



HAMAGEN

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MAGEN AVOT COMMUNITY



"Every act of forgiveness mends something broken
in this fractured world. It is a step, however small,
in the long, hard journey to redemption."

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS, zt"l

INCLUDES YOUTH SUPPLEMENT

ROSH HASHANAH 5784 | ISSUE 7



שנה טובה



• WORK AVENUE •

Creating Employment • Growing Business

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT BUSINESS SUPPORT SHARED WORKSPACE

020 8371 3280 WWW.THEWORKAVENUE.ORG.UK

REGISTERED CHARITY 1164782



General Information

Our Ethos

- Modern, orthodox, inclusive community that is welcoming to all
- Provision of opportunities for learning that are both intellectually and spiritually stimulating
- Promotion of women's involvement and ways of making women feel included within halachic guidelines set out by the United Synagogue and Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis
- Promotion of good decorum in shul
- Supportive of Israel and its national holidays
- Involvement and encouragement of children and youth
- To support and advocate for the interests of those in need including persecuted groups in the UK and abroad, consistent with Torah principles

Shul Contacts

- Address: 48 Finchley Lane, London NW4 1DJ
- Website: <https://www.magenavot.com/>
- Email: info@magenavot.com (monitored by Daniel Ehreich)
- Newsletter: julianmaurer@hotmail.com or via WhatsApp on 07957 777 543
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MagenAvot/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/magenavot>
- WhatsApp Community Umbrella Groups: <https://tinyurl.com/macommunitygroups>
- WhatsApp Broadcast Group: <https://tinyurl.com/mabroadcast>
- WhatsApp Social Group: <https://tinyurl.com/masocialgroup>
- WhatsApp Chesed Group: <https://tinyurl.com/machedes2023>

Executive and Council

- Rabbi: Rabbi Yoni Golker (rabbi@magenavot.com) – 07930 305 335
- Rebbetzen: Rebbetzen Dina Golker (rebbetzen@magenavot.com) – 07547 059 112
- Chairman: Simon Bentley (simon@simonbentley.net)
- Vice-Chair: Patti Adler (pattischustermann@yahoo.com)
- Financial Representative: Baruch Zekaria (treasurer@magenavot.com)
- Gabbaim: Elkan Adler (elkanadler@gmail.com) and Daniel Ehreich (daniel@ehreich.com)
- Women's Officer: Chaya Langerman (haya.langerman@gmail.com)
- Administrator: Daniella Radomsky (admin@magenavot.com)
- Council Members:-
 - Leila Behrman (leilabehrman@gmail.com)
 - David Berke (david.berke@outlook.com)
 - Moshe Langerman (moshe.langerman@gmail.com)
 - Julian Maurer (julianmaurer@hotmail.com)
 - Harriet Morris-Sloane (harrietsloane@yahoo.co.uk)
 - Julian Pollard (jandjpollard@hotmail.com)
 - Sara Spizzichino (ma@spizzichino.org)
 - Dr. Fiona Taylor (drfionataylor@gmail.com)
 - Toni Zakaria (tonized1@aol.com)
- U.S Representative: David Berke (david.berke@outlook.com)
- Board of Deputies Representative: Julian Pollard (jandjpollard@hotmail.com)
- Community Safeguarding Coordinator: Cecil Taitz (taitzlondon@btinternet.com)
- Y@MA Youth Directors: Sophie Harris (07960 614 083) and Shira Neville (07999 410 908)
- Chesed Committee: Toni Zakaria (tonized1@aol.com)
- Secretary for Marriages: Rabbi Yoni Golker (rabbi@magenavot.com) – 07930 305 335



From the Desk of the Editor Julian Pollard



This Edition celebrates some of the most important members of our community – our youth! Our future. A supplement has been produced by our youth and exemplifies what we are so proud of.

The Year in Photos highlights some of the many activities we have shared and enjoyed.

As ever I hope you find the content diverse, informative, and stimulating. My thanks to all our contributors, to our design team and to our valued advertising sponsors.

Finally, the views expressed by authors are personal and do not necessarily reflect that of the Community as a whole or indeed its Rabbinical leadership, but Magen Avot was and remains a diverse community where everyone is encouraged to become involved and where challenging ideas can be debated.

Julian Pollard

Editor, HaMagen Publication

CONTENTS

- 4: From the Desk of the Editor | Contents Page
- 5: Greetings from our Chairman
- 6: Rosh Hashanah Message from the Chief Rabbi
- 7: Rosh Hashanah Message from Rabbi Golker
- 8: Rosh Hashanah Message President of the BoD
- 9: Rosh Hashanah Message President of the US
- 10: Kaddish by Simon Bentley
- 12: Honoured Chattanim Bios
- 13: HaMussaf: Youth Supplement
 - 14: Bat Mitzvah Group
 - 15: Dvar Torah – Devorah Taylor
 - 16: Dvar Torah – Mia Langerman
 - 17: Dvar Torah – Imogen Morris-Sloane
 - 18: Dvar Torah – Eliana David
 - 20: Dvar Torah – Talya Kay
 - 22: Dvar Torah – Vivi Adler
 - 24: Y@MA Update by Sophie Harris
 - 25: Slavery Today by Abi Morris-Sloane
 - 27: My Year in Israel by Nillie Langerman
- 29: Wake Up and Smell the Nussach! by Josh Abeles
- 31: Four Cups from the Diaspora by Josh London
- 33: Anglo-Israel Association Relaunch by Josh London
- 34: Reflections on ראש השנה by Rabbi Michael Pollak
- 35: Q&A – Work Avenue
- 36: Ellul Reflections – Work Avenue by Sara Gatoff
- 37: Magen Avot Book Club
- 38: New Year's Greetings
- 39: Nachas Page
- 40: 5783 – A Year in Pictures
- 43: Magen Avot – Social Media
- 48: Peace of Mind



Thank You
TO OUR SPONSORS





Greetings from our Chairman

Simon Bentley

Warm best wishes to all our members for a happy, healthy, successful, and meaningful New Year. In June we celebrated the 8-year anniversary of our very first "soft launch" week back in 2015 in Hendon Hall Hotel. We wished Mazal Tov to King Charles III on his coronation which took place on Shabbat Parashot Emor. An enormous thank you to Cecil Taitz, our former Financial Representative, and a big welcome to Baruch Zekaria, who has now taken over his responsibilities as our new Financial Representative. Thank you to Anouk Abrahams who stepped down as a valued member of our Council, and a warm welcome to Leila Behrman, who has joined as a new member of the Magen Avot Council. Cecil continues as our Community Safeguarding Coordinator. He is the primary point of contact at the local level for members of the shul if they have any concerns in relation to child protection or the protection of vulnerable adults. We continue to receive the full support of the United Synagogue, where of the 62 United Synagogue congregations we are a small kehillah with less than 200 members. We are highly thought of, as our standards are high, and the degree of commitment and involvement of our members is an example for others to follow. Our Chesed, Tzedek, and Mishpat programme, under Elkan Adler's leadership, has deservedly caught the attention of many from the wider community. Initially, this was in relation to the crimes against humanity and possibly genocide against the Uighur population in China, and now in relation to Modern Slavery. According to the latest estimates 49.6 million people live in modern slavery, when an individual is exploited by others, for personal or commercial gain. Whether tricked, coerced, or forced, they lose their freedom.

In mid-July we had a breakfast to listen to Mia Hasenson-Gross from Rene Cassin and Andrew Williams from Hope for Justice, discussing modern slavery, what it is, and practical ways we can each make a difference. As part of our Chesed, Tzedek, and Mishpat programme, Richard Taylor approached Jewish Care to seek their agreement for us to collaborate with Wohl Court, a local Supported Living Facility, to help new tenants feel more connected to the local community. This involved designing a bespoke induction and certification process for a group of our members, to qualify them as Jewish Care approved volunteers, able to run group activities and act as befrienders. We now have 11 members who have undergone the training, and have run 3 group sessions so far, including sessions about Shavuot and the early English Jewish Community. Ellie McDonald has been a particular star. We are on the cusp of starting the befriending activities. Jewish Care and the home are positive about the project, which we understand is currently a unique collaboration between a Shul and a Jewish Care facility. Jewish Care are looking at the project as a possible future model for community partnerships. I'm delighted to advise that Magen Avot have been presented by EcoJudaism's Board of Trustees with the Silver EcoSynagogue award in recognition of completing the Environmental Audit and achieving a Silver level score. The presentation of our certificate took place at an EcoTeams meet on Wednesday, 2 August. Congratulations and huge thanks to Fiona Taylor and Tammy Beider.

A big thank you to Rabbi Michael Pollak for his inspirational monthly Shabbat Mevarchim Shiurim which began with 'The Roots of Modern Orthodoxy and Aristotle' in July. We have been privileged to host a number of outstanding speakers in the last few months. In particular: Manfred Goldberg, a 93-year-old Holocaust survivor, who spoke in commemoration of Yom Hashoah. We marked Yom HaAtzmaut listening to Dan Sacker, the former Co-Director of the Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust. Sivan Rahav-Meir the Israeli journalist, news reporter, and TV and radio anchor addressed us in May after Mincha on Shabbat. In 2017, Rahav-Meir was chosen by Globes magazine as the most popular female media personality in Israel. We welcomed back Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg, who attended The Mizrahi Weekend of Inspiration in May and Rabbi Malcolm Herman, the CEO of Seed, who spoke about 'The Power of Chutzpah in Shaping History'. In early June Dr Erica Brown, the American writer and educator, was our guest speaker, guiding us on 'Rabbi Sacks on Happiness and Loneliness'. The 2 additional sections of the mechitza have been delivered and are now in use as well as the 2 matching shenders. We are now looking to make further improvements in the area where we daven and are in negotiation with the school on this. A big thank you to David Berke for his assistance and expertise given unflinchingly at all times.

Grateful appreciation to Rabbi Yoni and Rebbetzen Dina and all the members of the Executive and Council for your total commitment and for being such a lovely team to work with. Patti Adler, our Vice Chair, and Chaya Langerman, our Women's Officer, are, as we all know and see, outstanding in their dedication to Magen Avot. Thanks to Julian Maurer for the production of our quality weekly Newsletter, featuring from Fiona Taylor an EcoSynagogue Tip almost every week. Julian Pollard, our unflinching and superb HaMagen editor, also handled the organisation of our Scottish whisky distilleries visit in May. Esther and I were happy attendees! We are dependent on the full commitment and expertise of our Gabbaim Daniel Ehreich and Elkan Adler, who seamlessly deliver everything required and involved for our Shul services. We are truly grateful. Thanks also to our wonderful Kiddush preparation team, and to Sophie Harris and Shira Neville, our Magen Avot Youth Directors. Finally, and most importantly, to all of you, our valued committed members, warm best wishes for a טובה וחתימה טובה

Simon Bentley

Chairman, Magen Avot



Rosh Hashanah Message from Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis



Office of The
CHIEF RABBI

תשפ"ב

The Chief Rabbi's Rosh Hashanah Message 5784

The term 'Yamim Noraim' (Days of Awe) contains within it the key to transformative living. Unetaneh Tokef, at the heart of our High Holyday Musaph prayers, commences: "Let us now proclaim the power of this day, for it is awe-inspiring..."

Awe is an emotion that is often elusive and fleeting, but when experienced, it can be unforgettable and life-altering.

Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, defines awe as the experience of "vast mysteries." In a widely acclaimed paper, written together with the noted social psychologist, Jonathan Haidt, Keltner identifies five spheres of experience which give rise to the feeling of awe.

1. Threat. When we encounter someone or something which has the power of life and death, such as a powerful natural disaster.
2. Beauty. When we see a striking piece of art or place of rare natural splendour.
3. Ability. When we appreciate in someone or something, an extraordinary talent.
4. Virtue. When we experience extraordinary acts of goodness which inspire us.
5. Supernatural Causality. When we feel the manifestation of the Divine in our lives.

Fascinatingly, these spheres of experience combine in the most extraordinary way on our Days of Awe.

Standing before our Creator on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we meditate upon our mortality and the gift of life. We are struck by the beauty of the sea of white in our Shuls and the rousing melodies of our prayers. We recognise in Hashem the capacity to help shape our lives and His boundless virtue to forgive us, no matter how frequently we err. Above all, our Days of Awe enable us to experience the hand of Hashem on our shoulders, comforting us, guiding us, and pushing us to fulfil our potential.

Significantly, in an extraordinary series of studies, Professor Keltner showed that people who had reported experiencing more awe in their lives, were more charitable and more altruistic. Reflecting on these studies, he wrote, "awe imbues people with a different sense of themselves, one that is smaller, more humble and part of something larger. In the great balancing act of our social lives, between the gratification of self-interest and a concern for others, fleeting experiences of awe redefine the self in terms of the collective, and orient our actions towards the needs of those around us." No wonder, therefore, that our Unetaneh Tokef prayer concludes with a call to engage in prayer, penitence and charity.

With this in mind, may our forthcoming Yamim Noraim, filled with heartfelt introspection and awe, inspire us to be more compassionate, more giving and more connected to our fellows. Let us strive to live each day with a renewed sense of purpose and a deep appreciation for the awe-inspiring moments that await us.

Valerie and I wish you all a shana tova umetukah, filled with awe and bountiful blessings.

Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis KBE





Rosh Hashanah Message from Rabbi Yoni Golker

I would like to begin by wishing everyone in the Magen Avot Community a heartfelt Ktivah va-chatimah Tovah – may you and your loved ones all be inscribed in the Book of Life for a year of happiness, good health, prosperity, and only joyous occasions. Well, what a year this has been! As Dina and I approach our first MagenAvotVersary, we can look back on a special year, throughout which we have been made genuinely welcome by everyone. Magen Avot is a remarkable Kehillah. It is a place full of warmth and a strong sense of community. The Tefillot are inspiring, replete with melody, joy, Kavannah and decorum. Torah learning and Chesed are central priorities and accordingly, for all these reasons, we feel truly proud to be your Rabbinic Couple. The last 12 months have been full of many exciting moments, programmes and activities. Barely a week passes without some initiative taking place within our community. Our sincere thanks are due to our Executive and Council for their tireless dedication! We can hardly wait for what will be on offer for us in 5784!

Charles Bosk, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania, once conducted a set of interviews with young doctors who had either resigned or been dismissed from neurosurgery training programmes. He wanted to discover what differentiates the top 1% of neurosurgeons, who have the lowest numbers of deaths and the best surgery outcomes. What he, somewhat unexpectedly, found was that it wasn't their MCAT scores, dexterity skills, etc. The top predictor was how they handled their mistakes. The top neurosurgeons wouldn't go home until they had changed setback to feedback; they would reconsider everything that they had done and ponder how they could have performed better, whilst the bottom 1% would externalise the blame. Bosk observed: "In my interviewing, I began to develop what I thought was an indicator of whether someone was going to be a good surgeon or not. It was a couple of simple questions: Have you ever made a mistake? And, if so, what was your worst mistake? The people who said, 'Gee, I haven't really had one,' or 'I've had a couple of bad outcomes, but they were due to things outside my control' – invariably those were the worst candidates. And the residents who said, 'I make mistakes all the time. There was this horrible thing that happened just yesterday and here's what it was.' They were the best." In his work *Yemei HaZikaron* (p.107), Rav J.B. Soloveitchik writes: "In the world of nature it is impossible to change what has happened, just as a thrown rock cannot change direction once you let it go. However, Teshuva is beyond the normal rules of nature because it preceded the creation of the world and is metaphysical, affording us the unique ability to convert sins into mitzvot and failures into successes". But even more than that, teshuva essentially entails our growing from those very same failures, making them constitute the foundation for future development and improvement. This idea is aptly expressed in the Midrash (Bereshit Rabba 30:8), Rav Soloveitchik explains, in relation to Avraham Avinu: "Avraham DID indeed sin during the earlier years of his life. He DID worship idols and was thoroughly familiar with the different ways of worshipping and the various deities. But later, he took that experience and used it as a foundation for the first kiruv movement, bringing myriads of souls into the folds of monotheism, because he knew how to speak their idolatrous language and relate to their perverse ideology and thus be able to expose their faulty logic or beliefs. That is why the Midrash states that Avraham was a tzaddik from beginning to end". In *Orot HaTeshuva* (9:5), Rav Kook writes in similar vein:

"Making mistakes and imperfection is part of life". Our goal during the Aseret Yemei Teshuva and over Yom Kippur is to emulate the practice of those top neurosurgeons, to recognise where we failed, to understand what exactly went wrong and utilise the very mistakes we have made as a vehicle for continuing improvement.

An excellent story to illustrate this point is to be found in the introduction to the latest edition of the *Sefer Shmirat Shabbat K'Hilchata* (which I reproduce below) – and I am indebted to Rav Yaakov Glasser for drawing this anecdote to my attention. A young (Rav) Yehoshua Neuwirth and his father were fleeing from the Nazis and hiding in an attic somewhere in Holland. All they had with them was a Gemara Masechet Ketubot and Chelek 1 of the Mishna Berurah, and for two years they were immersed in Hilchot Shabbat. When the time came for them to try to escape from Europe and they duly arrived at the dock ready to board, they found that the boat was departing on Shabbat. Clearly on account of sakanat nefashot one is allowed – indeed commanded – to violate the holy day. But imagine the mental distress suffered by people who have internalised the finer nuances and details of Hilchot Shabbat, to the extent that these have become an integral part of their being, and now the only way they can escape the European inferno is by being mechalel Shabbat. Rav Neuwirth tells us that as he boarded the boat and desecrated Shabbat for the first time in his life, he said to Hashem: "I had no choice but I'm going to devote my life to enhance the Shmirat Shabbat of the Jewish nation". Do you simply accept that failure in life, or do you pick yourself up and say that this failure is going to serve as a catalyst for something transformative and incredible, the composition of a monumental Sefer on hilchos Shabbat? The question we must ask ourselves, looking back at our lives, where we have fallen short, what is going to be our Shmirat Shabbat K'Hilchata? What are we going to do with these failures so as to take control of our destiny? How may we ensure that the occasions when we fall short are actually opportunities to accomplish something extraordinary? We all have moments where we're standing on the docks and have to take a step forward into something that is not truly us. The goal is to write our Shmirat Shabbat K'Hilchata moment and in doing so hopefully inscribe ourselves in the Book of Life for the year to come.

The Talmud in Masechet Megillah enquires why the 'Tochachah' – the section of Parashat Ki Tavo (Deut.28:15-68) containing a series of awesome curses destined to overtake the Jewish people should they fail to obey the dictates of the Torah – is invariably read in public shortly before Rosh Hashanah. The answer given is that it is to convey the notion that these curses – even if deserved – should all be confined to the year just ended, so as to enable us to inaugurate the New Year unencumbered and replete with blessings. Thus we, as faithful Jews, enter the New Year in a spirit not of trepidation but of fundamental optimism for the future. In much the same way as on January 1st, non-Jews make firm New Year resolutions for the secular new year (I'havdil), the High Holydays inspire us to commit ourselves in all sorts of ways to making improvements on aspects of our conduct over the past year. Yet how many of our sincere intentions actually manage to endure until next Rosh Hashanah? Let us all earnestly try to make this New Year different!

Wishing you and your loved ones a **נתיבה וחתומה טובה**



Rosh Hashanah Message from the President of the BoD

This Rosh Hashanah, I would like to focus on two wonderful events which demonstrate the esteem in which the Jewish community is held in this country. The first of these was the coronation of King Charles III in May. I was privileged to be invited to represent the Jewish community at the coronation. The King has said on a number of occasions that he wishes to be the 'protector of faiths' and he has been as good as his word. Having experienced King Charles' warmth towards our community on several occasions, I know he will be a wonderful monarch both for the Jewish community and the wider nation. I wish him much success.

Leading the service on that day was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. We were delighted that he accepted our invitation to be interviewed by historian and novelist Simon Sebag Montefiore at Bevis Marks Synagogue this summer. We invited every Board of Deputies-affiliated synagogue to send representatives to this wonderful event. The Archbishop spoke with great passion of his personal commitment to fighting antisemitism, the duty of care that universities have for their Jewish students and the historic relationship between the Church and the Jewish community. His views were both heartfelt and heart-warming for all who were there.

The Board's key work is in two areas. Firstly, we engage with politicians, civil society, and other faith groups throughout the UK at national, regional, and local level, sharing with them the Jewish community's views about a wide range of topics including antisemitism, Israel, religious practice, and social issues. Secondly, we work proactively to advance causes of great concern to our community. For example, we run Pikuach (The Jewish Ofsted) to inspect our Jewish schools, helping to ensure they provide an excellent Jewish education. We also have our Jewish Living Experience Exhibition, which is travelling around the country educating children and adults about the Jewish way of life, and we are developing a new online digital programme to teach non-Jewish children around the UK about Jews, Judaism, Israel, and antisemitism.

There are still threats to the safety of our community. We have previously campaigned successfully to have both Hezbollah and Hamas proscribed in their entirety as terrorist organisations. We strongly believe that the Government has a duty to ban the state-sponsored terror group the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). In July we held an event in Parliament which featured impassioned evidence from advocates of proscription.

There is still bias against Israel in the media. One particularly egregious example occurred recently when a BBC News presenter, in an interview with former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, said that "Israeli forces are happy to kill children". We contacted the BBC's Director General to protest in the strongest possible terms. On this occasion the BBC apologised swiftly for the unacceptable language, but we must continue to be vigilant and proactive.

This is but a snapshot of the extensive and varied work the Board of Deputies carries out for the Jewish community. We do all this on an extremely modest budget, largely funded by your communal contribution. We are very grateful for your support; please know that whatever your interests or concerns as members of our community, the Board of Deputies is here to advocate on your behalf.

I wish everyone a Shana Tovah and a happy year ahead.

Marie van der Zyl

President, Board of Deputies of British Jews





Rosh Hashanah Message from the President of the United Synagogue

Rosh Hashanah is all about new beginnings. We say in shul: Hayom harat olam, "Today is the creation of the world". Rosh Hashanah is considered the 'birthday' of the world as tradition holds that Rosh Hashanah was when Adam, the first human, was created. The word harat is a tricky one to translate. It comes from the Hebrew root 'h-r-h' which means gestation or pregnancy.

Building on this, Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz z'l (1937-2020) suggests that Rosh Hashanah is considered to be a little like a pregnancy: although there is a child there, it is not born yet, and nobody knows what it will be or how it will turn out.

It is this sense of starting anew, of a fresh injection of new potential, of putting behind us any mistakes or false starts, that I find one of the most uplifting aspects of Rosh Hashanah. Which of us hasn't committed ourselves to spending some time connecting more with our religion, only to find ourselves being beaten by work or family commitments? Now is the time.

So, Rosh Hashanah at its core is, in a sense, all of our birthdays – a day of renewal, of new beginnings. This time of year, affords us all the opportunity to take stock and ask ourselves some difficult questions: am I being the best me I can be? Am I making every day count? How can I make the world a better place?

For many of our members, this Rosh Hashanah will also mark the start of their return to shul. Although Coronavirus is still with us, as I write this, lockdown restrictions have been lifted and much of the population has been vaccinated. I know this will mean, as our recent membership survey suggested, that many members will be more comfortable returning to shul and we are so excited to welcome you back, whether for services, events, volunteering or even a fishball at kiddush.

Our membership survey also highlighted some of the challenges the United Synagogue faces. Some members told us how they were not satisfied with the provision for young people in their community during Covid. We are committed to redressing this balance now that young people's programmes can once again take place in person.

Members were also clear that they want to engage through both online and in-person events and services. This 'hybrid' model of community means we need to explore how to make the most of new technologies that continue to allow participation from afar as well as enjoying the many benefits that human-to-human contact brings – while ensuring we keep our members safe.

We know the journey to this Rosh Hashanah has had its challenges. I want to pay testament on behalf of my fellow Trustees to the extraordinary work of your Rabbinic and lay teams supported by your shul office team and colleagues at head office. Without them, and the thousands of volunteers across our organisation, there would be no United Synagogue.

It has been an incredibly difficult year since my last Rosh Hashanah message. But with your participation in your community and the support of the Almighty, we will have, please G-d, a bright future.

Shana Tova, may we all have a happy and successful year ahead, and, above all, a healthy one.

Michael Goldstein

President, United Synagogue



Kaddish – Our Best-Known Prayer and Least Understood

by Simon Bentley

The Kaddish, one of the most important of all prayers, expresses the hope that we may speedily see the coming of the messianic age, when the sovereignty of G-d will be recognised by all the dwellers on earth. It is written mainly in Aramaic, the language most widely spoken by Jews in the first centuries of the Common Era.



It has come to have five forms:-

1. Half Kaddish, recited to mark the beginning or end of a section of the prayers.
2. Full Kaddish (Titkabel), to mark the end of the Amidah.
3. The mourner's Kaddish.
4. The Rabbis' Kaddish, recited after a passage from the Oral Law.
5. The Kaddish of Renewal, recited only at the conclusion of a tractate of the Talmud, or by a child at the funeral of a parent.

Kaddish evokes strong feelings for those who recite it for 11 months in the memory of close loved ones who have recently died. Because of this, Kaddish has been described, honoured, recited yet misunderstood as being the prayer for the dead.

However, Kaddish contains no mention of death or guilt or nostalgia. Rather it is a declaration of faith in Israel's national purpose, of loyalty to Israel's Creator, of confidence in the ultimate triumph of the ideals for which heaven and earth were created, of longing for the time when people – all people – will accept the heavenly mission that gives meaning to life and transcends death, that will illuminate the darkest moments of personal and universal tragedy. Such an expression gives hope and direction to life.

Jewish people, whether secure or fearful, have historically raised their voices in the central theme of Kaddish:-

יהי שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא | May His great name be blessed forever and ever.

What is the secret of this seven-word, twenty-eight-letter proclamation and the Kaddish that is built around it? Why should we say 'Amen Yehei Shmei Rabbah' with all our strength?

One of the first commandments listed by Rambam in Mishneh Torah, is the responsibility lying upon the entire Jewish nation – not merely its scholars, leaders, and people of influence – to sanctify G-d's Name.

'Yehei Shmei Rabbah' contains seven words that are accompanied by an eighth, the 'Amen' that precedes it.

The number seven represents a form of completion. There are seven days in the week, seven years in a Shmittah [Sabbatical-year] cycle, seven weeks of preparation from Yetziyat Mitzraim [the Exodus] until the giving of the Aseret Hadibrot [the 10 Commandments] on Mount Sinai.

As a seven-word formula, 'Yehei Shmei Rabbah' is an expression of total dedication. But it begins with an eighth word, Amen. The formula expresses the idea that this eight-word response has implications far beyond the comprehension of anyone who has ever proclaimed it.

The Zohar teaches that 'Yehei Shmei Rabbah' possesses enormous spiritual power, far beyond that of any other acknowledgement of G-d's holiness.

Reish Lakish tells us that the one who responds 'Amen' with all his or her strength, is greater than the one who recites the blessing.

The word 'Amen' is derived from the same root as Emunah [Faith]. By responding 'Amen' to another blessing, a Jew affirms that he/she believes in the statement that has been made. By giving their assent they invest the statement with a greater degree of force. Now that there are two witnesses testifying to the statement it has greater validity.





Kaddish – Our Best-Known Prayer and Least Understood

by Simon Bentley

We are taught in the Midrash that Jacob, on his deathbed, was concerned that one or more of his sons was unworthy, that his lifetime of spiritual toil to produce the perfect family had ended in failure. His children reassured him saying: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל !! אֱלֹהֵינוּ !! אֶחָד. Hear O Israel [our father, i.e., they addressed him by his name, Israel] – Hashem our G-d, Hashem is One. They testified that no doubt or weakness had entered their hearts or diluted their faith. Jacob responded with relief and gratitude: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלִכּוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom forever, a prayer we retain in our recitation of the Shema.

Targum Yerushalmi states that Jacob's response was: 'יהא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עולמיא'. 'May His Great Name be blessed forever', that constitutes the major congregational response in Kaddish. It is clear that Targum Yerushalmi equates the communal response in Kaddish with that of Shema. Without doubt, the untarnished righteousness of Jacob's entire family represented a Kiddush Hashem [sanctification of G-d's name] of immense proportions. It was that sanctification which comforted Jacob and made him confident that his life's purpose had been fulfilled.

The United Synagogue has provided a guide to Kaddish for women, advising that Kaddish is a prayer which can be recited by any mourners who wish to, be they men, women, or children. Both men and women should respond to anyone, regardless of their sex, who is saying Kaddish.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks had a deep appreciation for music of all kinds. This became clear from his early appearance on the BBC's Desert Island Discs in 1991 and the interview promoting his book *Morality*, in *The Financial Times* in April 2020, where music was a recurring theme. In this interview, one of the last he gave before his untimely death just a few months later, he describes his passion for music, how music represented his connection with his father, and how critical music is for Judaism. For Rabbi Sacks, music was first and foremost a source of spirituality. On November 18, 2016, days after the death of Leonard Cohen, sitting in his New York hotel room, preparing a sermon on the coming week's portion, Vayera, Rabbi Sacks experienced a moment of inspiration that he couldn't help but share in an unscripted and unplanned video. In it, he linked the beauty and power of Cohen's last song, *You Want it Darker*, the weekly sedra, and the fractured world of the post-2016 U.S. election and the Brexit vote.

A self-professed fan, Rabbi Sacks has quoted Leonard Cohen songs often. But in this 11-minute video, he delves into an unprecedented depth of analysis of both this song (its personal message and the broader message to our generation) and of Cohen as a deeply Jewish artist. It is a magnificent example of Rabbi Sacks finding religious meaning and inspiration everywhere he looked, and his openness to appreciating and respecting Jews and people of all backgrounds, finding religious truth and beauty in their work and in their lives.

The song contains an English translation of parts of Kaddish (Rabbi Sacks suggests Cohen knew he was nearing the end of his life and was reciting Kaddish for himself). The Hebrew word *hineni* ("here I am") appears three times in the song, followed by the English words "I am ready my Lord," an obvious reference to the biblical phrase used to denote a willingness for sacrifice. This phrase features three times in the Akeda narrative in Vayera. Rabbi Sacks saw significant connections between the song, the Akeda, and the existence of violence in the name of G-d. He notes the angst and anger in the lyrics, summarizing his analysis with this paraphrase: "G-d, I love You, but I don't love the world You created or the human beings You have made in Your image."

Despite Leonard Cohen's obvious struggles with his faith, and his experimentation with other religious experiences, he was always deeply and proudly Jewish, and Rabbi Sacks celebrated him for this. Cohen famously came to Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War to entertain IDF troops, and his many performances in Israel would be peppered with Hebrew, and references to Jewish liturgy. He concluded a 2009 concert in Ramat Gan with *Birkat Kohanim* (he was proud of his priestly heritage).

References to Jewish ideas are found in many of his songs, such as *Unetana Tokef* in "Who by Fire", and according to Rabbi Sacks his most famous lyric, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in," is a reference to the Kabbalistic doctrine of *Shevirat HaKelim*. In his most "Sacksian" lyric, perhaps underpinning a deeply Jewish theme running throughout his art, Cohen sings "Hallelujah". For Rabbi Sacks, this word captures the essence of the existential paradox of Jewish faith: "That is what it is to be a Jew, a person of faith. Even, in the midst of darkness, there is light. Even, in the midst of death, there is life. Even, in the midst of hate, there is love. And even with our dying breath, we can still say hallelujah. That is the power of love, to redeem the brokenness of the world".

Almost exactly four years after he recorded this video, Rabbi Sacks passed away on Shabbat Parashat Vayera, leaving us the challenge – to find light in the midst of darkness, life in the midst of death, with words of praise of G-d on our lips.





Honoured Chattanim Bios

Laurence Lovat – Chatan Torah

Laurence grew up in Southgate and comes from a long line of shul 'machers'. His father blew shofar every year for 60 years and one grandfather was a Shul President. In Southgate Laurence ran the local Bnei Akiva group and taught in the cheder. He spent a year on Bnei Akiva Hachsharah, including a stint in yeshiva in Hebron, followed by a second year in Yeshivat Or Etzion. He entered the School of Medicine at UCL, planning on making Aliya. This has not quite happened (yet)!

Laurence met his wife, Linda, in the back of a car returning from a family Simcha in Leeds and four hours together made him realise that she was the one for him. They married in March 1991 and joined the North Hendon Adass Community. They have been blessed with five sons and a daughter. Two are married and they have 4 grandchildren. One of Laurence's greatest privileges as a Mohel is to have performed the Brit Milah for all of his male offspring. Linda and Laurence have been members of Magen Avot since it was founded.

Both Laurence's parents and his brother were dentists. But at 16 he realised he liked to look beyond the teeth which is why he ended up in the stomach. He qualified at UCL having intercalated in Nutrition with first class honours. He became Professor of Gastroenterology and Biophotonics at UCL where he is also clinical director to the Wellcome Trust WEISS centre. The centre enables engineers and clinicians to co-develop novel technologies in medicine. His research focuses on developing light-based tools for looking inside the body. His artificial intelligence (AI) endoscopy support system is now used in endoscopy tests throughout the world and his scientific publications have been cited over 10,000 times. During the Covid pandemic, he created an AI system to make air safer in hospitals.

Laurence enjoys new experiences. As a student he led the High Holiday services in Nairobi, Kenya and later spent 3 months in India seeing medicine in action there before a trekking holiday in Nepal. He still loves meeting new patients every day and establishing long-term relationships with them.

The most important lesson he learned from his late father was that **וכתר שם טוב עולה על גביון** – the 'crown of a good name is greater than all'. This is what he and Linda have strived to develop throughout their lives. Laurence feels deeply honoured to have been chosen as Chatan Torah this year and would particularly like to thank Linda for her unwavering support and encouragement. As the Gemara famously says in the name of Rabbi Akiva: **שלי ושלכם, שלה הוא** – what is mine is in truth hers!

Cecil Taitz – Chatan Bereishit

Cecil was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa. His brother and sister, both of whom are no longer with us, were about 10 years older than he. Cecil was what was known as a "laet lammetjie" (late lamb)! The suburb he lived in was about 40% Jewish, and his street was about 50% Jewish.

Growing up in Apartheid South Africa was an uncomfortable experience, and in retrospect, a very disturbing environment in which to live. That experience has served in Cecil honing his sense of what is right and what is wrong to this day. He attended King David Jewish day school. The school and the lifestyle of most Jews was relatively secular but very traditional and very Zionist, and his family was no different. Cecil was not the most diligent of students, and this included Hebrew and religious studies. For some reason, however, Pirkei Avot made a huge impression on him at school, and continues to mould his view of the world.

Being drafted into the South African army was an interesting experience. Although character building, it was mostly boring, sometimes frustrating, and rarely dangerous. Oddly enough, during basic training, the Jewish soldiers were served kosher food, and this was his first period of regularly having kosher food.

After that, Cecil stretched his wings for the first time, going to live in the US for a number of years, doing various jobs.

In 1985 an opportunity to work in the UK came his way, and he grabbed it. That was the start of a career in generic pharmaceuticals. It was exciting and (most of the time) enjoyable. He retired when the company was sold.

Life post-work has been varied. Cecil discovered swimming and the gym, volunteered at a school, and about seven years ago he became a magistrate. He also had the honour of being treasurer to the dynamic Magen Avot community for the past six years.

Cecil's proudest achievement? That's easy; Lee and Jason, good and upright men who together with their wives Yael and Liza, are thoughtful parents to his wonderful and delightful grandchildren.





HAMUSSAF

THE SUPPLEMENT OF THE HAMAGEN MAGAZINE



We have long wished to feature our youth and younger children in HaMagen as they are an integral part of our community. So, we are delighted to dedicate a Youth Supplement in this edition to them. What better than to let them speak in their own voices! Take your Youth Supplement and read on.

YOUTH SUPPLEMENT



Bat Mitzvah Group

Thanks to Rebbetzen Dina Golker and Patti Adler's efforts and commitment, the shul's Bat Mitzvah class has flourished and has been blessed with a number of outstanding and erudite young women. We are very happy to reproduce here extracts from the memorable Divrei Torah they delivered in shul during the last year. Rebbetzen Golker said: "It has been an absolute pleasure working with such an incredible group of girls. What a special year to begin running the Bat Mitzvah group, with so many home-grown Magen Avot girls! I hope that the bonds they have created and strengthened will endure forever. We have had so much fun together and learnt a lot on the way. The girls have really matured, and the speeches that follow demonstrated how insightful and talented they truly are. Thank you to Patti for co-ordinating the programme so seamlessly. Looking forward to next year's programme!".



SIGN UP FOR NEXT YEAR!!

2023/24 Bat Mitzvah Course Sign Up: Inspiring teachers, fun environment, source-based learning, and interactive activities. Learn about key themes in Judaism and their relevance to our lives. Sessions and workshops by **Rebbetzen Dina Golker** and other inspiring teachers. Workshops with Yad Vashem, GIFT and more. 10 sessions overall (1½ hours per session). From **September 2023** to July 2024 from **7.30pm to 9.00pm**. A session every month during term time (in Hendon). All Year 7 girls welcome (both members and non-members). Course price is £80. To sign up, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/batmitzvah2023>. Limited space so book now to avoid disappointment. For more information email Patti Adler: pattischustermann@yahoo.com.

2023/24 Bar Mitzvah Course – Register for Interest: Call for interest in the MA Bar Mitzvah Enrichment Programme led by **Rabbi Yoni Golker** and other inspiring individuals. Topics will include learning to lead Tefillah, Tefillin workshop, social media positivity, and much more! Plan is to run this once a month on Monday evenings. Price will be around £100 for boys in Year 8 to take place from **October 2023 to May 2024**. Express interest at: <https://tinyurl.com/MABM23-interest> or contact Rabbi Golker directly at: rabbi@magenavot.com.



Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Devorah Taylor

Shabbat Shalom, everyone, and thank you for coming to my Bat Mitzvah. Today is bet Nissan- the second of Nissan, which is exactly halfway between Purim and Pesach.

I have been reading through Megillat Esther with my dad and have been finding much of it very interesting. We learnt that there are some parallels between Purim and Pesach that I had never thought about before, and there are also some differences. I did a bit of research on this and decided that I wanted to talk about this tonight, and how it relates to my growing up and becoming Bat Mitzvah.

I heard a joke that goes: Every Jewish holiday can be summarised as follows: "they tried to kill us, we won, let's eat." It is definitely not true of some Chagim, but I think that for Purim and Pesach, this is the most obvious similarity between the 2 festivals. Both are centred around redemption of the entire Jewish population from near death, and celebrated with a meal or feasting, but the similarity does not end there. They are also both celebrated with a recounting of the story – on Purim through the megillah reading, and on Pesach through the Haggadah.

Another connection is that when we celebrate these 2 different festivals, we do this by showing concern for one another. The mitzvot for Purim involve giving charity and food to others, and the mitzvot for Pesach involve sharing the food one has at the Seder with others.

There is more: As we know, just 30 days separate Purim from Pesach. The Gemara tells us "Mishenichnas Adar Marbin b'simcha" – When Adar arrives we should increase our happiness". Rashi explains the reason for this is because "Yemei Nissim havu l'Yisrael, Purim u'Pesach – they are days of miracles for the Jewish People, Purim and Pesach". Rashi is telling us that the miracles experienced in both the Purim and Pesach stories are the reason for the halacha of increasing our happiness in Adar, but why should Pesach, which falls in Nissan, be a cause of joy in Adar? What does one have to do with the other?

When I read the Purim story in detail with my dad, we found one of the answers to this. At various times in the Megillah, there is a reference to Pesach. I kept thinking what a strange coincidence it was that for example, Haman was hanged on Pesach, and the night that Achashveirosh could not sleep was the first night of Pesach, Seder night. But then I realised that coincidences rarely happen in the Tenach!

In Parshat Bo, the Ramban writes that the reason Hashem displayed such awesome powers and outright miracles in the Exodus from Mitzraim, was so that the Jewish people should always be aware of the miracles He constantly does for us, even when it is not obvious.

Ramban says "Through the great open miracles, one comes to admit the hidden miracles which constitute the foundation of

the whole Torah". Therefore, the connection between Pesach and Purim is that on Pesach we learn explicitly that Hashem is behind miracles and that on Purim we are not to forget that He is still behind the miracle even though we do not hear His name once and His part in it is hidden.

While our story begins with complete dependence on Hashem, waiting for His intervention to save us, we eventually find ourselves in the position of Mordechai and Esther, taking the initiative while trusting that Hashem is guiding their way.

As a Bat Mitzvah, the same is true for me. As a younger child, I was totally dependent on my parents and later on my wider family, teachers, and friends to teach me how to do everything, from brushing my teeth and learning to read, to learning how to share with others and how to cross the road safely. Now that I am Bat Mitzvah I have my own thoughts, preferences, and opinions, and it is up to me to take the initiative to behave in a way that contributes to our community and society whilst being aware of Hashem's hand in everything that I do.

The lessons I have taken from this study into Purim and Pesach are the following:-

1. When we celebrate our own happy events we should have in mind a concern for others at the same time and we should be aware of and help others when we can.
2. It may not always seem that Hashem is involved in our lives, and we do not have open miracles nowadays, but it is sometimes helpful to realise that good things can sometimes be hidden, and it is important to trust that firstly we can't control everything that happens in our lives but that often things happen for a reason.
3. I have to take initiative rather than wait to be saved from difficult things.
4. I really love learning with my dad.

The other piece of work that I have done in preparation for my Bat Mitzvah has been to learn to lead the Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat with Rebbetzin Mandy Lawrence. I have loved going to her house in the evenings to sing and learn with her. Even my mum couldn't stay away, and we ended up learning it together. I had always really enjoyed coming to the women's Friday night services that we have at Magen Avot, and it has been a very meaningful way to feel that I was becoming an active Jewish adult in a community. Thank you Rebbetzin Lawrence for your time, patience, care, and flexibility.

Thank you as well to Rebbetzin Dina who has taught me at the Magen Avot Bat Mitzvah course this year. Her sessions are interesting and make me think, and I am very lucky to be with a group of lovely friends, many of whom I have known since I was 2 years old.

Thank you finally to everyone here at Shul for coming to hear me speak and to mark my special day. It's no secret that my family and I love this shul and it means a lot to me that you are here.



Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Mia Langerman

Birshut R. Ebrahimoff family and friends. Shabbat shalom everyone and thank you for coming to celebrate my bat mitzvah. It is so nice to see family and friends who have travelled so far to be with us and so many of my friends who are here today. For the past year, I have studied with Julie Cohn. We learnt masechet megilla for which I will make a Siyum in school later this week, and we also studied this week's Parasha, which is Shemot. I have searched the Parasha for a message that would inspire me as a bat mitzvah girl embarking on a new journey.

This morning we started reading the second book of the Torah - Shemot This book is commonly known in English as the book of exodus. The English name is easily understood as most of the Sefer is about the children of Israel leaving Egypt. The Hebrew name Shemot is not as clear; I will discuss this in my Dvar Torah. Throughout the book of Shemot we see the descendants of our Avot and Imahot start to form the Jewish nation who are ready to listen to Hashem, receive the Torah on Har Sinai and take on the mitzvot we were commanded to do. Similarly, I am becoming bat mitzvah and I am now responsible for my actions as a Jewish woman and for keeping as many mitzvot as I can.

The parasha we read this morning began with a passuk introducing the important concept of names: **ואלה שמות בני ישראל** (And these are the names of the children of Israel).

This is referring to Yaakov's children who came to Egypt to escape the famine in Israel and joined Yosef their brother who is the ruler there second to Pharaoh. Rashi explains that the reason why the Torah lists all twelve names is because earlier in the book of Bereishit Hashem tells Avraham that his descendants will be as many as the stars in the sky. He also explains that Hashem is emphasising how precious each individual person is to Him.

A person's name is commonly used as a label or an identification of who they are but if you search deeper, a name can reveal your personality and it makes you stand out from everyone else because no two people are the same even though they might have the same name. Baal Haturim **בעל הטורים** say that keeping their Hebrew names was one of the reasons why Bnei Yisrael were saved "נגאלו" from Egypt. Bnei Yisrael kept their strong Emunah in Hashem even though they had a very traumatic time as slaves, by keeping their Jewish names. In Shmuel aleph perek כ"ה passuk כ"ה says: **כי כשמו כן הוא** (As is his name so is he).

This passuk states that a person's name describes his personality as well and has an influence on who we are. We see this many times in the bible where we have an explanation as to why a person got his name and in some cases the commentators **פרשנים** use the reason behind the name to explain why it all went wrong for that person.

My parents named me **מיה** which means from **הי**. As you know I'm the fifth girl of the Langerman family, and although my parents may have wanted a boy, they gave me the name that shows it was Hashem's call that I would be a girl but I know they love me the most. My middle name is **מרים** and there is a passuk in Mishlei, perek ט"ו passuk ל' which links to this name because it begins and ends with the letter **מ**. The passuk says: **שמחה לב שמועה טובה תדשן עצם** (Light in a messenger's eyes brings joy to the heart and good news gives health to the bones). I understand this passuk to mean that when you smile at someone it affects how they feel and it fills them with joy and happiness, and this is something that I will try to do more.

In today's parasha we speak about Miriam, a Neviah who not only excelled in the trait of gemilut chasadim, being kind and thoughtful, but also brought joy to others.

In the book of Micha Chapter 6 Passuk 4 it says **ואשלה לפניך את משה אהרן ומרים**... (For I brought you up from Egypt And I sent before you Moshe, Aharon and Miriam) telling us that Miriam played a big part in bringing Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt. These qualities were first expressed by Miriam at the age of 5 when Pharaoh decided to have all male, Jewish babies thrown into the River Nile. However, she persuaded her parents, Amram and Yocheved to have another baby, who grew up to be our leader, Moshe Rabeinu. If it hadn't been for her maturity and forward thinking, Bnei Yisrael would not have been blessed with such a humble and special leader. We see that even at this young age, she was a strong, influential person.

Due to her actions Moshe was born, and unlike other male babies, he was not tossed into the river but was carefully placed in a basket and hidden by his mother among the reeds in the River Nile. Pharaoh's daughter, Batya, noticed the basket, and, not knowing there was a baby inside, asks her maid to pick it up. Miriam then acted quickly, realising the baby needed to be looked after. So, she took him to his mother, Yocheved. Later on, when Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt, Miriam leads all the women into singing Shirat Hayam. And we all know the Midrash about the well of fresh water of Miriam that Bnei Yisrael had in the desert as long as Miriam was alive.

In Hebrew every word has more than just one meaning. For example, the word **צדקה** is not only charity, but also about doing justice. Also, in Hebrew each letter has a numeric value, as in Hebrew the numbers are replaced with letters, like the Rav quoted **דף כב** of the Gemara and not page 22. My name Mia Miriam; it has the numerical value, 345 which is the value as Moshe her brother and also my father. This brings me to the point which I would like to thank my parents, my uncle and cousins who came all the way from the US and Israel to celebrate with me. To end, I would like to thank Julie for teaching me Mishna for the past few years and for helping me develop my Jewish knowledge further.



Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Imogen Morris-Sloane

This week's parasha is Ha'azinu, which takes place on Moshe's last day on earth. Most of this parasha takes the form of a poem or song, which is a summary of what was, what is, and what could be, if the children of Israel don't change their ways. (Sorry Dickens, but Hashem got there first). To understand the parasha better we have to know a bit about the context and look back to in last week's parasha, Vayeilech. G-d shows Moshe what will happen to the People of Israel after he dies, after they enter the Promised Land. And it's bleak.

G-d describes a potential cycle of abandonment, firstly the Jewish people abandoning G-d, then G-d abandoning the Jewish people. G-d says that once they have noticed they have been abandoned, they will become regretful and ask for forgiveness; however, as this forgiveness is only requested when they start to see the impact of their actions, G-d declares their teshuva meaningless and hides from them even more.

It must have been utterly heart-breaking for Moshe as G-d describes the complete undoing of his life's work. The entire purpose of leaving Egypt and spending 40 years preparing the people of Israel for their destiny amount to nothing, and his people suffers terrible tragedies, culminating in G-d threatening to undo his covenant.

But before we lose all hope, G-d tells Moshe all is not yet lost; he can change this prophecy by warning the Jewish people through a song reminding them of who they are and what they have done, and what could be. And this sets the background for our parasha.

It is in Ha'azinu that Moshe shares this prophecy with the children of Israel through a song. The song is designed to enable the Jewish people to retain their connection to Hashem. Even if they forget most other things, a song has a resonance that is easy to remember.

The imagery of the future is visceral. Moshe uses strong words to show the people what may happen: "You became fat, you became thick, you became corpulent". And "bloating of famine, flaming demons, and the teeth of beasts".

But it is the recounting of history that is really interesting and poetic. The words of the text use references back to Creation, serving as a reminder of G-d as the parent of mankind, and reminding us of our own personal connection with G-d. Moshe opens with "Listen O heavens, and I will speak". The "heavens and earth" are summoned, just as they are summoned into being at the beginning of the Torah. Even in a time of change and the ending of the Torah, we are reminded of the omnipotence of G-d and the connection of everything.

This is a time of change from the leadership of Moshe to Joshua, from exile to having a home. A time of change is always one of uncertainty, and with Moshe going, so also does the Jewish people's direct connection to G-d. This will be the first generation who won't have the experience of the miracles, or the Exodus. They won't have the same experiences with G-d, so it is not surprising that it is at this point that we see an increased risk of the Jewish people straying from G-d.

The poem is a warning from Moshe for the Jewish people to remember who they are, what G-d has done for them, and not to forget G-d as they move on without Moshe as their leader. They are reminded that the Jewish people can always reach G-d through knowing this song. This is Moshe's goodbye to his flock – the last act of leadership and kindness he can do for them before he must make his way up Mount Nevo to die.

Ha'azinu goes on to say: "Hashem spoke to Moshe on that very day, saying, 'Ascend to this mount of Abarim, mount Nebo, which is the land of Moab which is before Jericho and see the land of Canaan that I give to the children of Israel as an inheritance, and die on the mountain where you will ascend and be gathered to your people...'" In this parasha the Jewish people are told that they will have to continue without the leader who took them out of Egypt and led them for forty years in the desert. Instead, Moshe is going to die in front of the land he led them to. Moshe died because he didn't follow Hashem's directions, way back in Bamidbar, in Parashat Chukat when he hit the rock, instead of talking to it.

Throughout this parasha we learn that our actions have consequences. The actions of the People of Israel, as predicted in Ha'azinu, could lead to the end of their relationship with G-d, and Moshe's anger and impulsive behaviour has led to him not reaching Israel. This parasha is read at a time of year when we take stock of ourselves and our actions, and have the opportunity to repent, ask forgiveness from people and Hashem, and change. It also teaches us that for it to count we must carry out teshuva, repentance, in an honest and meaningful way. It also reminds us that we are in control of our destiny.

Being Bat Mitzvah means taking responsibility for all my actions, the good and the bad. For my Bat Mitzvah I achieved great things, even though I didn't think that was possible. I barely remembered how to read Hebrew, but I took responsibility to commit to improving, and with help I was determined to learn how to read and improve my skills.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach!



Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Eliana David

Good Shabbos everyone and thank you for being here to listen to my Dvar Torah on Shelach Lecha and share in my Simcha together.

I want to share with you today some of my learning which I think you will all be able to relate to. The theme I have chosen is the power of words.

Just to set the scene: as we know the Jewish people have now been going through the desert for many years. Although the Jews have seen many miracles throughout this time, it has also been very difficult for them; escaping Mitzrayim and spending many years travelling through the desert.

The Jews have now finally made it to the land of Canaan, and Hashem has asked Moshe to send out one very important man from each tribe to spy out the land. Moshe briefed the spies to find out a few things, such as, if the people were strong or weak, if there were few people or many people, and to bring back fruit from the land.

At the end of forty days, the spies came back and reported back to Aaron and Moshe and to the entire nation. The spies showed all of Bnei Yisroel the fruit of the land and they declared: "It flows with milk and honey and the fruit is very big, but the people that dwell in the land are very powerful, the Cities are fortified and very great, and we also saw there the offspring of the giant. Amalek dwells in the area of the South and the Hittite, the Jebusite, and the Emorite dwell on the mountain, and the Canaanite dwells by the sea and on the banks of the Jordan." This was not quite the picture the Jewish people had in mind whilst they were waiting for the return of the spies and so it caused them great unhappiness.

Why were the Jews so sad? The spies had just said that the land flows with milk and honey and the fruit is massive, which sounds amazing to me! But then we learn that they said the people who dwell in the land are not necessarily those we would choose as our neighbours? Surely this is just a small blip on the horizon of the amazing land Hashem promised them.

Let's think of it like this... Shul has finished, and some people are hanging out waiting for their cholent at the Kiddush. One person shares their latest piece of shul info and tells the other people in the group all about the daughter of a new family joining the shul. The person says, "I've heard she is very kind, fun, funny, BUT she is very wild and can be really annoying". How do you think this made the others feel about the new family planning to join our community? Some of the group had been thinking, how lovely, I would like to invite them over to get to know them, but by the end of the conversation that has stopped being the case.

The point of this story (which isn't true, I promise) is that the spies also presented a scenario filled with these great things – a beautiful land of milk and honey – yet they used the word 'afas,' which means 'but,' and followed their description of the land with their own opinion. As the spies were a group of people Bnei Yisroel trusted, they took their advice and were devastated by the news. They had lost hope in Hashem, and they wanted a new leader to take them back to Egypt.

In our modern-day Kiddush example, I just gave, we were originally told that the daughter of the new family is kind, fun and funny. However, the woman with the info then gave a big 'but' and changed everyone's opinion before they had even met her and had a chance to get to know her. As we can see in both scenarios, when we speak in any negative way it can quickly change people's view.

Rashi says this is the most dangerous type of speech because you have heard a positive fact first but then it is followed with a negative opinion. This seems very convincing as it came from a good and positive place, so this means that others now believe you are a reliable source of information and so they can be easily influenced and believe what you are saying.

If we think about it, there seems to be a question here. If Hashem knew that sending out the spies would cause a horrible effect on the Jews and that they would lose hope in Hashem, why would He ask Moshe to send them out in the first place?

Rashi notes that Shelach means send and Lecha means for yourself. Hashem was sending the spies to see the land for themselves and give them hope and trust in Him. It also made sure that the Jews wouldn't walk into the land thinking Hashem was hiding something from them.

Hashem gives us room to make our own decisions, and it's up to us what path we choose. In letting the spies go to the land of Canaan, Hashem was giving them the opportunity to be leaders and come back from the land to give the Jewish people hope.

On the return of the spies, the Jewish people were obviously feeling sad and confused. The land they had been promised wasn't living up to expectations. In fact, Colev and Yehoshua were the only two spies to stand up to the Bnei Yisroel.

They told them that the land is 'very good', and we should not be scared "Hashem itonu al teero-oom" – "Hashem is with us so do not fear them". The Jewish people were easily influenced by the reports, so they threw stones at Colev and Yeshoshua. They did not want to listen.



Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Eliana David

Let's go back to our Kiddush where this time I, as a Bas-mitzvah girl, join the story. I walk over to the cholent table and overhear the group who are busy chatting about this 'wild child'. I'm left with a dilemma: I don't want to be rude to them, but this is clearly Lashon Hora. None of us have even met her yet!

The Chofetz Chaim says that just like Colev and Yehoshuah, it is important for me to stand up for what is right. He suggests two main points: firstly, that I should try to politely stand up to the cholent chatters and tell them what they're doing is wrong or secondly, if they don't stop, then a way to get out of the situation is to just quietly walk away. After all, we know the whisky table is really the place to be. I should remember to act like Colev and Yehoshuah and stand up for what's right, otherwise, as the Chofetz Chaim says, I'm just as much a part of the sin as the cholent chatters in Kiddush.

As I mentioned earlier, even though Bnei Yisroel had seen many amazing miracles from the time they left Egypt until this point, they still didn't have full faith in Hashem, and had been easily swayed by the reports of the spies. Hashem then has a discussion with Moshe questioning how much they deserve to go into the land of Canaan and see the amazing miracles.

This is not the first time this has happened to Moshe. When descending from Har Sinai with the Luchos, he saw the Jews bowing down to a golden calf. Moshe was so angry that he smashed the Luchos, but Hashem reminded him of the importance of giving people a second chance. Here we see that Moshe is asking for Hashem to give the Jewish people a second chance – he has learnt to emulate the Middos of Hashem.

In this week's Sedra, it is almost like we heard two stories with the reports from the spies – most of them came back and painted a picture of this land filled with awful people, and two of them painted a totally different picture of amazing fruit and produce. There is a Mishnah that states: 'God doesn't ask of us more than what lies in our power to do'. We can learn from this that sometimes, something may happen in our lives that is challenging or scary, but we should know that Hashem is always with us and if we forget or fail the challenge, Hashem will always give us another chance.

Colev and Yehoshua showed this completely by having a positive mindset, enabling them to attempt to convince the rest of the Jewish people to focus on their Emunah. They realised that Hashem has given us the land for a reason and it's good, and as a result they were not punished, and instead rewarded.

As a Jewish girl I understand that I will now be taking on Mitzvahs of my own accord and it's important for me to build my own relationship with Hashem. In my everyday life, I'm thankful for everything Hashem gives me. However, I know that like the Bnei Yisroel in this week's Sedra, I can sometimes feel frustrated and fail at the challenges that Hashem throws my way. From Shelach Lecha, I have learnt to approach these challenges with a positive mindset and be careful about what I say, because even one word like 'BUT' can change the course of history. I know if I have a solid relationship with Hashem, if I am careful and thoughtful, Hashem will be with me to help me approach these challenges with Emunah and with the right mindset.

Perhaps one of the most important challenges for me today is being aware and mindful of the words that come out of my mouth. It's not easy, in fact it's very challenging, but this week's Sedra shows that the words we speak have a huge amount of power. I would like to be able to work on this and continue to learn more from the Chofetz Chaim to apply to my own life. I really admire how Colev and Yehoshuah were able to stand up for what is right, even if it was the unpopular opinion. I will always look to Hashem to guide me as I continue my journey as a Jewish girl.

Thank you for listening to me today and joining our Kehilla to celebrate my Simcha. Good Shabbos.





Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Talya Kay

It is a real honour for me to stand here on my Bat Mitzvah Shabbat in a shul that I've grown up in since the days of hotel rooms and marquees in gardens. I would like to start by thanking this whole community for providing me with a wonderful shul and community experience through childhood. This shul has already been the centre of 3 generations of my family, an extremely tight circle of friends and the opportunity to get involved like leading the Magen Minis service.

Rabbi Golker, who is also my deputy-headmaster at school is someone I look up to greatly. And Rebbetzen Dina has been my incredible teacher through the Bat Mitzvah classes this past year. Thank you both for your kindness, support, and patience. I've truly enjoyed learning so much from you both and I look forward to continuing to grow under your guidance for a long time to come.

Thank you to all my family, especially those who have travelled from Israel, Canada, Switzerland, and Australia to be here. It's particularly special to have my grandparents Baba and Safta Joy here today. I am really sorry that my Tata and Saba Melvin could not make it, but I am sure you will all join me in wishing them both a refua shleimah.

Finally, thank you Mum and Dad for this spectacular weekend and for putting up with me.

In this week's double sedra of Behar-Bechukotai, Hashem tells us:- "And you shall perform my laws, and faithfully keep my rules, then you shall live securely in the land".

This passuk appears after Bnei Yisrael are told about the laws of Shmitta where we are to refrain from farming in the land of Israel every 7 years as a show of faith and trust in Hashem. Rashi explains that we will be rewarded with living securely on the land if we observe the Shmitta.

However, in the second of the double sedras, Bechukotai, we read the Tochacha, a series of curses inflicted upon Bnei Yisrael if we do not follow Hashem's commandments.

One of these curses or punishments is the exile of Bnei Yisrael which will happen if we do not observe the Shmitta rules.

As Hashem says in Perek Kaf Vav; passuk Lamed Daled:- "Then the land will make up for its sabbaticals".

In fact, in Sefer Divrei Yamim it says: "The Jews were punished after the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash with 70 years of exile in Bavel for the 70 Shmitta years they did not keep."

We understand that the reason we observe Shmitta is to show the farmer and everyone else that Hashem is in charge and in control. That He will sustain us through Shmitta and the following growing season.

Shmitta therefore proves to the world that Hashem watches over, protects and provides for each individual.

Rabbi Zarihan explains that there is one other way to demonstrate Hashem's protection over us and this is by evidence of the continued existence of the Jewish people. According to all the rules of nature, history and conflict, the Jewish people should have ceased to exist, having been persecuted and downtrodden in exile for so long. Yet the Jewish people have outlasted the very empires that persecuted them. The only explanation? Divine Providence – Hashem watched over and protected us.

Mark Twain once expressed his amazement at the miracle of the existence of the Jewish people: "The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed; and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind".

So, what is the connection between failing to observe Shmitta and the punishment of exile? When we don't observe Shmitta in Eretz Yisrael we are missing an opportunity to demonstrate Hashem's total influence and care to the world. Therefore, we are forced to switch to a different way of demonstrating this care: by existing against all odds in exile amongst our persecutors. The fact that we continue to exist against such odds, for so long, is a demonstration to the world of Hashem's providence. The details in the Tochacha describe the dreadful exile, death and horrific suffering which has sadly been the recurring fate of the Jewish people over the past 2,000 years.

Throughout history, the painful cycle of exile has repeated itself: finding some degree of security, acceptance, and success only to be followed eventually by rejection by our host country. Whenever the veneer of acceptance melts away a little, the hard truth is once again revealed: our exile is a manifestation of the Tochacha laid out in the sedra. Often when we are feeling comfortable and at ease in exile, our faith in Hashem is worn down only to be replaced by trust in ourselves and our fellow man. It is precisely this message that Yirmiyahu warns us about in this week's Haftorah. That our reliance on human beings and our own wealth is merely an illusion that is bound to fail us in the end. Yet after hearing all of the terrible things that will happen to Bnei Yisrael in the Tochacha, Hashem comforts us with the following:-

"While they are in the land of their enemies, lo maasteem, I will not despise them... v'lo ga'alteem, nor will I reject them, l'chalotam, to destroy them completely... and to break my covenant with them completely for I am the Lord their G-d".

Just as Hashem outlines the terrible tragedies we can expect, so too He promises that he will not break His covenant with us and eventually we will return.



Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Talya Kay

We therefore need to keep hoping that things will get better, even when they look really bad. G-d says we will go through some tough times, but He also promises to stick with us and bring us back. This means that we should never give up hope, no matter how bad things seem.

Back in the ancient world, the Greeks and others thought that the gods didn't really care about people, and the only way to deal with them was to either stay out of their way or try to keep them happy by giving offerings. In modern secular cultures, people believe that the universe – and human life itself – is a bunch of random occurrences that don't really mean anything and have no higher purpose.

Rabbi Lord Sacks explains that whilst "hope" has existed in both of these cultures, Aristotle defined this hope as a "waking dream". Put another way, hope is simply a personal wish that things might be different, but in reality, there is no reason to believe that our situation can actually be improved.

Naturally our Torah has a different view, that of course our situation can improve as we are on a long journey, the end of which is the redemption and Moshiach.

Rabbi Sacks says: "Judaism is the principled rejection of tragedy in the name of hope".

It is wrong to think that the universe does not hear our prayers and is blind to our wishes. We are actually obligated to try and perfect the world and end suffering.

This illogical continued hope of the Jewish people was never more acutely felt than after the Holocaust and before the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948. It is no coincidence that Naftali Herz Imber, the author of Israel's national anthem, wrote "od lo avda tikvateinu" – "our hope is not yet lost" – as a direct reference to Yechezkel's haunting Dry Bones vision of our time in exile.

It is not an accident that Israel's national anthem is called the Hatikva, the Hope.

My Bat Mitzvah is twinned through a programme run by Yad Vashem with a girl who was not fortunate enough to see her own Bat Mitzvah as her life was tragically cut short during the Holocaust.

Lila Keh-Kai was a girl just like me. She had friends and a life and by chance ended up born in the wrong time and place. In 1942, in Lvov, Poland an innocent 9-year-old girl was murdered, and her only crime was being Jewish. Learning about Lila and the Holocaust makes me realize how lucky I am to be free and to have hope for my life ahead of me. Something I am absolutely aware; I cannot take for granted.

There are many lessons that we can learn from Lila and the millions of others who perished just because they were Jews.

However, like with the Tochacha which is a terrifying account of suffering and darkness, we realise that hope will never be too far away. As I enter Jewish adulthood, I pray that tomorrow will always bring better times, for myself, my family and community, for all Klal Yisrael and the entire world. I also hope that I can contribute in my role as part of Bnei Yisrael to help make this hope a reality.

Shabbat Shalom.





Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Vivi Adler

Merry Hello. Merry Shabbes and welcome to my Bas Mitzvah speech.

Thank you to everyone who has made it possible to stand here today and speak to you. With the permission of my parents, the Rabbi and Rebbetzen and with the permission of this wonderful community, I'll begin.

You may be expecting me to stand here and talk about my Parsha but... You know they used to say, "behind every great man is a great woman" and then they said, "sisters are doing it for themselves". I say "tosh" – I am my mother's daughter and my father's Vivi Vooster. I think that the only yardstick by which I should be measured is that of Hashem's and the talents which I have been blessed with. I am no one else's to label. Mami has taught me that lesson very well.

Before you even need to think about what it means being a young, blonde girl in 2023 – as the youngest of our family, I'm happy to show you my physical scars earned over the years from fighting with my big (did I say big – I mean huge) brother Yonah but somehow I survive. Also, I can't show you the mental scars from my sister, but please feel free to check in with me again in a few years' time (or over the course of the rest of my life) for psychiatrist updates.

My point is that I'm becoming increasingly aware that everyone in life has their struggle. The key is how we choose to respond to them. I don't feel that I should need to defend my position as a girl crossing over into womanhood in this society or that I need to in Judaism, but it is something that I have been thinking about for a while and I would like to share some thoughts, as some seem to miss the point.

As we know, 27 verses into the beginning of the Torah, we learn (quoting from Rabbi Sacks' translation) "So Hashem created mankind in His image, in the image of G-d he created him; male and female He created them". End of quote. So, all men and all women were created in the image of G-d! Wow – that's big.

There are many, many instances of men being leaders and tzadikim (righteous people) but allow me to remind you of a number of examples of women too in the Tanach.

In the story of Avroham and Sarah, whose opinion did Hashem tell Avrohom to listen to? Soroh imaynu – Who risked their lives to take a stand against Paro's decree to kill baby boys? Shifrah and Puah – Who saved Moshe from Paroh? Miriam – Who saved a Jewish boy from the River Nile? None other than Paroh's daughter, who became known in our tradition as Batya or Bisya, the daughter of G-d – Who saved Moshe from Hashem? Tziporah – Who was one of the 3 leaders who took the Jewish people out of Egypt? Miriam – For whom did the entire Jewish people wait to continue their travels until she was ready to go? Miriam (I can see my Pappi reminding himself of this whenever he and Mami are due to go out – but perhaps I shouldn't mention this right now) – Who planned the rebellion against the Canaanite king and inspired the fight for freedom? Devorah (What would Barak have been without her?) – Who finally defeated the Canaanite general Sisra? Yael – With whom did the angel repeatedly speak to announce that Shimshon would be born and would save the Jewish people? Manoach's wife – not Manoach – Who taught Eli – the spiritual leader of the time – and us what it is to pray? None other than poor barren, pitied Hannah – Who saved King David from Shaul ha'Melech? Michal (not my auntie) – Who saved King David from himself? Avigayil (more on that in a minute) – Who saved the entire Jewish people from Homon? Esther.

I've been learning about them with Pappi over the last year. The list goes on – and this is just a flavour. This is not supposed to be a defence of women in Tanach. My point is that we don't need this defence, and ultimately thinking back to the Posukim from Berishis, I'm not sure it really matters. Rabbi Sacks reminds us that each one of us is born in love as a unique individual because the world is not complete without each one of us.



Bat Mitzvah Group – Dvar Torah

Vivi Adler

We are all born into a world without much choice in the matter, but the invitation from Hashem is to partner with Him in making the world a better place, with the tools at our disposal. We can always choose how to respond. Eric Fromm said that, Jean-Paul Sartre said that - but much more profoundly, this is the essence of Teshuva and free choice, which are so essential to our way of life. After all, Chazal draw many parallels between the tzadik Dovid Hamelekh (King David) and Esav, who is the epitome in the Chumash of a bad person. Dovid was born ruddy like Esav, and like Esav, comes with armed soldiers to attack a man for a perceived wrong unlawfully. Dovid is on a murderous path like Esav, but Avigayil, my namesake, steps in, in his moment of anger and reminds Dovid that he does not need to take that path... and Dovid steps back from the brink... eternally grateful to that great Prophetess for stopping him from unjustly defiling his hands with another person's blood.

What does this have to do with my Bas Mitzvah? Everything, I guess. I am told that my life is changing. That with this birthday I start becoming an adult, and I already know that there are lots of things happening around me that are different and new. It's exciting, it's brilliant and it's terrifying all at the same time.

I know however that my challenge now is to step up and begin taking my life in my own hands and bring some good to the world – step by step. Thank G-d around me I have wonderful friends, a wonderful community, and a wonderful and utterly loony family whom I love very much and whom I know will be with me for each one of those steps.

The Haftorah we normally read for this Parsha comes from Hoshea. Hoshea is one of the Neve'im (prophets) who compares the sometimes-stormy relationship between the Jewish people and Hashem to that of a husband and wife. In the Haftorah, Hashem talks of a time when we will no longer call him Ba'ali or my Ba'al but Ishi. This is a multi-layered play on words. Ba'al was one of the

key Canaanite pagan gods, like Zeus or Jupiter, and the antithesis of ethical monotheism which the Jewish people were supposed to inspire. So, in Hoshea's vision, Hashem will take us all to the desert again – a kind of 'time out', reminding us of the miraculous existence of Bamidbar (in the desert, which is this week's parsha) before bringing us back home again. Now, the Jewish people will no longer turn to foreign gods but to Hashem and ethical monotheism. Ba'al however also means literally owner (and is the modern-day word in Ivrit for husband) as opposed to the more loving term Ish. All of Am Yisroel are depicted as a wife to G-d (we are all women here!) and the vision is that it becomes a relationship of closeness and love and not just that of the husband, or G-d, instilling awe or fear – to the extent that Hoshea goes on to describe the wedding vows which Hashem will make to the Jewish people when we become betrothed to Him for ever.

These are:-

וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי לְעוֹלָם וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי בְצִדִּיק וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְרַחֲמִים
וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי בְאֵמוּנָה וְיָדַעְתָּ אֶת־ה'

“And I will betroth you to me forever; and I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, loving kindness and compassion; and I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know G-d.”

Turning the parable around therefore, as we are in the image of G-d and we are to imitate the Divine where we can, is not our role – MY role – to take a leaf out of my Haftorah and with whatever tools I have at my disposal and in whatever situation I find myself, to go into the world with that Rachamim and with the kindness, righteousness and justice – the Chesed, Tzedek and Mishpot of the Torah and make the world a better place? That surely is how I should be judged in the world... Wish me well and see you there.

I am Vivi. Good Shabbes. Shabbat Shalom.



Y@MA Update

Sophie Harris and Shira Neville

As we gather to reflect on this incredible year at Y@MA, our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy for the journey we have undertaken together. This year has been nothing short of remarkable, witnessing the unprecedented growth of our youth group. We are thrilled to announce that the group has expanded into two, a testament to the strength of our community and the shared passion that binds us all together. Perhaps we owe some credit to the delightful sushi platter that has become a cherished tradition in our gatherings! At the core of Y@MA lies a diverse group of young individuals, all driven by a shared commitment to our Jewish heritage. We are immensely privileged to be surrounded by kind-hearted, enthusiastic, and impassioned Modern Orthodox youth, whose dedication to their faith and community knows no bounds. Every week, we come together to delve into the Parasha, engage in thought-provoking debates on topics of significance, and participate in various games and activities that nurture both personal growth and fun-filled camaraderie.

Throughout this year, our team has tirelessly worked to create more engaging and memorable events than ever before. We wanted to bring something special to each member of our Y@MA family, and we believe we succeeded. Our events have ranged from the delightful Chanukah ice skating and doughnut extravaganza, where laughter and joy filled the air, to our heart-warming movie night that strengthened our bond as a community. The mitzvah day supermarket sweep allowed us to give back to those in need while fostering a sense of responsibility towards Tikkun Olam (repairing the world). The Friday Night Dinner at the Golkers was a truly magical evening, where we shared a delicious meal, shared stories, and embraced the Shabbat spirit. And let's not forget the Purim fest bake-athon, where creativity and delicious treats came together in a delightful whirlwind of festivities. These events have not only brought us together but have also made us appreciate the richness of our Jewish traditions and the importance of community support.

Our joy is amplified as we witness the remarkable achievements of each individual in our group. It fills our hearts with pride to see our members constantly striving for personal growth, taking the initiative, and actively participating in the Magen Avot and other projects within the wider Jewish community. We firmly believe that our young members are the future leaders and torchbearers of our faith, and we are excited to see the positive impact they will make on the world. The inclusivity and warmth of Y@MA have been a magnet for new faces, and we are thrilled to welcome newcomers from around the local area. Every new addition to our community enriches us with fresh perspectives, diverse experiences, and a shared sense of purpose. It is heartening to see how quickly they become an integral part of our close-knit family, embracing the values and spirit that define Y@MA. As we embark on a new chapter in September, our excitement knows no bounds. The journey we have undertaken so far has been filled with joy, growth, and unity, and we are eager to build upon our successes. We have learned from the challenges we faced and celebrate the milestones we achieved. With unwavering determination, we are ready to chart a course that leads to even greater heights. The Y@MA community is a place where young minds blossom, friendships flourish, and souls find solace. Together, we will continue to strengthen our connection with our faith, embrace our heritage with pride, and contribute meaningfully to the world around us.

In conclusion, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals, parents, volunteers, and community members who have supported and believed in Y@MA. Your unwavering encouragement and dedication have been the pillars of our success, and we are honoured to have you as part of our Y@MA family. As we look to the future, we are filled with hope and excitement for the boundless opportunities that await us. Let us continue to grow together, guided by the light of our faith, and spread the warmth of our community to touch the lives of those around us. Together, we will make the world a better place. L'Chaim!



Y@MA fun messages for the community...

"Hope your Rosh Hashanah has been great sho-far!"

"Wishing you a year that is a head above the rest!"

"Hope to see you around this challah-day!"

"Here's to a year as sweet as honey cake."

"Wishing you a year that's all heads, no tails."

"Have no fear, the time for apples and honey is here!"



Slavery Today

Chabura by Abi Morris-Sloane

Tania arrived in the UK in the year 2000, aged 32, with a visa for a six month stay. She had been promised work by an "agency boss" in her home country of Latvia and arrived at Victoria bus station in London where she was met by a gang member and was ushered into the back of a minibus with other men and women, thinking it was taking her to the hotel she had been led to believe was booked for her. Tania was on the bus for so long, that despite it being summer, it grew dark.

"I did not know where I was," Tania said. "I spoke no English. We stopped in a village. A man took my passport and papers. We went into a house. The rooms were dark, there were a lot of people inside. Sleeping on the floor, everywhere".

When she asked who the other people were, she was punched in the face. It was then that she was told she owed the gang £10,000 (for arranging her journey to the UK), and work started the next day. With blood pouring from her nose, Tania curled up on the floor in a corner of the room. At 6am she and around 20 others were loaded into mini-buses and driven to the farm. She had no idea where it was. She was ordered to fill boxes with peas – one box took one day. She was paid 30p for each box.

"I was counting, and I was crying. It would take all my life to pay back this £10,000."

Tania had to hide her tears because crying was also forbidden and punishable by beating. Her crop-picking crew was guarded by men armed with sticks. Discipline was brutal. They worked from dawn until the light failed, sleeping on the floor of shipping containers on the farm. She was forced to drink water from puddles for the fun of her captors and she had to witness horrific violence. On one occasion was forced to watch as a man who had complained of toothache was attacked by his captors with a hammer to remove all his teeth. She, like the others, was told that she was now an illegal migrant and if she tried to escape, they would be arrested.

This week's Parasha is Voera. It provides a critical link to the Parshiyot before and after and it is this group of Parshiyot that are most closely associated with slavery. The tale of slavery, loss of identity, bonded work, and ownership of others is not one that lives in the past, unfortunately. This Parasha and Pesach give us a perfect opportunity to reflect on our own slavery as a nation, and what that means for our responsibilities to help others.

The Parsha starts with G-d responding to Moshe's accusation of having done evil to the Jewish people. G-d reveals that he has used a name apparently not known to others beforehand and asking Moshe yet again to go on a quest to help set the children of Israel free. Moshe tells G-d he can't possibly be the right man for the job, because he has a stammer.

This in turn leads to a very long reminder to the reader of the strong lineage behind Moshe and Aaron, making the Torah the original script in history to break the fourth wall. The Parasha ends with the first seven of the ten plagues which result in the eventual freedom of the Jewish people.

G-d appears to Moshe with the words "Ani Hashem" "I am Hashem" explaining to Moshe that he was previously known to the Avot as El ShaKai rather than Hashem "but with my name Hashem I did not make myself known". This is interesting as we can clearly see from the Torah that Hashem had used this name previously; in one example he appeared to Avroham as Hashem when describing the future to him, so why did he say this? Rashi points out this didn't mean our patriarchs didn't know the name of Hashem but instead it means that something new is about to happen. Another explanation for this is that previously when Hashem used the name El ShaKai the miracles that he performed have not disobeyed the laws of nature.

The introduction of "Hashem" as a new name indicates we are to understand G-d in a different way from now on. Previously G-d had been seen as working through nature and natural disasters rather than through directly involving himself with the destiny of people. Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks makes the point that the phrase "I am Hashem" changes the course of history. We are to understand from this that to remove the Jewish people from the position of slavery in Egypt was too great a task to leave to natural forces.

This change in relationship from a god of nature to an active interrupter of evil was the beginning of a new nation. One based on governance, the rule of law, and human rights. We learn from this exchange, and from the name Shemot itself, that names are key to who we are. A name highlights the value of an individual and captures the essence of a soul. Without a name a person loses their sense of identity, their pride, and their heritage. Pharaoh, despite looming so large throughout the Torah, is never given a name, he is never viewed as a distinct human with a value over and above his cruelty. Although perhaps Pharaoh's name is omitted to show that any name could be in place of Pharaoh, and anyone can mistreat people the same way.

We further see the loss of identity in Moshe's ongoing exchange with G-d. Last week in Shemot Moshe literally said "mi enochi chi elech ul Pharaoh" "who am I that I should go to Pharaoh" we are told he spends seven days arguing with G-d (Shemot 11), and this week he makes many of the same arguments, though adding now that he couldn't even get the Jewish people to listen to him previously and protesting to Him once again that he can't speak.

Slaves and prisoners often have their names removed and heritage discarded. Slaves in the transatlantic slave trade were either given Christian names chosen by their masters or took the names of their masters and ceased to be people in their own right. Victims in the Holocaust were referred to as a number and had their individual identity removed whilst being identified only as Jews. Slaves in our era like Tania are removed from their families, their identity, stripped of all identity documents and hidden in plain sight. They have no identity not just to their captors, but to the government often referred to only as statistics, and they don't have a voice (or the confidence) loud enough to speak up.



Slavery Today

Chabura by Abi Morris-Sloane

In response to Moshe's protestations G-d tells him that Aaron will help, and the Torah reminds us about the great lineage that both these men originate from. Moshe had lost confidence; he had forgotten who he was and where he came from, and defined himself by what he couldn't do rather than what he could achieve. Years in an oppressive environment had taken their toll. Here, Hashem is telling Moshe that he is not alone, and he has the weight and support of all his ancestors behind him. They are not just Moshe and Aaron standing before Pharaoh, but they are also all those people from whom they descended. Our identity and confidence (or lack thereof) is intrinsically linked to those who went before us. Sometimes we need to be reminded about where we come from, and the support we have around us, to achieve our potential. It wasn't just Moses who had forgotten who he was; after 400 years in servitude the Israelites had forgotten who they were too.

We are taught as small children that Pharaoh hardened his heart, that he was stubborn, but looking closer at the text it says G-d hardened Pharaoh's heart. It is interesting that Pharaoh would have consented for the people to go, but G-d made him change his mind. Hashem also removed his ability to repent for his sins. One commentator explains that even if this hasn't have happened Pharaoh's sins were so bad that he was irredeemable, and although he had had his heart hardened by Hashem, he would never be able to be a good person again regardless. Hashem needed to do this for his actions to be justified. This needed to happen not just to punish the Egyptians but because the Jewish people had lost so much of themselves in their time as slaves, they needed Hashem and not El Shaddai to remind the Israelites who they were. Who their ancestors were. And to imagine what their future may hold.

They needed this to move on, literally and figuratively. We have responsibilities as Jewish people to help others and stand against slavery.

Maimonides speaks out about slavery in Mishneh Torah, Laws of Indentured Servants. The Torah instructs in Deuteronomy 24:18: "Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that the Lord your G-d redeemed you from there. Therefore, I command you to do [justice]." As stated by the Chief Rabbi, "the foundations of Jewish belief stand on the principle that all people are created in the image of G-d and every single person deserves to be treated with respect. That is why slavery demands our urgent attention." The director of education for T'ruah points out: "Every human being must be treated with the dignity befitting an image of G-d." Hashem cares for all human's equality, as we are all created 'in G-d's image'; in Hashem's eyes we are all important. It does not matter if you are a Deliveroo driver or the king, a labourer, or a consumer.

The government estimate there to be around 10 thousand slaves in the UK, but a slavery expert estimates that there are more like 136 thousand slaves. According to Renee Casson, 40.3 million people worldwide are in modern slavery and 24.9 million are in forced labour. Slaves and trafficked people are seen as an annoyance and a problem to be dealt with and have no identity to society as a whole. We profit from the cheap labour without understanding the strong pull of supply and demand.

We are collaborators in their misfortune. Slaves can be found on our high streets, working in restaurant kitchens, car washes, and nail bars. Not all slaves are forced to make the journey to the UK, some come voluntarily believing this will bring a better life for them and their families, though on reaching the UK they find a very different reality.

They are exploited for their labour and with no documents or cash, have no way out of servitude. In October 2019 modern slavery made the headlines when 39 people from Vietnam were found dead in the back of a lorry.

According to investigators and research done on this case most would have gone on to work in nail bars for less than the minimum wage, getting just a couple of pounds an hour. Modern slavery is intrinsically linked to organised crime gangs; it is a sophisticated web of people traffickers and exploiters.

Last week saw the arrest of Kidane Zekarias Habtemariam, and that one arrest alone took the coordination of Interpol and the police in the UAE, Sudan, Ethiopia, and the Netherlands. Just like Moshe's response to G-d our natural response may be that it's just too big a problem, too international a problem, and too complex a problem for each of us little individuals to solve, but just like the Torah reminds us of the amazing providence of Moshe and Aaron so do we too have an incredible lineage of people who fight for those in less secure positions than ourselves.

We have to remember that we were the reason and the inspiration for G-d changing from Kel ShaKai to Hashem, and it is in that image that we can help others out of their servitude.

Tania's story has a happy ending. After two years of working in fields and greenhouses, Tania reached a breaking point and after an incident where she responded back to the captors they drove her to a field in the boot of a car, told her she was going to be arrested and abandoned her there. It was dark and cold. She was picked up by another gang who invited her to get on a bus.

The new boss was more lenient; she received £35 a week. Her accommodation was crowded but warm. The food was better. She and her fellow captives were allowed to speak and given a day and a half off every week. Her work wasn't in fields; she was sent to work as a dishwasher in a busy pub, giving all her wages to her gang boss. She was allowed to go into shops and began to pick up some English. She was forced to work for a further 15 years until 2017, when she plucked up the courage to escape.

On one of her afternoons off, she walked into a Citizens Advice Bureau and handed over a note which read: "Please help me, I am not legal." Tania found help in a safe house run by the slavery charity Unseen.

Just as the Jewish people needed intervention from Hashem rather than Kel ShaKai, and needed to be reminded of where they came from and the strength of their protector, if people are to be freed from slavery today, they need intervention from outside. And that outside help could be you and me.



My Year in Israel

Nillie Langerman

In Bereishit 12:1, Hashem says to Avraham: “Go forth from your native land and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you”.

In late August each year, thousands of secondary school graduates from all over the world do just that. This past year, I was one of them.

Like Avraham, I started my year as a stranger in Israel. I was in a new environment with new people, far away from my family, community, and the cloudy streets of London. I had yet to discover that this year would hold so many amazing experiences, the pinnacle being exploring Israel and deepening my connection to the land we all call home.

This past Shavuot, I was one of hundreds of thousands of Jews fortunate enough to engage in ‘Aliyah Leregel’, the mitzvah of pilgrimage to the Beit Hamikdash. We walked all the way from Arnona to the Kotel, in time to participate in ‘Netz Hachama’ davening with a quarter of the population of Jerusalem. This experience was a true manifestation of what had happened during the period of the Beit Hamikdash, and it was incredible seeing huge numbers of people collecting as we drew nearer to the old city. In this instance we were no longer strangers, but one nation engaging in an age-old tradition, united.

One of my pivotal moments this year happened over עשרת ימי תקומה, the days between Yom Hashoah to Yom Hazikaron. On Yom Hazikaron, I joined כלל ישראל on Har Herzl, commemorating those who gave up their lives for the State of Israel. My first visit had been with Seminary 10 days prior, where we spoke about known and lesser-known individuals who sacrificed themselves so that we could be standing, learning, and living in a Jewish state.

Although many people who came on Yom Hazikaron did not have family members or loved ones to visit, they still came to show support for those who did. Mark Levin, whose son Michael was killed in action during the second Lebanon War, describes the national support he received on Har Herzl when they laid his son to rest:-

“People came from all over the country... secular, reform, orthodox... The ideals that he stood for captured the hearts of the public”.

Michael was a lone soldier, and though he did not have any close family in Israel, Israel became his family. At 11am on Yom Hazikaron 5783, when the siren sounded initiating the two minutes’ silence, all of Am Israel was at a standstill. For those two minutes, those 10 days, we were one nation with one soul and one goal: keeping that soul alive. Since then, I have never felt like a stranger in Israel.

In Bereishit 12:2, Hashem says to Avraham: “I will make of you a great nation”. Avraham left everything familiar to him and came to a new, foreign land, just as we did. And he became a great nation, just as he was promised. We are that nation, Israel is that new land, and it is our duty to continue Avraham’s legacy throughout our lives, in Israel and here, in Magen Avot.





next issue



Contribute to our next HaMussaf supplement, which will be called "Life at Home" and will be a feature on our Shul members' lives at home.

Filled with stories from around your Shabbat tables and recipes to share for Pesach with the community.

As you may have guessed our next edition of HaMussaf will be released in time for Pesach 2024!



ARTISAN ALCHEMY GALLERY



Michele and Alfred White

A unique gallery in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, displaying exciting, individual bespoke jewellery and furniture of the highest quality.

 <https://artisan-alchemy.co.uk/>

 0121 233 1186

84 Caroline Street, Birmingham, B3 1UP Open Tues-Sat | 11am-5pm



Wake Up and Smell the Nussach!

by Josh Abeles

Way, way back, in the fledging years of our beloved Magen Avot, we found ourselves, as our biblical forefathers did, praying and congregating in a tent. It was, to be fair, a large tent. We replaced the desert with the Downage, and there was some kind of heating apparatus (or was it aircon?) that made a noise but didn't provide much heat or cool air, but we were 'appy.

We led quite the nomadic lifestyle back then, both in terms of location and congregants. I wasn't a regular myself but really enjoyed the services over the Chagim especially.

One particular memory of those days was on the 8th day of Pesach just before Yizkor, when our own Daniel Greenberg gave a moving Dvar Torah. It started like this (paraphrasing a little), "a teacup, a saucer, a gold dish, a silver becher..." Something like that. These items, it turns out, were not just to provide us with an inventory of his Pesach cupboard but were a suggestion of the artefacts we bring out on Pesach year after year, passed down from generation to generation, serving as a connection from our present to our past, even if they were too old to actually serve/hold/cook any food (the items, rather than the people). Pesach more than anything achieves this connection through said inventory – reminding us of our immediate past, the telling and retelling of stories of family members who are no longer with us but live on through their cutlery.

(This article will be more relevant to the current set of Chagim further on but if you take this edition home and only find it again behind the couch when cleaning for Pesach it will work then too!)

He continued by highlighting how odd it seems to say the Yizkor prayer on a festival of all times when we generally try to avoid making a hazkara (or any form of memorial) on Shabbat when it's Mevarchim HaChodesh or Rosh Chodesh or for the whole month of Nissan. And yet we do say Yizkor on festivals – namely Pesach, Shavuot, Yom Kippur and Shemini Atzeret, specifically for the reason above – connecting to our past, feeling that connection more strongly on Chagim than at other times particularly.

On Pesach we can see the family heirlooms (or worthless egg boiler saucepans – does everyone have one of these just for Pesach?), we remember Chagim of years gone by, relive old stories, and through them we remember the departed but also where we've come from as Jews, our history remembered through an egg cup, possibly. Reciting Yizkor on Chagim is therefore now understandably highly appropriate. It's a beautiful idea. Thanks, DG.

I'd like to go a step further to say that it's those memories, and the traditions of the Chagim themselves, perhaps more than a regular Shabbat, that allow us to connect to our past, and pass on to the next generation – in essence keeping Judaism alive and relevant. These little reminders and traditions keep us coming back for more.

Consider the first time you walk into shul on the Yamim Noraim (finally a topical reference!) and see the white coverings on the bimah and the change of curtain on the Aron Kodesh. It hits you that it's a special time of year and somewhere some distant past forces its way to the forefront of your thoughts – better get praying.

In addition to the physical, visible items that appear on various Chagim, there are also the not-so-tangible ones that evoke memories, that take us back in time, or simply remind us of where we are and what we're doing, injecting us with a dose of love for Judaism. Certain aromas, for example, evoke memories from many years previous, even as far back as childhood. From a Jewish perspective consider anything from the Arba Minim in shul on Sukkot, flowers (if real) in shul on Shavuot, and the less-than-pleasant aroma in shul towards the end of Yom Kippur.

Given I lack a sense of smell, my memory is more in-tune with ... er... tunes.

In fact, music has always played a major part in my life, with most genres appealing and each song or tune generating its own memory. All of which brings me to the music of the synagogue. You can't see it (or smell it – I've researched this), but you can certainly hear it, and you can even at times feel it. There is something unique about the niggunim (tunes) of the synagogue services that run through us like no other music and create their own memories.

Many tunes are universal. You can be anywhere in the world, walk into any shul and you'll recognise at once the same notes, in roughly the same order, and even be able to join in (ok, one exception may be if you're a full-blooded Ashkenazi and stumble into a Yemenite Sephardi minyan or vice versa). Even people who rarely attend services, and are perhaps removed from day-to-day Judaism, will probably be able to join in with something on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur.





Wake Up and Smell the Nussach!

by Josh Abeles

And it is the tunes and the music, the singing and chanting that enhance the shul experience, or for some make it a reason to be there at all. The songs of the synagogue connect us to the past and give us a reason to be present and extend our future. It is no surprise that when Covid hit us before Pesach in 2020 many struggled to connect with, and be inspired by, the Tefilla of the day without having the ability to be in shul and be led by someone who knew how to chant the Yom Tov niggunim.

Tunes are emotive. The major key of Kriyat HaTorah, the more minor tone of the Haftara, the chanting of the repetition of the Amida. The Shabbat flow, week in week out, the chagim year after year. It's familiar, it's homely and an integral part of our culture.

To take that idea up an octave (see what I did there?) a huge part of the experience of shul is what can be ascribed to as the Nussach of the day. Nussach – both the sounds of the general ebb and flow of the chanting, even when an actual tune is not being sung but when the Shaliach Tzibbur is leading, connecting the various parts of the service, and of course certain melodies – can remind us of where we are at that moment.

For example, the difference between the Yom Tov refrain and the regular Shabbat one. Or the Kaddish prayer before the Mussaf Amidah ending differently on Chag from the way it does for Shabbat, so if you're standing with your eyes closed you'll be jolted into remembering which day it is. These days many have the correct machzor for the day of Yom Tov, but you'll also notice most siddurim have the Amidah for Chag at the back. If you only had the one siddur, that nuanced tune would remind you to flip to the back for Mussaf as this was no regular Shabbat.

The same happens on a Shabbat Rosh Chodesh in-so-far as the change of tune for the last line of the Kaddish, but generally the Mussaf prayer for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is printed alongside the regular Shabbat Mussaf in the siddur and you can be sure someone will call out "Ata Yatzarta!" to remind you. Banging the bimah is optional. But I digress...

One could argue that these days it doesn't really matter which tune is used given most have a machzor with everything they need laid out page by page in front of them (those hardcore Routledge users may disagree with this statement). However, while the Nussach guides (or originally guided) us, it's these subtle nuances of that Nussach that people expect to hear, or want to hear, that deliver the full shul experience, and even enhance Yom Tov for us. Consider not hearing your favourite tune from your childhood during the Yamim Noraim... It may not ruin your Yom Tov but there would be a very small level of disappointment.

To take this up to eleven (if you know you know), there are different tunes or Nussach to be sung for the same prayers but specifically on different festive days, one example being the Kaddish after Kriyat HaTorah before maftir.

The standard Shabbat post-leining Kaddish tune matches the one sung before the Amidah on Friday nights. However, (!!), on Chagim and Yamim Noraim there are some who have a tradition to sing different tunes respectively for that Kaddish (which incidentally don't match the previous evening's pre-Amidah tune on those days). Again, all part of reminding us of where we are, what Chag it is (perhaps in case you weren't following the leining carefully) and providing an extra uplift to the day itself.

Does it matter if the right tune isn't sung at the right time on the right day? Possibly not in the grand scheme of things. G-d's decision to inscribe us in the Book of Life will unlikely be determined by the choice of Nussach for Kaddish or Ein Kamocha but perhaps that's not the only way to look at it.

Familiarity and structure enhance the shul experience for many, and much like we keep on bringing out those old plates on Pesach and keeping all our other minhagim going year after year, we should be conscious not to lose the traditional music and Nussach in our synagogues and try to ensure we pass these down to the next generation.

We will no doubt as ever be blessed in Magen Avot to hear a mixture of old and new tunes over the next few weeks, with something for everyone, that all can take at least one thing away with them and have a reason to keep coming back for more, recalling and making new memories as they do. With most of the Chagim falling on Shabbat this year there will be plenty of nuanced Nussach to listen out for and ingest. Wake up and smell it!

And no matter if we set up our shul in a tent in a back garden, in the playground of a school, in a permanent home (may we be zoiche bimheira v'yameinu) or school hall. It's the people, the tunes and the memories that hold us together and will do for many years to come.

Wishing everyone a Shana Tova, a year filled with happy memories, good health, and great singing in shul (and if you've just found this behind the couch while cleaning for Pesach – Chag Kasher VeSameach!).

The Kids Kaddish Challenge: Count the number of different tunes for Kaddish from first night Rosh Hashanah through to Shemini Atzeret – prizes to whoever can sing the most at Horim V'Yeladim!



Four Cups from the Diaspora

by Josh London

"Since the Exodus," the 19th-century German poet Heinrich Heine famously put it, "freedom has always spoken with a Hebrew accent." At the Passover seder, the Hebraic ideal of freedom speaks most loudly - with the four requisite cups of wine keeping its throat from getting dry.

Wine, after all, is accorded special status in Jewish tradition. An ever-present feature of Jewish religious observance, it is considered powerful and sublime. On Jewish festivals we are enjoined to be joyous, and to do so with wine. As the Psalmist (104:15) writes, "Wine brings joy to the heart of man," and the Talmud concludes that no festivity is complete without the consumption of this beverage.

Wine has its own distinctive blessing, "Blessed art Thou . . . Who creates the fruit of the vine," not said over any other fruit or beverage. Moreover, many rituals involve reciting this, and other prayers, over a cup of wine: the best known is the kiddush recited before Sabbath and festival meals, but wine is also part of wedding and circumcision ceremonies, and at times the benediction after eating - not to mention the libations that accompanied sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple. And then there are the four cups of the seder.

The 16th-century sage Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, better known as the Maharal of Prague, saw a mystical meaning in the drink, claiming that it is not wholly of this world, but "has a Divine aspect to it, for it 'gladdens G-d and man' [Judges 9:13]." Like esoteric teachings, wrote the Maharal, wine comes from the inside of the grape, in which it is hidden - and itself has its own hidden spiritual dimension. Thus, one who uses wine properly can find spiritual elevation, but one who misuses it "acquires a form of death".

Examining the same verse in the book of Judges, Rabbi Aḥai Gaon, the 8th-century author of the oldest known post-Talmudic collection of homilies, asks how exactly wine can gladden G-d. His answer: it fills man's heart with joy, leading him to sing praises to the Lord, which in turn bring Him gladness. This reasoning helps us understand the seder's four cups, as the purpose of the entire exercise is not only to retell the story of the Exodus, but also to rejoice and sing praises to G-d.

The Talmud also explains the drinking of wine as a symbol of freedom (P'saḥim 117b). Indeed, the classic prooftext for the seder's four cups is Exodus 6:6-7, which uses four different phrases to denote G-d's liberation of the Israelites: "Therefore, say to the children of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will save you from their enslavement, and I will redeem you. . . . And I will take you to Me as a people.'" In other words, at the seder every participant is obligated to consume four cups of wine as an expression of freedom, rooted in the shared experience of being taken by G-d out of Egypt, saved from a life of bondage, and redeemed and ennobled through G-d's revelation, in order to fulfil the promise of being a Holy Nation, ultimately in the Holy Land of Israel.

The Talmud also connects each of the four cups with a specific aspect of the seder, each of which emphasises exultation of G-d, in keeping with Aḥai Gaon's explanation of wine's sanctity. As on other festival eves, the meal begins with kiddush (literally, "sanctification"), a prayer praising G-d for choosing the people of Israel and giving them His holidays, recited with a cup of wine in hand. Upon concluding the main narrative segment of the Haggadah, we then praise G-d for redeeming us and drink the second cup. After the meal, having emerged from this shared relived experience at the seder - and finished fressing - we then praise G-d for the food and drain the third cup. The evening proceeds with Hallel, a prayer whose name means "praise", and which consists of Psalms 113-118, at the end of which we imbibe the fourth and final cup of wine.

That the wines of these four cups should be kosher is an important consideration. If the dramatic rise in sales of kosher wine in the weeks before Passover is any indication, even those Jews not normally in the habit of drinking kosher wine still make a point of using it for the seder. The laws governing what wine may be consumed are distinct from the other laws of kashrut, in that they concern not ingredients, but who produces and handles the wine. To simplify a complex body of regulations with their own history: wine, to be considered kosher, must be made by a Sabbath-observant Jew, a special requirement introduced precisely because both Jews and Gentiles use the beverage for sacred purposes.



Josh London is a published writer on wine and whisky and writes articles that explore kosher wine as a religious and cultural artifact as well as a commercial beverage, one which has the capacity to culturally enrich Jewish life and enhance Jewish living. Magazines to which he contributes include the Jewish Link Wine Guide: jlinkwineguide.com



Four Cups from the Diaspora

by Josh London

As a result, kashrut has never, in and of itself, posed any sort of barrier to quality or excellence in wine production. The universal keys to excellent wine are, first and foremost, quality grapes, followed by a serious, technically proficient winemaker, and also, ideally, a critical and demanding consumer base to keep producers competitive.

The historically poor reputation of kosher wine is largely an artifact of the Jewish condition in the Diaspora. Thankfully, producer and consumer advances over the last 40 years have rendered this reputation undeserved. In the United States, as a matter of happenstance, kosher wine was long made from Concorde grapes, and thus tended to be red and cloyingly sweet. Little consideration was given to quality. But the days of having no choice but to chug down four cups of Manischewitz extra-heavy Malaga (Palwin being the UK equivalent) at the Passover seder are long gone. Those that still turn to such wine do so out of preference, whether taste or nostalgia, rather than necessity.

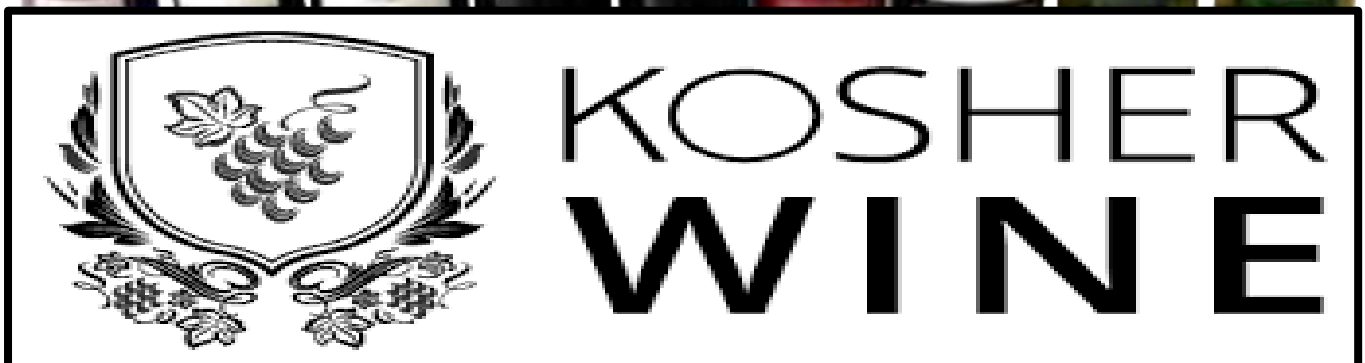
To the contrary, the Talmud stresses that the cups of wine, which are drunk as a sort of toast to freedom, should be a source of joy and pleasure. But what that meant in difficult times was something different from what we think of now.

Like the ancient Greeks and Romans, the Jews of antiquity always diluted their wine. Greeks and Romans used honey, spices, resin, oils, and the like for this purpose, but Jews usually mixed in water at a ratio of three parts water to one part wine.

The Talmud goes so far as to say that drinking undiluted wine at the seder is not a true celebration of freedom, since it is unappealing. Thus, Moses Maimonides stresses that the wine of the four cups should be mixed with water so that drinking it is "pleasant," and the ratio should be whatever an individual finds most enjoyable.

We can conclude then that, in our days, we have a positive religious obligation to give thought and care to wine selection.

[Editor: Space did not permit inclusion of this article in our Pesach edition]





Anglo-Israel Association Relaunch

One of the UK's longest established Israel friendship organisations, the Anglo-Israel Association, is set to relaunch its activities and has a new chief executive to spearhead its work.

The AIA was established in 1949 by Brigadier General Sir Wyndham Deedes, the first Chief Secretary to the British High Commissioner to Mandate Palestine, who thought that it should not be for Jews alone to support the State of Israel.

The AIA today is an independent charity that enjoys the active support of people from different faiths and none, across the entire political spectrum.

The Association's primary purpose is to promote wider and better understanding of Israel in the UK; to encourage exchanges between both countries at every level; and generally, to support activities which foster goodwill between British and Israeli citizens. The AIA is set to relaunch its activities and has a new chief executive to spearhead its work.

Our own Josh London was recently appointed CEO and is actively reviving the AIA to commemorate Israel's 75th birthday. With extensive contacts on the Washington "beltway" - the inner circle of political and security activity in the American capital - his mission in the UK is "to get work underway for a programme of AIA activity coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel". Josh is looking forward to strengthening its role in deepening the ties and understanding between Britain and Israel in fields as diverse as science and technology, medicine, environmental protection, and agriculture. "There are so many incredible opportunities for engagement with Israel today that represent a win-win for both countries and I'm excited to get to work amplifying and promoting them. The key is finding ways to harness Israel's unique pool of talent and expertise that can inspire and enhance British fields of endeavour and vice-versa. The AIA is in an incredible place to nurture real and lasting partnerships".

Before arriving in the UK, Josh spent nearly 20 years in the world of Washington, most recently as the director of government affairs for the Jewish Institute for National Security of America. As evidenced elsewhere in this edition, he has also worked as a wine and spirits columnist for a variety of publications.

Richard Bolchover, a director of the AIA's corporate trustee, was "thrilled" by the revival of the association's educational programmes. "It is a fitting time for the AIA to reinvigorate our work, building understanding and goodwill between the British and Israeli peoples".

Members interested to find out more can contact: info@angloisraelassociation.com or can contact Josh directly at: jlondon75@gmail.com.



HE Mrs Tzipi Hotovely (18th Ambassador of Israel to the Court of St James's) with Josh London.



ראש השנה Reflections

by Rabbi Michael Pollak

I once taught in a prestigious school attended by royalty in the Windsor area. An exchange arrangement with a Bavarian school one summer brought an intriguing and exotic addition to my class register. The school already had one exotic beast in the form of one Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson but for this one summer term he was put into relative obscurity by the arrival of Archduke von Habsburg. Apologies Archduke but I don't remember any of your many forenames.

Determined to identify my new charge I asked the class an utterly inane question which even the most inbred Habsburg could answer.

"Does anyone know the answer?... Perhaps Habsburg you could tell us".
The embarrassing silence was eventually punctuated by a Germanic voice.
"You vill call me Archduke".

The young yeomanry of England tried hard but ineffectively to suppress their giggles. For all his centuries of royal blood this acned youth was the Archduke of Nowhere and therefore a good target for his classmates' cruel humour. An archduke is nothing without followers as indeed a Monarch is defined by the fealty of his people.

This question of what makes a King is a crucial element in the תפילות of ראש השנה. Perhaps the most evocative moment in the service is the description of the Heavenly Judgement taking place. Amidst angels and trumpets G-d carefully sifts through each one of his subjects to determine their future. The author of the ונתנה תוקף prayer, traditionally attributed to a Rav Amnon, uses a strange phrase to describe the people being judged.

וכל באי עולם - Everyone on Earth

It is not just Orthodox Jews who are considered for judgement, not even every Jew but every human being alive at that moment. Why would Rav Amnon take an interest in humanity as a whole? Traditionally he was cruelly tortured and killed by the local Gentile rulers. Surely vengeance should have been on his lips?! Instead, he prayed that every human being, Jewish or Otherwise should be part of G-d's Kingdom.

Kingdoms are defined by their subjects and just as the Habsburg Empire is a meaningless term without a people, so the greatness of G-d's Kingdom is predicated on its universality. We crown G-d מלך על כל הארץ by including every possible human being in His Kingdom. That act of inclusion raises G-d to the greatest possible Kingship, but it is not achieved merely by a strange phrase.

To bring Mankind into the Kingdom of Heaven requires active inclusivity. We need to pray for all of humanity, we need to have concern for every individual and in that way we bring everyone into the celebration of G-ds Coronation.

In that way we elevate G-d and we elevate ourselves. We pray for all the Nations of the World because they are all G-d's peoples. We audit our behaviour towards every human being because without them we diminish G-d himself. We create the greatest Kingdom in which no-one is excluded to glorify the greatest King and to make ourselves valuable members of that Kingdom.

MONTHLY SHABBAT MEVARCHIM SHIURIM

| Date | Month | Topic |
|--------|----------|--|
| 15 Jul | July | Magen Avot Shabbat Mevarchim Shiurim:- |
| 12 Aug | August | • Given by Rabbi Michael Pollak |
| 14 Oct | October | • After Mincha on Shabbat afternoon |
| 11 Nov | November | • Runs every month except during the Chagim |
| 9 Dec | December | • Theme: "Interaction between non Jewish and Jewish ideas showing how important non Jewish thinking has been in forming contemporary Jewish thinking". |
| | | • Third Session: "How the Mussar Movement applied the ideas of psychology to Jewish Life". |

Magen Avot



Work Avenue provides employment and business support to the local Jewish community. Sara Gatoff provided an insight to their work in this Q&A for HaMagen.

Q: Can you explain what Work Avenue does?

A: Work Avenue is the community's leading employment and business support organisation, providing a range of free services, workshops and events that help thousands of people in their career journeys each year. Work Avenue supports clients in various ways, including one-to-one employment and business advice meetings, a LIVE jobs board, our WAGE programme that creates freelance opportunities by training in key areas, so small businesses can grow and develop, and much more. We also run WE Hub, a shared workspace in Finchley Central where we create opportunities by encouraging and supporting growth and collaboration.

Q: Whom does it help?

A: We help anyone in the community, no matter their age. We support kids in secondary school, all the way through to the more senior members of the community. We see clients from all religious and socio-economic aspects of the community. Everyone gets bespoke advice that is tailored to them and their needs.

Q: What does your role entail?

A: I work with both the business and employment teams creating programmes and events to help clients on their career journey. I also provide one-to-one business advice support, helping our clients develop their own business.

Q: What makes Work Avenue different from other employability training centres? What is its USP?

A: We are all inclusive – we provide a contemporary service and have a bespoke approach to every single client. We are a “one-stop-shop” for whatever business/employment queries our clients may have – whether it is an employment law query or what trade shows should your business exhibit at. Our advice is all free, it's unlimited and it is confidential. We also have a bursary fund very generously donated by our late trustee Richard Mintz's family and friends. This allows us to help people access specific training that they need to further their careers or grow their business.



Q: How has the landscape of work and employability changed over the past few years, especially in light of Covid?

A: Working from home is now regarded as the norm, with many people opting for hybrid working. A vast number of people do not see the benefits of being in an office 5 days a week. Due to the cost-of-living crisis, more and more clients are approaching us looking for a second income which of course we can help with.

Q: Are there any particular issues that members of the Jewish community might face regarding employability? e.g., leaving early for Shabbat.

A: We simply don't see this as an issue but would always help our clients to frame this in a positive and acceptable way.

Q: Can you tell us about any new initiatives?

A: We have a business accelerator programme starting in May this year which is a business incubator programme for new business owners wanting an intensive programme of weekly support. We have our annual business awards in June where we recognise the hard work of business owners in the community. We also have a “Women in the Workplace” event in June.

Q: What are the benefits of someone joining one of your employability programmes?

A: The benefits are endless – we help with identifying job opportunities, transferable skills, drafting CVs, interview practice, networking, building confidence, social media skills.... There are no downsides at all!

To find out more about Work Avenue visit:-
www.theworkavenue.org.uk or call 020 8371 3280.





Ellul Reflections

Celebrating Rosh Hashanah at Work Avenue

by Sara Gatoff

Here at Work Avenue, a charity with a long history of helping the community earn a living with dignity, we are always thinking of new ways to support and inspire people. This time of year, in particular the month of Ellul, we find ourselves in a month that connects the past year with the coming year – a time when we reflect on where we stand and where we want to go.

Ellul is traditionally a time of introspection and personal stock-taking or reflection, known in Hebrew as “cheshbon hanefesh” – literally “an accounting of the soul.” This process is conducted in preparation for Rosh Hashanah, the point of Ellul is to set the tone for the High Holiday period, so it’s all about taking personal stock of the past year and thinking about the year ahead. Maybe you are thinking of changing career in this next year? Perhaps you would like some help in looking for a new job?

The weekly Torah readings during Ellul also offer subtle cues to wake up and take stock of one’s life. We think about the past year, but we also think about the coming one. When we stand here next year, on Shabbat 12th October 2024 which is Yom Kippur – what would we have liked to achieve?

At the start of the month of Ellul, we read Parshat Re’eh. This begins with G-d enjoining the Jewish people. We learn that the first step in taking an account of one’s life is to look, to see clearly the possibilities laid out in each moment and to choose the path of blessing. The following week in Ellul, we learn from the Parshat Shoftim about contemplating our lives and our mortality; this serves as an invitation to consider what unfinished business is tearing at our hearts.

Do you ever think about your dream job? Something you would really love to do. Maybe you feel you don’t have the skills? Perhaps you had a great business idea in lockdown and would like to know if you should have a go at starting a business of your own?

Ellul is about meditating, taking time to pause and reflect on the past year, remembering the different moments, events, and experiences you may have already forgotten, and beginning to picture yourself in the year ahead.

It’s also about setting goals and intentions for the coming year.

At Work Avenue, we are passionate about helping people stand on their own two feet so they can earn a living to support themselves and their families. We understand only too well how difficult this can be if you have not had the right training and cannot access meaningful and practical work experience.

If you are seeking a career and/or freelance work in administration and want to learn or improve on IT, communication, and finance skills then we have a brand-new Office Skills course for you below.

If you would like to develop your career in the digital world there are courses in web and graphic design as well as digital marketing.

Develop your skills in these areas and gain invaluable practical experience to springboard your career. We will provide all the training, and then offer you projects with small businesses, so you gain the practical hands-on experience to ensure that your career gets off to a great start. But don’t worry, you will not be on your own. You will have a dedicated mentor who will help you every step of the way.

As a team at Work Avenue, we have a wealth of experience and information on every possible option about starting a business. Join us for our new online session, “Should I change my job or start a business?”

We will be running sessions in the evening, at lunchtime and in between school drop off and pick up time, all to suit you.

Come and find out what you need to be your own boss; how mindset, skillset and resourcefulness are important; share experiences with new colleagues and learn from others. Come and discuss your business ideas with our team of experienced business advisors, our industry mentors or have a meeting with our employment team to help understand what your best job opportunities may be.

Whatever works best for you – whatever route you think you may take, let the team at Work Avenue help you – whether that is a webinar or a training course; face to face or online; in a group or on an individual basis, we have the team and expertise to help you take the next steps.

This Ellul, let us help you with your “cheshbon hanefesh”. We look forward to hearing from you and wish you all a L’shana tovah u’metukah.

From the team at Work Avenue

All our events can be found at: <https://theworkavenue.org.uk/events/>



Magen Avot Book Club

Magen Avot has set up a Book Club and everyone is invited to participate. Run by new member Cathy Fisher, we will hold regular meetings every 4-6 weeks during the Autumn and Winter months.

Our first meeting will take place on **Monday 16 October 2023** at **8.00pm** at the home of **Joan and Julian Pollard** at **55 Hendon Hall Court**, Parson Street, Hendon NW4 1QY.

The book we shall be discussing is:-

“All the Light We Cannot See” by Anthony Doerr

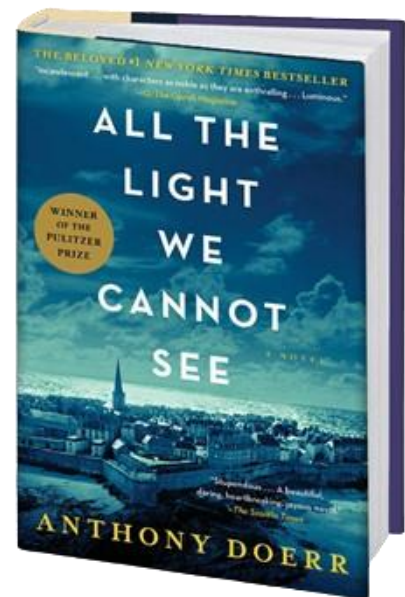
Pulitzer Prize winner Doerr has written an epic bittersweet novel that is an entertaining feat of storytelling. A page-turner and entirely absorbing.

Summary

The central characters are a young blind French girl Marie-Laure who takes refuge in Saint-Malo when the Nazis invade France and Werner, a German orphan whose knowledge of radio transmission sees him enter the Hitler Youth and then the German Army itself. Their lives become entwined remotely as the war unfolds.

Their pre-war lives and experiences are interposed with the ever-present realities of the hardships and horrors of the war. We see how their tantalisingly tenuous relationship develops and its final resolution. Bring your ideas and your enthusiasm as we seek to have a relaxed but stimulating discussion. Refreshments will be provided.

BOOK CLUB



Entry is free but please register your interest so we can gauge numbers likely to attend. Register by emailing **Cathy Fisher**: cathyfisherpr@gmail.com



New Year's Greetings

לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם

Wishing our wonderful Magen Avot community, a happy, healthy and successful year.

We look forward to seeing our Shul continue to thrive and grow.

Grateful thanks to Rabbi and Rebbetzin Golker, the Executive and Council for all their hard work.

Karina, Ashley, Joey and Minna Katz

Linda and John Wolffe send warmest wishes to all the Magen Avot community for a peaceful and healthy New Year and an easy Fast - Shana Tova u'metukah

May the community go from strength to strength. The Taylors.

With All Best Wishes. Shoima and David Kass.

Nadine, Adam, Eli, Talya and Maayan Kay wish all of the community a year filled with health, happiness and success. Wishing you all a Shanna Tova and an easy fast.

With much love to the whole community from the Maurer clan - Esther and Julian, Raffi and Laurie, Natan, Libby and Maayan.

Best wishes for a Happy New Year to all at Magen Avot. Baruch & Toni Zekaria.

Happy New Year Magen Avoters!! Anonymous.

Congratulations on 8 years of our wonderful community. Anonymous.

Wishing everyone at Magen Avot a New Year blessed with good health and happiness. Joan and Julian Pollard



Mazal Tov to our son Raffi Maurer who got married to the wonderful Laurie Reznik (from Mill Hill) back in March 2023. We are so grateful to have Laurie join our family. Picture is from Left: Maayan, Julian, Raffi, Laurie, Esther, Natan and Libby Maurer.



Well done to my wonderful daughter Malka Weissler who has graduated with a First Class Honours as a Midwife!

You do make me very proud of you! May Hashem bless you with good health and lots of strength to continue your fantastic work!!

Love Mummy xxx



Mazal Tov to our daughter Libby Maurer who was recently presented with a certificate of completion for her National Service (Sherut Leumi) as a "lone Bat Sherut" in Israel. Libby is in the process of making Aliyah and will return to Israel after the Chagim. We are all so proud of her! Picture is from Left: Karen Richman (Aliyah Advisor at Nefesh B'Nefesh) and Libby Maurer.



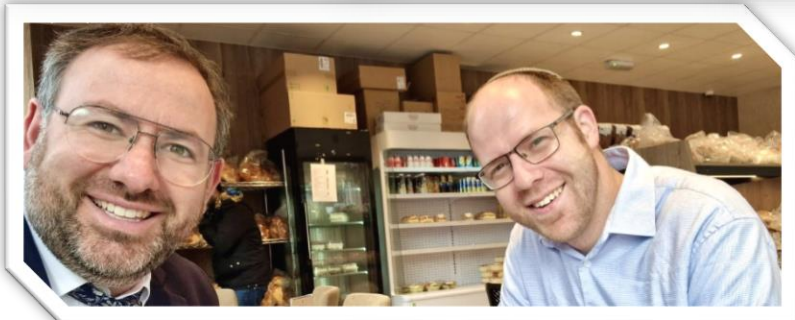
Mazal Tov to Fiona Taylor and Tammy Beider on achieving an EcoSynagogue Silver award for Magen Avot!

The following attendees have applied for membership over the last period: Laraine Abrahams, Lester Abrahams, Beverley Barrel, Joy Berger, Rabbi Glenn Bezalel, Chagit Blass, Yossi Blass, Claudia Bookey, Chani Cohen, Dr David Cohen, Ken Ehrenberg, Chana Ehrenberg, Cathy Fisher, Ben Kfir, Menachem Kfir, Howard Klass, Stephanie Klass, Chaim Kohn, Hadar Kohn, Isaac Maman, Talia Maman, Belinda Marks, Laurie Maurer, Natan Maurer, Raffi Maurer, Naomi Morris, Zvi Morris, Oliver Sanders, Rachel Sanders, Alexander Weinberg and Florence Weinberg. **We look forward to their continued attendance for many years to come!** If you are an attendee and want to become a member of Magen Avot please speak to the Rabbi, Rebbetzen, Executive or Council. Your continued formalised support helps continue the journey our young Shul will take in the future. To apply go to our website (www.magenavot.com) and click the "Membership" link or contact Dani at: admin@magenavot.com.

Purim Party in Shul



Yom Yerushalayim – BBQ at the Katz



Welcoming back Rabbi Kenigsberg

Herschel Golker's Upsherin



Magen Avot Whisky Tour of Scotland May 2023



A Coronation Order of Service



Breakfast talk by Holocaust Survivor Manfred Goldberg



Anti-Slavery Sunday Breakfast



For Bat Mitzvah Graduate Pictures please see the Youth Supplement section of this magazine.



Social Media Website

Magen Avot Newsletter Shiurim Membership Sponsor Smachot Contact About

LOGIN

TIMES FOR PARASHAT VAETCHANAN

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Friday Mincha 7:15 PM | Shabbat Shacharit 9:30 AM | Shabbat Mincha 8:51 PM | Shabbat Ends 9:51 PM | Sunday Shacharit 8:20 AM |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|

IMPORTANT MESSAGES AND LINKS

- * Yamim Noraim Signup: <https://myus.theus.org.uk/events/73688/yamim-noraim-sign-up-2023/>
- * HaMagen Advertising: <https://forms.gle/Tzb57Ual29nY8o6DA>
- * Bar Mitzvah Course: <https://magenavot.com/content/bar-mitzvah-programme-2023>
- * Bat Mitzvah Course: <https://www.magenavot.com/content/bat-mitzvah-course-2023-24>
- * Uyghur Conference: <https://theus.tv/timeforaction>
- * Manifesto of Solidarity: <https://www.magenavot.com/content/manifesto-solidarity-uyghur-muslims-an...>
- * Daf Hashavua: <https://www.theus.org.uk/category/daf-hashavua>
- * Latest Newsletter: <https://www.magenavot.com/latest-newsletter>
- * Community Whatsapp Group: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/HQ5NibGAtre8Ay2G9NKg7v>

FORTHCOMING AND PREVIOUS EVENTS

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tisha B'Av 5783 | Monthly Shabbat Mevarchim Shiurim | Bar Mitzvah Programme 2023 |
| HaMagen | Seuda Shlishit: Dr Erica Brown | Bat Mitzvah Course 2023-24 |

© 2023 Magen Avot
Site by Daniel Ehreich and Raffi Maurer
United Synagogue Charity No. 242552

[MagenAvot.com](https://www.magenavot.com) - a central website for all things Magen Avot. Catch up on the current and archived Newsletters. Listen to a Shiur from our archive in our Shiurim section. You can sign up for Membership if you would like to join the Shul.

If you wish to sponsor an event at Magen Avot, you'll find a Sponsor section to book many different occasions, from a Shabbat Hot Kiddush to one of the children's programmes such as Munchies (for Magen Minis and Maxis) to Y@MA sponsorship.

There are several other options, including Sunday breakfast or a Seuda Shlishit. There is something for everyone in the Sponsor section.

If you are planning a Simcha for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or an AufRuf/Wedding it is important to register first on our Smachot section.

There is plenty of other information on the website, including direct links for various event registrations that can be accessed on the front page. These are extremely useful and save time by offering a simple click to register. Many reasons to make this website a favourite on your browser!

Finally, perhaps the most useful feature: automated clocks at the top of the website giving times for Friday Mincha, Shabbat Shacharit, Shabbat Mincha, Motzei Shabbat, and Sunday Shacharit. These are automatically updated to align to any changes to regular timings.



Social Media Newsletter and Email

Magen Avot

Shabbat 22 July 2023 / 4 Av 5783

| Time | Day | Time | Day | Time | Day | Time | Day |
|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|
| 7:00pm | Monday | 8:00pm | Tuesday | 8:00pm | Wednesday | 8:00pm | Thursday |
| 7:00pm | Tuesday | 8:00pm | Wednesday | 8:00pm | Thursday | 8:00pm | Friday |
| 7:00pm | Wednesday | 8:00pm | Thursday | 8:00pm | Friday | 8:00pm | Saturday |
| 7:00pm | Thursday | 8:00pm | Friday | 8:00pm | Saturday | 8:00pm | Sunday |

Shabbat 22 July
Chabad Dinner (Dvich) | Leining Shimon Levy
 Mincha at 10:45am. Mincha and Vignas will begin online broadcast after this week returning on 8 September. YGMA will meet at the usual time and is kindly sponsored by Family Langerman to show support to the YGMA attendees.
Shabbat Dinner: Chef Tobi in Giv'at Mizra
 This week's Kiddush is kindly sponsored by Family Abraham to mark Anoch's birthday. Mazal Tov!
Post-Mincha Shiva Bruchachon '19-24 Kings and Calves'

Wednesday 26 July
Mincha 8:50pm followed by Maariv Eicha Fast starts 8:50pm

Thursday 27 July
Shacharit will be at 7:30am followed by explanatory Kinnot Esther Berley will be chairing our Tisha B'Av programme which will begin at 7:00pm with film called 'Hope Keeps You Going' - This is the story of Holocaust survivor Marta Weiss. Mincha will follow at 8:00pm. We are then honoured at 8:30pm to have Simon Silver who will tell the story of the Klausenberger Rebbe z"l who made the oath on Tisha B'Av that should he survive the war he would build a hospital to heal the sick regardless of faith, colour or religion. The presentation will last around 45 minutes and is accompanied by a couple of short videos. There will be no appeal and entry is free. Following the programme there will be Mincha from 9:15pm. The fast ends at 9:49pm. Details are on our poster.

Opening times for United Synagogue Committee on Tisha B'Av (Thursday 27 July):
 • Buxley, Westminster Abbey and Willesden (8am to 5pm)
 • East Ham (8am to 5pm)
 • Alderley Rd, Brady St and Lauriston Rd (11am to 3:30pm)

Friday 28 July
 The stone setting for David Benari's late mother Barbara Benari takes place at 10:30am on Sun 5 Aug at Buxley New Cemetery.

Levaya/ Shiva notices:
 We regret to inform the community of the passing of Mrs Hava (Ch) (mother of our member Nadine Kay). The Levaya took place on Monday at Buxley New Cemetery. Shiva is taking place at 22 Hildesheim Gardens, N3 3BA. Tefillah is at 7:30pm with Shacharit at 7:30am. Shiva Hamizlach on Sunday morning. We wish the whole family Chayim Anshim.

| Address | Age | Name | Relationship |
|------------|------|--------------------|--------------|
| 22/07/2023 | 4 Av | David Ruben | Mother |
| 25/07/2023 | 7 Av | Yvonne Kestnerbaum | Mother |
| 25/07/2023 | 7 Av | Jacqueline Roddy | Father |
| 22/07/2023 | 4 Av | Howard Katz | Father |

We wish them and their families Chayim Anshim

PICTURES FROM LAST SUNDAY'S ANTI-SLAVERY SUNDAY BREAKFAST

MAZAL TOV TO OUR RECENT BAT MITZVAH PROGRAMME GRADUATES

MAGEN AVOT TISHA B'AV PROGRAMME

Thursday 27 July
 Shacharit @ 7:30am followed by Explanatory Kinnot

27 JULY

7.00pm - Film
 "Hope Keeps You Going". The story of Holocaust survivor Marta Weiss.

8.00pm - Mincha
8.30pm - Speaker

Wednesday 26 July
 Mincha @ 8:50pm followed by Maariv and Eicha Fasts Starts @ 8:58pm

26 JULY

9.15pm - Maariv
9.49pm - Fasts Ends

We are honoured to have Simon Silver who will tell the story of the Klausenberger Rebbe z"l who made the oath on Tisha B'Av that should he survive the war he would build a hospital to heal the sick regardless of faith, colour or religion. The presentation will last around 45 minutes and is accompanied by a couple of short videos. There will be no appeal and entry is free.

Fast approaching 450 newsletters in our archive; the weekly Magen Avot Newsletter is emailed out to over 400 email addresses within the community. The newsletter provides an important source of information for our members and non-members alike.

The Newsletter is mainly provided weekly as a one-page easy-to-read publication with details of the week ahead including timings and more in-depth information about events taking place. Sometimes (as shown above) the newsletter stretches to two or three pages to include pictures from events and posters for upcoming events.

Printouts are provided weekly on recycled paper using an eco-ink printer to both protect the environment and save the Shul money. Attendees are welcome to take newsletters home after Shabbat before they are placed in the recycling.

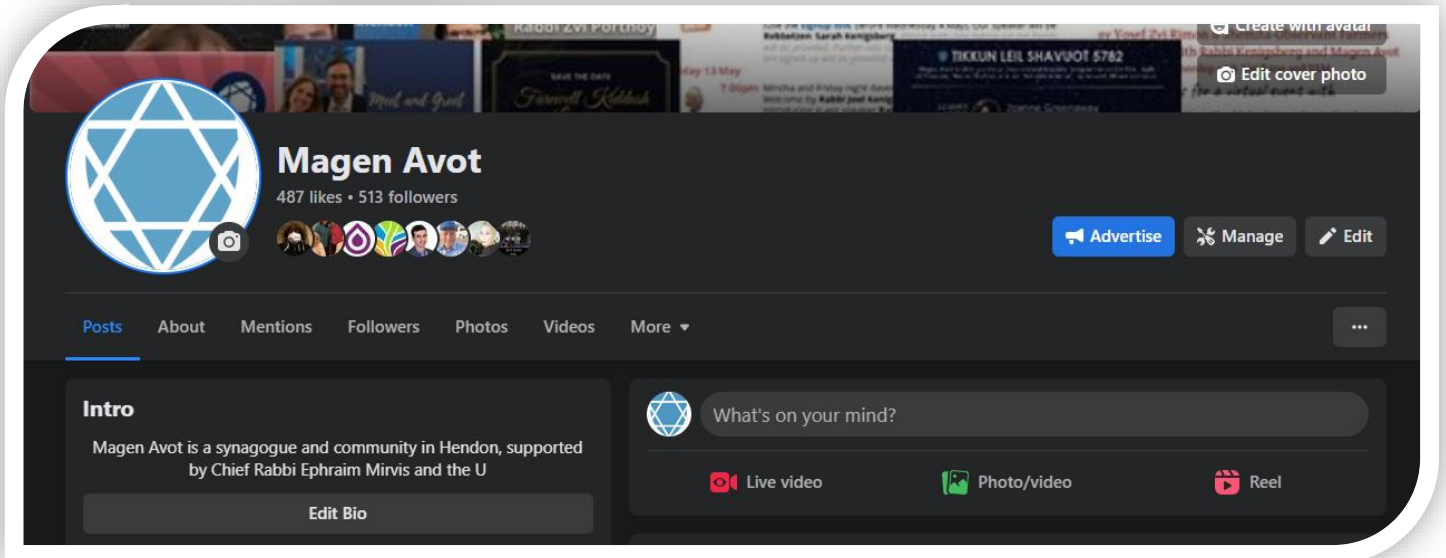
The newsletter is emailed out with a cover letter highlighting the important events for the week. Email is also used to send out other important notices such as: Mazal Tovs, Levaya/Shiva Notices, publicity for events etc. Signup is quick and easy and can be done by simply emailing info@magenavot.com and asking to be added.





Social Media

Facebook and X (FKA Twitter)



Our Facebook page is a great way to stay connected with our community, learn about upcoming events, and share your thoughts and ideas. Here are some of the benefits of joining our Facebook page: Stay up to date on events: We'll be posting regular updates on everything from our weekly Torah readings to our upcoming holiday programs. You'll never miss a thing! Learn about the community: We'll be sharing stories from our members, highlighting the work that we're doing in the community, and introducing you to new people. Share your thoughts and ideas: We want to hear from you! We'll be hosting discussions on a variety of topics, and we're always looking for new ideas. We encourage you to Like and Subscribe to our page, so you don't miss a thing at: facebook.com/magenavot/. We'll also be sharing photos and videos from our events, so you can feel like you're right there with us. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to message us on Facebook. We hope to see you on the page!



Follow us on X (FKA Twitter) on our handle @magenavot to stay up to date on the latest news and events from Magen Avot. Here are some of the benefits of following us on X:-

- Get the latest news: We'll be posting about our upcoming events, programs, and initiatives. You'll never miss a thing!
- Connect with other members: Get to know other members of the Magen Avot community and engage in discussions on a variety of topics.
- Share your thoughts and ideas: We want to hear from you!
- Post us your thoughts and ideas about Magen Avot.

We encourage you to follow us on X today! Click the link below to join the conversation.

x.com/MagenAvot



Social Media

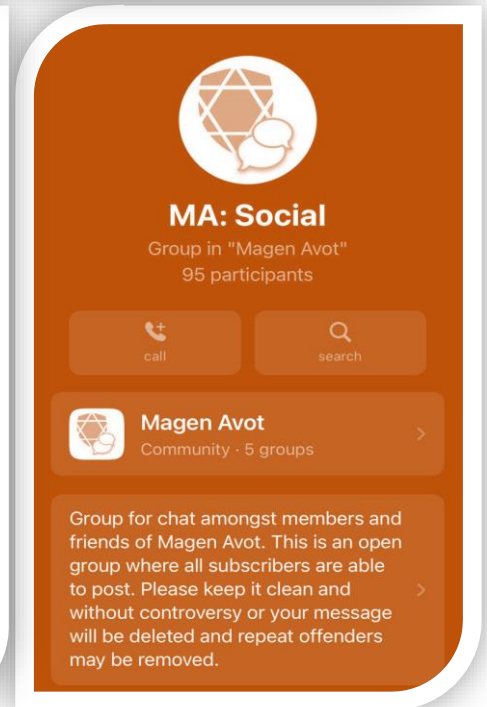
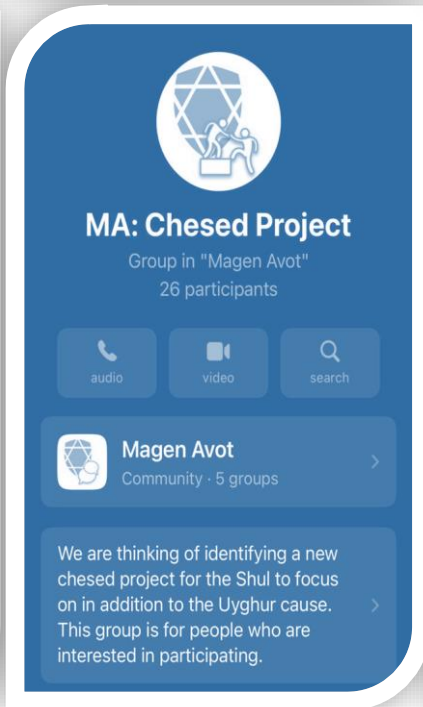
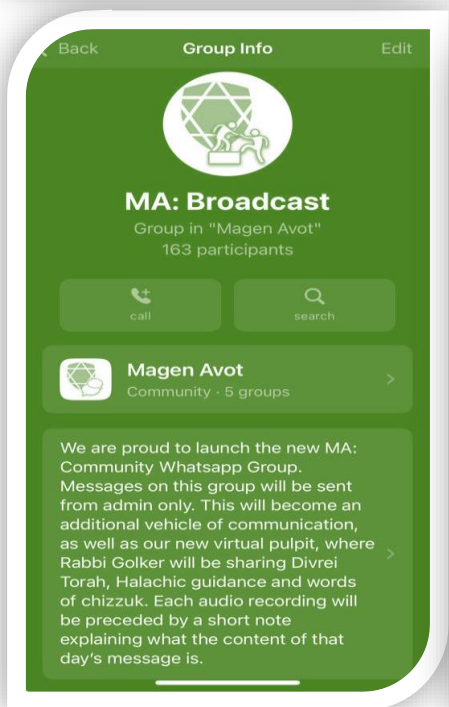
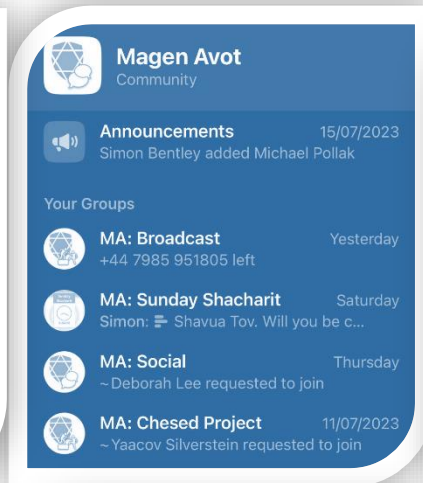
WhatsApp

Join our WhatsApp Community Groups:-

MA Broadcast Group: <https://tinyurl.com/mabroadcast>

MA Social Group: <https://tinyurl.com/masocialgroup>

MA Chesed Group: <https://tinyurl.com/macheted2023>



Don't forget we post a voicenote on the Broadcast Group every Friday before Shabbat with the important announcements for each week!

“If it wasn’t for Jami, I wouldn’t be where I am now. Jami gave me hope for life and hope for the future”

More people are struggling with mental illness than ever before.

TOGETHER

we can make a life-changing difference

Donate today at
jamiuk.org/donate



Registered charity no. 1003345. A company limited by guarantee. Registered in London no. 2618170

Jami
Mental Health
for our Community

Jami is the mental health service for the Jewish community, supporting young people, adults, and their families whose mental illness and distress makes everyday life a struggle.

From a young person refusing to go to school to an adult who can't go to work; a carer who is feeling isolated to a person who has hit rock bottom, we are there for everyone who needs us.

Every service we offer is delivered by people who have been affected by mental ill health in some way, giving us an understanding of experience seldom possessed by other mental-health care providers.

Whether someone needs an urgent and reassuring conversation, expert advice on how to navigate the complex maze of mental health services, connection with someone who has lived experience, recovery-focused services over the short term, an advocate by their side, or long-term professional support, Jami makes sure that people in our community get the treatment and support they need, when they need it.



Peace of Mind
Metiv | The Israel Psychotrauma Center

Peace of Mind is a unique programme that has been developed by the Israel Centre for the Treatment of Psychotrauma. It provides a bridge and pathway back to civilian life for young men and women who have served for 3 or more years in high-risk combat units in the Israel Defence Forces.

Peace of Mind is not a PTSD programme. Participants are 'regular', healthy, functional guys, some of whom carry a tremendous burden. Generally, when combat soldiers come out of the army, they have to re-adapt to civilian life without being offered any support. Some have suffered psychological trauma, have lost friends on the battlefields, or may question split-second decisions they had to make in combat. If left unprocessed, these experiences can deeply affect them, their families, and their ability to function.

Without singling out individuals, the Peace of Mind programme treats the entire unit of soldiers through workshops and therapy over a 9-month period. This innovative programme provides the time and space for participants to process their combat experiences in a supportive environment, enabling them to emerge from the programme healthier emotionally and mentally.

A central component of the programme includes a 7-day overseas trip with intensive 6-hour daily workshops with Peace of Mind therapists, allowing them time to process traumatic events away from distraction and the painful places where they happened.

Magen Avot is delighted to be hosting an elite דובדבן (dovdevan) unit of **21 male IDF veterans** (in their late 20's) and 2 facilitators (therapists) from **19 to 26 November** this year. Participants will be hosted by families in the community throughout their stay.

Their programme is very full-on: throughout the week, they will have breakfast with their host family, then leave home at 8.30am every morning. Therapy sessions will take place until 3.00pm, followed by afternoon and evening outings, activities, and dinner, with participants returning to their hosts around 10.00 pm. On the Shabbat of their stay (25 November) we will hold a communal lunch to honour the group and enable the community to meet them.

The intention of this visit is to help the participants unload the burden and live healthier, happier, and more fulfilling lives. It is a chance for us to thank them for their service by opening our doors and hearts and by welcoming them into our community.

This will very much be a community project with opportunities for everyone to get involved.

We are looking for volunteers to:-

- Host 2 soldiers for the week of their stay (they always stay in pairs)
- Join our Peace of Mind committee to plan and co-ordinate the week's events
- Help out during the week at a lunch time by serving and clearing away lunch
- Accompany the group on an afternoon activity
- Accompany the group on an evening activity
- Collect at the end of an evening activity and drop them back to their host family
- Buy a ticket for the communal lunch which will take place on the Shabbat during their stay

If you are able to get involved in any of the above ways, or have any questions, we would really love to hear from you.

Patti Adler (pattischustermann@yahoo.com) and Toni Zekaria (tonized1@aol.com)



Thanking our supporters and wishing everyone
a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year 5784

Best wishes

Yad Vashem UK Foundation

Simon, Esther, Evelynne, Sandra, and Sophie

www.yadvashem.org.uk | office@yadvashem.org.uk | www.guardianofthememory.org

The picture is from the Yad Vashem campus © Yad Vashem

RESOURCE TO THE RESCUE

“I was out of work and out of the loop. I just didn’t know what to do and who to turn to as I attempted to step back into the world of work. But then a friend suggested Resource – and they came to the rescue!”

“I’m in my mid-fifties and don’t have any professional skills,” says Michael. “I felt useless, but Resource gave me new hope.

“After my initial phone call, I was assigned a professional advisor. Together we devised a plan around my experience, skills, and ambitions. Resource showed me how to make effective use of networking, the Internet and jobs boards, all things I had never considered before.”

Eventually, Michael was invited for an interview with a leading retail group. Well before the big day, his advisor arranged a mock interview with one of Resource’s trained interviewers.

Michael says: “I actually found the subsequent interview far less daunting than I expected and it went well. A job offer quickly followed, which I was delighted to accept. My advisor and the entire Resource team were brilliant. I can’t praise them enough and it was thanks to their practical help and encouragement that I was able to get myself back into a job I really enjoy.”

Resource chief executive Victoria Sterman says: “Michael isn’t alone of course. His story is typical of the people we are helping every single week. Since we were set up 30 years ago, we have become the first port of call for anyone in the Jewish community who is looking for a job.”

For more information call **020 8346 4000** or visit www.resource-centre.org.

Best wishes, Fried Frank

Fried Frank advises the world's leading corporations, investment funds and financial institutions on their most critical legal needs and business opportunities.

FRIED, FRANK, HARRIS, SHRIVER & JACOBSON (LONDON) LLP

friedfrank.com

**Fried
Frank**



IT ENDED WITH A JOB AT **BOOKING.COM**



When it comes to **#CareerGoals** we are all different. Your dream job isn't going to be the same as your brother's or your best friend's.

Resource understands this and we'll give you the perfect employment advice, CV support and skills training that's just right for you.

Whether you are just starting out in the job market, looking for a change or have concerns about the future, landing your perfect job – well that's our job.

Visit resource-centre.org
or call 020 8346 4000

**IT STARTED WITH A
CALL TO RESOURCE**

Resource
Your job search starts here