

Tell

August - October 2010
Av - Cheshvan 5770/5771



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A Jew Living Judaism: Answering The Existential Questions



Many of us at one time in our life (and some of us more than once) question who we are and why we are here. This season of preparation for, celebration of and reflection on the Yamim Noraim confronts us with ultimate existential questions. Unfortunately, many of us miss out on the valuable exploration of these questions because the language of Scripture and liturgy seems out of touch with our common understanding of life itself. Thus, I write this article to help us respond to our existential questions, not just at the Days of Awe, but for each day that can be filled with awe.

Judaism is a system of belief, thought and practice that provides an answer to those questions, a system that has developed, and continues to develop, over thousands of years across the world. Judaism is more than a religion or system of belief; it is a daily way of life for Jews that helps inform who we are and why we are alive. We see ourselves as a faith people. We share a common story that grounds us in the past, focuses us in the present and drives us to our destiny. It is a story that tells us who we are and why we are alive.

Unfortunately, while Jews are a faith people, far too many of us have lost that sense of being a people, and perhaps even fewer “keep the faith.” I hope in this article to address each of those problems. The first question is, “who are the Jews?”

The Story of the Jews

Far too many of us think of ourselves not as a people, but as followers of a religion. While Judaism is the faith that connects Jews, irrespective of one’s religiosity or personal practice, being a Jew is actually a matter of an ancient people, whether by birth or be entry through conversion. We have an historical connection to a land (Israel), a language (Hebrew) and a way of life (Judaism) that connects us to this day, all bound through the story we hand down from one generation to the next.

Our story begins with the Tanakh, an acronym for “Torah, Nevi’im and Ketuvim”, also known as the Hebrew Bible or Jewish Scripture. The Tanakh is an extraordinary work of dozens of authors over thousands of years. Its first five books, known as the Torah or Teaching, form the basis for the practice of Judaism to this day. The next section, known as the Nevi’im or Prophets, contains our memories of conquest and settlement of the land of Canaan and our establishment of sovereignty there with Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, where in Jerusalem the First Temple stood until its destruction in 586 BCE. The final section, known as the Ketuvim or Writings, contains a collection of books, including Psalms - some of the most beautiful prayers ever written, still forming a large part of our liturgy- and Job, one of the best elucidations of why justice does not always come to the good (and the basis for Rabbi Harold Kushner’s *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.)

Our Bible is also known as the Holy Scriptures, for to be holy means to be distinct and set apart for a special purpose. The Bible is like no other book; rather, it is a collection of books that establishes our story, the story of the Jews. Our story is that we are a people who have been committed to serving God in word and deed - from the time we journeyed from Mesopotamia to Canaan, from our slavery in Egypt to our wandering in the wilderness, from our 1,000 years in the land of Israel through our 2,000 years of exile, until this point in our history after the trauma of the Shoah and the transformative reestablishment of sovereignty in Israel. In essence, our story tells us of our being a people (and for thousands of years, the liturgy Jews recite around the world reminds us of our descent from Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov, our common ancestors). Originally known in the Bible as the B’nei Yisrael, or children of Israel, our later name as “Jews” comes from the latinisation of “Yehudim”, or the people from Yehudah, the Kingdom of Judah. We are a people – with a common story in the Bible, a historic land in Israel and a language of Hebrew, even if most of us have been scattered around the world and forgotten all that.

While recent genetic research indicated that nearly 80% of those who identify as Jews today descend from the Middle East thousands of years ago, one can join the Jewish people (just as a citizen of the US can become a citizen of Australia); it is egregious error to speak of “the Jewish race” or “Jewish blood”. Unfortunately, because of historical circumstances – the exile from our land 2,000 years ago, the persecutions and traumas that followed from there – Crusade, blood libel, expulsion, pogrom and Holocaust – many Jews have lost the sense of being part of a people. The rise of modern nation states – such as Australia where one can be both Jew and Australian, or Israel, where one can be both Muslim and Israeli, have confused this issue of national identity further. I remember being confronted more than once, “are you an American or a Jew first?” I have since learned to answer, “I am a human being first.” As a human, I have many different identities – American, Australian and Jew among them, all of those informing each other. As Jews, however, we have purpose that has been transmitted to us by our ancestors over the generations, one which we can share in community as we endeavour to shape a better future. This is what it means to be a faith people, and the second question of faith is even more challenging in our time.

Judaism, the faith and life path of the Jews

In this age of science and reason, in this time in which we see such horrors committed “in the name of God”, it is difficult to understand what it means to be in service of God. We must accept that Scripture is not the literal and inerrant word of God to Moses, or God’s autobiographical narrative, but rather the attempt of our ancestors to understand how to relate to God within the communities and society of their time. Because the Bible has been written by our ancestors over time, what it means to be “a people committed to the service of God” has a broad range of understanding, both about God and about service.

Given our understanding of history and science, the whole notion of God has become a problem in the 21st century. History teaches us that there is no evidence that the stories told in the Torah happened exactly as they are described. Science teaches us that evolution is the way that the universe and eventually life on earth came into being. But our understanding of God is not

bound by the words of Scripture, for we look at Scripture not as the words dictated by God through Moses to the Jews, but rather as the way our ancestors understood their relationship with God. It is great error to see the Torah or the rest of the Bible as being univocal; rather, it contains a chorus of voices proclaiming our relationship to God and our obligation to serve God. The Bible is our narrative about relationship with God.

As such, we privilege the Bible because it is the beginning of our story – it is what started us on our exploration of what God might be and set the parameters of how we might serve God. In this sense, there are a few core principles we learn that contradict neither science nor reason. The first is that God is the source of all creation. We know now that this creation is even more awesome than our ancestors understood. They saw the stars as sitting in a fixed firmament above the earth. We have learned that the universe in which we exist (that hypothetically may just be one universe in a complexity of multiverses) is at least 14 billion years old and contains star clusters measuring trillions of kilometers – in just part of the known universe. Whatever God is, according to Judaism, God is more than all that time and space. The beautiful formulation of Adon Olam puts it in these words:

“Before creation shaped the world, God, eternal, reigned alone; but only with creation done, could God as Sovereign be known. When all is ended God alone will reign in awesome majesty. God was, God is, always will be glorious in eternity. God is unique and without peer, with none at all to be compared. Without beginning, endlessly, God’s vast dominion is not shared.”

Judaism teaches another concept about the God who Creates. It teaches that the essence of this creative God is “Being”. The Hebrew word for God’s name, spelled “yud and hey and vav and hey” (known as the tetragrammaton and pronounced as “Adonai” or its substitute “Hashem”) is a form of the verb “to be”. In the Torah, when Moses asks for God to explain just who God is, God replies, “Ehyeh asher ehyeh” which can mean: 1) “I am that which I am”; 2) “I am that which I am becoming”; 3) “I am becoming that which I am”; or 4) “I am becoming that which I am becoming”. In this sense, God is understood in Judaism as the continual unfolding of All that Is, of which we are part. When we say the Shema, proclaiming the Oneness and Unity of God, we are saying that God is within everything that exists and everything that exists is within God. Each of us is like a wave in the ocean, a fractal of existence. The entire liturgy of the Yamim Noraim, which speaks of God as King or we as clay in the hand of the potter, is meant to place human existence in context – we may be conscious beings, but there is One from which we draw that ability.

Now, whether or not God actually exists or not is a matter of speculation, belief and faith. The world of religion is not the world of science. Science is “a branch of knowledge conducted on objective principles involving the systematized observation of and experiment with phenomena, especially concerned with the material and functions of the physical universe.” (The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary). The best science can do is get us back toward the Big Bang, but not actually there or beyond. The best science can do is to teach us about matter and energy, and speculate how conscious being evolves from that. If we conclude that conscious being is a byproduct of material evolution, we reject God. All those who sense that the Big Bang evolved from Conscious Being accept, by definition, God. “Belief in God” is the belief or speculation that conscious being is both the source and purpose of life.

With these definitions in mind, then we understand why being religious gives one purpose. The problem is not with being “religious”, it is with religion. That is why many “believers” use the word spiritual as a substitute for religious. Religion is the system constructed by human beings to transmit religious understanding. While its goals are primarily noble, its specifics may not be so because of the weakness of humans who design and transmit the system. No matter what one’s religious affiliation, we are not required to embrace every aspect of our story as it has been transmitted through the generations anymore than we accept every teaching of our parents and grandparents. Even more so, given the way religion has been manipulated by so many as a force of oppression in the name of God, we have an obligation, in our striving toward Conscious Being to ensure that religion is used to embrace, not destroy, life.

Judaism as a way of life primarily gives that sense of deep embrace of and purpose in life. It does not require one to embrace every aspect of our story as it has been transmitted through the generations anymore than we accept every teaching of our parents and grandparents. Rather, we have gratitude that our ancestors were among those who first taught that everything that exists is part of Conscious Being, and since we are part of It, then we have obligations toward It. Judaism as a way of life guides us through time, centres us in space, and teaches us how to be of service to Life.

Its festivals, based in Shabbat, provide an opportunity to avoid doing in order to express being. These days are about rest, joy and holiness, about remembering the past in order to create a meaningful present and better future. The Yamim Noraim, in particular, provide us an opportunity to reflect on the path we have walked so far in life and remind us, as freely choosing beings, how we have lived rightly and wrongly, and how to nurture the right and rectify the wrong.

Jewish space emanates from Jerusalem, through Israel and around the world. We imagine God Consciousness being poured into the heart of Jerusalem, the “Beit HaMikdash” (Temple site or House of the Holy) and emanating through there, everywhere, into our own hearts and homes. This image teaches of the connection among all Jews, and ultimately all humanity, as our ancient prophets saw Jerusalem as the beacon for all who wanted to live righteously, consciously and peacefully. We are called upon to make our homes and communities similarly sacred spaces - a home in Judaism being called a “Mikdash Me’at” (a mini-sanctuary) and our synagogues “Kehillah Kedoshah” (a sacred community).

Judaism teaches us that we form sacred space by our behaviour toward others. As I wrote in the June (Sivan/Tammuz) TELL, according to the tradition there may be 613 mitzvot, but essentially these boil down to a range of commandments to do right and avoid wrong based in the core principles of justice and righteousness, lovingkindness and compassion, lived with humility. Occasionally, mitzvot of the Torah, if practiced now, would violate those core principles, and that is when we choose to limit and no longer live them. Otherwise, it is our obligation to learn more of our Torah and our tradition, so that we can know again what it means to be a member of this great nation of Jews whose Judaism provides us with purpose. As we nurture life and all living beings, so life nurtures us. We are a faith people. We are called to serve.

Rabbi Jeffrey B. Kamins



Spain was in the grip of the Inquisition. Jews were being tortured and killed for holding onto any semblance of their religious traditions. Everyone was afraid for they knew not who was friend and who foe. Many Jews chose to remain connected to their religion in secret but in public presented a front of devout belief in Christianity. These Jews risked their lives just to light Shabbat candles, they put themselves and their families in peril to say the shema.

In 1492 Rosh Hashanah was approaching. The Jews knew that this year there would be no shofar. It would be all they could do to try and acknowledge the day. The spies of the Inquisition would be especially vigilant, trying to catch out any of the secret Jews on this most holy of days. The Jews of Barcelona were in despair but they knew the perils of their position and they were not prepared to risk it all, even for Rosh Hashanah. In the midst of their sadness, news spread of a special concert to be held for Spanish Royalty and the church's highest officials. Much as they despised the thought of spending Rosh Hashanah in the Royal Concert Hall, they knew this was an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to Spain and their complete renunciation of Judaism. The Jews knew what they had to do.

But then a rumour started to spread amongst their community, whispers suggesting that no matter what else was going on, they should make sure they were in the Concert Hall that Rosh Hashanah evening. Word was that something important was going to happen. The secret Jews did not know why, but they knew that it was important for them to be there. Perhaps, those who were not would be accused of adhering to their Jewish faith, perhaps it would be seen as a sign of disrespect to the church for them to miss the event. The composer Don Fernando was presenting a concert featuring the instruments and music of various peoples and cultures, he was a prominent convert from Judaism, perhaps it was the Inquisition's way of parading one of their greatest conquests before the Jews on one of the holiest nights of the Jewish year. Whatever the reason, the secret Jews knew they had to attend.

So, Rosh Hashanah evening, the Jews dressed in their finest clothes and instead of sitting together around the table, enjoying the sweetness of the apple and honey, tasting the round challah and celebrating, they attended a concert and sat together with the highest ranking clergy of the church, Spanish royalty and the officials of the Inquisition. The music began and with every note the Jews became more sad and despondent, until they noticed a familiar instrument in the orchestra. In the midst of a beautiful piece of music, one of the trumpet players raised the shofar to his lips and began to sound the calls: tekiah, teruah, shevarim. With every note, the secret Jews gained strength and hope. Their conviction to remain connected to their faith, no matter what the risks, was strengthened. Their hearts soared that even in the midst of the threat of torture and death, they were able to join together and hear the shofar on Rosh Hashanah.*

People risking death to remain connected to their Jewish traditions. People doing whatever they could to just hear the sounds of the shofar, something so many of us take for granted. Every time I hear stories like this one, I wonder, what lengths would I go to, to remain connected to Judaism? Would I be prepared to risk my life and that of my family to have a mezuzah on my door, to light Shabbat candles, to hear the call of the shofar at Rosh Hashanah? Throughout our history there are tales of people who risked everything to remain Jewish. Today, do we care enough to do the same? Does the sound of the shofar move us in the way it did for those Jews in Spain, for the Jews in the Holocaust, for the Jews in Soviet Russia? How many of them risked their lives just for a moment of connection, a chance to keep their link in the chain of Judaism present and strong. So many times I have heard stories from people sitting in my office of risks they or their families took just to keep one of the mitzvot; smuggling in matzah so that people could have just the smallest taste of freedom in the midst of their oppression, teaching, singing songs, telling stories, reciting fragments of remembered prayers, lighting Chanukah candles when there was not enough food to survive. At Rosh Hashanah we hear the sound of the shofar, the call which wakes us from our slumber, which cries to us, remember! Remember who we are, remember what has come before, remember what is truly important.

I read recently about a study done of people in Hong Kong. The study began just before the hand over back to China. People were in a state of great fear and uncertainty, they were concerned about what would happen to them after the Chinese took control, would the freedoms which were so familiar be taken from them? Would their lifestyles change dramatically or would they be able to remain living the way they had always lived? One in twelve people left Hong Kong, not prepared to take the risk. It was a period of great upheaval and fear. Then came SARS. People were scared, the country was virtually shut down, crippled by a disease that nobody understood as it wreaked its havoc and destruction. During this time, the researchers looked at the people and their relationships. They found that across the board, those who stayed in Hong Kong, dramatically changed their lives. They worked less. One man described his days before as filled with work. He would eat two meals at the office, go home for dinner and then back to work, leaving his family for most of the day. And he was very typical, an average worker. This lifestyle and these hours were expected of everyone, not just the well paid executives. No matter what your status or income, it was assumed you would be available to your employer for the majority of your time, six days a week. Family time was limited, leisure time was almost non-existent. But then came the handover and SARS. Suddenly, when faced with a crisis, people's priorities changed. They worked less, spent more time at home with families and the people who really mattered. They began to take stock and recognise what was truly important. When faced with uncertainty and fear, there was a great need to touch and be close to what had meaning in their lives, and they realised that it was not work but rather people who were the most significant.


Today, Hong Kong has returned to what it once was. The fear has passed, the crisis is over and with it has gone the work life balance that people acquired. Thank God we are not faced with such crises and we do not, as the Jews did in Spain, have to risk our lives to practice our faith but sometimes that means that we lose the connection, we get so caught up with other things that we do not remember to seek the meaning in our traditions. So we have the shofar which sounds every year as our wake up call, our reminder of what is truly important. It calls to us with its haunting sound to listen to our souls, to hear what

they need and then to nourish them. The shofar calls us to reconnect with the people in our lives who mean the most, to assess our priorities and make what is truly important the centre of our lives. Amongst the noise of our daily existence it is easy to miss the sound of the shofar calling to us, pleading for us to remember what life is really about. We are really good at caring for our bodies, we know how to eat well, to exercise, and we are experts at tending our minds, remaining stimulated and engaged, but we sometimes forget about our souls. They need to be nurtured too, the relationships which sustain our souls also need to be cared for; they need attention and time just as the other parts of our lives. Our faith and our tradition are there for us, waiting to bring balance and wholeness to our existence but we need to hear the call. We need to recognise within the blasts of the shofar the cry which touches the very essence of who we are; the notes which reach the depths of our souls and awaken the part within us all that connects to the great energy of Judaism. It pulses through the world, it is a part of our very being, it is our link with the past and our connection to the future. It calls upon us to remember and to do, to make what is truly important the centre of our lives and to live, to truly live, each and every moment with value, meaning and connection to all that is important and significant.

I wish you all a Shana Tova, a good, sweet and happy year filled with goodness, wholeness and peace.

Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio

* From *Jewish Stories from Heaven and Earth*



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My Time on Earth Is Limited



On a sunny day, I find that I am more capable of taking funerals in stride. I can acknowledge that all life will eventually come to an end and that Judaism provides communal support and rituals to assist a grieving family in its time of need. At the conclusion of the funeral, I wash my hands, I get into my car, and I drive away, resolving to do something life-affirming in the day ahead.

But anyone who has been to Rookwood in the rain will undoubtedly be familiar with the dank emptiness of such an experience. It was my third funeral of the week and the weather was dismal and gloomy. As the family cried softly behind me, the misery-stricken grey skies wept in their own way. The rain teemed down, the heavens sobbed uncontrollably. For me, the most dreadful, and yet most important part of a funeral is the moment when immediate family members and friends proceed to shovel earth into the open grave. The sound of earth falling upon the plain pine frame of a casket is unmistakable. This jarring thud, which bespeaks the finality of the occasion, penetrates deep into my soul.

At this particular funeral I listen for that sound, but all I hear is a quiet splash. The pile of earth, dug respectfully and honourably by the gravediggers, (a truly thankless job), has begun to turn to mush, the grave itself has begun to fill with water, such that the casket itself is floating in a sea of wet mud. My spirit sinks further. There are no words of comfort or consolation that will alleviate the blank, telling stares of the mourners. Forget that the body returns to the dust as it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it. These mourners are not just “walking in the valley of the shadow of death,” they are confounded and confronted by the harsh reality that their loved one – their spouse, their parent, their sibling, their friend – while no longer laying on a bed of pain and suffering physically, has been laid to eternal rest in a damp, flooding pit.

I wash my hands at the close of this funeral, and my mind hearkens back to the words of Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare’s tragedy – a little water clears us of this deed – only I don’t feel clear, I don’t feel clean, I feel like there is blood on my hands, I feel sick in my gut, and my soul cries out with emptiness. My phone rings twice on my drive back to the synagogue, and I let it ring. My eyes are on the road in front of me, but I’ve left my heart and my mind at Rookwood. My feet are wobbly as they accelerate and brake through the stop-and-go traffic of Parramatta Road because I’ve been unable to walk away from the funeral I’ve just conducted.

In my first few years as a rabbi, people often told me that I was too young to be a rabbi. I cannot hide my age. And yet I must admit that even with four years experience in the rabbinate, and having conducted more than one hundred funerals, that there remains something deeply harrowing, something deeply tragic about conducting funerals, about burying people (in sunshine or rain). The people that I bury are sometimes two or three times my age; on occasion, they are even younger than I am. And yet it has been said that death is the great equaliser. We cannot control the weather forecast on the day that we are to be buried; all of us, each and every one of us, meet the same fate, gathered to our kin in a plain, pine box. Earth is heaped upon us with either an unmistakable thud, or a quiet splash.

We don’t have to see death in this way though. One of my teachers in rabbinical school often stressed that we need to see funerals as life-affirming occasions. If we are able to praise God in the Kaddish while standing at the grave of a loved one, then we should be able to go forth from a cemetery and acknowledge and praise the beauty of God’s presence in the world at other times in our lives too. Often I do walk away from funerals and say, “What a powerful reminder this is. I need to be sure to live, because this is the end that I will meet one day. My time here on earth is limited.”

And so it is for all of us. Our time here on earth is limited. But as Jews we are not mere Epicureans who live believing that we must eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we may die. Eating, drinking, and merriment are but one small part of a Jew’s individual and communal identity. Surely, we are entitled to moments of celebration, moments of happiness, and moments of festivity. To be fair, Shabbat and festivals afford us opportunities for rest, reflection, and spiritual rejuvenation. But the Jew’s *raison d’être* is made evident each and every day – we live through our actions and our words, by our commitment to mitzvot and our performance of *ma’asim tovim* (good deeds).

We must remember that the journey of our lives, from the moment we are born, is fated to conclude. This is the unavoidable tale of our sojourn here on God’s earth. A number of years ago, I remember flicking through the television channels and happened upon a repeated episode of Oprah. I don’t regularly watch Oprah but I was amused by a clock that she was displaying. Apparently, someone had designed a clock where a person could enter their current age, and the clock would then calculate the difference between that person’s age and their average life expectancy. (For example, if a fifty year-old woman bought this clock, the clock would count down from approximately thirty years, as the average life expectancy for a woman is eighty years). A person would then look at the clock on a daily basis, and realise, however slowly, that time is running out, that life will ultimately end.

Especially in this time of year, as we begin to approach the Yamim Nora’im, we are reminded of the sheer fragility of our own lives.

The Psalmist writes:

Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all inhabitants of the world, men of all estates, rich and poor alike....For one sees that the wise die, that the foolish and ignorant both perish, leaving their wealth to others. Their grave is their eternal home, the dwelling-place for all generations of those once famous on earth. Man does not abide in honour; he is like the beasts that perish (Psalm 49:2-3, 11-13).

This Psalm, intoned so appropriately as the “Psalm for a House of Mourning,” and recited throughout the initial mourning

period of shiva, reminds us that all of us, each and every one of us, is destined to die. We need to make sure that we don't simply let our days pass us by, that we are not simply absorbed in the pursuit of money and wealth – because as the Psalmist reminds us, we cannot take such things with us.

Maimonides teaches that *olam ha-ba*, the World to Come, is not a physical world unto itself, but the world, when we have died, that we leave to others. Our World to Come is characterised by how other people will ultimately remember us. Before our bodies go the way of the earth, before we decay and rot and decompose into nothingness, what will we have accomplished in this world? What positive, lasting actions will others remember us by? We have no control over our fate – but we have every opportunity to make every singular moment of our lives count.

Rabbi Paul J Jacobson

Renewal

Why Jewish Renewal?

The term 'Jewish Renewal' describes a set of practices and a movement within Judaism that attempts to reinvigorate Judaism with mystical, Kabbalistic, Hasidic, musical and meditative practices drawn from a variety of traditional and untraditional, Jewish and other sources. Jewish renewal is also an approach to Judaism that can be found within segments of any of the Jewish streams.

The movement's most prominent leader is Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, who visited Sydney with his wife, Eve, in 2007. Other prominent rabbis and teachers associated with Jewish Renewal include Art Green, Estelle Frankel, Arthur Waskow and Shohama Weiner.

Jewish Renewal brings kabbalistic and Hasidic theory and practice into a non-Orthodox, egalitarian framework, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as neo-Hasidism. It often adds practices such as meditation, chant and dance to services and gatherings, being inspired by teachings from Buddhism, Sufism, yoga and integrating them with Jewish practice.

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi began the Jewish Renewal movement in the 1960's, with small *chavurot* - "fellowships" for prayer and study in North American. Reb Zalman, now 85 years old, was educated and ordained through the Chabad movement and continues to be inspired by Chasidic teachings, as well as feminist ideals, activism for peace and for the environment.

In Sydney, Jewish Renewal has developed, over a number of years, into an active and vibrant element within the Emanuel community. The best way I could describe it is to give some examples of events we have held and relay some comments people have made:

At a Jewish chanting event, one woman (around 50 years old) said to me: "I haven't been inside a synagogue since I was 25. I have been doing yoga, travelling in India and that has been my spiritual practice. I never found synagogues very inspiring until I started coming to these chanting nights."

Some Jewish renewal activities in 2010:

Kabbalah Meditation: Gives an opportunity for people to take some time to explore their lives in light of the messages from the weekly portion of the Torah. This is an innovative method, where a key idea from the Torah is applied to meditation and self-improvement.

A comment from a participant: "I have always wanted to do meditation but I was worried I was going to get caught up in another religion. Doing meditation in a Jewish context gives me a chance to combine meditation with a culture that I grew up with."

Music circles at the beach: Meeting in the warmer part of the year, with our children, dogs, and musical instruments. We sit at sunset at the beach, sometimes with the full moon rising over the ocean, sometimes just with the sunset colours. Spectacular! We sing '*hine matov u manayim*' – "how good it is to sit with each other" and other songs. In between the songs there is a chance for silence and meditation.

A comment, "I spend so much time at work indoors, it is a relief to be able to practice my spirituality in nature. It feels so much deeper to sing '*ki le-olam chasdo*' 'for God's compassion is everlasting' at the beach rather than inside a building".

Jewish Renewal Shabbat Services: These services have a character of their own as they include: discussion and a chance for people to really meet each other; accompaniment with musical instruments, movement, meditation, chanting, story telling. What does that mean? Instead of reading pages of Hebrew, we might chant a key phrase from a prayer over and over, like a meditative mantra. For example: '*neshama she natata bi tehora hi*', "this soul that You have placed within me is pure." Then, the essence of the prayer becomes meaningful for each of us. When we sing *haleluya* – a prayer of gratitude – it is introduced with a sharing of what each person is grateful for. The idea of a *minyan*, more than 10 individuals praying together, is stronger when we have had a chance to introduce ourselves to some of the others in the room.

This is a short introduction to Jewish Renewal and of course, the best way to know what it is about is to come along!

Rabbi Orna Triguboff

Next Renewal service: 14 August



For Reform Judaism, Change Is the Constant

Two hundred years ago, in the small Westphalian town of Seesen, the latter-day court Jew Israel Jacobson built a small synagogue intended mainly for the impoverished boys in the vocational school he had founded there. What made the “Jacobstempel,” as it became known, unusual was that it contained an organ; the bimah was at the front of the sanctuary, rather than in the traditional center; and, along with edifying sermons from the pulpit, vernacular hymns were sung during services conducted in an atmosphere of worshipful decorum.

Jacobson was not a conscious “reformer” of Judaism; he merely wanted to bring its externals up to date. Yet the July 1810 dedication ceremony of that temple is now being celebrated as Reform Judaism’s starting point. Reform Jews around the world are referring to this year as their movement’s bicentennial.

Some might see a certain irony at work here. In recent years, after all, the Reform movement has become ever more traditional in its worship style, reversing some of the reforms advanced by its founders and extended by proponents of so-called Classical Reform. So how can the Reform movement claim the establishment of the Seesen temple as its genesis moment even as it backs away from some of Jacobson’s innovations?

Perhaps we can find an answer to this question by examining a second significant bicentennial that Reform Jews have reason to celebrate this year: the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Geiger, the rabbi and scholar from Frankfurt who gave intellectual substance to Jewish religious reform a generation after Jacobson.

A brilliant scholar of Judaism in the new critical vein known as *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the scientific study of Judaism), Geiger anchored Judaism firmly within history. Judaism, he argued, had developed from stage to historical stage: Rabbinic Judaism differed from biblical, medieval from rabbinic. Each new phase represented religious and moral progress, each an adjustment to the changing conditions of Jewish life.

Based on this historical understanding of Judaism, Geiger could argue that adaptation in the past justified adaptation in the present. Religious reform was not an aberration but tied to the main line of Judaism’s religious history.

Although his basic conceptions lent themselves to radical implications, Geiger was himself an observant Jew whose prayer book retained traditional elements such as resurrection of the dead and whose congregants sat in synagogue separated by gender. His “Liberal Judaism,” an approach somewhere between American Reform and Conservative Judaism, became dominant in a German Jewry that sought to maintain maximal communal unity.

It was primarily in America, toward the end of the 19th century, that Reform Judaism took on the radical character that we today call Classical Reform. It drew on both the aesthetic sensibilities that received early expression in the Seesen temple and the ideology of Abraham Geiger and other German rabbis.

Classical Reform attracted German-Jewish immigrants who sought a universalistic faith even as, socially, discrimination kept them apart from non-Jews. America was their Zion. They believed that excessive ritual was likely to detract from a proper expression of a Judaism that consisted of prayers, almost entirely in the English language, and sermons — generally half an hour or more in duration — intended to teach and edify. Their reason for remaining Jewish had nothing to do with ethnic identity, but rather with a “mission” to propagate an ethical monotheism that, religiously and morally, stood prior to and above all other faiths.

By the 1930s, with the influx of a bit of Eastern European yiddishkeit and a darkening situation for Jews in Europe, Reform Judaism started to reverse course. By 1937 the movement had officially endorsed Zionism, and shortly thereafter it began gravitating toward increasing traditionalization of the Reform prayer book and of the ambience of the Reform synagogue.

Today, even as these trends continue, a reevaluation of the Classical heritage has begun to take place. In a recent sermon, the Union for Reform Judaism’s president, Rabbi Eric Yoffie — himself a proponent of the turn toward greater emphasis on Jewish tradition — called favorable attention to the early reformers’ intellectual rigor, universalistic ethics, compelling sermons and majestic music.

But for the most part, Reform Judaism, 200 years after its symbolic origins, is a quite different entity. In some respects it has become more radical than its earlier historical manifestations, with its complete religious equality for women and gay, lesbian and transgender Jews; its full-throated embrace of patrilineal descent; and its greater willingness to include within the Reform community non-Jews who are committed to raising their children as Jews. Yet in most respects it is far more traditional than in its Classical days.

What, then, is the scarlet thread that binds Classical and contemporary Reform Judaism together? One can glimpse it in Geiger’s principle that Judaism is a historical entity, that change is endemic to its character and essential for its survival. Sometimes that change has been in the direction of tradition and sometimes toward novelty. Seen in retrospect, Reform has always been a matter of harmonizing Torah with contemporary life. Over the course of two centuries, all that have changed are the points along the spectrum between tradition and modernity where that harmonization takes place.

By Michael A. Meyer

Published July 07 2010, Forward Newspaper.

Michael A. Meyer is the Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History Emeritus at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. He is the author of “Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism” (Oxford University Press, 1988).

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Mazal Tov



We proudly extend a heartfelt Mazal Tov to Norbert Schweizer, past president and Life Governor of Emanuel Synagogue, on his being awarded the Federal Cross of Merit (German: Bundesverdienstkreuz), officially the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 in recognition of his work on behalf of the German and German speaking communities in Sydney and Australia as a whole.

In presenting Norbert with this prestigious award, the German Consul-General, Hans Gnodtke, praised Norbert for having "voluntarily offered advice, counsel and services to the most

needy organizations of these communities, including the German welfare society, nursing homes for the elderly of both the German catholic and protestant congregations," and for having drafted the Bye-Laws and other legal documents and instruments for a number of German organizations in NSW, which helped them by "freeing funds that could thus be allocated directly to the core humanitarian causes or community services of those organizations." Additionally it was noted that Norbert's law firm, Schweizer Kobras, has for many years been the principal legal advisor for official German missions in NSW like the Consulate General and the Goethe Institute in Sydney.

Noting that the Schweizer family, "like so many Jews here in Sydney has suffered terribly, barely escaping the most horrific abuse imaginable from their own home country, relentless persecution and mass murder," Gondtke praised Norbert as the incarnation of an appeal made years earlier by Jewish Professor Heinrich Kronstein to a young German lawyer who felt diffident at the prospect of rebuilding Germany from the rubble left behind by the Nazis - "Despite comprehensive disillusion all disappointment and total destruction, we are not entitled to feel bitter and so simply resign and give up. We have to use common sense and sound judgment into what's possible and we need to think of rebuilding."

Norbert has done much to strengthen the relationship between the German community and the Australian Jewish community. He does us proud.

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From our Executive Director

As this issue of Tell goes to press the synagogue staff is already busy making preparations for the nearly 2000 worshippers we will be hosting during the High Holy Days. And they are also busy organising the many varied programs-religious, educational cultural-that we will provide throughout the year.

I focus on the solemnity of the holy days and am reminded of a story told of a local 19th Century shtetl rebbe, who needed to raise funds to heat the homes of the town's poor. The story is set in winter, when the shtetl was besieged by bitter cold weather, and the rebbe, on a particularly cold day set off for the home of the town's richest man and knocked on his door. The *gvir*, a follower of the rebbe, answered the door and invited him in. The rebbe declined and said that he only needed a minute or two of the man's time and they could talk on the doorstep. The rebbe proceeded to engage the man in small talk, asking him about his family and children. The *gvir*, who had come to the door in his pajamas, began to shiver and his teeth began to chatter. "Rebbe, won't you please come inside?" he asked again.

The rebbe declined and began to ask the man questions about his business. The man was now visibly shivering from the cold and again asked, "Rebbe, won't you please come inside and tell me why you have come to my house?"

The rebbe remained outside, but told the man, "I've come to ask you for one hundred rubles. We need the money to warm the homes of the poor."

"And if I promise to give it, will the rebbe then come inside?"

"Yes," said the rebbe.

"Then I'll give the money right now! Just come inside; I am freezing!"

After the rebbe followed the shivering man into the house the man opened his safe and gave him the 100 rubles.

"Rebbe, he asked, "If you knew all along that you were planning to ask me, why didn't you come in right away and ask?"

The rebbe answered: "If I had come in as soon as you opened the door, you would have escorted me to a fine chair in your living room and brought out a glass of hot tea for both of us. We would have warmed ourselves by the fire, and when I would have asked you for the money to heat the homes of the poor, you would have offered five rubles, maybe ten. But standing outside, you experienced for a few minutes the bitterness of the cold that the poor are experiencing all the time. I wanted you to be feeling the bitter cold when I asked you for the 100 rubles."

The lesson of this tale is a simple one. When we truly understand what those less fortunate are experiencing we are apt to act appropriately on their behalf. Thankfully, our sense of empathy is more evolved than that of the *gvir* in the story. We do not

need to be solicited in the freezing cold in order to appreciate the needs of the poor and respond to them. Yet we do need to and do give ourselves reminders. Consciousness raisers. In part, we fast on Yom Kippur to remind ourselves of the Prophet Isaiah's words: "Share your bread with the hungry. Take in the homeless . . . clothe the naked." Last year, through Mazon, our Emanuel community distributed several hundred generously filled shopping bags of food to the needy.

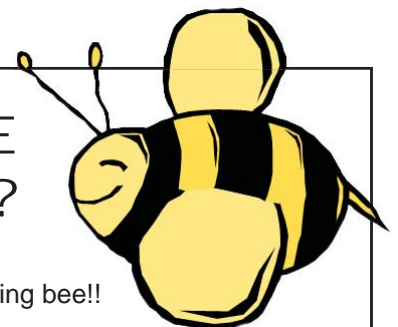
Analogously, as we seek atonement for our sins on Yom Kippur, our liturgy reminds us that through Repentance and Prayer and Tzedakah we avert the harshness of the decree. On Rosh Hashanah God decides who will live and who will die; for those who will live, what sort of life they will enjoy; and for those condemned to die, how it will be brought about. But sincere repentance, which includes fasting, prayer in a loud voice, and donations to charity, help us avert the harsh decree.

Tzedakah at this time of year is traditionally directed to the synagogue as well as to the poor and the homeless. Our synagogue provides not just a place to worship, but also a place for us and our children to receive a Jewish education, and to undertake social action and social justice programs, as well as a variety of cultural and recreational activities for our members and the community at large. We welcome members even when they cannot afford full dues, and your gift helps sustain our high level of programming even as the global financial crisis continues to unfold and impact our funding adversely. Last year's campaign was very successful and this year we are seeking to improve upon that success by fifty per cent. I urge you, therefore, to respond as generously as you are able to our annual Kol Nidre campaign.

And I seize the opportunity to wish you a happy, healthy, and peaceful New Year. L'shanah Tova Tikatevu!

Allan H. Glazerman

HEAR THE BUZZ?????



It's the sound of the working bee!!

On Sunday 5 September (four days before Rosh Hashanah) we will be having a 'working bee' to clean everything, polish silverware and shine woodwork in preparation for the High Holy Days.

Come and join us and help make your synagogue sparkle and shine for the New Year. Coffee, tea and honey cake provided.

Time: 10.30am – 12.00noon



Apology: In last month's magazine we listed the names of all of the exhibitors at our recent Bar/Bat Mitzvah Expo and inadvertently left out a name.

We apologise to Balloons by Balloongram and hope that you will support Jan Van Poortvliet who runs this company. He can be contacted on 8060 2994 or jan@chocogram.com.au

A Lesson From History

In 1938, the Evian Convention on Jewish refugees met in order to consider the question of the involuntary emigration of the Jewish people of Europe because it had assumed major proportions and that the fate of the unfortunate people affected had become a problem for intergovernmental deliberation. Most of the countries of the world turned a blind eye to the fate of the refugees. Our own Australian Foreign Minister noted: "as we have no real racial problem, we are not desirous of importing one." In her book "Hitler's Green Light for Genocide, Annette Shaw wrote "I wrote about the Evian Conference because I felt people should know the part the allies played in appeasing Hitler and giving him the green light to believe he could do whatever he wanted to the Jewish people as nobody wanted them and this resulted in genocide. By their refusal to take Jewish refugees the countries who attended the Evian Conference condemned them to torture, inhumane treatment and a horrible death. Let us hope and pray we never make the same mistake again."

The irony of this becomes apparent when we look at the actions of an Aboriginal man from Victoria. William Cooper led a deputation of Kooris from the Australian Aborigines League, in an attempt to present the German Consulate in Melbourne with a resolution 'condemning the persecution of Jews and Christians in Germany'. The Consul-General, Dr. R.W. Drechsler, refused them admittance. This brave and outspoken group of Aboriginal who in the previous hundred years, had themselves been subject to genocide, and in 1938 were (like Germany's Jewish people) denied citizenship, achieved little in mobilising the conscience of mainstream Australia either in terms of the situation of Germany's Jews or that of Aboriginal Australia. Indeed, their gesture has been almost completely forgotten in Australian history.

And so – to today,

Article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of the United Nations calls for the signatories thereof to establish a system whereby asylum seekers' requests be handled in a manner that is both efficient and thorough. Australia, as a party to the Geneva Convention, should, according to the UNHCR, adopt a rapid, flexible and liberal process of processing the refugees, recognising how difficult it often is for them to document persecution in their native land.

Throughout history, Jewish people have been the quintessential refugees, forced to flee from one country to another and to adopt and adapt to changing conditions and societies where we are not always welcome. It is precisely because of our Jewish character that we should be actively involved in compelling society to adopt a just and humane policy in dealing with those who now arrive in Australia in desperate need.

There is no question that we should maintain safe and secure borders and that we should uphold reasonable immigration policies. We should however keep the issue of Asylum Seekers coming into Australia in perspective. According to human rights and refugee advocate Julian Burnside QC, "We are not being flooded by people – we take less than one per cent of the world's total refugee population and yet we are taking hundreds of thousands of migrants each year for economic reasons."

William Cooper's actions earn our respect and demand our involvement. As Jews we should remember for "Once we were slaves in Egypt---"

**"Learn to do good, seek justice, aid the oppressed.
Uphold the rights of the orphan, defend the cause of the widow" Isaiah 1:17**

Sandy Hollis, Director of Education

HIGH HOLY DAY MACHZORIM

Enhance your enjoyment of the Services by purchasing a copy of the 'Gates of Repentance' for the Progressive Service or *Machzor Lev Shalem* for the Masorti Services for each member of your family.

We have a very limited number for 'loan' of Machzorim and urge you to get your own copy and bring it with you to services.

PLEASE MARK YOUR MACHZOR CLEARLY.

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HIGH HOLY DAY TRAVELLERS AND HOSPITALITY

If you will be away over the Yamim Nora'im please contact Belinda so that your seats can be allocated to a visitor to our congregation.

If you are a visitor to our community and would like to join a family in celebrating Rosh Hashanah or to break the Fast after Yom Kippur, just call Belinda and she will try to arrange hospitality for you.

If you are entertaining family and friends, have room at your table and would like to host someone, please contact us.

Thank you in advance for fulfilling this mitzvah.

REMINDER

The deadline for submitting the names of your loved ones to be included in our 'Yizkor' Remembrance Book to be published for and used during the Yizkor (memorial) Service on Yom Kippur is 31 August 2010.

You will find the form for our Remembrance Book included with this copy of Tell.

Netzer Winter Camp 2010

Recently, things changed.

The definition of fun was recreated, the sound barrier was broken six times over and concepts such as sleep were thrown out the door. With such incredible occurrences, breakthroughs and advancements, would you have expected it to have been on a campsite with 80 kids? At Netzer, there were no doubts that such things could exist.

Early, on the morning of the 6th of July, kids clambered out of their beds, checked to see if everything was packed and ready to go and with a hop, skip and a back flip, landed in their car. They all knew this was going to be one HECK of a camp. They were right, but they had no idea to what extent Netzer's Machane Mahapecha would push it. A wise man once said, "ye shall go to Netzer, and thy mind's shall be blown" (in the most non-threatening way possible). Whether or not it was actually me is not important, what IS important is that madrichim and chanichim alike stayed oh-so-true to this saying.

As the kids left the campsite on the 11th of July, sniffing, smiling and reminiscing as they looked back at their home of six days, I couldn't help but do the same. I thought to myself "what made this camp so incredible? How did we get so many extremely cool kids to come together and how did we pull off one of the best camps in history (*note that Netzer camps will consistently get better throughout time)? Was it the spectacular contest of colour wars? Was it the surprise appearance of some of the cutest animals around from an animal farm? Was it the greatest last-night-party ever to hit the Jewish youth movements? Was it the wonderful atmosphere that floats through on Shabbat? Was it the superior quality of madrichim who put Netzer camp as a priority for four months over everything else? Or was it something we put in the cordial?

I'd assume it had nothing to do with the latter, though I do whole-heartedly believe that it was a combination of all of the others. Personally, my highlight was at dusk, just before Shabbat sank in. Our shlichah, Anat, was busy running a program for some of the seniors on the ethical dilemmas that the Israeli army face until she was quickly pulled out of the class by the other madrichim. Outside she was met with a sight that I'm sure will never leave her. Held up by ten senior chanichim was a huge sign that read 'will you marry me?' Standing centre stage, was Anat's man of the hour. As she said yes, an enormous cheer erupted from all around the campsite, kids and madrichim running everywhere at once in. What a moment we all thought. I hope that moment never leaves me. For the chanichim involved, too, I doubt it will ever leave them either.

Such a camp will hopefully be engrained into the memory of the kids for many, many years to come. If you have a child that you think might be interested in Netzer, give it a go! Netzer is a not-for-profit youth movement that works purely to provide entertainment and educate on the basis on Tikkun Olam, Reform Judaism, Reform Zionism and provide a basis for informed, ethical thinking.

For those of you who are already involved in Netzer, I must encourage you to come to our fortnightly gatherings, get-togethers and adventures as we put large amounts of time



and effort to provide something for your kids. Please, support us so that we can support your kids. This movement is our passion and nothing could please us more than a group of kids excited to hang out with us, have some fun and learn a bit on the way. Thank you for your continued support of Netzer, it is appreciated more than you know.

Jonno Baker

Get to know us!

Open Door Friday 6 August, 5:00pm

Bring your friends, your family and anyone who would like to know more about the Emanuel community and join us for drinks and nibbles in the synagogue foyer.

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**Name: Tom Kurz**

School: Waverley College
 Hobbies: Surfing Surfing Surfing
 Pets: Buddy the Labrador, Jazz the Maltese and Elmo the cockateil
 Dislikes: People who pretend to be what they are not! On shore winds!

I'm a year 7 student at Waverley College. I play basketball in summer season and rugby in Winter season. Sadly surfing is not part of our curriculum. My ideal career would be a Professional Surfer - to

surf around the world and make money at the same time would be cool. I love animals so a vet is an option if I can get

the high marks that is needed to be a vet. I have also been out on the road with my Uncle Rob who is an electrician, so I wouldn't mind that either, just have to study and see how I go. My favourite tv show at the moment is Modern Family.

My mum volunteers at Ronald McDonald House. When I'm old enough I would like to volunteer some time there as well helping out. At Waverley we have an outreach programme helping the homeless with a food and clothing van which I will be involved with in year 8.

What I will remember about preparing for my Bar Mitzvah:

Tuesday afternoons going to Hebrew class at Synagogue with my friend Jake Apps (also at Waverley College) who is also preparing for his Bar Mitzvah - meeting new friends at class and my Hebrew teacher Kim Gotlieb - so much patience and the best chocolates at the end of a lesson.

**Name: Michael Hamilton**

School: Rose Bay Secondary College
 Hobbies: Sport, video games, computer, music
 Any pets: Two fish – Flame and Spiderman
 Any dislikes: None

I play basketball for Maccabi and rugby union for Randwick. I am club captain of Bondi Nippers. I play in four bands at my school – two concert bands, and two jazz bands. I play the trombone.

My favourite school subjects are PDHPE, maths, music and computers.

What social justice projects/charity projects have you been involved in and what issues of concern would you like to become involved in as you grow older?

The One Family Fund. I sponsored a boy in Israel and paid for his Bar Mitzvah. His family had been victims of a terrorist attack.

What I will remember about preparing for my barmitzvah:

My weekly sessions with my wonderful teacher, Mariela. She explained everything so well and it seemed easier, especially when it all seemed so difficult at the beginning. Also going to synagogue most weeks with my grandfather. I will also remember my meetings with Rabbi Kamins every few months.



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The Progressive Movement And Its Allies Make Key Gains At Zionist Congress

The worldwide Progressive Jewish movement made a strong showing at the 36th Zionist Congress, held June 15-17 in Jerusalem. Of the approximately 750 delegates - two-thirds of whom represented Jewish communities around the world, and the rest an international array of Jewish organizations - Progressive Judaism, through its various arms sent some 120 representatives who, united under the banner of ARZENU, the international federation of Reform and Progressive religious Zionists, comprised the congress's *largest faction*.

The ARZENU/World Union delegation consisted of Progressive, Reform and Liberal Jews from 14 countries: Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Israel, the Netherlands, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Although delegates were involved in long, hard and sometimes acrimonious debates with representatives of other groups and organizations, the ARZENU delegates were able to return to their home countries with a renewed sense of purpose, not least because of the effective partnership with our Israeli team members led by Yaron Shavit, the new chair of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, and Rabbi Gilad Kariv, its Executive Director.

Some of the achievements, both within the Congress and beyond include:

1. Overwhelming support to oppose the currently proposed changes to Israeli conversion law. In its present form, that law would weaken the law of Return and the rights of Jewish streams such as ours to act in regard to the conversion process.
2. Immediate implementation of equal WZO funding for all Jewish religious streams activities around the world, outside of Israel.
3. Cancellation of elections to the 36th World Zionist Congress on a one-time basis. As a result, even as we saved hundreds of thousands of dollars for our movement around the world, and the WZO saved millions of dollars during a time of continued economic uncertainty, we maintained our numerical strength from the prior Congress elections.
4. Control over the Congress. ARZENU/WUPJ was the leader of the largest faction in the Congress, ensuring its positions and concerns were given legitimacy and weight. The Israeli political parties in the faction, Labour and Meretz, committed themselves to an agenda of pluralism. Labour is of course a member of the governing coalition in the Knesset. This alliance has translated already into support for our position regarding the Conversion Bill in the Knesset.
5. ARZENU/WUPJ and our faction partners succeeded in passing our major resolutions and in defeating all resolutions which attempted to attack pluralism or other Reform and Progressive core values. We strengthened the role of women in forthcoming Congresses and strongly asserted the negative impact of settlement expansion. Our presence was strongly felt and acknowledged by all participants, thanks in no small part to the extremely



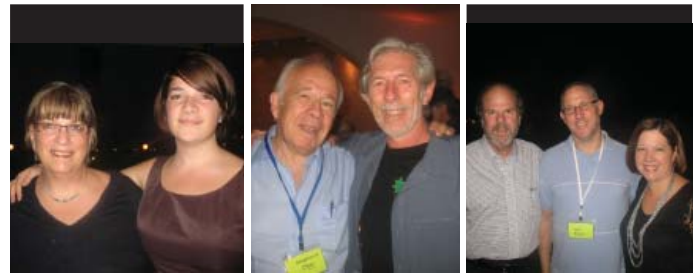
From left: Australian delegates Ian Samuel, Alison Marcus, Steve Denenberg, Jocelyn and Gary Robuck outside the Old City of Jerusalem.

active and engaged presence of our delegates and alternates and the leadership roles assumed by our youth representatives. A complete list of approved resolutions will be provided when it is prepared by the WZO staff.

6. ARZENU/WUPJ held key leadership positions within the Congress planning and operational period. Amongst other key positions, Phil Meltzer from ARZA (U.S.) was chair of the Congress Presidium; Yaron Shavit chaired its Standing Committee. Phillip Bliss (WUPJ Vice chair, Australia) served on the Congress Presidium and Steve Bauman (WUPJ chair) served as vice-chair of the Zionism and Diaspora Committee.
7. Ehud Barak, the leader of the Labour party, committed to expanding the role of the Reform in Israel in the quasi-governmental section, through filling positions with Reform Jews identified by us. We will ensure this process is followed up.
8. Reform now holds the co-chair position in the Diaspora department of the WZO, enabling direct input to Zionist activities around the world. Reform also holds the land position in the Jewish National Fund, which gives it control over land issues and related funding issues. A complete list of all Reform roles will be circulated when the remaining details are finalized.
9. The role of Diaspora representatives in the WZO was expanded going forward, through agreement to provide translation and participation in key committees throughout the year. This will enable our representatives to play a larger ongoing role and will help to ensure the WZO is more open to Diaspora input.
10. The process of reforming the WZO was continued. Our negotiating team ensured that extensive checks and balances were implemented, particularly with regard to financial matters. We will be chairing an empowered budget and finance committee.
11. Our youth were active, empowered and valued participants throughout the WZO Congress. WUPJ YA representatives came from Latin America, Former Soviet Union, Australia and Europe. The measure of the success of their participation will be found of course in their ongoing involvement in their constituent regions and countries. The generosity of individual delegates in supporting the costs of the youth delegates is much appreciated.
12. WUPJ representative to the JAFI Board of Governors will be Michael Grabiner/ Shai Pinto will be the representative on the WZO Zionist Executive, and Tamara Schagas

will be the additional representative on the WZO outer Executive. A full list of all ARZENU/WUPJ positions will be circulated when completed.

The 36th Zionist Congress helped mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Theodor Herzl, the great Zionist visionary, and has also signalled the dawn of a new era in Zionist politics, where egalitarianism and pluralism come to the fore as essential elements of the world Zionist movement.



Emanuel Supports Shir Madness



Shir Madness is a weekend music festival showcasing and celebrating the diversity of Jewish music and Jewish performers in Sydney with guest artists from Israel, Germany, New Zealand, New York, Victoria and Queensland.

The festival will feature music to appeal to all tastes: from traditional Jewish music to popular forms of music performed by Jewish musicians today.

The Emanuel Synagogue Cultural Fund is proud to be a contributing sponsor of Shir Madness. *The FourPlay String Quartet* and *Nadya and her 101 Candles Orkestra* are both sponsored by the Cultural Fund.

FourPlay String Quartet defy convention and stereotyping. As much a band as a string quartet, they blur the boundaries between styles and genres while maintaining their own original and true sound. *FourPlay* perform covers by a diverse array of bands; from *The Strokes* and *Radiohead* to *Charles Mingus*, *Robert Johnson* and many, many more. They also write their own original compositions inspired by rock, pop, post-rock, neo-classical, jazz, klezmer, swing, folk-tronica, hip hop and more... no musical stone is left unturned.

FourPlay shot to prominence in Australia and Europe in the very late 90's as a unique musical phenomenon – an indie rock band that just happened to be a string quartet! They achieved fame and (somewhat) fortune by establishing a blueprint for the DIY ethos with a rather punk attitude for people who had originally met through playing in orchestras. As no distributor was interested, they self distributed from the floor of their managers office, selling their first 1,000 CDs in three weeks and continuing on to be the first indie band to sell their CDs, in bulk, direct to the major chainstores of that time. *FourPlay* toured internationally and released three studio albums, a remix album and a trilogy of mini CDs.

Nadya and her 101 Candles Orkestra feature Gypsy, Eastern European songs and old French favourites including Edith Piaf and Jacques Brel are sung by Nadia Golski and played by virtuoso musicians including the wonderful Daniel Weltlinger on violin. Instrumentation also includes keyboards/accordion, bass, guitar, trumpet, mandolin and percussion.

Romantic, seductive, lively and captivating, *Nadya & Her*

101 Candles Orkestra's repertoire and presentation is quintessentially European and transports audiences in a unique way to other lands and other cultures.

The Emanuel Synagogue Choir has also been invited to perform at this inaugural festival event, together with the North Shore Temple Emanuel choir. The combined choirs will present a powerful performance of world music ranging from Hebrew to musical theatre, conducted by Andrea Catzel and Judy Campbell.

Come along and show your support for our choir and for our sponsored groups on the day.

Klezmer, choral, ladino, chassidic, israeli, jazz, cabaret, folk, blues, pop, rock, funk, reggae and rap...you'll find it all at Shir Madness!

Tickets available at www.shirmadness.com/tickets

SHIR MADNESS
SYDNEY JEWISH MUSIC FESTIVAL

SUNDAY AUGUST 15th - BONDI PAVILION

Deborah Conway • Monsieur Camembert • FourPlay • Adrian Deutsch
Nadya & Her 100 Candles Orkestra • The Mark Ginsburg Band
The Jews Brothers Band • Alex Jacobowitz • Tinpan Orange
Dahlia Dior • Klezmer Connexion • The JOssher Band • Husky
MC Reason • The Preachers • Three Quarters Hazel • The Naked Parade
Angie Takats • Leo Novikov • Leonie Cohen Trio • Alana Bruce • Ronit
PLUS The Combined Emanuel Congregation Choirs
& MANY MORE ARTISTS!

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40 ARTISTS ON 4 STAGES OVER 11 HOURS. BOOK NOW!

Emanuel Idol 2010

Emanuel Idol brought talented performers of all ages to the stage at Emanuel Synagogue on Sunday the 27th of June. The singing competition invited entrants to compete for the title of Emanuel Idol and a grand prize of a recording studio session at Brighton Boulevard Studios.

The evening featured performances from nine finalists as well as special live performances from Ilan Kidron of the Potbelleez and Yaron Hallis of Monsieur Camembert. Both Ilan and Yaron were also members of the judging panel, along with Adam Majsay, Head of Music at Emanuel School, and Andrea Catzel, Musical Director at Emanuel Synagogue. The MC for the night was Adam Gelin, who kept the audience warmed up with his enthusiasm and wit and helped the night run smoothly and seamlessly.

A week of auditions had narrowed down the list of entrants to the top nine, who then competed live on stage for the title of Emanuel Idol. All of the performances were brilliant, and the judges and audience were genuinely impressed with the caliber of singing.

Of course, there had to be a winner, and Ben Goldstein of Emanuel School took out the title of Emanuel Idol with his stunning rendition of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah". First prize was awarded by one of the team from Brighton Boulevard Studios, presenting Ben with a song recording session in the studio, under the production supervision of Tony Buchen who has worked with musical legends such as Tim Finn, Lior, John Butler, The Whitlams, Andy Bull and Blue King Brown.

Second prize was a photographic session with Zorro Gamarnik. Fortunately Zorro was on hand to offer a solution to an awards dilemma. The judges struggled to decide on just one second prize winner, Zorro stepped up to offer two sessions to two second place holders. This went to Imbar Nassi and Victoria Bromberger. Two totally different styles of performers, but both fabulously entertaining. Victoria sang a spine tingling rendition of "Somewhere over the Rainbow" from The Wizard of Oz, while Imbar sang a powerful "Signed Sealed Delivered" from Stevie Wonder.

The audience was not there just to watch though; they had to vote in the People's Choice Award. This went to Tamar Hoffman and her band that brought the house down with their rocking performance of "Wheels" by the Foo fighters.

An award was given by Ilan Kidron to a performer who showed special talent in songwriting. Ilan awarded one on one songwriting sessions to David Politzer who had performed and composed his own song "Take it or Leave it".

In the end the judges couldn't stop there, they were just too impressed with the performances. Yaron Hallis awarded an impromptu prize of Monsieur Camembert CD's and swing singing lessons to Sarah Encel for the most entertaining performance of the evening. With her theatrical rendition of "Adelaide's Lament" by Frank Losser, Sarah had enchanted the judges and audience.

It was a wildly successful night. The venue was packed and the room was buzzing with good music, great sounds and wonderful performances.



From left: The Judges Andrea Catzel, Ilan Kidron, Yaron Hallis and Adam Majsay



From left: The Winners Ben Goldstein, Imbar Nassi, Victoria Bromberger, Tamar Hoffman and David Politzer



The whole Emanuel Idol crew



Emanuel Idol winner Ben Goldstein receives his recording session prize from Dustin Bookatz of Brighton Boulevard Studios

Every Single Saturday

Parenting, Passion, Oranges and Lemons!

A new musical comedy is scoring goals with theatre and sports fans everywhere.

Every Single Saturday is a celebration of parents whose love, dedication and passion help their kids live out a dream. Sometimes their passion spills over and they cross the line, proving that - for them at least - 'the real action is on the sidelines'. It's thrilling, almost painfully familiar and completely hilarious!

Four football parents - with four very different agendas - meet at the final game of the year when hopes and fears are present in equal measure. What happens next is familiar and funny, moving, sometimes shocking... and ultimately inspiring! *Every Single Saturday* - with its laughter, tears, romance and reconciliation - more than any show in recent memory - taps into the Aussie spirit of competition and 'a fair go'. It will touch every audience... and leave them standing and cheering!

Carlo is a highly competitive former player who never quite 'made it'. He is frustrated by Neil's lack of passion as much by his own son's lack of interest and talent in 'the beautiful game'. He's also having secret personal training sessions with Sandy... Neil is a recently returned international orchestra conductor and father of the team's star player, Becks. He doesn't understand the attraction of football; he's just grateful to have time with his son from whom he's been separated. Sandy is a personal trainer and frustrated both as mother of overweight goalie Maddie as well as wife to her unsuccessful husband. Liz, recently widowed, is the overprotective mother of team captain Jamie. A keen amateur photographer, she is fascinated by Neil and has dreams she has not dared pursue, locked as she is into the past, unable to move on.

Writer-composer Joanna Weinberg says she created the show "as a tribute to the enthusiastic sporting parents who live the dream with their kids every single Saturday, sharing the passion and the pain, the joys and the disappointments of being a fanatic full-time fan."

There is much that audiences will recognise – in others... and even in themselves!

Also directed by Ms Weinberg (Twelve Shoes, The Lightness



of *Fleeing, Sinksongs, The Piano Diaries*) *Every Single Saturday* stars Melanie de Ferranti, Sara Grenfell, Matt Young and Geoff Sirmai. Musical direction by Paul Geddes with choreography by Daniella Jacob.

This new show's wonderful blend of sport, theatre, music, comedy and competition is simply irresistible! After popular seasons at Canberra and the Casula Powerhouse, it heads to the Avoca Theatre on August 14 and then on to the Parade Theatres, Kensington (NIDA) 13 Sept to 2 Oct.

Every Single Saturday

Parade Theatre (NIDA), 215 Anzac Parade Kensington
September 13 to October 2

Tickets \$42 / \$29 concessions.

Generous group and family deals apply plus "Manic Monday specials"

Bookings 1300 795 012 or www.ticketek.com.au

Visit www.everysinglesaturday.net for more info



What's On

august – october 2010

av – cheshvan 5770/5771

Our Community
Services
Spiritual
Festivals
Childrens Education
Children and Family
Adult Education
Arts and Culture
Shabbat Dinners
Special Events
High Holy Days

Take a look at **What's On**

Your comprehensive guide to everything that is going at Emanuel Synagogue from August to October.

All the details of our great programming and events in one easy booklet!

Our Community • Services • Spiritual • Festivals
Childrens Education • Children and Family • Adult Education
Arts and Culture • Shabbat Dinners • Special Events

High Holy Days services information included, refer to pages 10 - 13 of What's On for full details.




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SERVICES

Monday & Thursday:

6:45am Morning Minyan Neuweg

Friday:

6:00pm Erev Shabbat Service

6.30pm in daylight saving time

Saturday:

9:00am Conservative Shabbat Service - Neuweg

10:00am Progressive Shabbat Service - Main

Sanctuary

August Event Highlights

Pizza with the Rabbi

**Mondays 2 August, 9 August, 16 August and 23 August
6:00pm – 7:15pm**

Location: Rabbi Jacobson's Home

(please call the office for location and directions)

Enquiries: pjacobson@emanuel.org.au

If you've celebrated Bar or Bat Mitzvah, come along with your friends for pizza, lively discussion, and other great surprises. This term's subject: "What Does It Mean To Be Cool"

Open Door Friday

Friday 6 August, 5:00pm

Bring your friends, your family and anyone who you think might like to know more about the Emanuel community. This is an opportunity to meet our Rabbis, Members of the Board and other staff as well as take a tour of the synagogue and find out more about all the programmes, events, services and activities going on in our vibrant community.

Sivan Rotem In Recital

Sunday 8 August, 3:00pm – 5:00pm

Bookings essential: 9328 7833

Tickets: \$30, \$25 for students/seniors

Recital followed by afternoon tea

Soprano Sivan Rotem is considered one of Israel's most outstanding singers and will perform one show only in this special recital at Emanuel Synagogue.

Lunch 'n' Learn

Saturdays after services until 2:00pm.

Nourishment for mind, body and soul. Enjoy lunch, meet friends and delve into Torah.

14 August Dr Mark Leuchter discusses *Moses: the man and the myth*.

Jewish Storytelling

Friday 27 August, 6:00pm

In conjunction with the Shalom Institute and the Jewish Writers Festival.

Join us for a special Shabbat Service celebrating Jewish storytelling through our literature, with readings from the great library of Jewish writers.

The 3rd Annual Pizza with the Rabbi Shabbat Dinner

Friday 27 August, after the 6:00pm service

\$10 members, \$15 non-members

Bookings: 9328 7833

A delicious Mexican Shabbat Fiesta catered by the Pizza with the Rabbi team. Don a sombrero and come support our teenagers as they dazzle you with a Mexican feast. Our celebration of Jewish literature will carry over from services and lead to thought-provoking discussions.

Festivals

Selichot

Saturday 4th September, 9:30pm

You are a prisoner in a concentration camp. One day you are working in the grounds of a hospital and you are removed from your work detail and brought to the bedside of a dying Nazi. He tells you about his crimes, the horrific acts in which he has been involved and he asks for your forgiveness. What do you do? This is what happened to Simon Weisenthal and is recorded in his book *The Sunflower*. He explains what he did and then approached theologians, thinkers and famous people and asked whether or not they felt he had done the right thing. Join us for Selichot and hear what Simon Weisenthal did, what others thought about what he did, and discuss what you would have done. An evening contemplating the themes of repentance and this High Holy Day season. Following the discussion we will join together for our candlelight selichot service, a beautiful entry into the High Holy Days.

Tashlich

Thursday 9 September, 5:00pm

Centennial Park, Model Yacht Pond, access via York St
Come before second night Rosh Hashanah services and symbolically cast your sins into the waters. It is traditional during this period to take crumbs and throw them into the water, representing the casting away of our sins and transgressions. It is a short, lovely service at the water's edge, with some time for your own reflection.

Hoshanah Rabah

Wednesday 29 September, 6:30am

A fun service celebrating the last day of Sukkot and a chance to beat the willow branches from the lulav on the ground and recite the hoshanot one last time.

Sukkot

Wednesday 22 September, 5:30pm Decoration of the sukkah followed by both an adult and children's service at 6:00pm.

Thursday 23 September, 9:00am Join us for services and stay for soup in the sukkah.

Friday 24 September, 9:00am Second day morning service.

Friday 24 September, 6:00pm Join us for a pot luck dinner in the sukkah. Bring along a vegetarian dish to share.

Sunday 26 September A barbecue followed by cinema under the stars

Come and join us in our "Celebrity Sukkah". Add your star to our walk of fame and fulfil the commandment of dwelling in the sukkah. Shake the lulav, smell the beautiful scent of the etrog and celebrate in celebrity style!

Simchat Torah

Join us for the celebration of the Torah where we dance and sing and rejoice that we have completed the Torah reading for one year and are ready to begin again.

Thursday 30 September, 6:00pm come and dance with the Torah and hear the last verses of the Torah being read. It is a joyous and fun celebration for all.

Friday 1 October

9:00am Morning Service

9:30am Childrens service

This is the opportunity to be called to the Torah and weather permitting, the unrolling of the Torah so we can see the entire scroll.

For full details of all High Holy Day Services please see pages 10 - 13 of your What's On guide.