


becomes dim. At the same time, if we are only concerned with our most basic needs, opportunities to open to Jewish wisdom -- to stretch and deepen our perspectives -- may come rarely or never. As is so often the case, the name of the game is balance!

One of the places this bears out most strongly is our prayer book. Jewish liturgy – our long held language of prayer filled with poetry, questions, exaltation and religious conviction – underscores the interplay of physical and spiritual well-being. There we find a series of daily blessings thanking God for simple miracles like waking up in the morning, to wondrous ones like stretching the earth over the waters. We praise God for matters of body and soul, poignantly aware that both are precious gifts and neither could exist without the other.

Balance is also manifest in the narratives, laws and ethics of the Torah. The family stories of Genesis expand into Exodus, which deals with the Israelites as a community; both the times they splinter and the times they come together again. As they venture further into the wilderness, their rebellious episodes reach a fever pitch only to be tempered by reminders of God's enduring presence, assuring them that their journey is in fact one of great purpose.



form, first into hard little chrysalises, and then, like magic, into painted lady butterflies. I never tire of watching this incredible miracle of nature.

At first we thought that doing this project in the winter was a little odd. I imagine releasing caterpillars into the warm summer air, so they can fly right into a waiting flower. Plus, the instructions say to keep your house at 70-75 degrees while they are there. What Bay Area family keeps their bedrooms at 75 degrees? Would we kill our little butterflies before they even had a chance to hatch?

Despite our reservations, we went for it. If a caterpillar can successfully metamorphose in the wind and the rain, surely we could do this too. And even more importantly, what lessons could we teach our kids about science and nature regardless of the outcome?

Every day I go into Judah's room to check on his chrysalises. And every day I feel more and more like I can relate to those tiny caterpillars. They build shells around their bodies to protect their transformation, to keep out the cold, looking to all the world like nothing is happening inside when in reality, an incredible change is taking place. Winter often feels this way to