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Tell

June 2010
Sivan/Tamuz 5770

volume 29 No 5

Wedding and
Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Expo

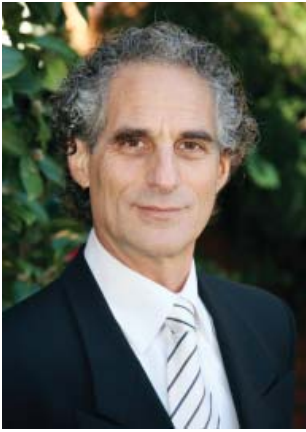


Everything you need to plan your event

Sunday 6 June
12:30pm - 4:00pm

Venue changed, now at:
Emanuel Synagogue
7 Ocean St, Woollahra

www.emanuel.org.au



At our recent Festival of Dangerous Ideas, part of our celebration of Shavuot, I presented three integrated topics: “Religion is a Human Construct”, “Smashing the Idols: Torahlatry” and “The Fabrication of the 613 Mitzvot.” Upon seeing these subjects, one might think that the rabbi teaching them has lost his faith. Just the opposite. For whatever reason, for as far back as I can remember, I have had a sense of something beyond the physical or material world in which we exist. A man like Richard Dawkins would say I’m just deluded in my imagination; perhaps he is right – only upon leaving this world will any of us know for sure. In the meantime, over the decades my belief in that which we for the sake of linguistic convenience call God has only deepened. Many synonymous descriptions of what God might be are used: the Cosmic Consciousness, Life Force, Web of Life, Source of Life, Creative Intelligence, or just Being. The believer has a sense that beyond the exchange of matter and energy, exists being.

The problem with contemporary religiosity from my perspective is that human hubris has led people to say that their teaching about Being is the one that is exactly and most true, relegating other teachings to something less than. But understanding religion (not God) as a human construct, one sees that belief in God does not demand belief in any book as being absolutely true. Seeing religion as a human construct does not turn the Bible, as is often the fear-based critique, into Pulp Fiction. Rather, it allows us to read it as the deep insight of our ancestors into God. Each faith community has its Holy Scripture that enables individuals, across the generations and around the world, to unite in common practice and purpose in the service to God.

When the ancestors teach about God, “You shall have no other gods beside Me” and “You shall not worship any image”, that in my understanding includes even the written word. When words of Torah, or words of any Scripture, are used to denigrate or undermine that which God might be (see the attempts at definitions above), then we find ourselves not worshipping God, but worshipping the word of human about God. This does not require us to “throw out the Torah”. Rather, following in the school of what is now called Masorti Judaism (what was in the 19th century first called the school of positive-historical Judaism) we find ourselves positively disposed to respect our history and maintain our tradition. That is our default position, and as long as the study of Torah and the practice of its mitzvot enhances the creative energy within us and among us, then we are doing well, but we are obliged, just as our ancestors did, to make the changes necessary in how we live, understand and teach our Torah to make sure it is always in the service of God.

One way we can do this is by actually looking as honestly as possible about the historical development of our tradition. For example, these days, there is a litmus test being applied within certain circles of Judaism: do you keep the 613 mitzvot? A deeper look at the tradition of the 613 mitzvot shows that there is no mention of such a concept in the Torah or the rest of the Bible. (On the other hand, the essence of Judaism is being commanded by God to do mitzvot as learned from the Torah). In fact, there is only one mention in the whole Talmud of the 613 mitzvot, in Makkot 24a, and there it is written that Rabbi Simlai, when preaching said, 613 mitzvot were communicated to Moses, 365 negative precepts corresponding to the solar days in the year, and 248 positive precepts, corresponding to the number of the bones of a person’s body. Rabbi Simlai uses the gematria of Torah (611) plus two other mitzvot the people heard directly from God. The editor of that gemara then writes that David came and reduced the precepts to 11 principles (from Psalm 15), and Isaiah came and reduced it to six (from Isaiah Psalm 33), and Micah came and reduced them to three (Micah 6:8) and Amos came and reduced them to one, “For thus says the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek Me and live.” (Amos 5:4).

It took 500 years before the rabbis of the Middle Ages began enumerating the 613 mitzvot – and different rabbis came up with different lists – even the great Nachmanides of the 13th century contradicting the 12th century Maimonides. On top of that, of the various lists of the 613 (which would have 550 plus in agreement), only half of those can be kept at this time, without a Temple in Jerusalem where priests offer animal sacrifices. One sees by deeper study of the Gemara that the rabbis are actually talking conceptually about how one connects to God through living the mitzvot of the Torah. In essence, Rabbi Simlai is saying that each of us should be connected to Torah and mitzvot with every fibre of our being every day of our lives.

Religion may be a human construct, but as humans continue to strive for the divine, each of us needs a discipline to do that. Judaism, whose Torah has profound teachings of the Oneness of Being and sanctity of life, and whose mitzvot guide us to a life of righteousness, loving-kindness and humility constructs a life of meaning and purpose.

Rabbi Jeffrey B. Kamins

Go Team Emanuel!

If you are planning on taking part in the City 2 Surf this year, then why not do it as part of the Emanuel Synagogue Team.

City 2 Surf: Sunday 8 August.

Walk, jog, run, push a pram or skip to the finish line with your friends and family...and do a wonderful mitzvah raising money for our selected charity.

To register* as part of the Emanuel Synagogue City 2 Surf Team, please call 9328 7833 by Tuesday 15 June.

*You will also need to register with City 2 Surf stating Emanuel Synagogue as your team.



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Family Shabbat Dinner Friday 25 June

Emanuel Synagogue Hall
Following services at 6:00pm

Free

BYO vegetarian pot luck

Bookings on 9328 7833

Families are invited to join us for a casual, family-style Shabbat dinner. Bring a vegetarian dish to share, and celebrate Shabbat with our community.

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DEPRESSION, SUICIDE, MENTAL ILLNESS

MOST PEOPLE HAVE HAD THEIR LIVES TOUCHED BY THESE THINGS IN SOME WAY.

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JOIN US FOR BRUNCH WITH JOHN BROGDEN

Sunday 20 June, 10:30am

Cost: \$10

Bookings: 9328 7833

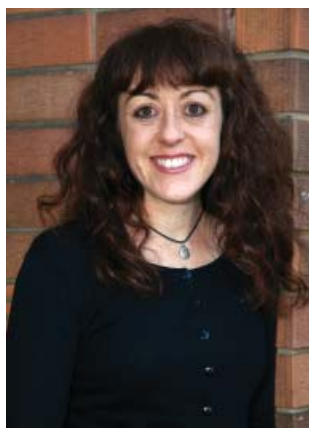
Donations will be taken for Lifeline Australia

As part of our ongoing commitment to a healthy spirit, body and mind, we would like to invite you to brunch with John Brogden, prominent business man and Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales from 2002 to 2005 and inaugural Patron of the counseling service Lifeline.



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Tel: 9328 7833 E: info@emanuel.org.au
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I have been thinking a lot recently about clothing; what we wear and how it reflects upon us. As I mentioned in my last article, I recently attended a family bar mitzvah in a traditional synagogue in Melbourne. There, it is the custom for married women to cover their heads. I am a married woman so, out of respect for the traditions of that community, I wore a hat. At first it felt very strange. I am unaccustomed to wearing any kind of head covering ever, let alone in shule and it seemed to me, at first, that everyone was noticing my discomfort. But once I settled into my chair, the familiar prayers began to wash over me and I realised that far from being conspicuous I felt right at home. But it did feel strange to me to be in a synagogue praying without my tallit. It made me smile because it was not always that way. I first started wearing a tallit a year or so before rabbinical school. My father, who was raised in an Orthodox home, said to me

“Jacqueline, why don’t you wear a tallit?”

“Well, um, I er...” I eloquently responded

“You know,” he said, “if you really believe in what you say you do about equality and so on, then you should really be wearing a tallit.”

“Um, err, yes, well, ahh, hmmm” I said

But much as I hated to admit it, he had a point. The next Shabbat when I went to shule, I tentatively approached the rabbi and asked about wearing a tallit.

“Well it’s about time!” he said. (or words to that effect) and he took me and gently explained how to put it on, where to find the appropriate prayer and I settled into my seat with my new look. I wish I could say that I felt wrapped in holiness and blanketed in the tradition but I did not. It felt awkward and weird. I imagined everyone’s eyes on me and spent most of the service trying to make it stay on my shoulders. It was not the most moving religious experience of my life. But I persevered, often hearing my father’s voice in my ear, “if you really believe what you say...” Then, in time, something incredible happened; I came to “own” the tallit. It became a part of me and my prayer experience. I did begin to feel wrapped in the tradition, the warmth of community, each time I placed it around my shoulders, my head buried beneath its folds I imagined joining hands with the generations of people who had worn tallit before, those who did so in public, proudly and those who had to do so in secret, in fear for their lives and safety. Wearing the tallit is something so special and important for me, such a gift and sometimes I take it for granted that I have the freedom to wear it and pray. I can express my connection to Judaism and tradition by wearing a tallit.

Recently, we read about a woman in Israel who was arrested for carrying a Torah near the Kotel wearing a tallit. She was interrogated by police and held for a number of hours. She is a medical student and was charged with violating a High Court ruling obliging visitors to the kotel to abide by a dress code. If found guilty, she could be prevented from practicing medicine in Israel and all because she did something that I have the freedom to do every Shabbat in our synagogue.

This week I read the story of Noa, a woman who was waiting at a bus stop after having said her morning prayers. When she prays she wears tefillin on her arm and as they do with many people, they left an imprint on her skin after she took them off. A man at the bus stop noticed her arm. He stared at it and asked her what it was from. She ignored him. He asked her again, more aggressively, if the marks were from tefillin. Eventually she felt she had to answer him and she said yes. He began to shout at her and physically assault her. Luckily she managed to escape his grip and ran onto the bus, shaken, bruised and injured. And why? Because she prayed wearing tefillin. I love Israel and most people are not like those who arrested Nofrat or who beat Noa but we must be outraged when we read these stories and we must express our feelings by supporting the people who are fighting for religious pluralism and freedom in Israel and we must do it here too.

This week I was asked my opinion about the proposal to ban the burka in Australia. It seems to me to be a really simple issue. It is one of human rights and religious freedom. I don’t believe that a government should be in the business of telling people what to wear, especially if the wearing of a garment or item of clothing is one associated with a religious practice. I do not agree with the interpretation of a law which requires women to be covered from head to toe for the sake of modesty. That is not how I would choose to read the text, but for those who do, they should have the freedom to apply it as they understand. For women who wear the burka, a ban will essentially restrict their movement to home. They will not be able to leave their houses and be in public at all. It would curtail their ability to be part of society and the world and confine them to their own four walls. If it is, as some have suggested, a matter of public safety, of being able to identify people, then surely we must also ban balaclavas, motorcycle helmets, masks of any kind, and so on, but I don’t believe it

is about safety. I think it is about a fear of difference, and I wonder, if the ban goes ahead, where the line will be drawn. Will it become an offence to show any identification with a religious group? Will the kippah be banned? What about nuns' habits? And then will identification with any group by way of clothing be banned? And then will we be required to dress in an "Australian way?" What will that be? Will budgie smugglers and thongs become compulsory attire?

We sometimes think of clothing as frivolous, something not too significant or important but getting dressed is perhaps one of the most important things we do every day. What we wear projects an image to the world about who we are, what we believe, it can connect us to certain groups, ideologies and passions. It is an extension of us in so many ways and part of our freedom of expression and thought. There is a place to legislate about clothing which could be offensive or cause harm to another but I do not believe that the burka is such an item of clothing and I believe we should fight to maintain the freedom to express our religious beliefs.

Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio

B'NEI MITZVAH SHABBATON

Saturday 26 June
9:00am – 5:30pm
Bookings: 9328 7833



All students who will celebrate becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah between Rosh Hashanah 2010 and Rosh Hashanah 2011 are invited to join us to celebrate Shabbat. Students will attend services with their parents, and then stay for lunch, songs, games, and other activities. The afternoon concludes with a moving Havdalah ceremony in which parents pass the Torah to their child for the first time.

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A space for our youngest children and their carers to meet, talk and play.



A great opportunity to get to know other new parents and their families.



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Children aged 0 - 3
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From Rabbi Jacobson: Building from the Inside Out



I love sushi. Tasty and relatively healthy, especially on my busiest days, I find that sushi makes for a nice lunch, snack, or dinner. While I particularly enjoy raw fish and vegetables, and prefer brown rice to white rice, I find that I am also partial to what is commonly referred to as an “inside-out roll.” A traditional sushi roll will have filling (say salmon and avocado – yum), be surrounded by rice, and then be covered by a sheet of nori (seaweed). Inside-out rolls reverse the process. The filling (tuna and cucumber anyone?) is still inside, but next to the filling is the seaweed, which is then covered by the rice. I guess that it is a preferential thing really – whether you like traditional sushi or “inside-out” sushi more. But for a sushi chef the process of building something from the “inside-out” is different from building something from the “outside-in.”

I found myself thinking about sushi last week when I received word over E-mail that council had approved our synagogue’s application for redevelopment (my hearty congratulations to all those involved in this process). Ever since I began working for Emanuel Synagogue in 2006, there has been considerable discussion regarding plans for redevelopment of the synagogue campus. Now, it seems that with the approval of our proposal, the construction process will be underway in the not too distant future.

Construction of the synagogue will require the work of architects, builders, and engineers – gifted people in their particular trade, talented workers who know how to lay a strong foundation and form the structure of a building from the “outside in.” But as congregants, contributors, community members, lay leaders, administrative staff, educators, and rabbis, we need to remember that our task is to build from the “inside out.”

Though I do not have any experience in the building process (save for my Lego sets when I was a child), I imagine that construction begins with raw materials. The foundation is established, the structure is erected, concrete is poured, there is a lot of hammering, nailing and bricklaying, walls are built, hinges and doors are installed, and carpet is placed. And when the process is complete, a building will have been constructed from all of these materials.

At its inception, that building, our synagogue, will be an empty edifice. It will be a beautiful structure, constructed from the “outside in.” But it is up to us to provide our building with soul, with spirit, with warmth, with generosity, with community, with companionship, with friendship, with respect, with awe, and with love. Consider on a Friday night that when we light Shabbat candles, our Shabbat candles are merely wicks wrapped in wax. But when we light these candles with intentionality and we say a blessing, we transform wicks and wax into a symbol of holiness and light, filling our home with the beauty of Shabbat. Similarly, our Kiddush is merely a cup of grape juice or wine. But when we sing a blessing as part of a Shabbat meal, when we remind ourselves that Shabbat celebrates the beauty and mystery of creation, as well as our redemption from slavery in Egypt, mere grape juice becomes significant, and Shabbat becomes something more than special – it becomes holy. In our Jewish ritual lives, mere objects take on symbolic importance through dedicated acts.

Such is the case with our synagogue. Over the next few years we are likely to be engaged in the construction process. But we cannot lose sight of our ultimate goal – to build our synagogue from the “inside-out” – to provide spiritually enriching services, stimulating and meaningful learning opportunities, and a place for community to gather in times of celebration and sorrow, festivity and reflection. Our community is blessed with a wonderful professional team, but we cannot fulfill the task of building our synagogue without the support and feedback of our congregants. It is your contribution and dedication, your participation in the life of our synagogue, “which turns a house into a home,” which makes our synagogue an emotionally supportive place of spiritual vibrancy, and intellectual excitement.

I look forward to engaging in this ongoing process of redevelopment with our community. And when we find ourselves poised to dedicate the building, and re-dedicate ourselves to those activities that make up the lifeblood of our building, I’ll be sure to bring the sushi (inside-out of course).

Rabbi Paul Jacobson

Shabbat Tot

A short and very noisy prayer service tailored for young children

A story, craft activity and Kiddush follow the service

Parents and grandparents welcome

First Friday of the month
5:00pm - 6:00pm
Children aged 2 - 5

2010 Dates:
4 June, 2 July, 6 August,
3 September, 1 October,
5 November, 3 December



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Kabbalah Meditation

Wednesday evenings 7:30pm + Thursday mornings 8am

Term 2: 20 April - 1 July

All welcome - beginners & experienced meditators.

Cost: \$20 Emanuel Members: \$15
Concessions available.

Facilitator: Sue Beecher
psychologist, social worker, lecturer, author, meditation teacher.

Enquiries please feel free to call Sue 0405 241 710



- come to stillness
- using the kabbalistic Tree of Life, connect with and develop awareness
- with a Jewish framework, develop qualities such as lovingkindness, strength, balance
- opportunity to gently heal and grow, opening to peace, clarity and joy
- feel harmony within ourselves, and between ourselves and life
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June Highlights

Emanuel Wedding and Bar/Bat Mitzvah Expo

Sunday 6 June, 12:30pm – 4:00pm

VENUE CHANGE: Emanuel Synagogue, 7 Ocean St, Woollahra

More information: 9328 7833

Everything you need to plan your event, all under one roof! We take the stress out of organizing a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or wedding by bringing all the best suppliers together in our second annual expo.

Sunday Cinema

Ajami

Sunday 6 June, 4:00pm

Jaffa's Ajami neighborhood is a melting pot of cultures and conflicting views among Jews, Muslims and Christians. Sensitive 13-year-old Nasri and his older brother live in fear after their uncle foolishly wounds a prominent clan member. Naive young Palestinian refugee Malek works illegally in Israel to help pay for the surgery that will save his mother. Wealthy Palestinian Binj dreams of a bright future with his Jewish girlfriend. And Jewish policeman Dando seeks revenge when his brother is found murdered in the West Bank.

Lunch 'n' Learn

Saturday 12 June, After services until 2:00pm
Religion as a Human Construct.

What is the connection between God, human and scripture? Is religion the root of evil or source of salvation? Rabbi Kamins will discuss the concept of religion as a human construct: how Dawkins and Torah can both be right.

Rosh Chodesh

8:00pm – 13 June

Contact 9328 7833 for location details

Secret Jewish women's business celebrated in conjunction with the new Hebrew month/moon. All women are welcome to attend.

People of the Book Club

Have a Little Faith

Sunday 20 June, 4:00pm

Call for location details

Have a Little Faith is available from the synagogue office for \$35.00

A book about a life's purpose; about losing belief and finding it again; about the divine spark inside us all. It is one man's journey, but it is everyone's story.

Brunch with Brogden

Sunday 20 June, 10:30am

Cost: \$10

Bookings: 9328 7833

Donations will be taken for Lifeline Australia

As part of our ongoing commitment to a healthy spirit, body and mind, we would like to invite you to Brunch with John Brogden, prominent business man and Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales from 2002 to 2005 and inaugural Patron of the counseling service Lifeline.

Family Shabbat Dinner

Friday 25 June, following services at 6:00pm

Free, BYO vegetarian pot luck

Book your space on 9328 7833

Families are invited to join us for a casual, family-style Shabbat dinner. Bring a vegetarian dish to share, and celebrate Shabbat with our community.

Emanuel Idol Grand Final

Sunday 27 June

7:30pm, Emanuel Hall

\$5 admission, children under 12 free

Show your support for our top ten performers as they compete for the title of Emanuel Idol and a first prize of a recording session at Brighton Boulevard Studios.



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Meet Aley Greenblo, a down to earth girl

My name is Aley Greenblo and I am one of the finalists for MISS EARTH AUSTRALIA 2010. I am a 21-year-old Commerce Law student who is crazy about the environment! I attended Emanuel in my primary school years where I believe my love for the environment developed.

I am extremely passionate about keeping our planet clean and want to create awareness in our local community. I am absolutely dedicated to ensuring that our beautiful country remains clean and litter free and everyone can play a part in ensuring this goal eventuates by simply doing their part. The smallest actions can make the most major differences!

Miss Earth is an annual international beauty pageant that promotes environmental awareness. Along with Miss Universe and Miss World contests, Miss Earth is one of the three largest beauty pageants in the world.

As a finalist I am completely dedicated to promoting environmental projects and to addressing issues concerning the environment.

The Pageant has adopted the slogan "Beauties For a Cause" and focuses on inspiring others to become environmentally aware. I am just a "down to earth" girl who is pursuing a dream of making our world a more beautiful place and as a contestant I stand for the protection and preservation of the planet.

I would absolutely love to answer any questions or have you assist me as I plant trees or help with any recycling or water conservation tips! You can make a difference so get active!

Aley Greenblo, Miss Earth Australia Finalist 2010
aley_greenblo@hotmail.com, 0401 992 607



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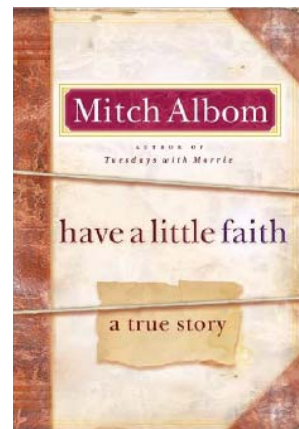
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People of the Book Club

Presented by the Emanuel Synagogue Cultural Fund

Have a Little Faith
Sunday 20 June, 4:00pm
Call 9328 7833 for location details



***Have a Little Faith* is available from the Emanuel Synagogue office for \$35**

From our Shlichah: Why Choose a Gap Year in Israel?



As Year 12 students start to think about what to do after graduating high school, they usually have lots of options to choose from. Whether you are a Year 12 student, or you still remember what it was like, this is a crucial stage in life. You are just about to cross the bridge from being totally dependant on your parents to becoming independent and an individual - not referred to as “the son of Naomi” or “one of the Cohens” but as Ron, Mikki, Hana, Ben, etc. For the first time, you are the one to choose your path. Your parents influence you - some more and some less. Sometimes they back you up, and sometimes they veto and say: “Not with my money you’re not!” and sometimes it’s totally your decision, to say “I do”.

I had the chance to deal with some of the options as part of a Yom Limud (Education day) for Year 12 students. The Shlichim programme asked the question: should a Jewish student go on a gap year in Israel before starting the rest of his/her life?

It is very obvious what my answer as a Shlichah would be: “Yes!” But I can certainly identify and understand the dilemma. One of the main reasons is that one wouldn’t want to miss a year in university, and would want to start straight away, graduate earlier and start working and earning money. Let’s call this the “get on the fastest train to success” reason. A Jewish mum would surely be proud if her child would be “the first doctor in the year”.

Yet, very few know exactly what they want to study and what they want to do with their life. Some time away can give you the opportunity to think about your life, what interests you have, what drives you, what makes you happy. You can gain life skills, grow as a person and become more independent. You experience freedom, learn responsibility - things that will make you more knowledgeable about world events, and more opinionated. And as for the “express train”: why are we in such a hurry? We will have most of our life to work, and in the long run, does it really matter if you will start your “serious” job at the age of 24 or 26?

Ok, so hopefully I have convinced you to take some time off and go explore yourself and the globe – so the question is: **why Israel?** You can actually travel all over the world and meet people from all over the place. Let’s point out the “elephant” in the room and admit: some are “Jewed out”, and are not so into “Jewish stuff”. Why explore your religious collective identity when today it is all about the individual? Moreover, your parents may want you to go on a Jewish programme and isn’t that by itself a reason to suspect and reject?

Well Israel has more than 200 programmes to offer you. These programmes vary from those associated with a youth movement (like Shnat Netzer), Israel by choice, academy programmes and programmes geared to particular interest, such as arts, acting, dancing or volunteering with kids or refugees. Programmes vary in duration from five months to a year. Israel offers what other places don’t: a combination of exploring your roots, connecting to your personal beliefs and ideology, together with doing whatever you like to do. You get to know people from all around the world, as Israel is filled with an amalgamation of people from all over the globe.

MASA, the Israeli programmes project, offers applicants an automatic scholarship, and more, to whoever needs it. And why? Because you are Jewish (sorry about that, for the “not into Jewish stuff” ones) and by the way – “Jewish” refers to self-definition – so relax.

So now you are probably on the way to buy your ticket and you are saying to yourself: “Cool, I’ll go for a month to see what she is talking about and come back to start university. Why do I need a whole year?”

Although it’s clear that you cannot really explore a totally different culture and country without living there for a while, and probably not “find yourself” in a month, I have found this to be the hardest question to answer. About a month ago, the answer became clear.

In April, we celebrated and grieved during the Yomim period. It started with *Yom Hashoh (Holocaust Remembrance Day)* and then *Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day)*, followed by *Yom Ha’atzmaut (Israel Independence Day)*. Usually there are a lot of activities for every Jewish holiday, and this week was a busy one as well., but I didn’t feel it. I participated and went to all the Yomim ceremonies; I celebrated Yom Haatzmaut in different ways and cried on Yom Hashoah when the Holocaust survivors told their stories. Yet I didn’t feel it.

I didn’t feel what you should feel on the Yomim, when all the country stops and stands still, people pulling over in the middle of the street, people stopping and standing in the supermarket, in the bank, in the mall or in the office while the moment of memory siren is sounded. I didn’t feel what you feel when all the radio stations play beautiful sad songs all day and all the TV channels show history movies, personal stories and discussions about the Holocaust or our history. I didn’t experience the feeling you have when after the agony and pain of Yom Hazikaron, you transfer your emotions to happiness and celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut, and say to yourself, every year, that it’s impossible to get into “party time” mode after such a day - yet everyone still does it, surprisingly easily, and you feel it.

At least once in your life, you have to feel it. You have to experience in Israel how the New Year ritual of blessing, presents, family gathering and a fresh new start happens on Rosh Hashana. You must experience Yom Kippur - with no cars on the street, no music on the radio, no TV broadcasting on local channels and you can hear the sounds of the synagogue from a mile away: the sound of people gathering and talking or praying, like when there was a world with no electricity and cars and the public gathering sound would have been your navigator. For everyone, this is a real day of meditation and "heshbon nefesh" (taking stock of our souls).

Israel is the only place in the world where the public holidays are your holidays; where your chag (holiday) is a national chag, where your university and schools commemorate Jewish holidays and the calendar is according to it. It's where the language you used once for your bar mitzvah and hear at shul is the language people use in the street. In Israel, you don't measure your Jewishness based on the times you go to the synagogue: you just live it. **Israel is the only place you don't need to find the balance between your life and your Jewish life.** And at least once in your life, you must feel it.

This is why Israel is the place to go for a long-term programme between high school and the rest of your life.

Anat Baruch, Progressive Community and Netzer Schlichah, NSW

Contact:

schlichansw@netzer.org.au or 0432 231 192



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creating community • celebrating diversity

YELLADIM

Every Saturday, 10:00am – 11:45am
Children aged 5 – 9

This is a time filled with song, prayer, stories, games, food and laughter. An opportunity for children to be vocal and have fun at synagogue. Facilitated by dynamic and creative youth leaders.



YOUR WEDDING YOUR WAY



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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE KASHRUT AUTHORITY, OUR INTERNATIONALLY EXPERIENCED CHEF AND HIS TEAM ARE ABLE TO CREATE AND PREPARE TRADITIONAL JEWISH AND CONTEMPORARY CUISINE FOR SMALL THROUGH TO LARGE SCALE EVENTS OF UP TO 600 GUESTS.

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In 1897 following the convening of the first Zionist Congress, a secular Jew, Theodore Herzl, wrote an article called "Der Judenstaat" - the Jewish State. The title was probably meant as an ironic play on words, since it literally means "The Jews'-State," a derogatory construction like the "Judenstrasse" (Jews' Street) of the medieval ghetto. In The Jewish State, Herzl proposed a modern solution to the Jewish question. He believed that attempts at assimilation of Jews into European society were in vain, as the majority in each country decided who was a native and who an alien. The persistence of anti-Semitism determined that the Jew would always be an outsider and, therefore, only the creation of a Jewish state would put an end to the Jewish problem. In 1902 he published a utopian novel "Die Neu-Altland" (the old new land) in which the final words were "Im tirzu, as ayn agada" "If you will, it is no legend."

No where in any of his writings or his speeches did Herzl – the founding father of the Jewish State, suggest that the new homeland would be exclusively for any particular group of Jews. On the contrary, when the British Government offered Uganda as the Jewish Homeland the Zionist Congress accepted it and then realised that this would create a huge split as the religious groups insisted that such a homeland could only be in Israel and so they subsequently rejected the offer in order to maintain Jewish unity.

It was clear that Herzl, and those who endorsed his views and vision during the subsequent decades, saw this place as a homeland and refuge for ALL Jews, without distinction based on colour, culture or religious affiliation. Several decades later, and after 6 million more victims of the European anti-Semitism that Herzl identified, a certain document was read from a building near the beach in Tel-Aviv. That document stated:

WE DECLARE that, with effect from the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), the People's Administration, of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel"...

It went on to say...

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations... PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE "ROCK OF ISRAEL", WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION. David Ben-Gurion

Those who love Israel have not forgotten those words. In fact, each week on Shabbat in Emanuel Synagogue we offer a prayer for Israel and we include the following words: "Grant us the fortitude to keep ever before us those ideals to which Israel dedicated herself in her Declaration of Independence. May we be true partners with the people of Israel in working toward her vision."

Last week President Shimon Peres said during the state ceremony marking 43 years since the reunification of Jerusalem that "the city with a wall in its heart and the city that has peace on its horizons is a gift from the paratroopers, the Harel Brigade soldiers, the Jerusalem Brigade fighters, and the Air Force." "In our eyes, Jerusalem is not a battle ground, but a destination for our people, believers and bearers of justice for man, and hope for its descendents. Jerusalem is the central and eternal Jewish ideal, even without idealizing its history," Those who died in creating and defending the State and in unifying Jerusalem came from across the full multicultural and religious mosaic of the Jewish People and those Jews around the world who have celebrated and cried with Israel similarly come from all sectors of religious belief.

However, against this backdrop of ideological, political, historical, philosophical and practical pluralism the reality of Israel today is very different.

In May 2010 a women was physically attacked in the Beersheba Bus station when an Orthodox man saw that she had the imprint of Tefillin on her arm; the week before women seeking to hold a prayer service at the Kotel had chairs thrown at them. In the same week the women's toilets at the Kotel were closed to avoid females approaching the men's prayer area; the number of segregated lines on the Public bus service, Egged, increases each week. The Government has ceased holding Army Graduation and Citizenship ceremonies at the Kotel because women will sing the National Anthem there.

Progressive and Conservative Judaism are not recognised in Israel. Whereas every orthodox rabbi receives a salary from the Government and any orthodox synagogue that is built receives a Government grant, the non-orthodox movements have to find their own funds in order to pay their rabbis and to construct synagogues.

In the publicly-funded education system increasing numbers of ultra-orthodox students are taught that Israel is an

immoral entity, but they are not taught any Maths or History. In previously secular sections of Jerusalem there are now “modesty patrols” that accost women; ask about their married lives and challenge them to dress and behave more modestly.

In the political system, the dysfunctional electoral system has given huge power to the representatives of far right-wing religious groups who are using their power to introduce new legislation that will give even more power to the Orthodox rabbinate. In fact, even now – and with the knowledge that this legislation is totally opposed by the vast majority of Diaspora Jewish communities - it was announced that the amendment to the Conversion Bill – a law that will differentiate between Jews by birth and Jews-by-choice – will move ahead in the Knesset.

Perhaps even more concerning is that, despite Supreme Court rulings insisting that the country should be more pluralistic via practices such as funding for conversion going to all denominations of Judaism, the orthodox Finance minister simply refused to allocate funds to non-orthodox groups.

Next month a number of us are attending the World Zionist Congress and, for the first time, there will be a delegation from the Shas party. When their decision to join the WZC was challenged by ultra-orthodox, anti-Zionist groups, they made it clear that their goal was to rid the Zionist movement, and Israel, of Progressive and Conservative Jews.

Just over a month ago Prime Minister Netanyahu told a conference in Israel that the greatest threat to Israel's future is not the Palestinians or even Iran – it is the schism between those who want a free and open Israel and those who want to impose a monolithic system similar to the Sharia law found in some Muslim countries.

I believe that these few examples, and there are many more, demonstrate that there really is a significant problem in Israeli society. The real question is whether this is any of our business and, if it is, what action we should take. Consider this. If you have a friend, partner or relative who made a solemn oath to do something that is really, really important to them, to you and to many other people but then – due to a number of major and unavoidable distractions – they don't do what they promised, what would you do?

a. Would you accept that they forgot and “move on” – even though you believe that this action will lead to many more problems for all involved?

b. Would you publicly attack them; stop supporting them in anything they do; and blame them for a series of other happenings as well? Or

c. Based on the belief that you have a unique relationship with them, would you approach them; remind them of the oversight, and encourage them as strongly as possible, to rectify the error?

As we know, in Jewish tradition and Law the obligation of pikuach nefesh – saving the life of a person - takes precedence over almost every other law and rule, including Shabbat, Kashrut and Prayer. How much more then are we obligated to try and save the life and soul of a nation?

To accept and even defend a situation without question, to not offer constructive criticism in the face of wrong is against everything that we are taught as thinking people and as Jews. To knowingly ignore the increasing religious and gender discrimination that exists in Israel – as we are effectively told to do by many communal leaders – is not only against what we practice in our own country, it is actually harmful to the State of Israel and her own vision of a democratic, open and pluralistic society.

If we don't speak up and help change things we will be contributing to the spread of what is happening in America where Reform Jews - who make up 85% of the Jewish community - believe that Israel is not a place for them and, therefore, they are withdrawing their emotional support and their funds.

The “dangerous idea” of us, as friends and supporters, telling Israel when she is making a mistake is something that, in my opinion, we must embrace. Not in public statements of criticism but through the establishment and development of open and honest channels of communication.

The imperative for us to take such action was recently best summed up by Israel's Ambassador to Australia, Yuval Rotem. In going to him to express our concern over some of these acts of religious discrimination he exhorted us to take action; to address the Government; to insist that changes are made; and to actively fight to make Israel more open and pluralistic.

“After all” he said “Israel knows how much you love and support her. If you don't tell her of these errors, who will?”

Steve Denenberg

** This article is taken from the presentation made at Shavuot's “Festival of Dangerous Ideas”*

From the Board

The AGM will be held on 31 May 2010 and a new board elected. Interested members are urged to attend, and as always to discuss with us how they might make a contribution to the congregation and what they would like us to devote our energies towards.

The board discussed the following subjects at its April meeting:

- Future seating to replace the outdated and uncomfortable “pews” we presently have.
- The development of a professionally lead Strategic Plan to review the future direction and priorities of the synagogue and its multiple minyanim
- The DA process, which has recently delivered us approval to build according to our exciting plans, subject to some conditions that require further consideration
- Investigating environmental savings in our offices and activities.
- The board resolved to discontinue the practice of selling casual seats to the same non members year after year for High Holiday services. We wish interested persons to commit to the mitzvah of membership of our congregation, but will continue the practice of not excluding people from prayer or membership on financial grounds. All remain welcome to join and support us in prayer and in our other endeavours.
- Members are reminded there are insufficient prayer books for the high holidays for all persons attending, and anyone that doesn't own one already should buy one from the office now to ensure they can follow the services.
- Members have clearly been hit by the financial crisis and as a result our finances continue to be stretched. We are assessing options for cost savings in all areas including moving to email instead of post where possible.
- We also commend the new web site to everyone's attention

Rodney J Brender



Cafe Jvrit

*Friday 11th June, 5:30pm
Emanuel Synagogue
With community Shlichah Anat Baruch*

**Come along to practice your Hebrew skills
or to learn some more.**

**Get together before the Friday night service
for some friendly conversation and a pre-
service coffee and nibble.**

**No need to be fluent - whatever Hebrew
you know is enough!**



Emanuel Idol

Grand Final: 27th of June
7:30pm, Emanuel Hall
\$5 admission
Children under 12 free

Support our top ten performers as they compete for the title of Emanuel Idol!

Judging panel includes: Ilan Kidron from the Potbelleez, Yaron Hallis of Monsieur Camembert (winner of two Aria awards), Andrea Catzel and Adam Majsay from Emanuel School's Music Department.

First prize: a recording session at Brighton Boulevard Studios under the production supervision of Tony Buchen (Tim Finn, Lior, John Butler The Whitlams, Andy Bull, Blue King Brown).

Call 9328 7833 or visit www.emanuel.org.au

Lyla Levy- Jordan



School: Rose Bay Secondary College
 Hobbies: Dancing, singing, acting, writing
 Pets: A dog named Jessie
 Dislikes: Homework
 Favourite TV shows: 'Glee' & 'So you think you can Dance'.

When I grow up I would love to become a professional singer or a costume designer. Recently I have become a fan of Justin Bieber, but my favourite bands are Muse and Death Cab for Cutie. I enjoy performing on stage and set design.

Social projects: We support the ChildFund and have been supporting the education of a boy my age in Sierra Leon. I think becoming involved with Amnesty International, a human rights charity, would be really fulfilling.

What will you remember most about preparing for your Bat Mitzvah?
 I think I will remember learning my D'var Torah. I also think I will remember the people who have helped me through this journey like Tahlia my teacher and my friends and family.

Zac Freuden



School: Bishop Druitt College
 Hobbies: Sport, Friends, Family
 Dislikes: Golf, Boring TV, Having nothing to do
 Team: Soccer, Futsol, Friends and Family
 Favourite Subjects: Maths, Art, PE, Sport and Music
 Favourite Sports: Swimming, soccer, futsol, skiing, surfing, running, cross country, athletics
 Favourite TV shows: Rush TV, Scrubs, Family Guy, Storm Hawks
 Future Career: Olympic swimmer - don't know after that.

I am currently invloved in surf life saving and nippers, I mentor the younger kids.

What will you remember most about preparing for your Bar Mitzvah?
 I've learnt alot of hebrew, and I'll remember my Mum stressing out about the Barmi! I'll remember Mic, my hebrew teacher, my Mum helping me and going to Mic's house nearly every week.

Sam Bell



School: Emanuel School
 Hobbies: Gaming, guitar and good friends
 Dislikes: Monday mornings, homework
 Pets: Two adorable cats named Playstation (P.S.) & Nintendo (Ninny)

I love just chilling out with good friends, playing game consoles or watching movies in our basement. Of course I love "Simpsons" and "Family Guy" but I also surprise myself by enjoying some educational shows like "Man vs Wild" and "How is it made?" when they show cool gadgets. I like science at school when we're doing experiments with chemicals but I dont have an exact idea of what I want to do when I leave school.

For my Bar Mitzvah I asked guests to donate money instead of gifts to a charity that is trying to stop the slaughter of cats and dogs in the fur industry. Can you believe anyone could skin a living creature for it's fur?

What will you remember most about preparing for your Bar Mitzvah?
 I thought that Uncle Velvel (MR Lederman) was a great teacher. He always had really interesting stories to tell, games to play and photos from his Israel travels that related to the week's parsha.



A 'typical' day on Netzer Camp

First of all, let me start by saying that a "typical" day on Netzer camp is not at all a "typical" day. Where else but Netzer camp would a typical day involve such things as singing crazy songs at the top of your voices before every meal AND in between? Where else but a Netzer camp would kids be so eager to learn about Progressive Judaism, Zionism, Jewish culture and Israel and form their own ideas on such subjects? So... What exactly is a "typical" day on Netzer camp?

After waking up and putting on hiking clothes, the first thing to be done is enjoy a good breakfast with your friends and Madrichim (Leaders) in the Cheder Ochel (Dining room) which begins with plenty of singing and continues with excited chatter about what you think will be happening throughout the rest of the day. After breakfast you embark on a hike through the beautiful surrounding bushlands of the campsite, stopping here and there for games and a nature appreciation themed creative prayer service enhanced by the tunes of a guitar and song harmonies by those musically gifted. After the hike you engage in passionate debate in your program about the Kibbutz movement - where it has been and where it is heading.

Next – Lunch, where some madrichim teach a new song which has everybody up on their chairs and ends in a skit the madrichim prepared earlier on how to stay sun-safe on camp. After a delicious lunch, everybody chooses a different chug (activity) to attend. You can decide whether to go to sport, aquarobics, theatre sports, tree planting, tie dyeing, film making or spoon playing. After an awesome game of ultimate Frisbee, it is time for your next program which involves learning ways you can make a difference in your community and planning a group project that you can continue with once you go home. Theme night tonight is 60s so you go to the tziud (gear/equipment) room and search for a costume to wear. After dinner is a night time program where the camp is split into teams and play a game similar to jeopardy only messier. Bed time at last so you can re-energise for tomorrow which is sure to be just as good, if not better than today. Laila tov!

It is absolute madness to mention a typical Netzer camp without mentioning a Netzer Shabbat. Only once you have fully experienced a Netzer camp Shabbat do you fully understand the sense of energy and ruach (spirit) that comes from the liveliness of a kabbalat Shabbat service and even the Saturday morning service on a Netzer Camp. Shabbat is definitely seen by most, if not all, as the highlight of camp as we endeavor to make it different from all other days of camp. There is a certain taste of it in the air which begins on Friday evening even before Shabbat begins with chuggim in preparation of Shabbat and ends with a Havdallah service under the stars on Saturday night.

Netzer Camps and meetings strive to engage the chanichim in informal education that is both fun and exciting, and is run for the youth, by the youth. As Progressive Jews, we try to instil in the chanichim a realisation that there is more than one way to be Jewish and encourage them to make informed choices in their beliefs and actions. A large part of Netzer's ideology is also about learning how we as individuals and as part of a community can do our part in Tikkun Olam (repairing the world). But most of all, we aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment for Jewish youth to come together and have a positive Jewish experience.

Josh Van Biene



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Wedding and Bar/Bat Mitzvah Expo

Sunday 6 June
 12:30pm - 4:00pm

Please note change of venue:
Emanuel Synagogue
7 Ocean St, Woollahra



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Sunday 20 June, 10:30am

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As part of our ongoing commitment to a healthy spirit, body and mind, we would like to invite you to brunch with John Brogden, prominent business man and Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales from 2002 to 2005 and inaugural Patron of the counseling service Lifeline.



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Emanuel Idol

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7:30pm, Emanuel Hall

\$5 admission

Children under 12 free

Support our top ten performers as they compete for the title of Emanuel Idol!

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