

# LISTENING CAMPAIGN

7 November  
and  
14 November

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# Tell

November 2010 - January 2011  
Cheshvan - Shvat 5771



עמנואל

**emanuel synagogue**

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## Israel: A Holy Nation



While in recent years we have been concerned about the GFC, (Global Financial Crisis), there is a more problematic GFC, the Global Faith Crisis, which impacts not only on our material well-being, but on our human being. This GFC first hit humanity during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, when we began the struggle that continues today as we attempt to define who is God, what is God's realm, what is our relationship to God and our consequent human responsibility. It now is expressed in the pull of fundamentalism with its totalitarianism, and secularism with its atomisation (meaning individualisation and disconnect from each other). How can we maintain individual integrity, the cultural depth of different peoples, and still see ourselves as one humanity interconnected in service to a grander goal?

We, *Am Yisrael*, the people of Israel, the Jews, have a mission: it is to rectify the Global Faith Crisis. We have done so once before, during the first Global Faith Crisis that hit humanity thousands of years ago with the dissolution of idolatrous paganism. In a sense, it was in that first GFC, during the height of paganism when humanity worshipped the idols of wood and stone, gold and silver, that we arose as *Am Yisrael*, with the realisation that there was only one God who created All.

Now we have a new Global Faith Crisis, ironically brought about by us in our monotheistic response to paganism. We expressed our Scripture as the word of God, and all who have followed in our footsteps, Christian and Muslim alike, have taken on that understanding in terms of their own scripture. The competitions among the religions was bitter and severe enough through the Middle Ages, when we all held relatively simplistic but parallel monotheistic beliefs, but something began to shift after the Enlightenment that has now been exacerbated by the events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Enlightenment began to challenge how we understood the nexus between God and Scripture. The Shoah was a unique event among the 20<sup>th</sup> century genocides that made us further question God's relationship with humanity. Finally, the rebirth of Medinat Israel, the State of Israel, has challenged all three monotheistic faiths as to the meaning and significance of the return of *Am Israel* to Medinat Israel.

We, the Jews, having brought the concepts of God, Scripture and Israel to the world stage thousands of years ago, have a special responsibility to help clarify what each of those terms means in our time – not just for us, but for all humanity; thereby, we can continue on our mission as *Am Israel*, *a people called upon in service to God to repair the world within the sovereignty of God*. The primary mission of the Jews remains to serve God, but to do this in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we must look at God from a different perspective.

A fantastic teaching of Torah guides us: "The concealed things are in the realm of God, and the known things are for us and our children to implement the teachings of the Torah". When speaking about God, we must distinguish between speculative faith and empirical knowledge. *The Torah, as I have said and written many times, is not the autobiography of God, but the record of our ancestors' understanding of God*. Accordingly, we do not have to accept everything our ancestors have taught about God as the reality of God. However, there is a continuous thread in our tradition for thousands of years that enables us to accept the existence of God in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The essential name of God in Scripture is a conjugation of the verb "to be". Thus, God is the singular source of Being in the Universe. Our rabbis throughout the years have taught these basic principles of faith about God that are reformulated in the liturgical poems *Yigdal* and *Adon Olam*, sung in our services: God is one, unique, non-corporeal, exists beyond time and space (before the Universe began with the Big Bang and after the universe ceases to exist with the Big Crunch), the creator of all and God alone is to be worshipped (that is, nothing else other than Singular Being may be worshipped).

A person of faith believes that a Creator exists beyond the Big Bang. We know we exist in this Universe, which is about 15 billion years old and extends for trillions of kilometres in its smallest part, expanding since an event in time known as the Big Bang.

I believe that Conscious Being (or Infinite Light, as it is referred to in the Kabbalah) exists beyond the Big Bang. It is something concealed, the great Mystery, as to how we ourselves become conscious beings. For scientists and materialists like Richard Dawkins, nothing exists beyond the known world, and our consciousness is a natural outcome of the development of the brain. Belief in God is a matter of faith, no one knows as a matter of empirical proof;

But whether believer or atheist, the conclusion is surprisingly the same, we are part of a whole. At the core of Jewish teaching about God is that God is One and thus everything is interconnected as God creates and flows through all. If from a scientific perspective, Stephen Hawking is correct and creation began with gravity, then we are still part of the whole. Naturalist John Muir put it this way a century ago: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." (*Stanford Magazine*, July/August 2010 p. 40). *From a point of religion or humanism, we recognise the singular unity of existence, the interconnectivity of life. As Jews, that is what we are called to serve, that is what we mean in general by the service of God. There is a difference between service and worship. Note that we are not to worship anything else but God – or let us say infinite light or conscious being. But we are called upon to serve It. Therefore, as Jews we are obligated to be consciously serving creation and being and light every moment we exist.* Simple as that. This is not about Jews serving Jews, but Jews serving All.

We resolve one aspect of the Global Faith Crisis by declaring that it is practically a matter of semantics whether one

is a person of faith or not; the crucial element is understanding the interconnection of all creation from a single source, whether God or gravity, uniting us in one universe. As Jews, we see it as incumbent upon ourselves to give back to the fount of life from which we come.

The second element of the Global Faith Crisis is more problematic, requiring another leap in human consciousness. If our first GFC was against the idolatry of paganism, this one is against the idolatry of Scripture worship. Monotheism supplanted paganism in all three faiths insisting on the “truth” of its revelation. Post-enlightenment, we must also look at Scripture from a different prism; **it is not the literal word of God or God’s autobiography, but the human attempt to draw down higher consciousness.** Scripture contains deep truth as a path to create meaning in one’s life but it is not necessarily historic or scientific fact.

As the contemporary rabbi, Rami Shapiro in his book *Open Secrets* has written, the Tanakh “is the Jewish people’s diary of its early encounters with God. It is a blend of myth, legend, history, ethics and timeless revelation. It tells us where we came from, and where perhaps we ought to be going, and offers guidance from those who have taken up the journey before us. It is a book whose meanings are as numerous as the people who dare to uncover them.”

I, and many others, agree with Rami’s position that the Bible is the narrative of our ancestors’ encounters with God, and have spoken and written about this extensively. As such, it establishes who we are as Jews: we are a faith people – our collective memory connects us in many events to both God and land. We are more than a faith with attendant religious practices; we are more than a people firmly connected to the land of Israel, the Hebrew language and a way of life; but a faith people – serving God as a nation wherever we are found. *The Tanakh is sacred literature not because “God gave it to us” but because it establishes our narrative of how we wish to serve God. If one wishes to serve Conscious Being in another way, there are billions of opportunities to do so. But if one wishes to serve God as a Jew, then one must know but not worship our narrative.*

One must study the writings of our sages and rabbis, the generations of our ancestors who came after the canonization of the Tanakh (which reflects the teachings of our ancestors from about 2,000 to 4,000 years ago), to see how they transformed the Tanakh into the way of life we know as Judaism. By carefully selecting passages from the Tanakh, the rabbis gave a clear message in the Siddur, the Mahzor (our prayer book at the Yamim Noraim) and in other texts as to what are the core values of the Jews, and how we are meant to live as a faith people. They emphasised the notion of a singular creation and interconnectivity among all; that we must have one standard of justice for stranger and Jew alike; that our care must be for the poor and disadvantaged; that our message is not just for us, but all humanity; that compassion must always accompany justice; and that our overall mission is to “repair the world under the sovereignty of God” (known as Tikkun Olam) and to bring shalom, or peace and wholeness to the world. Judaism is our way of life that guides us to do these things, by conscious living in time (structured by the passing of the day, the Shabbat and New Moon and the festivals with their deeper meaning) and conscious relationship with other human beings, animals and the environment. All this stems from the Tanakh, as understood by our rabbis, right through to this day.

Jews, the first of humanity to bring the concept of One God through Scripture can help resolve this GFC by allowing the understanding of both God and Scripture to evolve, as everything else in life does. That we are called to do so is evident in the incredible events our people have undergone over these last decades, the most momentous in the last 2,000 years of our history, from which we are still psychically reeling and with which we are still coming to terms.

The concept of Israel truly tests us as to what it means to serve God, and in that we must distinguish between “Am Israel” and “Medinat Israel” – the people of Israel and the State of Israel, which do not correlate exactly. Since the destruction of the First Temple nearly 2,600 years ago, more Jews have lived outside the land of Israel than in it, including during the 600 years of the Second Temple period. Since the destruction of the Second Temple, most Jews lived outside the land. It was at this time that the Romans (whose successors would form the Byzantine Empire) changed the name of the land from the Kingdom of Judah (from which we get our name “Jews”) to Palestine, as part of their attempt to eradicate our presence in and connection with the land. Although small numbers of Jews remained from that time to this, many emigrated there after the Arab conquest of Byzantine in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and continued to do so especially after the expulsion from Spain in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. With the rise of Zionism as a political movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (eventually calling for a state of the Jews in the land of the Jews in this era of formation of the nation state), Jews eventually became the majority in the land, and soon more Jews will live in the State of Israel than outside for the first time in 2,600 years.

Yet the State of Israel has a conundrum of its own, for while it is called the “Jewish State”, no one is sure what that means at this time. The growing haredi population (approaching 25% in the decades ahead) does not necessarily accept the State, except for its financial assistance and other benefits. Another 25% of the State’s citizens are Arab Muslims and Christians who are to be accorded equal rights according to Israel’s Declaration of Independence as well as the international accords from the United Nations that partitioned the land between its Arab and Jewish populations in 1947. Of the remaining Israelis, many find themselves alienated from Judaism in the way that it has been manipulated by the Haredi population through their controlling the balance of power in most of Israel’s minority governments. Despite all these complexities of determining the Jewish character of the State of Israel, Medinat Israel remains the unique political entity in which Jews exercise sovereignty, and thus presents us with our biggest challenges as we try to fulfil our mission with the eyes of the world upon us.

In our liturgy, we refer to the formation of the State of Israel as “the beginning of the flowering of our redemption”, that is, our opportunity to fulfil our mission as we have understood it through the centuries. It is perhaps best stated in the Torah in the story of our standing at Sinai and hearing the word of God: “Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep

My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Our narrative teaches us that we are called to be leaders of religious stature – that is our people are called to serve the Creative Consciousness, the Light, God, as we say in the Shema with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our might. We are meant to do this not just as individuals but as a people. The question with which we all must grapple is whether our Jewish state will be a nation state like other nation states, or somehow stand proud as our prophets hoped to be the place from where the teaching of Scripture and the word of God would emanate.

Unfortunately, many Muslims see the State of Israel as an affront to their potential caliphate and thus want it destroyed or turned into another state in the Mideast where Muslims are the majority. Many Christians, on the other hand, see it as the harbinger of the Rapture, when after the Jews have returned to the land God will bring the apocalypse and Jesus will return enthroned as King for all believers in him. Thus, a potential cataclysmic conflict among world faiths has developed out of our return to our land. Israel thus becomes the focal point for the Global Faith Crisis.

It is incredible, given these malevolent forces, what Israel has achieved in its short 62 years of existence. We can look with pride at its incredible achievements – a strong economy, a leader in high technology, a vibrant democracy, and according to a recent study, tied in 8<sup>th</sup> position with Australia as having the best quality of life on the planet. On the other hand, we know that there continues to be problems of corruption in government, religious discrimination, and a quandary of issues regarding the Arab population. We must do everything to educate ourselves and the world as to how we are the indigenous people of the land who have survived thousands of years of exile, while respecting the rights of the other inhabitants long settled there. We must do everything we can to encourage tolerance and to support the possibility of positive outcomes in the nascent peace negotiations, recognising there is not a one to one correspondence between Jews and the State of Israel.

The Global Faith Crisis needs Jews to help resolve it (although we can only do so in coalition with other globally thinking people from different communities). We can only contribute if we learn and live our narrative, which requires us to re-think what we mean by God (not solely defined by Biblical tales, but rather our ancestral wisdom that sees it as the One of which we are all part) and our narrative itself. Our story is sacred in its uniqueness as a narrative calling on a people to serve God: but if we are to live it we must do so in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not in Biblical or Medieval time. If we truly choose to live our story, we must maintain the covenant of service our ancestors established. The terms of the covenant, while far reaching, has a basic precept: all the earth is God’s and all living creatures are part of that interconnected creation. We have a mission to bring justice and compassion, with a sense of humility, in our service to the awesome creative life force. While the story is about “me” and the story is about “us”, it is also about something far more – “all of us”.

We share this earth, and we share humanity’s crisis of faith: from how to relate to God, to Scripture and to ancestral lands. Our story, thousands of years later, continues to unfold in dramatic fashion. The better we know it and live it, the better we will move from a fear based Global Faith Crisis to an illuminated Global Faith Covenant.

*Rabbi Jeffrey B Kamins*

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## Listening Campaign: **Say It On Sunday**

Emanuel Synagogue is going through a period of transition and growth. As part of that, we are beginning a “Listening Campaign”, where we will in various forums listen to each other and get to know each other better.

Recently, members of the Board and staff drafted this as our provisional vision statement:

“Emanuel Synagogue is a dynamic, welcoming congregation, creating community and celebrating diversity. We strive to be a leading religious community by living “Our Shared Values” based on Torah and Jewish tradition. We provide a spiritual home for transformative learning, inspiring prayer and communal gatherings where people are included, embraced and valued. We maintain a deep connection with Israel and world Jewry. We are mindful of our obligation to sustain the environment and heal the world.”

We hope this vision reflects where you want to go with Emanuel, but we want to make sure that Emanuel Synagogue is responding to your needs and concerns, and that you are able to find yourself at home and in community here. During the listening campaign, people from the synagogue will be in touch to set up a meeting,

a gathering of a group of people for us to hear from you, to learn what is important to you, what you are passionate about, what are your challenges, and then to work on ways we can come together to act as a true community, supporting, caring for each other and affecting the world in the most positive way we can. It will take us time to reach everyone, but we will also be having a number of open sessions where we can meet in small groups and share stories and learn from one another.

Please RSVP on 9328 7833 or [info@emanuel.org.au](mailto:info@emanuel.org.au) to come to one of our first two sessions:

Sunday 7 November  
2.00pm for 2.30pm - 4.30 pm

Sunday 14 November  
12.00pm for 12.30pm – 2.30 pm

To find out more visit [www.emanuel.org.au](http://www.emanuel.org.au)

If you cannot make either of those sessions and would like to be listened to soon, please call 9328 7833 and we will be in touch to schedule a conversation as early as practicable.



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# Say It On Sunday

Emanuel Synagogue Listening Campaign

An initiative of Emanuel Synagogue  
to better understand our Community;  
your needs and issues of importance to you.

**Sunday 7 November**  
**2.00pm for 2:30pm - 4:30pm**  
**&**

**Sunday 14 November**  
**12.00pm for 12:30pm - 2:30pm**

**More on [www.emanuel.org.au](http://www.emanuel.org.au)**  
**RSVP essential by 1 November**  
**Contact: 9328 7833**  
**Email: [info@emanuel.org.au](mailto:info@emanuel.org.au)**  
**Emanuel Synagogue**  
**7 Ocean Street, Woollahra**





Recently I rediscovered a wonderful book that I have sitting on my bookshelf. It is a picture book called "The Flower Man." The only words are on the first page. It says "My Granpa always said "everyone's gotta story, you jus gotta find out what it is." Below the words, is a black and white picture of a man sitting alone in his bathtub beside the window, watching tv. He is droopy and sad, fed up with life and the world in which he finds himself. On the next page, the scene widens out and we see the street on which the man lives, it is entirely black and white except for someone crossing the bridge with a dog. He is bathed in light and colour as he makes his way into the neighbourhood, he is the flower man.

The next few pages show the flower man buying an old run down home and starting to fix it up; he mows the lawn, plants flowers, repairs and paints the house. And all the while, we see inside the windows of the houses of the street. In one, an artist sits alone, dejected, unable to lift his brush, in another a woman, sadly pats her cat, an old man sits outside his shop, looking at the ground, couples are fighting, children misbehaving, a man is crying alone at the fountain. It is a scene filled with loneliness and sorrow. But slowly, the flower man brings colour and light to their world. He gives a flower to a young girl. Suddenly she is bathed in colour, she smiles, she feels acknowledged, loved. She smiles at the old man as she passes by his shop, she hands him a flower. He smiles back, feeling noticed and appreciated. They start to talk.

As the book progresses, more and more people find flowers, they find colour and they find connection.

The artist begins to paint on the street, the old man takes the children to the roof of his building and they look through his telescope at the wonder of the sky, the heartbroken man is joined at the fountain by the lonely woman, they dip their feet in the water together and smile, the young man with the broken leg is being wheeled in his wheelchair by the local children, the children are playing on the street together, people are talking and colour fills the world of the street, all because the flower man took the time to hear their stories and to create community. Everyone's gotta story you jus' gotta find out what it is.

But how often do we take the time to hear the stories, to listen, to really know one another? If we looked at our congregation in the pages of a picture book, what would we see? Would it be the coloured, vibrant pages at the end of the Flower Man, filled with love, connections and belonging, or would it be the black and white of the opening pages?

I fear that sometimes our congregation can be a mirror of the world in which we live, a place of loneliness and separation, people encountering one another, sitting beside one another, yet not really connecting, not really taking the time to know one another. Our lives are increasingly lived behind walls, cocooned in our own worlds, not meeting, not talking. Just the other day I went to the movies with Adam and I saw a row of young men and women, all together waiting for the movie to begin. Each one had their phone in their hand and they were texting or talking or playing a game. Every now and then one of them would lean across and show someone else what they had on their screen but essentially they were together physically, but emotionally completely in their own space. I remember going to the movies with my friends and the time before and afterwards was almost as good as the movie itself. It was the place where we caught up with the news, we talked and we listened to each other's stories. But that does not happen anymore, instead we are absorbed in a world of screens, phones, constant contact and availability with very little true connection. And I believe we are beginning to feel the loss of true human contact, of really knowing one another.

I was speaking with someone on Yom Kippur who was lamenting the fact that we no longer know our neighbours. We live alongside these people, we see them every day and yet we know so little about each other. I grew up in a house where I lived until I moved out of home. My parents still live there, 44 years after they moved in. They used to know everyone in the neighbourhood, they shared each other's lives. My Mum met our next door neighbour one of her first days in the street. They were both newly married and our neighbour had gotten her new husband's shirt stuck in the washing machine and she could not get it out. That day, as the two women struggled with the shirt and the machine, a friendship was forged with ties which became stronger than family. They shared with one another the ups and downs of their lives, from the joys of children being born, milestones celebrated, to the losses of parents, the struggles of life, they even sheltered together with their children when a gunman was on the run in our neighbourhood, but that is a story for another day. But these two people, who had no reason to encounter one another other than the fact that they happened to buy houses next door, became friends, supports and so much more. But how many of us even know the people we live alongside? How many of us have the time to get to know our neighbours? How many of us are missing the most incredible opportunities to add richness and beauty to our lives?

Connections do not have to be so deep, the links we create between ourselves and others do not have to lead to the kind of friendship my mother had with Mrs. Foster. In fact, in a wonderful book I referred to at Yom Kippur called Consequential Strangers, the authors look at "the relationships that don't seem to matter, but really do" and they discovered that all of us have people in our lives they would term consequential strangers, people you know or see in certain contexts, you may know a little about them and they about you, but their presence in our lives can give us certainty, grounding, fulfilment and a sense of belonging, and according to some of the research, they can even be a factor helping us to live longer, happier lives. So who are these consequential strangers? They are people we encounter every day who make our lives a little less lonely. It could be the person you see every day at the park when you go to walk your dog, the server at the local coffee shop who knows your order without you telling them, and while they make your coffee you chat. They could be the person

in the same gym class as you, the one you start off smiling at, then you have a conversation before you start the class, and after some time maybe you even have coffee together afterwards. A woman spoke about always arriving early to her yoga class just so she could chat with one of the other women taking the class, she did not know her last name, but she knew about her ill mother and how hard it was to care for her, she knew about her son and his decision to leave school and do an apprenticeship and in turn, her gym friend knew of her struggles and joys. A few moments a week, shared stories and a connection is made.

I have a wonderful person like that in my life, her name is Marie. I always do my supermarket shopping on Monday, my day off and usually at the same time of day and I have a favourite check out person, Marie. Every week I see her and line up at her check out, even if it is a longer line. Marie is very efficient and fast so I know I will get to the front quickly, but more than that, Marie knows me. She says hello, comments that I have more or less shopping than usual, asks how things are. And it makes a difference. A few weeks ago, Marie went on holidays. It was very distressing, I missed her, shopping was not the same. I did not leave the supermarket with the same good feeling as I did when she was there. Now, Marie and I see each other once a week for a total of 7-10 minutes, depending on how much shopping I have, she knows nothing about me, yet she actually knows a lot. We talk for those ten minutes about what is happening, I share things with her, she with me and then I go, always with a smile on my face and a spring in my step. And we all have Maries in our lives, people who make things a little less lonely and make us feel valued and appreciated; consequential strangers, people who don't seem to matter but actually do.

Our congregation is filled with potential consequential strangers, a group of people who could really matter to each other. Every time we come to the synagogue there is an opportunity to connect with another person, to make a link, to be special in their lives and they in yours. I don't expect us all to become life long friends with one another, but wouldn't it be incredible if every time we came to synagogue someone greeted us, someone asked about us, someone took the time to hear our story? And each of us has the power to do that for someone else, to make them feel cared for, appreciated and less alone in the world. But to make it happen we all need to have courage, the strength to push beyond our shyness, our reticence, our cocoons, and to reach out to one another and just talk. To say hello and find out something about the person sitting next to us in the class or the person sitting by themselves in the synagogue, or the person who is standing beside us at the table during Kiddush. A few words, a smile, a connection can make all the difference to someone's day, their life, and all of us can give that gift and hopefully all of us can receive it too. I would love our congregation to be known as the one in Sydney where you can't be anonymous, you can't be alone, because everyone greets and welcomes you when you step over the doorstep. But more than that, I would love our congregation to be a place where everyone can tell their stories, share what is happening in their lives and we can support, care for and be there for one another through all the moments of life. That is what it is to be a community, to be a holy place.

In our striving to create a holy community, a place where we hear and know each other, we would like to make a commitment to you. During the coming year we want to hear your stories, we want to learn more about each and every one of you, so we are going to be conducting a listening campaign. People from the synagogue will be in touch to set up a meeting, a gathering of a group of people for us to hear from you, what is important, what you are passionate about, what are your challenges, and then to work on ways we can come together to act as a true community, supporting, caring for each other and affecting the world in the most positive, beautiful ways we can. It will take us time to reach everyone, but we are also having a number of open sessions where we can meet in small groups and share stories and learn from one another. There are two open sessions planned. The first is on Sunday November 7<sup>th</sup> from 2:30pm - 4:30pm and the second on Sunday November 14<sup>th</sup> from 12:30pm - 2:30pm. If you are able or would like to join us for one of those dates, please call the office to book. There will be more about the campaign during the months ahead and I hope that we can through this and also just by being aware and taking time to talk with one another, that we can create the most incredible synagogue in the world. I am so excited about this opportunity to transform our synagogue and become an even more caring, welcoming place. Let's start hearing our stories and who knows what transformation can happen.

(for more on this topic have a look at my kol nidrei sermon on the web: [www.emanuel.org.au](http://www.emanuel.org.au))

*Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio*



**Are you looking for ways  
to help your community?**

**Have some spare time?**

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to have you as part of our  
wonderful volunteer team.**

**Ph. 9328 7833**

## To Push or Not to Push: Is That the Question?



On a recent Shabbat afternoon, I took Hannah for a walk in her pram. Dressed in a baseball cap and sunglasses, a white T-shirt, shorts, and sneakers, I clearly looked the part of “Dad spending an afternoon with his baby daughter.” In my dressed-down state, with a baseball cap on instead of a kippah, there was nothing in my casual attire which would have suggested that I was Jewish, let alone a rabbi.

As Hannah and I reached the conclusion of our walk, we came to an intersection and traffic light. Waiting beside the light was a woman, clearly Orthodox (at least what I perceived to be) in her appearance. She wore a fashionable hat on her head, and even in the warmth of that early spring day, was covered completely from head to toe, in a rather modest-looking long-sleeved shirt and long dress. We were the only two people waiting for the light to change at this busy intersection.

I found myself faced with a niggling religious dilemma. I needed to cross the intersection with Hannah in her pram (I didn’t want to have to dodge approaching cars while doing so) and I could not guarantee that anyone would come along and push the button for the traffic light to change. I certainly could not expect, nor could I ask the Orthodox woman beside me to push the button for the traffic light; for her, such an action would be considered chillul Shabbat, a desecration of the Sabbath. Upon further consideration, I, as a Jew, could not knowingly push the button for the traffic light to change, because as I was standing beside someone who was quite clearly, an observant Jew, I would be “breaking the Sabbath” in order to enable both of us to cross the street.

Part of me feels, upon further reflection, that if this is the greatest religious dilemma that I ever have to face in my life, then nearly everything in my life must truly be okay. Fortunately, the problem I have explained above resolved itself in the matter of the next thirty seconds or so, as someone on the opposite side of the street approached the light, and pushed the button so that the traffic light would change. I did not have to “break Shabbat” either for myself or the Orthodox woman beside me.

Let’s say for the purpose of this article and for the discussion at hand, that someone did not appear either on our side or the opposite side of the street. One school of thought might suggest that both of us standing at such an intersection would simply need to be patient and wait until either a break in the traffic occurred or someone did appear to push the button for us. But another school of thought yells from within the deepest recesses of my mind and cries out kicking and screaming, “Do you actually think that God cares?”

I assure you – I am not presently going through a crisis of faith. I will simply admit that, even as a rabbi, I have my doubts and my scepticisms, and I too have questions that I wrestle with. I often think – it’s just a button, it’s just an electrical circuit, it’s just creating an access so that my daughter, this other Orthodox woman, and myself can safely cross the street. The ancient rabbis didn’t have traffic lights when they wrote the Mishnah and the Talmud. Maimonides in the twelfth century lived much closer to shul than we necessarily do, so he easily walked, but trying to get to Woollahra from Lindfield or Westmead is impossible unless some form of public or personal (mechanical) transportation is used. Surely, many of my Orthodox friends and colleagues would say, “Daven at home,” or would say “Live closer to the synagogue.” For them, and for the Orthodox woman at the traffic light, the “button” is absolutely, emphatically a “no-go zone.” Black-and-white, plain-and-simple, to observe the Sabbath, one does not touch electrical circuits, or traffic light buttons, or anything of the sort.

Having religious conversation, especially when such disparate viewpoints exist (notice I offer the word “disparate” and not “correct” or “incorrect” viewpoints) is a difficult undertaking. These days, we spend so much time involved in interfaith dialogue, trying to understand the religious practises of people of other faiths, and not a great amount of time participating in intra-faith dialogue, working to analyse the similarities and differences with various streams of Jewish life. I wonder if such a task is truly too difficult to undertake because it is so rife with sensitivity, and it is so seemingly inappropriate to criticise one another’s level of religious practise or one another’s understanding of how God is present in our lives. We know that there is more than one way to be Jewish and to live a Jewish life filled with meaning.

I would never think of directly addressing one of my observant Jewish friends and asking them the question with which I openly wrestle in this article. Most of the time, I truly believe in my heart that God cares deeply about what we do in the world, that God cares about our actions, our feelings, our reactions to and interactions with one another. But I do often wonder if there is a limit, specifically when we get down to the nitty-gritty fine-toothed-comb details of religious life about how much God cares, and whether God is much more concerned with seeing the forest, instead of seeing the trees.

A few months ago Israeli newspaper Yedidot Acharonot published an opinion piece on the unfortunate tale of a father in Netanya who murdered his three children. A neighbour, a religious woman, claims to have heard one of the children screaming, “Dad, let go of me!” but did nothing to act and did not contact anyone because she was a religious woman who wouldn’t touch anything on Shabbat. Uri Misgav comments:

Instead of taking up the challenge and focusing on boosting Judaism’s moral aspect, the religious mainstream turned to obsessive preoccupation with the ‘do’s and don’t do’s” of daily life. For hundreds of years now, the finest rabbis and students have been engaging in strict interpretation of mitzvahs [sic] and prohibitions, depreciating Judaism to a shallow ritual of hollow, trivial discussions that often appear to be sheer madness to outside observers....Most of the contemporary religious leadership...does nothing in order to bring this reckless train back to the tracks of sanity and logic. The opposite is true: They cooperate. It’s apparently convenient for them – the more ignorant the masses are, the easier it is to control and manipulate them.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of Jewish life, if we lose sight of the most basic principles of Jewish life – respect and regard for the entirety of God’s creation, then we have truly missed the mark. In this day and age, if we are reading about fathers murdering children, and people simply standing idly by while their neighbours bleed, all in the name of religion, I have to think to myself (and out loud in this column) that this is not what God wants of us. Mitzvoth and ritual performance in Jewish life are designed to enhance meaning in our lives, not to be used as a stepping stone to criticise the practise of others, or cause irreversible detriment to one or another’s life.

And yet my questions still remain. Do I push the button or not? I realise now that this conversation, this question, is not at all about a button at a traffic light. By asking such questions about ritual observance and the impact of such observance in our lives and on God, I am pushing many different emotional and religious buttons. Maybe it is important for us to start having this conversation – not just at traffic lights, but in all areas of our lives. Where does ritual impact our lives positively? Can ritual life cause detriment and harm, and if so, how?

I invite each of you to this challenging conversation and offer hope that each of us, seeking to grow as Jews, may tread respectfully and sensitively, and be open to one another’s viewpoints, as we seek to exist together within the bounds of sacred community.

Rabbi Paul J Jacobson


<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3927834,00.html>

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## Do Jewish Men Really Do That? Domestic Violence in the Jewish Community

We all want to believe that domestic violence happens only to others, not people who live near us, or sit with us in shule. "Shalom bayit," (peace in the home) is a central idea in Judaism, but unfortunately is not a reality in some homes. Domestic violence can be found in every kind of Jewish home and occurs in Jewish families at about the same rate as it does in other religions. (Jewish Community Federation, SF, 2004)

Domestic abuse is about one partner exerting power and control over another. It can be as subtle as a pattern of unkind words and name calling and can escalate to physical violence. Domestic abuse comes in many forms including emotional and spiritual abuse, financial control, social isolation, threats and physical and sexual violence. Abuse affects children whether or not they themselves are the target.

This year, we have been once again invited to participate in JewishCare's White Ribbon Day campaign, a national campaign, founded by the United Nations against domestic violence. Wearing a White Ribbon is a personal pledge that the wearer does not condone violence against women and is committed to supporting community action to stop violence. JewishCare has approached all the Sydney synagogues to participate to make a united stance against domestic violence. You will notice towards the end of

November that some of us will be wearing a White Ribbon to show our support for this campaign.

We will also distribute domestic violence brochures in key areas of the synagogue. They contain vital information for a person seeking help if dealing with domestic abuse.

JewishCare also provides specialist casework and counselling services for people and families who are experiencing any form of family and domestic abuse. We believe that it is important to stand up against domestic violence and also to get help when people are in this kind of situation and encourage you to tell your friends if you know of anyone needing this support.

For further information or support, please phone JewishCare on 9302 8034 or First Call 1300 133 660.



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## From our Executive Director

*Cheshvan*, the month following *Tishrei* on the modern Jewish calendar, has become known as *Mar Cheshvan*. The prefix *Mar*, which means bitter, is a reference to this month having no festivals or rejoicing. For synagogue professionals, it is therefore a quiet month, conducive to debriefing the High Holydays of the previous month and planning for the busy year ahead. Our High Holydays, by all accounts went remarkably well. All three *minyanim* experienced record numbers of worshippers, who found the services meaningful, the sermons inspiring and the fellowship with others comforting and uplifting. Looking forward, we are not only planning next year's programs and working on the synagogue's strategic plan for the future, but implementing the listening campaign about which the rabbis began speaking over the holydays. Last, but far from least, we continue to plan the redevelopment of our campus.

As in the past, when we called on our members to support our Mazon (Oz Harvest) food drive and annual Kol Nidre Appeal you responded generously. To date, we have collected 520 kilos of food and over 300 families have participated in the Appeal. People continue to drop off bags of food and donations to the appeal arrive daily. Because our goal remains 100% participation, we will keep the campaign open until the end of the year. It is not too late, therefore, to return your Kol Nidre envelope with as generous a gift as you are able. Your gift helps us

provide funds to needy members of our congregation, and support the delivery of educational and religious services and our efforts to increase in number and diversity.

With all best wishes for a fulfilling year,

Allan H. Glazerman  
Executive Director

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## Start Of A New Era For Australia, New Zealand, Asia & South Africa

This Shabbat sees historic events taking place as congregations across the region start to use the first-ever Siddur produced specifically for the Southern Hemisphere. "Mishkan T'filah- World Union edition is based on the American edition but includes numerous prayers especially focused on the seasons in which we experience the festivals and also includes numerous poems and writings by local authors," says Executive Director of the Union for Progressive Judaism, Steve Denenberg "It will be an important part of our prayers and religious celebrations for many years to come."

The search for a new Siddur to replace the long-serving Gates of Prayer was initiated by the Victorian rabbis of the Moetzah (the Rabbinic Council of Progressive Judaism) and they examined all of the Siddurim around the world. After a thorough search they decided that the richness of Mishkan T'filah made it the perfect choice. After receiving permission from the publishers, the Central Conference of American Rabbis a committee led by leading communal worker, Philip Mayers, was established to oversee the adaptation process.

The editorial committee, led by Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black, painstakingly worked through the entire Siddur to include local content of relevance; to ensure that the egalitarian and pluralistic essence of our Progressive Judaism is reflected; and also to provide a transliteration that is easier to follow and read, making participation in prayers more accessible for non-Hebrew speakers.

At that time the project was handed to the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ) for completion and implementation. "The wonderful work of the initial group



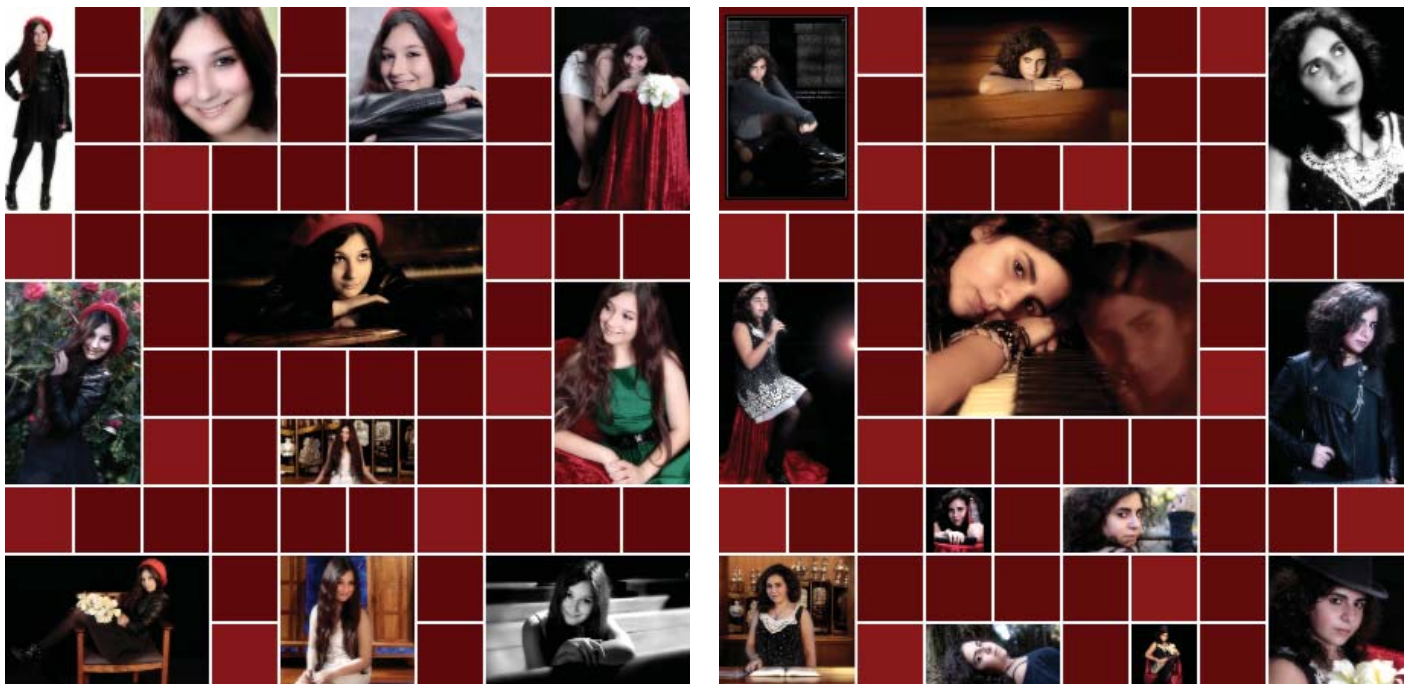
was then complemented by a number of dedicated volunteers who got us through the exhausting process of production, shipping and distribution," said Denenberg, "It has also been a great bonus that we have been able to do this project in partnership with the South African Union for Progressive Judaism and we look forward to their President, Steve Lurie, joining us for the formal launch in November."

Mishkan T'filah will be introduced into the congregations across the region over the coming weeks and will be formally launched at a Gala dinner at Parliament House during the UPJ biennial conference on November 25.

***Mishkan T'filah is available now from the synagogue office for \$55. Contact 9328 7833***

## Emanuel Idol Photoshoot Winners

Take a look out our second place winners from Emanuel Idol! These were presented to them by Zorro Gamarnik. Victoria Blomberger and Imbar Nassi were joint winners of the second prize of a photography session with Zorro.



## A Lesson From History

*'The world is too dangerous to live in – not because of the people who do evil, but because of the people who sit and let it happen.'* Albert Einstein

We are living in a time where there is a trend, both deliberate and inadvertent, to delegitimize Israel, and by extension, the Jewish people. The director Oliver Stone makes insane announcements about how Hitler killed more Russians than Jews, but that the Jews got all the attention because they dominate the news media and that the Jewish lobby controls Washington. Veteran White House reporter Helen Thomas and CNN anchor Rick Sanchez are both removed from their jobs because of anti Semitic comments and Turkey's prime minister tells Israel's president, "When it comes to killing, you know very well how to kill."

Let's learn from history:-

In 1964, On March 13, at around 3:30am, there was a murder in the Kew Gardens section of Queens, New York.

It was very late, very cold, and very dark when 28-year-old Catherine "Kitty" Genovese, an African American and new to the city, parked her car at the Kew Gardens train station after work. When she got out of her car, she saw a stranger walking toward her. The man stabbed Genovese twice as she hurried past a bookstore looking for assistance. She called out, "Oh my God. He stabbed me. Please help me," and fell to the ground. Her attacker was leaning over her to stab her again, when he heard a man's voice calling from a window in an apartment building across the street, "Leave that girl alone!"

Startled, he ran down an alley, got into his car ready to drive off. Lights had gone on in the nearby apartment building, but they went off again. He got out of the car and again followed Genovese, who had reached the doorway of her apartment building. As she fell forward through the

doorway, crying out, "I'm dying, I'm dying," the attacker caught up with her, stabbed her again, and then raped her. A short time later, a neighbour, Greta Schwartz, who had called the police after receiving a phone call from another neighbour, ran down to the lobby and cradled Kitty in her lap until the paramedics arrived.

From interviews in the neighborhoods of the two stabbing incidents, police learned that as many as 37 people had seen or heard part of the stalking and murder of Kitty Genovese, but supposedly none of them had called the police except Greta Schwartz.

But – how does this 46 year old murder impact us?

In Judaism, the bystander is obligated to come to the rescue of his fellow man who is in peril. Jewish law requires us to intervene so long as we can do so without putting ourselves at risk. "Do not stand by while your neighbour's blood is shed," says Leviticus 19:16.

It takes so little effort to get to know those who are from a different culture to ourselves. We live so closely together, our lives are so intertwined socially, economically and politically, we spend years studying together in schools and universities and yet still manage to be largely ignorant of one another. What we learn reinforces stereotypes, gossip, rumour and fear. What we learn also leads to comments similar to those made by Oliver Stone and others.

Holocaust survivor Eli Wiesel summed this up, "What you do today may change lives tomorrow...The present matters. The present is a bridge" to the future as well as the past" Wiesel concluded, "What is Judaism without an attitude toward time?"

*Sandy Hollis, Director of Education*



### UPJ Biennial Conference "Celebrating the Journey" 25 - 28 November 2010, Canberra

In celebration of the 80th anniversary of Progressive Judaism in our region, the Union for Progressive Judaism will hold it's Biennial Conference in Canberra from Thursday 25 November - Sunday 28 November. Pre-registration is strongly recommended to ensure your space.

Please indicate your interest by emailing Jocelyn at [jocelyn.upj@gmail.com](mailto:jocelyn.upj@gmail.com)

## SALE OF PAINTINGS TO FUND CHILDREN IN NEED

Artist, Giselle Tova Antmann, is selling her paintings to support registered childrens' charities building schools and orphanages. Colourful, abstracted Australian landscapes can be bought direct from the artist with no gallery commission. Originals not prints.

Giselle is included in private and public collections here and the UK.

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[www.giselleantmann.com.au](http://www.giselleantmann.com.au)

## From the Board

### High Holy Days

The focus of the shul's activities over the past few months has been the High Holydays. The board wishes to thank the staff and volunteers for all their efforts in making the three services and associated activities such a success. In particular we acknowledge:

- The rabbis for the conduct of the services and sermons, as well as their day to day dedication to our community. They are the best, anywhere, no question.
- Our visiting musical leaders, Simon Lobelson who came to us direct from his opera career in London, and Martine Yaffe, who we hope might be in a position to join us on a more permanent basis in the future, having completed his studies overseas and who is weighing up his options. We know he enjoyed his time here, including good Aussie hospitality, even including seeing the most exciting game of Rugby league in decades.
- Our choirs, led by Andrea Catzel
- Our administrative staff, lead by Allan, who seamlessly organised tickets, membership, collections, building and maintenance issues and a myriad of other behind the scenes tasks
- Our "meeters and greeters" who do such a nice job in providing a welcoming atmosphere
- The communal volunteer security detail (CSG), who have a thankless job and do it with dedication
- All who responded to our Kol Nidre appeal.

This year we decided to discontinue the sale of casual tickets to those who prefer to attend our annual services year after year and not join as members. As a result we had some unhappy people, but we are glad to be able to welcome many new members. We continue our policy of providing financial subsidies to those in need. We urge anyone on subsidy who can afford to pay more, to do so, and we recognise that decision as a mitzvah that helps pay for the activities and services we provide, including the payment of salaries to the rabbis and others who will assist anyone in need, regardless of financial or social status, or often, even if they are not a member at all.

### Redevelopment

As you will probably know, we have DA approval for an ambitious building programme. Since the approval was sought, Temple Properties has acquired the adjacent 11 Ocean St house. Also, the global financial crisis has hit many members and potential supporters. The board will not commit to any major expenditure until such a programme is properly funded.

We look forward to engaging members in the process of discussion and planning, leading to the launch of the necessary fundraising to make the dream a reality. An initial step is to retain professional fund raising assistance. Another is to discuss with our professional building advisers the ideal order to stage the works. Also, we are actively looking at the installation of new seating in the main sanctuary and have had several options presented to us. We will keep everyone informed. What we ultimately decide to do will be informed to a great extent by the two other activities mentioned below. We certainly hope we could raise the necessary funds to start some building works within 12 months. What we do will largely depend on your response.

### Listening Campaign

The synagogue is embarking on a "Listening Campaign", to understand what is important to our members and how and what makes you want to be involved and make a difference. Organised by Sydney Alliance, of which the Jewish Board of Deputies is a partner, it will also allow opportunities to engage with like minded organisations all over Sydney, including Trade Unions, Churches and other community organisations. Many board members, staff and other members of Emanuel have participated in training courses.

### Strategic Review

The board has also embarked on a broad strategic review of the synagogue's activities. There are 5 key areas of those activities – they are: a house of prayer, a house of knowledge and education, a social hub, as spokesperson for and about Israel and World Jewry, and works and advocacy in connection with social justice. We are in the process of preparing a document which will outline the aims and activities relevant to each area. Again, we propose to consult the members in the formulation and finalisation of the plan.

### Other

The board and staff continue the ongoing process of management and leadership. We will shortly be preparing a budget for 2011. We continue an involvement in the life of the kindergarten and Emanuel School. Some of us attended leadership training for not for profit board members. Others continue to represent the synagogue on community organisations such as the Board of Deputies.

We have plans to seek to engage a Young Adult Director in conjunction with other organisations.

We have heard presentations from Rabbis and Staff about their roles and plans for the future. The music for regular services is a major area on the agenda for change and improvement in the short term. The rabbis also wish to introduce a weekly second Friday night service, so both Progressive and Masorti styles are catered for.

The staff have organised many programmes eg the health breakfast programme, book club, wedding and bar mitzvah expo, Emanuel Idol and ongoing education programmes. The shul continues to be very active.

We welcome members' involvement in any activities that might be of interest.

*Rodney Brender*



**Name:** Robyn Grosz  
**School:** Emanuel  
**Hobbies:** Swimming, surfing, horseriding, physical culture  
**Pets:** Dog - Toto, Cats - Jemima and Truly  
**Dislikes:** Being called 'Bob'

Ever since I was 5 I've wanted to work with dolphins. I don't know if it will happen but who knows? I really enjoy swimming competitively and I'm hoping to gain a spot in the Aussie Swim Team at the next Maccabiah Games in Israel for 2013. Some people think I'm weird

because I really like school and I don't hate any subjects - they're all great. I guess I do love maths and science, but then I also love drama, art and music too. My biggest obsession - I LOVE PIE!! Any kind, anywhere, anytime. I'm a student volunteer at the Montefiore Homes. I go with my sister and help my nana in the boutiques at Randwick and Hunters Hill, and I also help take people from their rooms to wherever they want to go. It is important to care for our elderly community.

My teacher Aviva was great and I felt very comfortable learning with her. Rabbi Jacobson has a great sense of humour - it certainly helps when you feel nervous, I do really want to thank Rabbi Ninio for stepping in and helping me with my d'var torah when I got a bit stuck - that was awesome.



photography by ingrid.ingshak@bigpond.net.au  
0416000153

**Name:** Mikki Liling  
**School:** Emanuel  
**Hobbies:** Singing, acting, netball, swimming, guitar  
**Pets:** 2 Golden Retrievers - Cooper and Chelsea  
**Dislikes:** Justin Beiber  
**TV shows:** Glee, Modern Family, Good Luck Charlie, Gossip Girl  
**Favourite artists:** Bon Jovi, Selena Gomez, B.O.B  
**Favourite Subjects:** English, music and sports

**Dislikes:** Intolerant people

I want to be an actress (I like being the centre of attention). I loved doing the school play last year. I play netball for Maccabi (Goal attack). I am a supporter of Chelsea Football Club. I named my dog after them. I have been sponsoring a child in Zambia since I was 10.

I really liked the time I spent with Rabbi Ninio and my teacher Irit. During this year I learnt more about my Sabba Misi's life during WW2. He was so young and so brave! I wish he could have been here to share my Bat Mitzvah.



**Name:** Micayla Laurence  
**School:** Emanuel  
**Hobbies:** Playing music, reading, designing clothes  
**Pets:** 2 dogs - Bonjo and Kayleigh, 2 mice - Bolt and Mickey Mouse  
**Dislikes:** Spiders

My favourite TV show is 'True Jackson VP' on Nick. It's about a young fashion designer and that's what I want to do in the future. I do drama at NIDA, play piano and guitar, do

capoeira (brazilian martial art) and dancing. My favourite school subjects are music, art, drama and Design and Technology. I love music but I don't like the singers Justin Bieber or Cody Simpson.

I have been involved in charity work. I have participated in RSPCA and whenever I see the guide dog I always put change in the dog. I also have helped at Monika's Doggie Rescue which my money from the Mitzvah Project is going to.

I will never forget the long hours I had trying to learn my part, and the many times Irit and I spent talking about Robert Pattinson and Twilight.



**Name:** Joshua Zwi  
**School:** Emanuel  
**Pets:** 1 dog, 1 cat and 2 tropical fish  
**Dislikes:** Homework

My hobbies include playing drums with my band, swimming and hanging out with my friends. I love the Simpsons because it's so clever and funny. I don't really have a plan for the future however I'd love to be a chef.

Me and my family sponsor many children through World Vision. I participated in the Mitzvah Project and often give money to charity. After my Bar Mitzvah I plan to work for a bit at an animal shelter.

I think what I'll remember most is the hours of preparation for my Bar Mitzvah. I'm sure I will also have lots of fond memories of the actual occasion.

## Tradition Today: Opening the Gates

Everything in Israel comes to a halt and has to wait until “after the holydays.” Well, today is “after the holydays” and the normal grind of living begins again. Unfortunately one of the things that will be resumed is the struggle concerning the Rotem bill which was put on the back burner while we first repented and then celebrated. There is much to repent for in the Rotem bill and little to celebrate.

The bill is schizophrenic. According to MK David Rotem, and I do not question his sincerity, the subject of the bill is the easing of conversion for thousands of non-Jewish Russians. But according to others, including Sephardi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, the subject is the strengthening of the Chief Rabbinate and the exclusion of non-Orthodox religious movements not only from conversion in Israel but from existence here at all.

Rabbi Amar is quoted as having written, “Those who call themselves liberals and reformers” have brought us to “our spiritual low point,” in which violence is rampant, immodesty is acceptable and assimilation is at a high even in Israel. “They now have their claws in the nation of Zion and are trying to impose the lifestyle of other nations on us. [Their] purpose is to remove Torah from Israel.”

Is there anything wrong in Israel and Judaism for which we are not responsible? Is it any wonder that these movements oppose this bill? It should be made clear that the opposition is not to the easing of conversion, but only to the strengthening of the Chief Rabbinate and the exclusion of other movements. Divest the bill of those dangerous features and there would be no opposition.

As a matter of fact, if Rabbi Amar is so interested in encouraging the conversion of these non-Jewish Russians, why does he not do something about it himself? Has he no power over the way the Israeli rabbinate now converts? Could he not appoint more understanding courts than now exist and instruct the dayanim to observe the true halachic laws of conversion instead of the severe regulations they now use that have absolutely no basis in Jewish law? There would be no need for the Rotem bill or any other if the Chief Rabbinate and its courts were to act properly and show a real interest in solving the terrible situation that they themselves have created.

As for the attempt to portray these streams as the destroyers of the Jewish people and a foreign import, there is nothing new in these libels. Yet many Orthodox rabbis themselves have admitted that these movements – even if they disagree with them – have played and do play an important role in the preservation of the Jewish people. Without them we would be in greater peril than now. As for being imports, what is not an import in Israel? Was not Chabad imported from Brooklyn? Where do the other various hassidic groups come from? And what about the “Lithuanians” among the haredim? To say nothing of the influence of Moroccan Jewry here. The question is not where it originated but what value it has.

I can only speak for my own movement, Masorti. Our organizational roots are in Europe, where our founder, Rabbi Zachariah Frankel, left the early Reform movement because he felt it had abandoned Hebrew, love of Zion and the nationethnic components of Judaism as well as too many of the “ritual” observances. Its aim was not to destroy Judaism, but to preserve it which is why it adopted the name “Conservative” in America and later Masorti (traditional) in Israel and the rest of the world. Its attitude toward Reform was best summarized by Solomon Schechter when he called it “His Majesty’s loyal opposition.”

I do not expect the chief rabbi to admit it, but the best thing that could happen to Judaism in Israel would be for the various Jewish movements to flourish and thereby strengthen religious affiliation. All too many Israelis are still in the outmoded mind-set that if they cannot believe in one of the variations of Orthodoxy, then they must reject the Jewish religion and live a totally secular life. Unfortunately too many representatives of Orthodoxy have encouraged this attitude. The result is ignorance of Judaism and a decline in observance among those who are not Orthodox.

There is nothing better for business than competition. There would be nothing better for Judaism than the free market of ideas and competition among the streams. There is room for all. Let the playing field be made level. Deprive the Chief Rabbinate of its monopoly and see what would happen.

Israel is a modern, democratic nation. It cannot afford to remain in the dark ages when it comes to religion, imposing one version of Judaism as the only one. It must open the gates if it wants to remain truly democratic and, more importantly, if it wants Judaism in all its wonderful variety to flourish in the only Jewish state we have.

Reuven Hammer is the head of the Rabbinical Court of the Masorti Movement and the author of several books, the most recent being *Entering Torah*.

*Reuven Hammer*



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## Report From Director Of Membership Services

"If I am only for myself, then what am I? If I am not for myself the who will be for me? If not now, when?"

*Ethics of the Fathers Chapter 1 verse 14.*

The spirit of volunteerism:

During the preparations for the Yamim Noraim, we had a very successful Cleaning Bee where a group of volunteers cleaned and polished all the Torah silverware.

The Torah covers were changed to the white ones we use for this time of the year and the benches were given a good polish.



At the same time we had volunteers in the kitchen baking honey cakes for Rosh Hashanah as well as biscuits and slices for kiddushim in the Sukkah.

Our volunteers all commented on how good it felt to be able to do something tangible for their synagogue. I encourage anyone else who has not yet volunteered, to contact me and let me know they type of activity they would like to become involved with.

Our "Meet and Greet" volunteers continue to provide a wonderful service by being here on Friday nights and Saturday mornings to greet congregants, hand them a book and welcome them into our community.

Once again we are looking to increase this group of congregants and would welcome some additional volunteers. We also have a group of volunteers who assisted us during our very busy period leading up to the High Holydays with office work such as mail outs, ticketing for the High Holydays and set up of the seats and other preparations in the main sanctuary. We are very grateful to all of our volunteers who come forward and give their time for various tasks.

New members BBQ in the Sukkah:

This year we invited the congregation in general and the new members who have joined our congregation since Shavuot in particular, to join us for a BBQ in the sukkah. This was followed by a screening of "Ushpitzin" – under the stars in the sukkah. This was a very good function as it allowed the new members to mingle with long standing members and chat with members of staff, the Rabbis and members of the Board.

Mazon New Year food appeal:

We were thrilled with the response to our annual appeal and once again the foyer was filled with bags of non perishable goods that were donated by our congregation to feed the hungry and the homeless. A big "Yesha Koach" to all those who made the appeal the great success that it was. Oz Harvest collected all the bags of food for distribution to the various charities that we support.

*Belinda Levy*



### What's On

november 2010 – january 2011

cheshvan – shvat 5771

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

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

Your comprehensive guide to everything that is going at Emanuel Synagogue from November to December.

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  
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## Court Rules Against Segregating Men And Women On Streets

Barriers separating men and women on the main street of the ultra-Orthodox Jerusalem neighborhood of Mea She'arim were removed Tuesday after the High Court of Justice ruled that the barriers were unacceptable.

"Any division of the public space in Israel is illegal, and the police - located just two streets away from Mea She'arim - can't treat a certain area as 'extraterritorial,'" Jerusalem city council member Rachel Azaria, one of several people who had filed a petition against the barriers, said before the hearing.

Aviad Hacoen, the petitioners' attorney, said the ruling sends an important message against discrimination.

"No more gender-based discrimination in the public space, including Mea She'arim," he said. "Every resident of and visitor to Jerusalem has the right to walk its streets, and the police must protect that right and prevent any attempt to violate the status quo in the city."

Attorneys from the State Prosecutor's Office said at the hearing that an agreement had been reached between police and representatives of the ultra-Orthodox Eda Haredit group stipulating that the barriers would be immediately taken down and the use of pedestrian traffic controllers stopped.

The decision effectively puts an end to the years-long tradition of gender segregation during the Sukkot holiday.

A march will be held in Jerusalem today to protest the wider phenomenon of gender segregation in the city. Some 50 Meretz party activists and university students are expected to take part.

After police rejected activists' request to march through Mea She'arim, organizers took the case to the High Court. Judges Miriam Naor, Esther Hayut and Uzi Vogelmann ultimately decided on a compromise allowing the rally to take place in a section of Mea She'arim but not to end in Shabbat Square, a major neighborhood landmark.

For the past several years, Mea She'arim Street has been closed to cars in the evening due to the influx of residents and visitors streaming to the quarter's batei midrash (study halls) for Sukkot festivities. This year as well, a barrier was set up to separate male and female pedestrians, and both Mea She'arim and Shivtei Yisrael streets were marked off with checkpoints and security personnel to keep women away from the area where the hard-line Toldot Aharon Hasidim are concentrated.

This year's barrier, however, was smaller than in previous years, when checkpoints were deployed in various locations around the neighborhood.

The petitioners asked the High Court to issue an interim injunction instructing police to enforce anti-discrimination laws in Mea She'arim and prevent "the use of fences separating men and women in an accessible public space. This impinges on human dignity, freedom and equality." At the petition hearing, prosecutors cited Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein's support for prohibiting gender segregation in public spaces such as city streets. The response from Mea She'arim residents was more muted than many observers had expected.

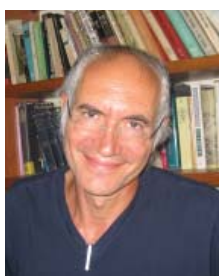
Before the hearing Yoel Krois, a representative of the ultra-Orthodox community in the area, said: "The police won't take down the barriers because they're everywhere. It's the right of Toldot Aharon to deploy them. "There are barriers at Haoman 17, and nobody tries to take them down," Krois said, referring to a nightclub. Haim Pappenheim, a spokesman for Eda Haredit, tried yesterday to minimize the barriers' significance. "We set them up for just a few hours, because we wanted things to be orderly. People were asked to be considerate in the vicinity of synagogues, and they warmly agreed," he said. "We never wanted to limit freedom of movement for women. It's a shame the High Court decided to get into this."

*Tomer Zarchin and Chaim Levinson*

*With thanks to ARZA*

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## **CRISIS: THE RABBINIC RESPONSE**



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## 15 years On: The Legacy Of Yitzhak Rabin

Seven years after the assassinations of Lincoln, Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, the people of the United States were still struggling to heal their wounds and find their way through times of war and upheaval. Whether it was the toil of Reconstruction, the division over Vietnam, or the sacrifices of the Civil Rights movement, each of these great leaders was a guiding light snuffed out far too early in their lives – and as a result, the people they led were forced to weather the coming storms alone. In November 2002, seven years after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Israelis and Palestinians had been embroiled for more than a year in the torturous cycle of violence that continues to this day. The peace for which Rabin had given so much seemed like a distant dream.



In Israel today, Rabin's name is rarely mentioned. For a growing number of Israelis who have lost loved ones in the militarization of the Palestinian intifadeh uprising, the mentality has shifted from a willingness for compromise to feeling under siege. Yasser Arafat and his PLO have been marginalized, isolated, and accused by Ariel Sharon's government of supporting the Islamist extremist groups whose bombings have stigmatized many Israelis to the possibility of peace and reconciliation. Sadly, the hope and unity so beautifully expressed on the night of Rabin's death are now only a fading memory. As expressed by Nancy O'Malley, a distinguished teacher of the humanities at Boston Latin School, "Unfortunately our memories are short, and we forget that only a little while ago Rabin held out the very real prospect of peace, but ever since Sharon instigated the intifadeh by visiting the Temple Mount, there's been so much violence and bloodshed, oppression and reaction to oppression, that it wiped out the memory of what Rabin had done."

Even in the darkest times, however, there is still hope to be gleaned from the example set by Yitzhak Rabin. With just a few handshakes over the span of a few years, the courageous leadership of one man was able to produce exponentially greater waves of change. The respect Rabin earned over several decades of dealing with Arab countries, the historic peace treaty with Jordan, the limitless promise in those few months of excitement – all of it was a stunning demonstration showing that a lone leader could single-handedly bring together two seemingly irreconcilable sides. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount, proved that a single leader could shatter it just as easily.

So what, then, is Rabin's legacy? Most centrally, it is the idea he planted in the minds of both Israelis and Palestinians that compassion and the will to forgive were all they needed to form a bridge across decades of hatred and distrust. It was the essential faith and belief in the ability of humanity to make common cause in the knowledge that mutual hatred would breed only mutual suffering. Rabin's actions were the profound validation of the tenet that it took just one voice to stem the tide of suffering by two proud and ancient peoples. The success of his peace outreaches to Arab countries proved it was possible; the heartbreaking conflict in Israel today proves it is needed now.

*Printed with thanks to [www.learntoquestion.com](http://www.learntoquestion.com)*

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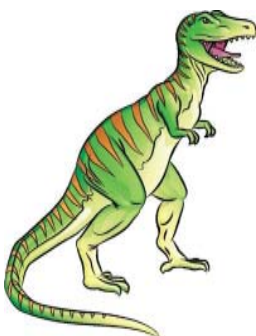
**Senior camp – January 4<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>**

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**For further enquiries contact Maddie Davie, 0432 44 735.**

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**Be there or be square.**





# Our Shabbat Table

**Beginning in November we will have a pot luck Shabbat dinner every week here at the synagogue after our Erev Shabbat service.**

**Just bring along a vegetarian dish to share and join us. It is a wonderful way to celebrate together with community every week.**

**No need to book, just come along.**



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