



עמנואל

**emanuel synagogue**

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# Tell

May 2010  
Iyar/Sivan 5770

volume 29 No 4



Emanuel Idol

Shavuot

Meet our Team

From the Board

**Emanuel Idol**  
**entries close 31 May!**

[www.emanuel.org.au](http://www.emanuel.org.au)

# Shavuot: A Festival Of Dangerous Ideas



As we are in the midst of the count up from Pesach to Shavuot, we think of the connection between these two festivals established by our ancient sages in their interpretation of Torah, all based on a simple and repeated phrase in the book of Exodus. Time after time, Moses pleads with Pharaoh in the name of God, “Let My people go so that they may serve Me.” Pesach celebrates the time our people were let go, but counting toward Shavuot, the celebration of the giving of the Torah, we remember that the ultimate purpose of our freedom was to serve God.

For contemporary Jews, particularly those outside the Orthodox tradition, the questions are twofold: 1) what does it mean to serve God in general, and 2) what does it mean to serve God as a Jew, through the Torah and its mitzvot? We live in an age in which men like Richard Dawkins in his *God Delusion* speak for the scepticism many people feel about God. However, Dawkins’ major argument is that the God spoken about in religious literature contradicts science. If we are to assume (as is the teaching of Emanuel Synagogue and the movements with which it is affiliated - the Masorti, Progressive and Renewal approaches) that religious literature is not the word of

God but the word of human attempting to understand our connection with God, then we cannot use science to prove that God does not exist. In other words Torah does not tell us as much as what God is as what our ancestors thought about God. We can accept those aspects of their teaching that have consonance with our understanding of life. We can agree that the existence of God cannot be proved and that the God in whom some believe does not necessarily do or say all the things attributed to God in any scripture.

The one thing that we know of God in the tradition of Torah and our ancestors is that they understood that there is a unity in creation and purpose in life. In fact, the name our ancestors gave God in the Torah is a form of the verb “to be”. In other words, those who reject God like Dawkins assert that the universe is only an exchange of matter and energy. Those who believe in God (or some sort of spiritual “life force” or “higher energy”) believe that there is a unity in creation prior to the big bang that is the source of beingness and consciousness in the universe. I count myself as one of those believers, a person of faith, understanding that belief is an assumption (or another sense) that cannot be proved.

I understand the Torah as the attempt by our ancestors to draw down God (or creative or cosmic) consciousness and beingness and establish ways of connection for their descendants – communities of like minded people who would exist into the future. Just like I at times make wrong statements and fallible teachings, so too did they. As I have often written and said, I cannot believe that statements in the Torah that establish a second class status for women, that discriminate against homosexuals and that justify genocide can be literal words from the God of creation and being in which I believe. On the other hand, there are teachings from the Torah and from the prophets inspired by Torah that have become touchstones for the highest aspirations of humanity and entered into the teachings of other faith communities, among them: “You shall love your neighbour like yourself”, “Beat your swords into ploughshares”, and “Justice, justice shall you pursue”. Teachings that affirm the oneness and interconnectivity of life must be expanded and applied, especially so in this potentially fractious time we face as a human species. I believe this is what our ancestors, the first teachers of Torah, intended.

In other words, to serve God through Torah and mitzvot is to learn how to study the Torah and do just what our ancestors have done for thousands of years: limit and contextualise the teachings that undermine life’s creative impulse, and elaborate those that enhance the ultimate goals of justice, compassion and peace. We can only do this if we truly grapple with the words of Torah and have the courage to engage in this process.

The pursuit of Torah requires us to break the chains not just of physical servitude but also intellectual narrowness. We know this from the fact that the two forms of disgrace mentioned in the Haggadah which we overcame are physical slavery and idolatry. Idolatry stems from ignorance. In Hebrew, the Exodus from Egypt is known in Hebrew as *Yetziat Mitzraim*. Pronounced differently, the Hebrew word Egypt (*Mitzrayim*) becomes *Metzarim* – the narrow places. That is, our freedom was gained as we broke out of the “narrow places”. Judaism demands that we break free from ignorance and narrow ideas. The Torah begins with the words “let there be light” (as in enlightenment) and the first thing for which we pray in the *Amidah* is “knowledge, wisdom and understanding”. The word “Torah” means teaching. Judaism teaches that we should have faith, not fear, in pursuing knowledge, wisdom and understanding. The expanding of our consciousness is one of the greatest gifts from God there is.

On Shavuot, we celebrate the gift of Torah – the first document in human history attempting to draw down God consciousness for an entire people to serve the Life Force. We are to have no other gods beside that Life Force, and therefore, we are asked to “smash the idols”. Accordingly, this year at Shavuot (and perhaps every year to come) we will celebrate with a Festival of Dangerous Ideas. I will present “Smashing the Idols: Torahlatry”; “Religion as a Human Construct”; and “The Myth of the 613 mitzvot”. Elsewhere in TELL you will see a fuller list of some of the topics to be addressed, each in a ten minute teaching. We will explore many ideas that counter status quo assumptions that keep us in narrow intellectual straits – but always with the larger purpose of serving the One that unites us, of which we are all part.

Rabbi Jeffrey B Kamins

**Shabbat Tot**

A short & very noisy prayer service tailored for young children

Parents & grandparents welcome

First Friday of the month  
5:00pm - 6:00pm  
Children aged 2 - 5  
Next date: 7 May

# 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
- draw on weekly Torah parsha for spiritual development
- Jewish chanting

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Emanuel Synagogue Cultural Fund presents:

# Fear & Desire

By Alana Ruben Free

Sunday 2 May, 5:00pm • Tickets \$10 at door

Performed in a rehearsed reading by Jewish actress Lee Ann Simons and Vee Malnar.

The New York-based playwright Alana will be visiting to direct the reading and to lead a discussion about the psychology of Jewish mother/daughter relationships.

*How do you trust life if you don't trust your mother?*

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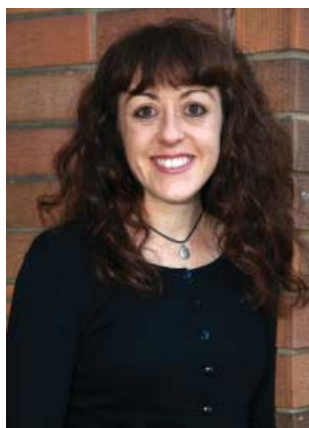
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# YELLADIM

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.

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Sometimes do you get the feeling that the universe is trying to say something to you? Trying to get your attention and have you focus on a particular issue or part of your life? I do and during the last month I think the universe has taken the equivalent of a large wooden plank and has been beating me over the head with it so that I take notice of the message. I just want to say; "universe, I think I've heard your message!" Let me tell you what happened.

First, I was invited to speak with the Netzer madrichim at their chinuch seminar about Shabbat observance. They were engaged in an exploration of the ways in which different communities and people mark the Shabbat and make the time special. It was a wonderful discussion, and as part of my research before I spoke with them, I discovered a book on my shelf called "The Gates of Shabbat." I had not spent much time reading this book and that was a mistake. I opened it and began to read about the three important goals of Shabbat: to rest and stop work, to have joy/oneg and to bring a spirit of holiness. It then suggested different ways in which we could possibly bring those elements and spirit into our lives. As I read and discussed these goals with the madrichim I realised that I was craving exactly what the Shabbat could provide, a space and time away from the pressures of the week, a time of joy, beauty and peace. A moment when the incessant noise and intrusions of the outside world are held at bay for a few hours and a sanctuary is created, what Abraham Joshua Heschel called "an island in time." The book said that we too often focus, when we speak about Shabbat observance, on what we can't do on Shabbat and suggests we refocus instead and look at the positive ways in which we can bring the elements of Shabbat: rest, joy and holiness, into our day.

As these thoughts were circulating in my mind, percolating as it were, in my brain, I caught up on reading the newspaper and my favourite section of the Sunday paper, "Sunday Life." I read two of them in one week, as I said, I was catching up on reading, and I read two articles by Sarah Wilson, one talking about taking Sunday as a day of rest, and the other about how important it is to take time out for ourselves. She quotes a study by Dan Beuttner: "a long and healthy life can be boiled down to nine stupidly simple factors. One of which is taking a day out each week to switch off. Beuttner's research surveyed the Blue Zones (places in the world where people live longer than average) and found a day of complete rest added years to life expectancy. In days past it was called observing the Sabbath and it entailed a full shut down- no shopping, no errands and no updating Twitter." (Sarah Wilson Sunday Life March 28<sup>th</sup> 2010) The following week, she wrote about taking time out and what can happen when you do. She talks about "clear days" days during which you do not deal with your usual work but instead make space to be creative. Apparently Google has something called 20% time which gives employees one day a week to work on something different. Google News and Gmail both emerged from this. She quotes Madisyn Taylor who takes one day a week and turns off the phone, creates a beautiful space and then meditates with a notebook. She does not leave the house all day and she makes a special space where her mind can be free. It is then she finds she is most creative. (Sarah Wilson, Sunday Life April 11<sup>th</sup> 2010)

So thoughts of Shabbat and taking time and space in order to make the rest of my life more creative and productive and even perhaps longer, were spinning around in my head. I started to think again about drawing a line between work and the rest of life. These days they too easily merge and blend into one. There are no more firm boundaries. We do not leave work when we go home, it travels with us wherever we go. Our internet, our phones, our gadgets make us always available, always "on." No more do we leave work at the office, we take it along and for me, it was becoming a heavy load of baggage I was carrying. Days off were not days off, time away was not time away. And the more I read, the more I realised that my Shabbat was not a Shabbat and then came Melbourne.

Last weekend our family gathered from the corners of the country and made pilgrimage to Melbourne for a bar mitzvah. For weeks we discussed what we would wear, what events were planned and most of all, what we would do about the Shabbat, because, you see, my family in Melbourne are shomer Shabbat. We wondered how we would keep the children entertained, what they would do without their electronic games, ipods and computers to keep them busy and distracted. How on earth were we going to cope? Let me tell you, we coped brilliantly, in fact, I might even venture to say, that we thrived. Towards the end of the party after the shule service I realised that I had wonderful conversations with cousins and friends with whom I had not spoken in ages even though we had been at events together on many occasions. I found myself relaxing into the energy of the day, knowing that I could not speak on my phone, collect messages. If someone needed to contact me they would have to wait until after sundown. I connected with people and was in the moment in a way I am usually not. It was incredible to feel the stresses and intrusions of the outside world just slip away allowing me to float for a moment in a calm, gentle bubble of love, family and celebration. It was a beautiful, peaceful Shabbat, a glimpse of what possibilities the Shabbat can hold.

Now I must admit that I did still drive to the bar mitzvah, I warmed a bottle for Willow in the microwave before we left, cooked a piece of toast, made a coffee and did not in any way keep the Shabbat in a traditional manner but by being with my family in their home, experiencing a different Shabbat observance I realised that I could enrich my own life by thinking about the way in which I currently celebrate Shabbat. I began to wonder what conversations we were missing out on with Willow when we spent time on other things, or put on a dvd for her to watch. What would we miss as she grows older and has the host of electronic games to keep her entertained or distracted. I can't imagine that I am going to observe Shabbat in a traditional manner but I think that I finally received the message from the universe that it may

be time to take stock, re-evaluate and make an effort to create a sacred space on Shabbat, to take one day out of seven to truly be in the moment, not distracted by work and the outside world, just escape for a time into the world of rest, holiness and joy.

But how to make that happen? The wonderful "Gates Of Shabbat" suggests a model which can guide our decisions about the activities and tasks we may choose to do on Shabbat and to create an observance for ourselves. For some people that is following the traditional definitions of work but we may find other creative ways to bring Shabbat rest into our lives. It has one caution though "This book is not suggesting that a family day at the beach or painting or museum going are in and of themselves Shabbat activities. They must be part of a larger whole that takes its shape from the home and synagogue ceremonies described in (this book)" pg 54

So here is their list of criteria to consider when deciding upon a Shabbat activity. I will be working on thinking about these questions and how to make my Shabbat special, I hope you will too and share your thoughts with me.

1. Will this activity lend Shabbat a quality of kedusha/ holiness?
2. Is this activity done for its own sake or is it merely a means to an end?
3. Does this activity imbue Shabbat with a sense of liberation?
4. Does this activity help cultivate a sense of wonder at God's creation?
5. Does this activity advance the spirit of Shabbat embodied in the home and synagogue celebrations of the seventh day?
6. Does this activity bring me closer to the Jewish people?

(Gates of Shabbat pg 55)

I wish you all a restful month and many beautiful Shabbatot.

*Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio*



Talented makeup artist with extensive experience in weddings, beauty, fashion, stills, theatre, television and cinema, Vardit Lahav has led a large number of make up productions during the last 10 years, including catwalk and catalogues for international brands such as Castro, Champion, BedHead Tigi, and critically acclaimed Opera productions, such as A Midsummer Nights Dream directed by Baz Luhrman, and Samson et Delilah, directed by Academy Award Winner William Friedkin.

Contact: 04 0329 6665, (02)9328 2153

## From Rabbi Jacobson: Blessing Our Daughter



As I write this article for our TELL magazine, I am on paternity leave, sitting at home in our living room with Lisa and our daughter Hannah (who for the moment is sleeping soundly in her bassinet.) The past ten days have been the most amazing days of our lives (and we reckon that there are many, many amazing days yet to come). What an incredibly special blessing it has already been to have Hannah as part of our lives. Both Lisa and I are thankful that she is healthy, and both of us are so very excited to nurture her and watch her grow in the days ahead.

For me, the past two weeks have been filled with very special Jewish moments too. Every Shabbat, whether Lisa and I have guests at our Shabbat table, are spending Shabbat with friends, or are celebrating Shabbat at home alone, we begin our meal with songs and prayers. We sing Shalom Aleichem, I sing Eishet Chayil (a woman of valour) to Lisa, and then I recite Kiddush. We then wash our hands and recite Ha-Motzi over our challah.

Hannah's arrival has brought a new ritual to our Shabbat dinner table. On Friday night 9 April, less than thirty hours after Hannah was born, I was standing next to Lisa in her hospital room, our eyes looking at our beautiful daughter. We placed our hands on Hannah's head and said, *y'simeich Elohim k'Sarah Rivkah Leah v'Rachel* – may God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel (the four most revered matriarchs of Jewish life). I then continued by offering the Priestly Blessing: *Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yish'm'reka* (May God bless you and protect you), *ya'er Adonai panav eilekha vi'chuneka* (May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you), and *yisa Adonai panav eilekha v'yaseim l'kha shalom* (May God's face be guided towards you and always show you peace). I have said Shabbat prayers for years, but last Friday night, standing next to Lisa as we blessed our daughter for the first time, was one of the most special and moving Jewish experiences I have ever felt.

The specialness of the occasion hit home for me the following morning. The traditional Jewish custom when celebrating the birth of a daughter is to wait until the Shabbat morning (or in some communities – the next day on which Torah is read) to publicly announce her name and also recite a prayer of healing for her mother. (For the birth of a son, the naming and prayers of healing take place at his brit milah – ceremony of circumcision). Having the opportunity to be called to the Torah, to chant the Haftarah, and to receive a special blessing from my colleagues and community was an extraordinary moment.

I found the Torah portion and Haftarah portion to be equally appropriate for the birth of our daughter, even though both readings included somewhat tragic episodes beyond human comprehension. You may wonder how I could say, first as a husband and father, and second as a rabbi how these readings were appropriate for the birth of our daughter. More important than the tragedies which the Torah and Haftarah revealed, was the way in which the characters in these stories rose above these tragedies, how they continued to approach life's more difficult moments with compassion, using community, tradition, and their strength in God to help them in their daily journeys.

That is the beauty of our tradition. Each week of our lives is filled with incredible moments – some easier experiences, and some more difficult circumstances. Shabbat offers us an opportunity to centre ourselves. We check in with one another, recite prayers of thanksgiving, and offer prayers of hope for the week ahead. How special it is for us to have such a beautiful daughter. How special it is to be able to include her in our Shabbat rituals, to bless her each week, to do everything in our power to insure her well-being, and also to be able to call upon the support of our community, our tradition, and God.

Lisa and I are deeply appreciative of all of the congratulatory notes, "Mazal Tovs," words of encouragement and gifts that we have received. We look forward to celebrating Hannah's arrival and officially welcoming her into the Jewish community and our Emanuel family at her Simchat Bat on Sunday morning, 13 June.

*Rabbi Paul, Lisa, and Hannah Jacobson*

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The 70th Annual General Meeting  
of  
Emanuel Synagogue will take place  
on  
**MONDAY 31 MAY 2010 at 7:30 p.m.**  
**at 7 Ocean Street Woollahra.**

All members of the Congregation  
are invited to attend.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD  
OF EMANUEL SYNAGOGUE

G Woolf, Hon Secretary

Rabbi Paul and Lisa Jacobson invite you to celebrate with them at the Simchat Bat of their daughter Hannah Mae.



**Sunday 13 June, 9:00am**

**9:00am: Shacharit (Morning) Services  
for Rosh Chodesh (New Jewish Month)**

**10:00am SHARP: Simchat Bat Ceremony  
(Welcoming Hannah into the Jewish community  
and our Emanuel family)**

Morning tea to follow



In lieu of gifts, please consider a donation to the Sydney Children's Hospital.

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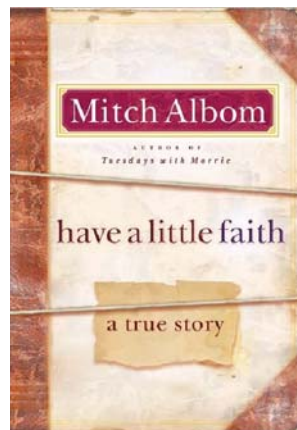


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Postal 7 Ocean Street Woollahra NSW 2025

## People of the Book Club

**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**

# May Highlights

## Lunch 'n' Learn

**Saturday 8 May, After services until 2:00pm**  
**The Ethics of Money and Stuff.**

Every day we interact with other people and their stuff and we engage in financial transactions. Rabbi Ninio will lead a discussion, considering some difficult ethical decisions about money and possessions. Should a synagogue use lotteries to raise money? If you see something extremely valuable at a garage sale for \$2 do you tell the seller its true value and pay that, or do you pay the \$2 and get a bargain? Someone asks your opinion on their new dress, you hate it, do you tell them?

## Pirkei Avot

**Saturday 8 May, 4:30pm – 6:00pm**  
**Location: Rabbi Jacobson's Home**

**Contact 9328 7833 for address and directions**

Between Pesach and Shavuot it is tradition to study a collection of wise sayings by our ancient rabbis. Join us for s'udah sh'lishit (afternoon tea) and lively discussion. Our afternoon will conclude with Havdalah.

## Womens Rosh Chodesh Group

**Thursday 13 May, 8:00pm**

**Contact 9328 7833 for location details**

Secret Jewish women's business celebrated in conjunction with the new Hebrew month/moon.

## Annual Jewish Spirituality Day

**Sunday 30th May, 10:00am - 3:00pm**

**\$20 members, \$30 non-members**

**Please bring a plate of vegetarian food to share for lunch.**

**Info and bookings: [info@neshamalife.org](mailto:info@neshamalife.org)**

Join us for a day of diverse sessions of Jewish spirituality. Sessions will be held simultaneously so there will be lots of choice. Presenters: Imanuel Suttner (Eneagram), Sande Bruch (art and creativity), Judy Kater (relaxation and healing), Michelle Mahrer (dance), Gad Levy (Tai Chi), Alla Melman (yoga postures), Ian Mansell (Chi Gung), Nadav Kahn (music), Orna Triguboff (meditation and kabbalah text study).

## EMANUEL SYNAGOGUE

# SHAVUOT CHILDREN'S SERVICE

**WEDNESDAY 19 MAY, 10:00AM**

**A service filled with story and song. Engage with the Torah scrolls and see them up close.**

**Plus an activity and ice cream!**



EMANUEL SCHOOL

## Opportunity Class for Year 5, 2011

**Applications are now open for Emanuel School's dedicated Opportunity Class for Year 5, 2011.**

Emanuel School is one of the few independent schools to offer such a class. The Years 5 and 6 OC classes form an important part of Emanuel's approach to meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. Other strategies (Years K-12) include differentiation, extension, enrichment and acceleration.

All successful applicants will qualify for a scholarship worth 25% of High School tuition fees for at least four years. Several students will qualify for additional High School scholarships (Years 7-12).

The Opportunity Class aims to challenge academically gifted students by providing a range of stimulating programmes across all key learning areas. These programmes also allow our students to tackle major philosophical issues at an advanced level.

Students use laptops to conduct research and undertake studies on relevant local and world issues. Discussions involving higher order thinking skills are regular classroom practice. Students benefit by being with like-minded peers, working at a level commensurate with their ability, while still interacting with the entire year group.

Applications close on Friday 11 June 2010 for testing on Friday 25 June 2010. An information evening will be held on Monday 31 May 2010, 7.30pm at the School.

For further information please contact Head of Primary Mr Gabriel Pallo on 02 8383 7318 or email [gpallo@emanuelschool.nsw.edu.au](mailto:gpallo@emanuelschool.nsw.edu.au)



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EMANUEL SCHOOL

20 Stanley Street Randwick NSW 2031  
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EMANUEL SCHOOL Where the Individual Excels

We are thrilled to announce Emanuel Idol – our synagogue’s own singing competition to find a winner who will be rewarded with an amazing prize of a recording studio session!

This recording session is at Brighton Boulevard Production Studios – thanks to the generosity of Tony Buchen whose studio has produced recordings for singers Lior, Tim Finn, John Butler, The Whitlams, Andy Bull and Blue King Brown!!!

So come on and send in your entries as fast as you can, entries close on the 31st of May.

Our panel of esteemed judges includes:

- Ilan Kidron of Potbelleez fame
- Yaron Hallis of Monsieur Camembert – winner of 2 Aria awards
- Andrea Catzel – Director of Music Emanuel Synagogue
- Adam Majsay Director of Music Emanuel School

Auditions for a place in the top 10 will be held at Emanuel Synagogue during the week of the 13th of June.

Those top 10 performers will be on stage at Emanuel Synagogue, in front of friends, family and an excited audience for the final judging of Emanuel Idol on the 27th of June.

Join us one and all for a fun filled evening with music and song and let’s support our finalists and give them some true Emanuel encouragement!!!!

**Entry forms available at [www.emanuel.org.au](http://www.emanuel.org.au) or contact Belinda on 9328 7833.**

**Applications are open to anyone aged over 12. Entries close 31 May 2010.**

**GOOD LUCK!**

## Pizza with the Rabbi

If you’ve celebrated Bar or Bat Mitzvah, come along with your friends for pizza, lively discussion and other great surprises.



**Mondays 3, 10, 17 & 24 May**

**6:00pm - 7:15pm in Rabbi Jacobson’s home**

**Call 9328 7833 for directions**

**Enquiries: [pjacobson@emanuel.org.au](mailto:pjacobson@emanuel.org.au)**

**This term’s subject: ‘You are what you eat’**

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*Life is Magnifique*

# Shavuot and our Festival of Dangerous Ideas

Join us for Shavuot and our “Festival of Dangerous Ideas”.

Throughout the evening we will be challenged, enlightened, entertained and perhaps even outraged by a plethora of 10 minute addresses on “dangerous ideas!” Hear about “Smashing Idols: Torahlatry” “Using Nazi Medical Experiments” “Jewish Revenge” “God as a woman” “Religion as a Human Construct” “Jews who are not wanted in Israel” and much more. Come and join in our festival, make a contribution and celebrate dangerous ideas.

And if food for the soul and mind were not enough temptation, we also have food for the body, as they say “*ein kemach ein Torah*” “without sustenance there is no Torah!” Throughout the evening we will be serving a delicious pasta dinner and a feast of dangerous cheesecakes: white chocolate, strawberry, chocolate swirl and many more: you won’t be able to resist!

At Shavuot during Temple times our ancestors brought offerings of their first fruits. Since that time Jews bring baskets of fruit to decorate the synagogue during the festival. This year, instead of fruit baskets, we are inviting everyone to bring along a can or two of food for us to give to the needy in our community.

Along with our Shavuot service for adults we will also have a service especially for children. There will be a service with stories and songs, the chance to see the Torah up close, a craft activity and ice cream!

## Services:

### **Tikkun Leil Shavuot ‘Festival of Dangerous Ideas’ Tuesday 18 May, 6:00pm – 12:00am**

Ten minute bites at controversial and ‘dangerous’ ideas.

### **Shavuot First Day Service Wednesday 19 May, 9:00am – 12:00pm**

Join our intimate and warm Masorti minyan as we hear the story of the giving of the Ten Commandments and the prophecy of Ezekiel that has inspired Jewish mysticism.

### **Shavuot Children’s Service Wednesday 19 May, 10:00am**

A service filled with story and song.

### **Shavuot Second Day Service Masorti minyan Thursday 20 May, 9:00am – 12:00pm**

Read the beautiful book of Ruth, followed by the recitation of Yizkor in memory of our loved ones.



## **Walter Carter Funerals**

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## Yoga at Emanuel

**Saturday 8 May, 9:00am - 10:00am**

Alla Melman will be leading a special Jewish Yoga class, it is free and all are welcome.

Alla is a physiotherapist and trained yoga teacher. She has a passion for combining Jewish teachings with Yoga. Please bring a yoga mat (let us know if you need us to have one there for you).

It will be held in the Education Centre upstairs at Emanuel Synagogue, prior to the Renewal service.



One of our members, Lilly Skurnik has been duly recognised for her many accomplishments over the years.

Lily is the recipient of an Achievement Award presented by Paul Lynch, Minister for Ageing, at a wonderful ceremony for the NSW Senior Citizens Awards 2010 on Sunday 21st March 2010 at City Recital Hall, Angel Place.

Lilly has been the president of La'Pid group for people with a vision impairment for nearly 20 years, has been a speaker for Vision Australia, giving lectures to several organisations and the media and has spoken out about the importance of effectively training guide dogs. She is passionate about helping others and has worked as a councillor for social welfare and the prevention of child abuse. Lilly is a published author of two autobiographical books Shalom this is Lilly and Out of Sight.

We wishing her a hearty Mazeltov. May she continue in good health contributing to humanity in her innately wise, caring and loving way 'till a hundred 'n 'tsvanzic.

*Tanya Fox*



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# Shnat Update from Gemma Hilton

This is just an update on Shnat Netzer so far. Ever since we arrived in Israel, we have been having various adventures from hiking in the Negev, chilling on Tel Aviv beach and exploring the ancient city of Jerusalem. The etgarnicks have been learning for the past two months what it means to live as a community and to take care of our own home. This has presented some challenging moments but we are definitely learning a lot.

Some adventures include an etgarnick wandering off during one of our first tours of the old city to find a bathroom. Somehow though, he got himself a tour of the Christian quarter after we were just told not to go into that area. He managed though to get himself back safe and sound.

During our time in Etgar we have to have asefot (discussions) in which we discuss the different issues of the week which range from our guest policy to avocados, (the avocado discussion lasted longer than the guest policy!) There is also a bit of a friendly war going on between the boys and girls in which various mattresses and shower heads have been removed and hidden around the apartment. But in all seriousness we are all here for each other and definitely come together when needed.

During the week we have different classes in which learn Hebrew, Zionism, Judaism, Hasbara, Hadracha and many more things that will equip us to become better Bogrim when we return. I have found the education to be amazing and really feel prepared to come back and educate my chanichim. We also have siyurs (excursions) once a week which allow us to explore Israel. One of my favourite siyurs was definitely visiting the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; these amazing sites really show how diverse Jerusalem really is and how sacred it is to different groups. Another amazing siyur was in Tel Aviv, where we had a cultural tour of the graffiti surrounding one of the neighbourhoods. It definitely gave us an insight into Israeli life.

Another part of Etgar is the tiyuls (trips) in which we go away as a community and explore more of Israel. On our most recent tiyul we went to the south of Israel to Ein Gedi and Eilat which involved lots of hiking, swimming and chilling on the beach. We were able to climb a mountain to see the 4 borders of Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt and it really brought to home just how close Israel is to its neighbours and how small the borders really are.

I have definitely found Shnat so far to be an incredible and challenging experience. While I get homesick at times, I have found I have made a new home and family that will support while in this new land. Recently, returning from a trip overseas during chofesh (break) I commented to a friend of mine how I was "returning home to my family" to which they replied "you're going back to Australia?" I then explained to them how Etgar has become my new family and home. Shnat is definitely changing my life for the better and I highly recommend it to anyone who wants an amazing experience to make friends for life and learn life lessons.

I miss everyone lots and will see you all in 8 months.  
Lots of love  
Gemma



	<p>A space for our youngest children and their carers to meet, talk and play.</p>	
<p>A great opportunity to get to know other new parents and their families.</p>		<p>Term 2: 23 April - 2 July</p>
	<p>Children aged 0 - 3 10:00am -12:00pm Friday mornings during school terms.</p>	



I want to take you for a short trip through time – to another century. To a time when things like the State of Israel, television and computers did not exist, let alone the internet, Twitter and space travel.

Let's go to a time when the Jewish population of Australia – and Jewish observance itself – were in serious decline: not because of anti-Semitism but rather the opposite.

In the early part of the 20th century, Jews were regarded as a “good catch”, and many of them sought the respect and acceptance that they believed went with giving up their Jewish practice. By the mid-1920s, around 25 per cent of all weddings involving a Jew were to non-Jewish partners. It is also worth noting that at this time, and despite the opening of two Orthodox synagogues in Melbourne, the overall number of people attending synagogue was also dropping.

At this time, the Jewish community fell into two distinct groups: the minority who were observant, coming mainly from the Anglo Jewish tradition, and the majority, who had little or no interest in Judaism at all.

Those people seeking to establish a Progressive movement in Australia, having witnessed the attraction of a service that included women and used the local language as well as Hebrew for prayer, were almost exclusively aiming at recruiting people from the second group: those who had virtually abandoned their Judaism. However, this did not prevent them from receiving tremendous hostility from the orthodox group. This was well demonstrated when they sought to purchase a Lulav and etrog and were refused and told that “This is a terrible thing that you are doing, you are the way to perdition.”

The Parasha at the time of that first Progressive Shabbat in April 1930 was Vayikra. It was the first verse of Leviticus and describes how God literally called out (vayikra) to Moses and told him to teach the Children of Israel to be a holy and good people.

These events occurred after the Exodus where, at the significant age of 80, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and toward a new destiny as the Jewish people. As God called out to the people of Israel they commenced an epic journey – first through the 40 years of wandering and since that time as a nation, a race, a culture and a religion that has overcome many trials and tribulations and yet remains a symbol of what a civilised society can and should look like.

Since that time many things have changed. And even since that time in April 1930, many things have changed. Most importantly, from being a tiny group of people seeking to establish Torah-based egalitarian Judaism “at the edge of the Diaspora”, we are now part of the largest and most vibrant group in the Jewish world today. From the small group who went on to establish Temple Beth Israel in St Kilda 80 years ago, our regional union now includes 25 congregations and affiliated organisations across Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

As Progressive Zionists, we have the largest delegation within the Australian section of the World Zionist Congress.

We are also the strongest financial and moral supporters of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism and its work to care for refugees; to develop Progressive Judaism in Israel; and to fight to make Israel the open, pluralistic democracy that was outlined in its Declaration of Independence.

During this year, our movement is actually celebrating a number of important anniversaries: including 80 years for Temple Beth Israel; 60 years for the Leo Baeck Centre in Kew; 50 years for North Shore Temple Emanuel in Sydney; 30 years for Temple Shalom on the Gold Coast; 25 years for a Progressive minyan in Canberra; 20 years for our congregation in Hong Kong – and in addition, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the time when Rabbi John Levi, received his ordination as a rabbi.

In addition to celebrating all of these special anniversaries, we will be celebrating a few of our own special events.

Those will include launching the first ever Siddur adapted especially for the Southern Hemisphere – the World Union edition of Mishkan T'filah. It will also include bringing a number of international scholars, musicians and speakers to work with our lay and professional leaders, as well as with our congregations. We will also be making special efforts to support and develop new congregations throughout our region, including Shanghai, China, the Sunshine Coast in Queensland and Bendigo in Victoria, as well as having a special biennial conference in Canberra in November.

All in all, we will have a brief look at our many achievements and then, more importantly, we will look forward to being able to offer more people access to a Judaism that respects all religions, including other streams of Judaism; a Judaism that shows equal respect to men and women; a Judaism that values and encourages Tikkun Olam – making the world a better place; and, most particularly, a Judaism that draws on the values of our Torah and traditions whilst celebrating them within the context of the contemporary world.

We hope that you will help us to celebrate our 80 years of progress – by getting involved in your congregation; by supporting the UIA Progressive Trust; and by making sure that Judaism is a meaningful part of your life.

# From the Board

Since last month's TELL the Board has met once, but the President meets weekly with the leadership, and committee work and voluntary activities are ongoing.

The board discussed the following subjects at its March meeting:

### Redevelopment.

Gordon Woolf continues to drive the redevelopment process through Council and associated mazes. We looked at some wonderful new state of the art seats that will add greatly to our comfort as we pray through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### Strategic Plan.

The Board has embarked on a professionally led strategic review that will involve the congregation and staff in reviewing where we are and where we wish to go over the next several years.

### Environmental audit.

Our CEO has identified a number of initiatives that will reduce our impact on the environment as well hopefully saving costs and wastage of scarce resources.

### Music and Prayer.

The board continues to consult with and assist the Rabbis in developing the type and style of religious services the congregation wish to attend, including in particular musical options for the future. We have secured the services, for the third year in a row, of Simon Lobelson for the Progressive service and also for the first time in the Masorti service, Martin Yafe, who visited us briefly from Argentina last year

### Finances and membership.

The board and staff closely monitor the financial position of the shul. We appreciate that times are tight for many members and try to assist where possible rather than lose members. Nevertheless there is a need to generate revenue this year if we are to continue to provide the services that we wish to provide to the membership and the community generally.

*Rodney Brender*

## Jewish Spirituality Day

**Sunday 30 May, 10:00am-3:00pm, Emanuel Synagogue**  
**Early bird (before 10 May): \$30 non member, \$15 member**  
**At the door: \$40 non-member, \$25 member**  
**Includes delicious vegetarian lunch**  
**Info and bookings: [info@neshamalife.org](mailto:info@neshamalife.org)**

Time	Topic	Presenter
10:00am	Registration	
10:15am	Sefirot (Chakra) Yoga Story Telling	Alla Melman Donna Jacob-Seiff
	Self Awareness and the Eneagram	Immanuel Suttner
11:15am	Kabbalah Sound Healing	Judy Kater & Orna Triguboff
	Tai Chi and Psalms Healing Massage	Gad Levy Nathan Jacobs
12:15pm	Lunch	
1:15pm	Chi gung of the Heart Jewga	Ian Mansell Sara Myerowitz
	Angel-Human Connection: text study Inner Child, Mother Letters and Art	Orna Triguboff Sande Bruch
2:15pm	Closing meditation, chanting and Chai Gung movement	Nadav Kahn & Ben-Zion Weiss



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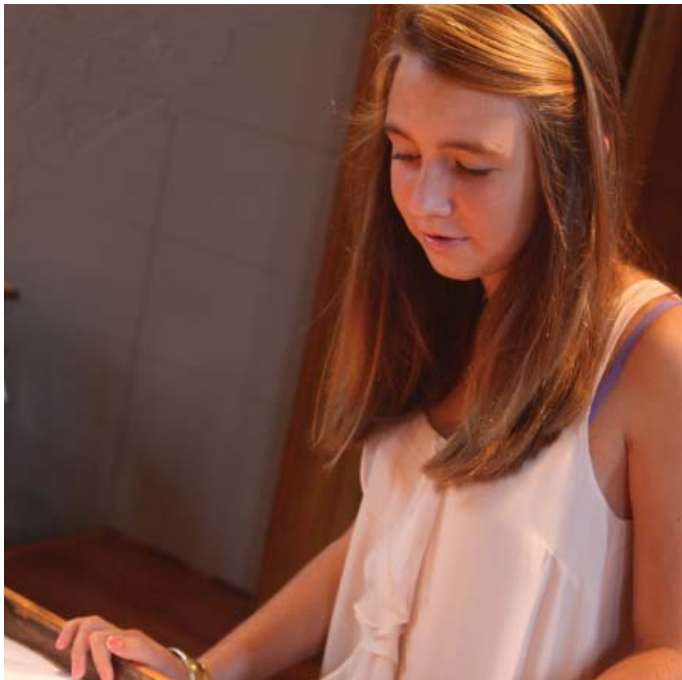


**Name:** Zachary Lazarus  
**School:** Emanuel School  
**Hobbies:** Tennis, Football, Computers and Gaming  
**Any pets:** A dog called Toby  
**Any dislikes:** Nothing I really dislike

**About you:** My favourite TV Show is the Simpsons, because I like anything that makes me laugh. My idea about my future career is to be a Stockbroker in the New World of 'Wall street'. My favourite subject at school is geography. On weekends I enjoy going walking with my dog, playing with my friends, computer gaming and boating. I also enjoy the time I have with my parents.

**Social justice/charity projects:**  
I am currently not involved with any social or charity projects but as I get older I would involve myself with Animal Welfare.

**What I will remember about preparing for my barmitzvah:** Mainly my cool and funny Barmitzvah teacher, Kim.



**Name:** Hannah Rebecca Vasin  
**School:** Rose Bay Secondary College  
**Hobbies:** Netball, photography, art  
**Any pets:** 1 dog - Baxter  
**Any dislikes:** Licorice

**About you:** My favourite school subjects are PE, art and cooking! My favourite TV show is Gossip Girl. I love netball and I have been playing it for almost 8 years. When I grow up I either want to be a photographer or a marine biologist.

**Social justice/charity projects:**  
I am concerned about poverty all over the world. I want to help charity when I'm older.

**What I will remember about preparing for my barmitzvah:** Spending lots of time practising and organising the event.



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## Meet our Team:



**Danii Fischer**  
**PA to Rabbis / Front of House**

Danii joined the Emanuel Synagogue team at the beginning of 2010. Originally being named at Emanuel Synagogue, Danii then went to Moriah College for her school-life. Since finishing school, Danii has travelled around the globe, and visited Jewish communities and synagogues from New York to Hungary, whilst working in various Administrative roles, including being the Personal Assistant to the Principal at Kesser Torah College. With her family originating from Hungary, Danii speaks fluent Hungarian, and often goes back to visit family and friends and learn more about her family history. Having been part of the Jewish community all her life and with her continued interest in learning about her Jewish heritage, Danii fits right in with the Emanuel family.

**Irene Juravleva**  
**Coordinator of Digital Operations**

Irene was born in Russia, where she trained and worked as a computer programmer until 1992, when she moved to Australia together with her husband Alex and three children Mitya, Sonya and Liza. Irene had a challenging first couple of years, learning English, doing courses in administration, getting her drivers license and getting used to life in Sydney. In 1994 she came to Temple Emanuel on a volunteer placement, but after four months she was offered permanent employment and has now been with the Synagogue for 16 years.

Irene is responsible for maintaining the database and ensuring that the office computers function smoothly and efficiently. Nearly all the information coming from Emanuel Synagogue passes through Irene's hands – including mailouts, newsletters, emails, flyers, etc.

Irene has always enjoyed working with the other staff and rabbis and loves the friendly atmosphere of the office.

In her spare time, Irene enjoys spending time with her family, reading, going to the movies, travelling and listening to music.



### Family Education Day Sunday 16 May, 10:00am - 12:30pm

Celebrate the festival of Shavuot with your children at Emanuel Synagogue. Shavuot celebrates the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. On Shavuot the custom is to stay up the entire night (leil) of Shavuot studying with the community in order to experience the standing at Sinai. As part of the fulfilment of this custom and of the mitzvah to teach your children of Judaism, we would like to invite all the families of Beit Midrash Emanuel and Emanuel Synagogue to join us in a day of study.

**This will be a wonderful opportunity to join with your children in creative learning.**



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# Wedding and Bar/Bat Mitzvah Expo

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

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## Emanuel Idol

Emanuel Synagogue is looking for a local singing superstar!

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

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Monday & Thursday:  
6:45am Morning Minyan Neuweg  
Friday:  
6:00pm Erev Shabbat Service  
6:30pm in daylight saving time  
Saturday:  
9:00am Conservative Shabbat  
Service - Neuweg  
10:00am Progressive Shabbat  
Service - Main Sanctuary

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