

Arizona Faith Council Meeting

12/07/17

*Jane Strub*

Notes for opening blessing:

*What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.*

*That is the entire Torah,*

*All the rest is commentary.*

*Go and learn it.*

Hillel – Talmud Shabbat 31A

Continuing with Hillel:

*If I am not for myself, who is for me?*

*And if only for myself, what am I?*

*And if not now, when?*

Mishnah Avot 1:14

*Do not separate yourself from the community.*

*Trust not yourself until the day of death.*

*Judge not your fellow man*

*Before you have come into his situation.*

*Say not a thing that cannot be understood at once*

*In the assumption that sometime in the future*

*It will be understood.*

*Say not when I shall have leisure I shall study,*

*Perhaps you will not have the leisure.*

Mishnah Avot 2:5

From Rabbi Elana Kantor, The New Shul, Arizona

A study of Parshat Vayatzet, Genesis 28:10-32:3

"The Zohar calls our world *alma d'peruda*, the world of separation. This is true of our time, perhaps more than any other preceding era.

"As individuals, our lives are fragmented and scattered. And on the collective level, the many deep divisions in families, in communities, in America and around the world threaten to overwhelm us

"The S'fat Emet's vision of the interconnectedness of an individual's spiritual life can serve as a model for us of how we must think about our collective lives as well. If we are to try to heal the vast array of rifts in our families, our communities and in the world, then we must begin to base our thinking on something that seems simple but is hard for us to integrate: the fact that our lives are deeply intertwined with the lives of every other human being, with *kol yoshvei teveil*, with all who dwell on earth.

"If we can acknowledge this most basic spiritual truth, then perhaps we can bring hope and peace to a world that so desperately needs both."

The blessing I ask is that we all continue to work to make this world a better place, that we have the strength and perseverance to face all obstacles, and that we do so with a grace and gentleness that accompanies compassion for those facing fear, displacement, and hatred from others.