

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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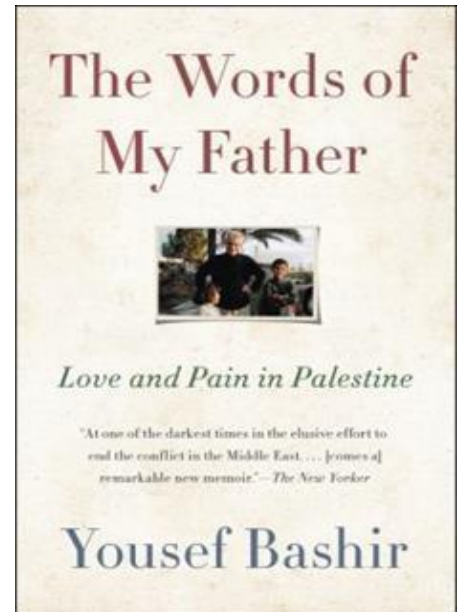
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From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message



Rabbi Dennis Jones



Peace in the Middle East—Understanding the Passion on Both Sides Based on *The Words of My Father* by Yousef Bashir

You might recall that when I reviewed *Letters to my Palestinian Neighbor* by Yossi Klein Halevi I was thrilled to find that, like me, Klein Halevi proposes a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders as the best path toward peace. He sees that solution as a **fair sharing of the land** to which **both Jews and Palestinians have valid but competing historical 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).

Klein Halevi closes his book with a chapter containing a dozen or so letters from Palestinians in response to his request for dialogue—giving his Palestinian neighbors the last word. Many of those letters brought tears to my eyes, but one letter, in particular, led me to purchase a second book, written from the Palestinian perspective that was absolutely eye-opening: *The Words of My Father—Love and Pain in Palestine*, by Yousef Bashir (HarperCollins, NY, 2019).

Yousef Bashir is the son of Khalil Bashir, a highly respected educator. The Bashir family had for centuries farmed dates near the small village of Deir el-Balah, “Monastery of the Date Palms,” in Gaza. Yousef begins his story by pointing out that “. . . for the past three hundred years since records were first kept, our name has been on them for this land.” Yousef, who has a BA in International Affairs from Northeastern University and an MA in Coexistence and Conflict from Brandeis University, speaks often to international groups, telling them, “I want to start by telling you two things about my father. My father was as much in love with his land as he was with my mother. And he loved both of them deeply” (*The Words...*, pp. 2-3). Yousef recounts that the freshwater springs that never ran dry and “the sweetest, reddest dates on the Mediterranean coast” had drawn his ancestors to this area long before written records were even kept. He shares with the groups he speaks to that he considered Gaza a “paradise” in his youth. But he despairs, “Today—and my heart breaks to say so—you might be more inclined to call it “hell” (p. 8).

The early chapters of Yousef Bashir’s book are a moving tribute to his father, Khalil, now deceased. His father was an educator, an English teacher who also served for many years as a school headmaster. One of the schools at which Khalil served was founded by a wealthy German benefactor, Rudolf Walther, near their village of Deir. Khalil had become friends with Rudolf. Yousef notes, “The two of them shared a deep commitment to peace, and both believed that education was its cornerstone.” Khalil clearly passed that passion for peace and value for education on to Yousef. Yousef attended the same school where his father was the headmaster, and he points out, “My father had the teacher punish me twice as hard as the other students so no one could say that the son of the headmaster was getting special treatment” (pp. 29-30). As a result of his commitment to peace, Yousef’s father Khalil attended several local events held by an organization called the Sons of Abraham in Ramallah and Jerusalem. After one such conference, Khalil brought home a framed verse from the group and put it in the family’s home. It read:

Peace begins at Home

Peace begins in Me

Peace begins in You

Peace begins in Her

Peace begins in Him

Peace begins in Them

“Violence only leads to more violence,” was Khalil’s mantra (pp. 42-43). Though he was highly respected in the community, many of Khalil’s fellow Palestinians strongly opposed his commitment to peace and coexistence. Some of them still resided in refugee camps, their families have been there since 1948.

Most Jews consider the rebirth of the state of Israel in the 20th century and the resurrection of the Hebrew language as a national language to be the fulfillment of prophecy, an answer to prayer, and a miracle. We must remain compassionate, however, and mourn the grief and anguish that the return of Jews to the land has caused the Palestinians who called it home for so many years, particularly those displaced in 1948 and 1967. Shortly following the Jewish celebration of Israeli Independence Day is the Palestinian mourning of Nakba Day. Nakba Day commemorates the “nakba”—the “Palestinian Catastrophe” which entailed the destruction of Palestinian society and the permanent displacement of a majority of the Palestinian people, estimated at 700,000. Regarding this displacement, Yossi Klein Halevi offers a chilling and honest analysis.

After the war, two competing narratives about the refugee tragedy emerged. For many years our [the Jewish] side claimed that there had been no expulsion, only voluntary flight from battle, and that Arab leaders had encouraged Palestinians to abandon their homes, to clear the way for the imminently victorious Arab armies. Your [the Palestinian] side claimed that expulsion had been the norm, a systematic and premeditated Zionist plan. **Both versions were untrue** [Emphasis mine] (*Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor*, pp. 82-83).

In his treatise, *The Words of My Father*, Yousef Bashir recounts how the Bashir family was able to keep their date farm through the 1948 war, but things became much more difficult for them after the 1967 war. A Jewish settlement, Kfar Darom, was established very near the Bashir’s land, and an Israeli military base with two high watch towers, manned with machine guns, was placed between the Bashir farm and the settlement. Yousef shares his mother’s sarcastic comment, “The settlers attacked us, so they brought their soldiers to protect themselves” (*The Words...*, p. 15). It is difficult for the Jewish person to read much of Yousef Bashir’s narrative, as he details countless instances of both Jewish settlers and Israeli soldiers treating the Bashir family unjustly and inhumanely. Such things as destroying the outbuilding on the date farm, destroying crops, detaining, and questioning family members, and ultimately occupying the family’s home as a barracks, even while the family lived there, became commonplace. Frequently the Israeli soldiers would lock the family into a single room while they ransacked the rest of the house. Yousef shares that he was angry at the time that his father, Khalil, remained dignified and committed to peace and dialogue.

Yousef’s life would completely change one week after his 15th birthday, when, while saying goodbye to a delegation of UN observers who had been visiting his father, Yousef was shot in the back by an Israeli soldier from a nearby gun tower. In his words:

The [UN] jeep had just begun to reverse when, with no warning, I heard the sound of a single gunshot. Since there had been no shooting that day in the neighborhood, I instinctively assumed that the shot was being fired away from me in another direction. In the same instant, though, I felt something knock me to the ground, like I was crumbling. I tried to get up but my legs would not move. I grabbed my stomach and called out, “Yaba, I can’t move. Yaba, I can’t move.” ... I was

in shock and could feel no pain, but neither could I feel my legs. I ran my hands over my chest, stomach and legs to check what was wrong with me. ... Then I suddenly understood that I had been shot (*The Words...*, pp. 99-100).

After three days in a hospital in Gaza, Yousef was transported to the Tel Hashomer Hospital in Tel Aviv.

Yousef's experiences at the Tel Aviv hospital were equally transformative in his life. There he experienced the kindness, care, and compassion of the Jewish doctors and medical staff, in stark juxtaposition to the cruelty of the Jewish settlers and Israeli soldiers in Gaza. Yousef goes on to detail his long recovery and the educational opportunities that opened for him as he recovered. Ultimately, Yousef inherited his father, Khalil's **passion for peace, dialogue, and compromise**. In fact, he has made seeking just that his life's work. While many parts of *The Words of My Father* were hard to read, I encourage anyone who is interested in understanding the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to purchase and read this book. Understanding Yousef Bashir's perspective has only served to **strengthen** my belief that in time the **moderates on both sides** might prevail and facilitate a transition into a time of compromise and peace. *Ken yehi ratzon*—May this be God's will!!

The President's Message

Susan G Goldstein, President

I am pleased to share with our TBS family that Rabbi Janet Liss has accepted our offer, as approved by the Board, as part-time rabbi for the coming year. Attached is her CV, and you'll be hearing more about her very soon. In the meantime, please mark your calendars to meet Rabbi Liss at services on **Erev Shabbat, Friday, August 25, at 7:00; Shabbat morning, Saturday, August 26, at 10:00; and Havdalah, preceded by *Seudah Shlishit* (the third Shabbat meal), and Jewish Adult Learning at 6:00 pm.**

Stay tuned for more to come!

Shalom,

Susan



TBS Sisterhood

Sheri Stock, Sisterhood President

I can't believe it's almost summer! Sisterhood had two monthly Friday night potluck dinners on Friday, May 12th, and Friday, June 10th. We started at 6 pm. Everyone brought a vegetarian, parve, or dairy dish to share. I hope to see you all there for the next one!

The whole synagogue was invited to Jodi's house for a pool party Sunday, June 11th from 3 to 7 pm! A great time was had by all in spite of the weather!

And on July 16th we reserved tickets for a Crawdad's baseball game, at 2 pm at Crawdad Stadium. Contact me if you want to attend.

Sisterhood is also planning a Summer Cleaning Day. Our synagogue needs a good deep cleaning, and many hands make light work. We will begin at 10 am on Sunday, July 23rd. Come ready to roll up your sleeves and help get our synagogue shining like a new penny before Rosh Hashanah rolls back around. I look forward to seeing you all soon!

Sheri



TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Principal

Our Sunday School students held their last class of the school year on May 28th and will be celebrating their accomplishments with an "End of Year Party" on June 4th. Classes will begin anew next fall with Sheri Stock as the new Sunday School Principal.

Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund



The Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund (HSSF) was established by a long-time Temple member and past President, Burt Sederholm (may his memory be a blessing), to honor his late wife Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement from 25 years with the Catawba County Department of Social Services. The scholarship committee is a sub-committee of the Temple Beth Shalom Board. The committee manages funds invested for the purpose of rewarding one-time scholarships with the

earnings from the invested funds. These awards honor the memory of Harriet Sederholm and her efforts to improve the lives of so many impoverished adults and children in Catawba County.

The HSSF scholarship is available to students. Candidates will submit an essay to any one of the committee members. The essay will explain who the candidate is, what they are doing currently, their plans for the future, how the scholarship funds will be used, and, if applicable, what the connection may be to Jewish life.

The committee will make decisions based on the following preferences but not absolutes:

- ◆ Is the applicant a temple member or related to a temple member?
- ◆ Is the applicant Jewish?
- ◆ Will the funds be used for educational needs?
- ◆ Will the funds make a difference regarding the applicant's ability to benefit from the activity?
- ◆ Is the activity something deemed to be of value by the committee?

Interested students should submit their essays 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 15th. 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 meeting is TBD. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Contact Susan Goldstein if you wish to join a scheduled monthly meeting. Board members are:

Officers:

- Susan Goldstein, President
- Lin Gentry, Vice President
- Mary Lee Tosky, Secretary
- Susan Rieder, Treasurer

Members at Large:

- Liz Correll
- Karen Ferguson
- Sheri Stock
- Susan Tiger Huitt
- Jodi Lavin-Tompkins

**The TBS board thanks
you for your donations**



TBS monthly donations to local Charities:

- June - Guardian Ad Litum
- July - Viewmont Elementary School
- August - Marine Corps

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



Please consider pairing with a board member(s) to host a Shabbat or Holiday 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. A sign up sheet is posted in the synagogue foyer, or you can sign up online. Here's the link: [TBS Hosting Sign-ups - Google Sheets](#)

1. View the [spreadsheet](#) to see what dates are free
2. Submit your choice using the [Google Form](#).
3. MaryLee will type in any form *submissions*, but **any board member can enter host names** on the spreadsheet for themselves or other members *by request*. Several of you have successfully done so!

TBS Community Mitzvah Projects

The Community Relations and Social Action Committee would like to thank the Tiger-Huitt family for their donation of children's socks this month. We will be distributing them to homeless and low-income families throughout this next year.

Please remember us when you have funds, bedding, or household goods that you would like to donate. If you have any questions about our mitzvah projects or suggestions on where else we can have a positive impact, please contact Kathy Jones, Chairperson, at krsjones2002@yahoo.com

**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
Suite170
Hickory, NC 28602
828-345-0800

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

Jack and Hannah Levy
Druzy Dreams Crystals
<http://www.etsy.com/shop/druzydreamscrystals>

Dr. David Peltzer
Newton Family Physicians
767 West First Street
Newton, NC 28658
828 465-3928
www.newtonfamilyphysicians.com

**Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle
June/July Events**



June	Birthdays	July
Bradley Haddock 6/3		Emily Tosky 7/3
Susan J Goldstein 6/10		Lin Gentry 7/7
Connie Tosky 6/14		Karen Ferguson 7/9
Heidi Jones 6/14		Daniel Jones 7/16
Esther Greene 6/16		Tiffany Hull 7/17
Ron DuBow 6/20		David Peltzer 7/18
Sandy Guttler 6/22		Eric Igdal 7/19
Ashley Brooke Cohn 6/30		Seth Cohn 7/19
Rhett Tompkins 6/30		Mitch Weatherly 7/19
		Alison Weatherly 7/20
		Arleen Gold 7/20
		Alexis Cangemi 7/23
		Debra Engelman 7/24
		Ben Levinson 7/29

June	Anniversaries	July
Solomon and Stephanie Zerden 6/6		
Dennis and Kathy Jones 6/9		Karen and Clyde Ferguson 7/9
Rich and Debbie Engelman 6/10		
Lin and Frank Gentry 6/14		

June	Yahrzeits	July
Harry Leifer 6/1		Elaine S Rockstein 7/5
Roy Bowen 6/5		Sylvia Kaufman 7/6
Mazzie Hull 6/11		Carole Bowers 7/16
Harris Sederholm 6/15		Leo John Maciejewski 7/19
Dorothy Cohen 6/21		Bernice Fedder 7/20
Stephen Schonberg 6/24		Marvin Yelton 7/20

Local and Regional Events



21st Annual Martin and Doris Rosen Symposium, 2023

The Holocaust and Lessons For Today

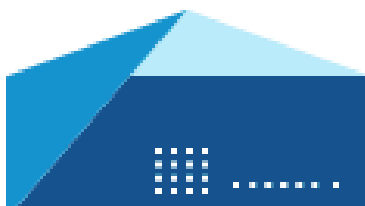
"The Holocaust is not just Jewish history; it is humanity's history, and we must understand it if we are to prevent it from happening again."

Save the Date! July 8-13th

Registration Forms and Scholarship Applications Open February 15, 2023.

This year's symposium will be guided by the theme "The Holocaust and Lessons For Today."

Registration: Visit this site to register: <https://aonstate.irisregistration.com/Form/23SYMPOSIUM>



**SHALOM
HARMON
INSTITUTE**

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



Temple Beth Shalom has an active membership in the Catawba Valley Interfaith Council, where Rabbi Dennis served as president for 5 years and now serves as secretary. You can find out more about this organization and its activities at: <https://www.facebook.com/CVICNC/>.

Interfaith Council

Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School

For event updates, email: info@hickoryjewishcenter.com

DATE	EVENT	BULLETIN DEADLINE
June	3/4 Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM/ Sunday School Final Session/Party	
	23 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	
July	8 Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM	N/A
	21 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	



Tisha B’Av 2023

The Ninth of Av begins at sundown on July 26, and concludes at nightfall on July 27. The fast of Tisha b’Av is observed on the Hebrew calendar date of 9 Av (or 10 Av, when 9 Av is Shabbat). It marks the destruction of both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem and is a day of fasting, prayer, and reflection.

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