



Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community

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Dear Members and Friends,

We can all be thankful that Hanukah is here. A darkness is hovering over our society and the larger world that we have not experienced before or have not witnessed in quite a long time. We crave for the light and the message of hope that Hanukah provides us. The word Hanukah comes from the three letter root Khet-Nun-Khaf, the root letters that give us education, training, inauguration and dedication.

Hanukah is not about the physical conquest of evil. It is ultimately about the power of the spirit to overcome such darkness. When Abraham Joshua Heschel taught at the Center for Jewish Education in Germany in the 1930's, he encouraged people to fight the rise of fascism with spiritual resistance, to resist through education, to resist through the celebration of life and holidays, to train our youth in the words of Torah and the social consciousness of the Hebrew Prophets. In the 1960's, spiritual resistance brought Heschel to Vatican II to help heal centuries of anti-Semitic bias coming from the Church. In the 1960's spiritual resistance was married to non violent civil disobedience in the fight against racism and the Vietnam War.

Am Kolel is engaged, more than ever, in spiritual resistance and non violent civil actions to address the growing social, political and environmental threats we face. We rededicate ourselves even more totally to:

- The renewal of Judaism and the Jewish community.
- Responding to social and environmental issues.
- Joining coalitions of response.
- Designing opportunities for civil discourse on sensitive issues:
 - ▶ American democracy, ▶ Israel/Diaspora relations and ▶ Gun reform.
- Providing Judaic resources, counseling and officiating for all lifecycle events.
- Building bridges with non Jewish communities.

Our retreat center continues to be a gem in our collective hat, used by organizations engaged in spiritual growth, social justice and community service.

All our efforts are only possible because of your support.

We are so fortunate to have two dedicated staff, Cyndi Leitner, our office manager, and George Paley, our administrative assistance and community relations coordinator. Of course, we also count on a strong core of members to actualize our vision.

With this December Appeal, we need to raise \$35,000 - \$45,000.

If you have given in the past, thank you. **We need your continued support.** Tell your friends about us. While members have special benefits, you need not be a member to enjoy what Am Kolel offers.

May the Light of Hanukah be with us all,

Rabbi David Shneyer