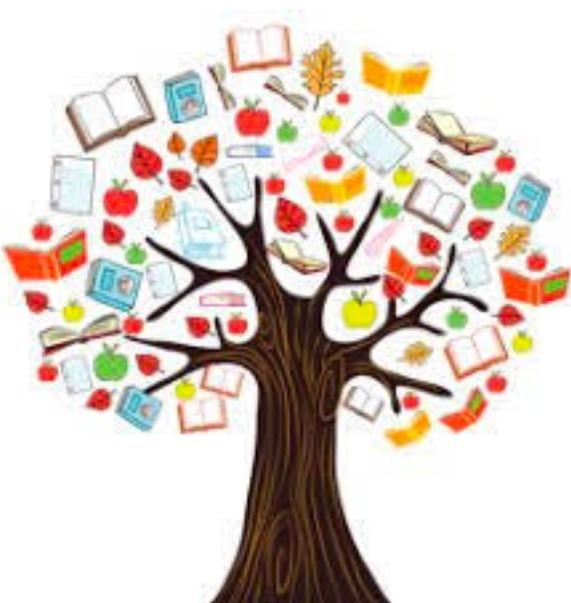
Shalom friends!! I am so excited to be learning about a holiday that I had never heard of until recently.....Purim Katan! A little Purim for a Jewish Leap Year! Purim Katan will be one of the categories in our Havdalah ceremony and trivia that is coming up! Be prepared to join my family as we light the "flamethrower" (How Rabbi Dennis refers to the Havdalah candles in Sunday School!) and say the blessings marking the end of Shabbat before playing virtual trivia on Saturday February 19th at 6:00 pm. I hope to see everyone there!!!! I even have a prize for the winning team!!!! Also, March is coming up quickly and that means it's almost time for Purim! If anybody is interested in helping make hamantaschen to send to kids at college or deliver to seniors in need, please let me know. I am excited about seeing everyone virtually, both for services on the 12th and for trivia night!!! Sheri



## TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Principal

Temple Beth Shalom Sunday School continues to meet virtually according to the dates in the 2021-2022 TBS Calendar. If you would like to know more about the TBS Sunday School, please contact Kathy Jones, Sunday School Principal, at [krsjones2002@yahoo.com](mailto:krsjones2002@yahoo.com).



## Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund



The Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund was established by a long-standing Temple member, Burt Sederholm, to honor his wife Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement after 25 years with the Catawba County Department of Social Services. Mr. Sederholm's efforts provided the initial funding from generous family members and friends and it has been added to over the years. The scholarship is available to students. Temple members are looked upon favorably, but one does not need to be a temple member nor Jewish to apply. The scholarship fund dividends are used to provide scholarship awards. Candidates may submit an essay to any one of the committee members. The essay will explain who the candidate is, what they are doing currently, what their plans are for the future, how the scholarship funds will be used and, if applicable, what the connection may be to Jewish life.

Interested students should submit their essay by April 30th. The scholarship season runs from May 1-April 30. All applicants will be notified in writing if their application has been approved or declined by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Awards should be mailed to recipients by May 31st.

The essay should be emailed to any of the committee members: Lin Gentry, Karen Ferguson, or Sandy Guttler. Naturally, the committee encourages everyone to make a tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund at any time.

### Temple Board

Our next board meeting will be Wednesday, February 16th at 6:30pm via Zoom. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Contact Susan Goldstein if you wish to join the meeting.

Board members are:

**Officers:**

- Susan Goldstein, President
- Barbara Laufer, Past President
- Tiffany Hull, Vice President
- Susan Rieder, Treasurer
- Lin Gentry, Secretary

**Members at Large:**

- Liz Correll
- Mary Lee Tosky
- Karen Ferguson
- Derek Cooperberg
- Sheri Stock
- Susan Tiger Huitt
- Jodi Lavin-Tompkins



### TBS Gives through Donations

**CORRECTION-** The TBS donation for the month of January was sent to The Catawba County United Arts Council

February's donation went to the AIDS Leadership Foothills-Area Alliance

Do you have a favorite charity you would like us to donate to? Let us know.

**Donations**

**In memory of Elaine Zerden**

Lynn Spees  
 Carly and David Siegel  
 Liz Correll; Sol Zerden; Robert Zerden;  
 and the entire Zerden family

Please consider these funds for your next donation:

Building and Grounds  
 Security  
 Sunday School  
 Community Relations and Social Action

When we all get back to temple in person again, please consider pairing with a board member(s) to host a weekend at Temple Beth Shalom. When members contribute to the life of our synagogue in this way, we all feel a part of our Jewish community and an active participant in assuring its well-being.



### **TBS Community Mitzvah Projects**

Thank you to Larry and Barbara Laufer for their donations of warm winter clothing this month. The items went to help men at the Exodus Ministries and women at the Kwanzaa Family Inn. Also, thank you to Heidi Reed who donated two wall mounted folding desks. They will be used in the Exodus Works break room for the workers reading and paperwork activities.



**Temple Beth Shalom has an active membership in the Catawba Valley Interfaith Council, where Rabbi Dennis serves as president. You can find out more about this organization and its activities at: <https://www.facebook.com/CVICNC/>.**

### TBS Member Business Directory

Let us know if you would like to list your business here in the Bulletin. It is a free benefit of TBS membership

**Dr. Laura Faruque**  
A Woman's View  
915 Tate Blvd SE  
Suite 170  
Hickory, NC 28602  
828-345-0800

**Dr. Mark Faruque**  
Bethlehem Family Practice  
174 Bolick Lane Suite 202  
Taylorsville, NC 28681  
828-495-8226

**Scott and Julie Owens**  
Taste Full Beans Coffeehouse  
29 2nd St NW  
Hickory, NC 28601  
828-325-0108  
[www.tastefullbeans.com](http://www.tastefullbeans.com)

**Dr. David Peltzer**  
Newton Family Physicians  
767 West First Street  
Newton, NC 28658  
828 465-3928  
[www.newtonfamilyphysicians.com](http://www.newtonfamilyphysicians.com)



### Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle February Events

#### Birthdays

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Barbara Laufer 2/1   | Jodi Lavin-Tompkins 2/10 |
| Linda Greenfield 2/1 | Larry Laufer 2/11        |
| Julia Cooperberg 2/3 | Grayson Weatherly 2/20   |
| David Cooperberg 2/3 | Julie Owens 2/21         |
| Tristan Haddock 2/7  | Nicholas Faruque 2/23    |
| Perri Huitt 2/8      | Maddy Gross 2/24         |
| Henry Greenfield 2/8 | Sam Gross 2/28           |

#### Anniversaries

#### Yahrzeits

- Helmi Berndt 2/18
- David Guy 2/21
- Sol Taub 2/22
- Trudy Lowenberg 2/27

Local and Regional Events

# Contested Memories: The Srebrenica Genocide, the Role of the UN, and Bosnia Today

## Hasan Nuhanovic

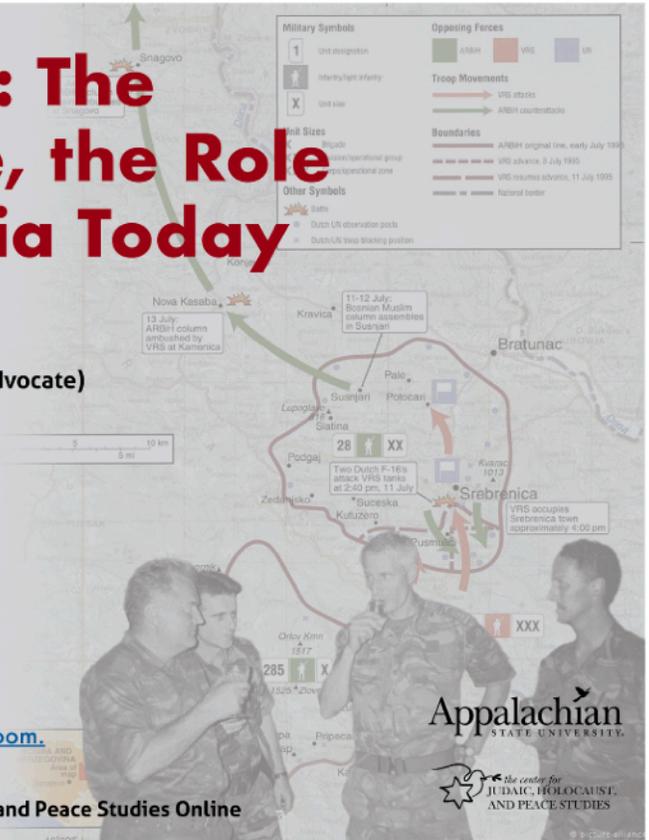
(Survivor of the Srebrenica Genocide, author, and social justice advocate)

**Wednesday, February 23,  
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

**Organized by the Department of History and the Center for Judaic, Holocaust and Peace Studies. Co-sponsored by ASU's Department of Government and Justice Studies and the Peace and Genocide Education Club. For more information, also about the research colloquium with Nuhanovic, contact the Center at 828.262.2311 or [holocaust@appstate.edu](mailto:holocaust@appstate.edu).**

To register for this virtual lecture, please go to <https://appstate.zoom.us/j/64912811111>

The Center for Judaic, Holocaust and Peace Studies Online



## Israeli Historian, Prof. Shmuel Feiner, to Shed New Light on the Haskalah in an In-Person Lecture March 24, 2022

Center welcomes the public to an in-person presentation by Prof. Shmuel Feiner (Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan) on "The Haskalah Project of Secularization: Challenging 'The Religious Turn.'" The event will take place at the Reich College of Education, Lecture Hall 124 ABC, on Thursday, March 24, at **4:30 p.m.** Prof. Feiner is one of the foremost authorities on the Jewish Enlightenment and among Israel's most distinguished historians. At Bar Ilan, he holds a professorship in Modern Jewish History as well as the prestigious Samuel Braun Chair for the History of the Jews in Prussia.

The lecture is open to the public and free of charge. **ASU's pandemic policies and mask requirements are in effect.** For more information, see [here](#) and contact the Center at [holocaust@appstate.edu](mailto:holocaust@appstate.edu) or 828.262.2311. <https://holocaust.appstate.edu/events>



**SHALOM  
HARMON  
INSTITUTE**

Follow this link for information about upcoming online events at SHI: <https://www.hartman.org.il/programs/>

# Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2022

For event updates, email: [info@hickoryjewishcenter.com](mailto:info@hickoryjewishcenter.com)

DATE	EVENT	BULLETIN DEADLINE
February	12 <b>Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM VIRTUAL ONLY</b>	February 5
	13 <b>Sunday School 10:00 AM VIRTUAL ONLY</b>	
	25 <b>Friday Night Service 7:00 PM attendance options TBD</b>	
	27 <b>Sunday School 10:00 AM VIRTUAL ONLY</b>	
March	12 <b>Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM</b>	March 5
	13 <b>Sunday School 10:00 AM</b>	
April	9 <b>Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM</b>	April 2
	10 <b>Sunday School 10:00 AM</b>	
	16 <b>Passover Community Seder 6:00 PM (Saturday)</b>	
	22 <b>Friday Night Service 7:00 PM</b>	
	24 <b>Sunday School 10:00 AM</b>	
May	14 <b>Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM</b>	May 7
	15 <b>Sunday School 10:00 AM</b>	
	22 <b>TBS Annual Membership Meeting 10:00 AM (Sunday)</b>	
	27 <b>Friday Night Service 7:00 PM</b>	
	29 <b>Sunday School 10:00 AM</b>	
June	5 <b>Shavuot Morning Service 10:00 AM (Sunday)</b>	June 4
	11 <b>Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM</b>	
	12 <b>Sunday School Final Session/Party 10:00 AM</b>	
	24 <b>Friday Night Service 7:00 PM</b>	
July	9 <b>Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM</b>	N/A
	22 <b>Friday Night Service 7:00 PM</b>	

## UPCOMING JEWISH HOLIDAYS



Begins evening of **Wednesday, March 16, 2022**  
 Ends nightfall of **Thursday, March 17, 2022**

Want to contribute to the TBS Bulletin? Send entries to Karen Ferguson at [karen.sederholm@gmail.com](mailto:karen.sederholm@gmail.com). All entries are reviewed by the TBS Board before publication.



