

Congregation Beth Hillel & Beth Israel, Inc.

Elul, Tishri, Cheshvan, Kislev 5740/41 Number 286

Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec. 1980

Message From The Rabbis

Proverbs act as barometers, reflecting life, in terse, relevant and engaging language. But life is often beset by contradiction and paradox, therefore, proverbs, too, can clash and collide.

We hear it said that "the first step is the hardest", and we know that this is true. Call it habit, apathy, or laxity, but even with the best intentions, it takes effort to turn over a new leaf.



HAPPY
NEW YEAR

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We also hear it said that "new brooms sweep clean." This, too, is an accurate observation, borne out by human behavior. A new experience generates bustling interest and enthusiasm before the novelty finally wears off, and the zeal subsides.

Our Jewish year begins with a series of holidays, which tie in remarkably with these two seemingly-contradictory proverbs, but which blend and reconcile them skillfully. To be sure, the solemn Days of Awe are taxing on mind and life style, calling on us to examine our ways and to meaningfully return to G'd, Torah and mitzvos. On the other hand, the incomparably rich and rewarding atmosphere of an entire congregation assembled in prayer, united in thought, at one with G'd and man, engenders a gratifyingly happy enthusiasm. Little wonder, then, that the solemnity of Rosh HaShono and Yom Kippur is immediately followed by the joy of Sukkos and Simchas Torah.

May these Yomim Tovim serve as an auspicious beginning for a good, sweet, happy and prosperous year to come, for each and everyone!

Hearty *leshono tovo* wishes to each of you and your loved ones from us, our Rebbitzins, and children for good health and happiness in accordance with His wishes and blessing.

Rabbi Abraham L. Hartstein
Rabbi Shlomo Kahn

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PRAYER SCHEDULES

SHABBAT

		<i>Preceding</i>				<i>Day</i>	<i>Shema</i>
		<i>Evening</i>	<i>Morning</i>	<i>Mincha</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>before</i>
1980							
Oct.	4 Bereshis — Sermon (Blessing Month of Cheshvan)	6:20	8:45	6:35	7:09	6:10	9:40
Oct.	11 Noach (Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan)	6:05	8:30	6:25	6:57	6:20	9:40
Oct.	18 Lech Lecho — Sermon	6:00	8:45	6:15	6:47	6:30	9:45
Oct.	25 Vayero-Sermon	5:45	8:45	6:05	6:38	6:35	9:50
Nov.	1 Chaye Soro	4:35	8:45	5:00	5:30	5:40	8:55
Nov.	8 Toldos-Sermon (Kristall-Nacht Remembrance (Blessing Month of Kislev)	4:30	8:45	4:55	5:22	5:45	9:00
Nov.	15 Vayetze — Sermon	4:20	8:45	4:45	5:17	5:50	9:05
Nov.	22 Vayishlach	4:15	8:45	4:40	5:12	5:55	9:10
Nov.	29 Vayeshev-Sermon (Blessing Month of Teves)	4:15	8:45	4:35	5:09	6:00	9:10

WEEKDAYS

Mornings:	Sundays and Legal Holidays	8:00 A.M.
	Thanksgiving, Thursday, Nov. 27	8:00 A.M.
	Mondays and Thursdays	6:55 A.M.
	Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays	7:00 A.M.
Evenings:	September 14 to October 23rd	6:00 P.M.
	October 26th to November 27th	4:30 P.M.

(continued on next page)

PRAYER SCHEDULE (continued)**HOLIDAYS**

1980			Preceding Evening	Morning	Mincha	End
Sept.						
Wed. 10	Erev Rosh HaShono *			6:00	6:55	
Thur. 11	1st day Rosh HaShono-Sermon	6:55	7:30	6:15	7:49	
Fri. 12	2nd day Rosh HaShono-Sermon	7:49	7:30	6:55		
Sat. 13	Shabbos Shuvo - Sermon	6:55	8:45	7:15	7:46	
Sun. 14	Fast of Gedalyo		7:00	6:00	7:41	
Mon. 15	to Thurs. 18 Selichos		6:15	6:00		
Fri. 19	Erev Yom Kippur		6:30	1:30		
Sat. 20	Yom Kippur					
	Holiday begins Fri. evening 6:40 P.M.; Kol Nidre 6:50 P.M. (Sermon); Sat. morning Shacharis 8:15 A.M.; Reading of Torah 11:30 A.M.; Sermon 12:30 P.M.; Musaf 1:00 P.M.; Mincha 3:45 P.M.; Sermon & Yizkor 5:45 P.M.; Neila 6:15 P.M.; Conclusion 7:33 P.M.					
Wed. 24	Erev Sukkos *		7:00	6:35		
Thur. 25	1st day Sukkos - Sermon	6:30	8:30	6:55		
Fri. 26	2nd day Sukkos	6:55	8:30	6:35		
Sat. 27	Shabbos Chol Hamoed-Sermon	6:30	8:30	6:55	7:21	
Sun. 28	Chol Hamoed		8:00	6:00		
Mon. 29	& Tue. 30 Chol Hamoed		6:30	6:00		
October						
Wed. 1	Hoshano Rabbo *		6:15	6:20		
Thur. 2	Shemini Atzeres Yizkor Sermon	6:20	8:30	6:45		
Fri. 3	Simchas Torah	6:45	8:15	6:20		

Hakofos Thursday evening and Friday morning (9:15)

* ERUV TAVSHILIN on Wednesday, Sept. 10, Wednesday, Sept. 24, Wednesday, Oct. 1

TASHLICH after Mincha on the 1st day Rosh HaShono

HASHANO RABBO LERNEN Tuesday evening, September 30 — 7:00 P.M.

SPECIAL DAYS

ROSH CHODESH Friday, October 10, 1st day - morning 6:45 A.M.
Cheshvan Shabbos, October 11, 2nd day - morning 8:30 A.M.
Kislev Sunday, November 9 - morning 8:00 A.M.

FAST DAY Tzom Gedalyo (Fast of Gedalyo) Sunday, September 14th:

Fast begins 5:30 A.M.; Morning 7:00 A.M.; Mincha 6:00 P.M.; Fast ends 7:41 P.M.

SHENI-CHAMISHI-SHENI: Mon. Oct. 27-Thurs.Oct.30; Mon. Nov. 3-morning 6:45 A.M.

SHIURIM SCHEDULE:

Daily Halacha after Shacharis

Daily Leren after Maariv

Chumash Shiur Shabbos 45 minutes before Mincha

Halacha Shiur Shabbos after Mincha

Gemoro Shiur Shabbos night after Maariv

Ladies Shiur Monday 7:30 P.M.

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OUR CONGREGATION

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From The Desk Of The President

Members & Friends:

As we are about to enter the year 5741, let us pause for a moment and reflect with gratitude on the change which took place during 5740, the year which we have just concluded.

Congregation Beth Hillel & Beth Israel has emerged as a large viable congregation worthy of its founders, its heritage and traditions. The Congregation is respected and well thought of by the Jewish community, especially in our area. Each and everyone of us may be proud of having had some part in this important development. A revived interest and expression of loyalty has appeared, and it is to be hoped that this will not only remain, but continue to increase. Let us, therefore, resolve to continue working together for the benefit and continued improvement of our congregation.

May the Yomim Noroim awaken in us the good intentions to go on and continue in the spirit of devotion to our faith.

My best wishes for a Year of HEALTH-HAPPINESS-CONTENTMENT and PEACE to our revered Rabbis, to our Cantor, to my colleagues on the board, to all their respective families and to all Members and Friends.

L'shono Tovo
Oscar Wortsman

**First General Membership Meeting
Of New Congregation**

On May 11, 1980, the first general membership meeting of the newly-named Congregation Beth Hillel & Beth Israel took place under the chairmanship of President Oscar Wortsman. Called to order at 11:06 A.M., the meeting took place 60 days after Supreme Court approval of the merger on February 10, 1980. It followed by one day the historic Shabbos Service highlighting the merger.

Approval of the new by-laws of the merged congregations was followed by the financial report given by Asst. Treasurer Eric Hanau, in the absence of Treasurer Werner Heumann, who was on a trip. Mr. William B. Blank, Synagogue Committee chairman, reviewed the programs of the past and previewed what we can expect.

Mr. Heimer, who had been president of Congregation Beth Israel, was elected unanimously as Honorary President. The Board of Trustees and officers were elected for one year. Rabbis Hartstein and Kahn spoke briefly and Mr. Heimer accepted the honorary post.

A marvelous spirit of good will and cooperation prevailed during the entire meeting which continues to last past the adjournment of the meeting at noon and is prevalent even today. It was truly a meeting to remember — short in time spent but long in accomplishment.

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General Membership Meeting of Chevra Kadisha Congregation Beth Hillel & Beth Israel, Inc.

Our first combined General Membership Meeting was held on June 15, 1980 in our Synagogue with a large attendance representative of our new unified Chevra. After welcoming all the officials of our Congregation, Mr. Hirsch asked the attending brothers rise for a minute of silence in memory of the CHEVRA'S departed brothers. He also spoke about the beautiful affairs of the past year like Shavuot-Lernen, Hoshano Rabbo-Lernen, and the CHEVRA-Day. A Thank You to everybody who made the success of these functions possible. Then he thanked the brothers, who supported him during the past year.

The Secretary, Mr. Bacharach, gave a short report about the functions and meetings of last year. This was followed with a favorable financial report with which to start the combined CHEVRA. Then came the election of Officers and Trustees of the CHEVRA. The new Officers and Trustees are as follows:

PRESIDENT: EMANUEL HIRSCH
VICE-PRESIDENTS: ARTHUR HANAUER, FRED STONE, MARTIN SAUL
TREASURER: CHARLES WOLFF
ASST. TREASURER: HARRY SPEIER
SECRETARY: HUGO BACHARACH
RECORDING SECRETARY: FRED SCHOEN

TRUSTEES FOR ONE YEAR

SIMON ACKERMANN, HARRY BENDER, WILLIAM BLANK, VICTOR FRIEDLEIN, ALFRED GERSTLEY, HERMAN GUTMAN, JUSTIN LANDENBERGER, SIEGFRIED LOWENFELS, VICTOR MARX, LUDWIG MERKLINGER, LEO NORDLINGER, LEO OPPENHEIMER, ALFRED STERN

Our President spoke some words of thanks to our former Treasurer, Mr. Victor Marx, who served in this capacity for 16 years. He did his job well with devotion and accuracy.

Under new business, Mr. Hanauer asked for additional men to help perform the Taharah Service and Mr. Wortsman agreed to join. Mr. Hanauer also stressed to have more men to go to funerals and to the cemetery, also to Minyanim in the mourner's house. Mr. Hanauer is willing to take 5 people along to the cemetery in his own car.

It was also decided to have 2 Lernen and a CHEVRA-Day in the coming year. The President adjourned the meeting.

Hugo Bacharach
Secretary

SHAVUOS-LERNEN

We can proudly report that this year the traditional Torah study on Shavuot doubled in intensity. One Shavuot-Lernen took place on the first night of the holiday, when a group of men returned to the Synagogue after services and holiday meal, to spend some time until late at night studying the Torah selections set aside for this annual event. A second Lernen took place on the first day of Shavuot in the late afternoon, prior to the evening services.

Both Lernens, sponsored by the Chevra Kadisha, enjoyed a good attendance, fine participation in the reading of Torah passages and study of Mishnah excerpts, instructive and informative talks by Rabbi Hartstein and Rabbi Kahn, greetings by Chevra President, Mr. Emanuel Hirsch, and Chevra Vice President, Mr. Arthur Hanauer, and refreshments tastefully prepared and served by a team of dedicated ladies.

Rabbis' Sermon Schedule

SABBATHS

Sept. 6,	1980	Nitzavim - Vayelech	RABBI KAHN
13,		Haazinu (Shabbat Shuvo)	RABBI HARTSTEIN
20,		YOM KIPPUR - See Holy Day Schedule	
27,		Shabbat Chol Hamoed	RABBI KAHN
Oct. 4,		Bereshit - Mvorchim	RABBI HARTSTEIN
11,		Noah - Rosh Chodesh	
18,		Lech Lecho	RABBI KAHN
25,		Vayera	RABBI HARTSTEIN
Nov. 1,		Chaye Sarah	
8,		Toldot - Mvorchim	RABBI KAHN
15,		Vayetze	RABBI HARTSTEIN
22,		Vayishlach	
29,		Vayeshev	RABBI KAHN

HOLY DAYS SERMONS

Sept. 11,	1st DAY ROSH HASHONO	RABBI HARTSTEIN
12,	2nd DAY ROSH HASHONO	RABBI KAHN
19,	KOL NIDRE	RABBI HARTSTEIN
20,	YOM KIPPUR A.M.	RABBI KAHN
	YOM KIPPUR P.M.	RABBI HARTSTEIN
25,	1st DAY SUKKOT	RABBI KAHN
Oct. 2,	Shemini Atzeret	RABBI HARTSTEIN

Initial Historic Service

The merger of Congregations Beth Hillel & Beth Israel became a reality with the first Sabbath Service on May 10, 1980. The synagogue was filled with worshippers in its newly-refurbished interior with many representative guests from neighborhood congregations and organizations. Aliyot were distributed to officers and trustees, and both Rabbis.

Brief sermons were delivered by Rabbis Hartstein and Kahn and a short address given by President Wortsman, who also acknowledged the presence of distinguished Rabbis and guests. Judge Herman Cahn and Mrs. Elizabeth Wurzbarger represented the Jewish Community Council of Washington Heights. Rabbi Ascher Yager of the Inwood Hebrew Congregation attended the Services as did Rabbi Dr Herman Glatt. Mr. Allen Riselsheimer represented SHARRE HATIKVA, Mr. Adolph Adler EMES WOZEDEK, and Mr. Ludwig Katz the Hebrew Tabernacle. Messages were also received from K'HALL ADATH JESHURUN, KEHILLAT YAAKOV, OHAV SHOLAUM, YESHIVA UNIVERSITY, and the Men's Club of the Hebrew Tabernacle.

From beginning to end the beautiful service ran smoothly. Cantor Mark Hess led the Shachrit Service and Cantor Jack Schartenberg directed the choir and chanted the Mussaf Services. Faith and friendship, harmony and hope, piety and peace prevailed in a menu of unforgettable Sabbath spirit, a harbinger of a fruitful future.

FAMILY CLUB

Hoping you all had a good summer, I am looking forward to greet you again at our next afternoon get-together, October 7, at 1 P.M. I am also looking forward to welcome many members of formerly Beth Israel who shall join us at these meetings which are always enjoyed by everybody.

Meta Weil

PLEASE NOTE

On the March 1981 page of this year's new wall calendars, distributed by the Congregation, G'd's name (in Hebrew letters) appears. This must not be destroyed or disrespectfully discarded. We suggest that you remove the cover and send or bring it for proper disposal.

Sisterhood General Membership Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held on June 15, 1980. Because of the merger this was an especially important one. A combined new Board was elected to serve until the next annual meeting. The new President of the Sisterhood of Congregation Beth Hillel & Beth Israel, Inc., is Fay Blank (Mrs. Wm. Blank). Mesdames Edith Weissfeld, Irma Stern and Erica Neu were elected as Vice-Presidents, Gertrude Strauss as Treasurer, Miriam Hirsch as Assistant Treasurer, Eugenie Weinberg as Recording Secretary, Irma Leopold as Secretary. As Trustees were elected Mesdames: Hertha Baer, Claire Friedmann, Irma Hanauer, Rosel Hirsch, Fanny Leidecker, Bertel Neuhaus, Kate Nordlinger, Rose Rabow, Ria Roos, Ruth Ruhm, Bianka Simon, Gertrude Speier, Johanna Tischler, Paula Trautman, Meta Weil, Margot Wortsman.

Acting President, Irma Stern, spoke with deep affection and profound respect of the late Irma Loewenstein in whose memory and the memory of all departed sisters she asked all present to rise. Mrs. Stern expressed the hope for a fine relationship among all members to continue the good work of our past presidents and boards who guided the affairs of the Sisterhood so well by giving help where needed, bringing members and friends together for lectures and concerts of high cultural value, and all other functions expected of a Sisterhood.

Mrs. Edith Weissfeld until now President of the Sisterhood of Congregation Beth Israel, wished for a "large family" and asked for participation in the Chevra. Since no annual meeting was held in 1979 there were no minutes to be read. Mrs. Gertrude Strauss gave an outline of last year's happenings and also rendered a short financial report. This was followed by a short financial report of Sisterhood Beth Israel, stated by Mrs. Edith Weissfeld.

In a few words President elect, Fay Blank, made an excellent acceptance speech, promising to do all possible to achieve harmonious and successful working together.

With thanks and best wishes Mrs. Irma Stern closed the meeting. There was a feeling of sincerity and good will all around.

Eugenie Weinberg

Dr. Irwin Richt and Dr. Allen Shuman

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Mrs. Edith Vogel
Mrs. Gabriele Vogel
Mrs. Charlotte Wahle
Mr. & Mrs. Manfred Walden
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Mrs. Sabine Wellisch
Mr. & Mrs. Julius Wertheimer
Mrs. Doris Wolferman & daughter
Mrs. Flora Wolff
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Wolff
Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Wortsman
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Mr. & Mrs. Max Goldstein, Florida
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Loeb, Florida
Rabbi & Mrs. Hugo Stransky, Kfar Sava, Israel

ALL IN THE FAMILY

When you, dear readers, will see this column, your reporter hopes you have enjoyed a summer, blessed with physical relaxation, peace of mind and the spiritual rejuvenation that will prepare us for the coming Holyday Season. Meanwhile, there certainly are quite a few Happy Family Events to be shared.

The honor list of *Geburtstage* is headed by Mr. Max Neumann, who shared his 96th birthday with the 204th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence! The 85th recurrence of their *Wiegenfeste* was celebrated in July and August by Mrs. Beatrice Hess, Mr. Ernest Hirsch and Mr. Nathan Sucher. While Mrs. Agathe Hagun celebrated her 80th birthday in June, the quartet of Mr. Siegbert Strauss, Mr. Ludwig Goetz, Mrs. Else Richmond and Mr. Siegfried Goldschmidt shared 80th birthdays in the month of July. In August Mr. Kurt Goldschmidt, Mr. Alfred Morgenthau and Ms. Erna Weil had reached their three-quarter century mark.

The joy of becoming the grandparents of a boy and a girl, born to their two daughters, came to Mr. and Mrs. Manfred Loeb, and grandmother of a girl to Mrs. Betty Abraham. Mrs. Bianca Berger can boast for a second time of having become a youthful great-grandmother, this time of a girl. Also a mazel tov to Mrs. Hanna Kafka and Mrs. Carole Hess for having become again grandmothers of a girl. Speaking of such third generation *nachas*, has it ever occurred to you what a German student's uncertain translation of "Urgrossvater" into English might be — perhaps "grandfather clock?"

A bundle of happy news comes from our young adults, also. Howard S. Heiman, received his Doctorate from the School of Medicine, Uniformed Services University, for an Internship at Walter Reed Hospital, and a hearty mazel-tov is due to his grandmother, Mrs. Lina Wolffs. This column extends its warm wishes for the blessings of Heaven to the families of the following young people who are planning to exchange the vows of matrimony, or who meanwhile have tied their sacred knot: To Mrs. Meta Rosenthal's daughter Shirley Rosenthal, who became engaged to Mr. James Renner. To Linda Hirsch, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sigmund Hirsch, who was married to Mr. Warren Lieberman. Lastly congratulation to Mr. Erich Baer's son, Mr. Dennis Baer who married Miss Debra Billian. Mrs. Jenny Wild is looking forward to the Bar Mitzvah of her grandson Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Howard Wild, Mazel Tov to Miss Helen Hopfer, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Henry Hopfer, who was married to Mr. Richard Goldenberg.

What could be better even than a newly founded marriage? The sum of the years of bliss, shared by loving couples who have pledged their vows many, many years ago. This column is happy to report two such joyous milestones. On June 8, Mr. and Mrs. Levitus observed their Golden Wedding Anniversary and celebrated it in our Congregation with a Kiddush on the preceding Shabbat. Last month Mr. William B. Blank and Mrs. Fay Blank will look back to the day, when they tied the knot 25 years ago. The former President of our Congregation and the New President of our Sisterhood have been as one also in their devotion to the Kehillah and our warmest wishes go to this dedicated couple and their family for many, many years of Happiness together.

As we go to press: Mazel Tov to Mr. & Mrs. Leo Nordlinger on becoming grandparents of a boy.

May all celebrants enjoy continued blessings! Once more, best wishes for good Health, Peace of Mind and Contentedness in the year ahead.

Shalom ve-hatzlachah,
Theodore H. Spaeth

THANK YOU

My sincere appreciation to the Congregation and to many friends for the kind, good wishes and thoughtfulness extended to me on my recent birthday.

Irene Heimer

My sincere thanks to the Congregation and all the friends for the kind wishes and thoughtfulness I received on the occasion of my 80th birthday. A happy New Year to all.

Siegfried and Bella Goldschmidt

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the Congregation for the lovely gifts we received. Your thoughtfulness was very much appreciated. A *Shono Tauvo* to all.

Mark and Stacey Hess

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all my friends, the Sisterhood and the Congregation for the get-well wishes and thoughtful gifts I received after my recent operation. I also like to wish everybody a healthy and happy 5741.

Sincerely,

Lotte Mannasse

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Rabbinate, President Wortsman, the Sisterhood and all the members of the Congregation for their kindness shown to me on the occasion of my special birthday.

Martha Isenberg

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Congregation and all our friends for the thoughtfulness and good wishes extended to my father, Max Neumann, on his 96th birthday, as well as for all the good wishes sent to us on our recent move into a new apartment.

Carole Hess

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PROGRAM — PREVIEW**1980**

Sunday, October 26, afternoon Sisterhood Luncheon
 Saturday, November 8, afternoon Oneg Shabbat
 Sunday, November 16, afternoon Social Get-Together
 Sunday, December 7, afternoon Chanukkah Party
 Saturday, December 13, evening)
 Sunday, December 14, all day) **B A Z A A R**
 Mnday, December 15, morning)

1981

Sunday, January 18, afternoon Sisterhood (Program to be announced)
 Sunday, February 1, morning Guided Tour (Museum Yeshiva University)
 Sunday, March 1, afternoon Chevra Day (Memorial Service & Luncheon)
 Sunday, March 22, afternoon Purim Party
 Saturday, April 4, afternoon Oneg Shabbat

Lecture On The Prophet Hosea

The books of our Bible are not all equally familiar to us. Many enjoy frequent exposure and are therefore well known. But there are others which, either due to unfamiliarity or to their difficult content, remain rather obscure, until a scholar skillfully opens them and takes us on a guided tour.

On Sunday, April 20th, our Congregation was treated to such an eye-opening expedition, when Rabbi Hartstein lectured on the Prophet Hosea. The life, the personality and the powerful divine messages of this prophet who lived some 2,7000 years ago, came vibrantly alive right before the eyes of the large audience that had assembled in our Social Hall. They listened attentively and with interest as Rabbi Hartstein described the historical background, the turbulent times in which Hosea was active, and the various themes which make up his prophecies.

Thoroughly versed in the biblical text as well as the wide array of commentaries and literature on the subject, Rabbi Hartstein sketched the sociological climate of Hosea's era and showed the surprising relevancy of the prophet's immortal messages right down to our times.

Especially poignant were Hosea's personal experiences, for G'd had chosen him to be an instrument of divine instruction. The prophet was subjected to emotionally painful family ordeals so as to be a living reminder of G'd's love.

"The affection which G'd has for His people Israel can never be destroyed," concluded Rabbi Hartstein. "It is the most enduring love imaginable."

Rabbi Shlomo Kahn

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A Brief History Of Congregation Beth Hillel.

The origins of Congregation Beth Hillel reach back to 1939 when Samson Schmidt, a former resident of Munich and friend of Rabbi Dr. Leo Baerwald, Chief-rabbi of the liberal Jewish community of Munich, initiated discussions with other former Munich Jews in New York City on organizing a new congregation. These discussions bore fruit in the formation of Congregation Beth Hillel of Washington Heights, Inc. After Dr. Baerwald arrived in New York in March 1940, he accepted the rabbinate of the congregation with Hermann Silberman as cantor. The new congregation was launched with the High Holy Day Services of 1940, which was held in a rented hall in the Paramount Building on 183rd Street. The hall was filled close to its seating capacity of 800; three Torah scrolls from Germany were dedicated.

The congregation was born. Religious orientation, synagogal services, familiar melodies and rituals were those of south German, conservative Judaism. Sermons were given in German. A varied and informative social-cultural program was offered to the membership. The Hebrew School was started with 20 children; a Sisterhood was organized, and an information bulletin (Bulletin of Congregation Beth Hillel of Washington Heights) was published with the rabbi as editor.

In the Spring of 1941, a large body of former Nuremberg Jews, under the leadership of their Rabbi, Rabbi Dr. Isak Heilbronn, joined the Congregation Beh Hillel. Members of the Nuremberg group joined the Board of Trustees of the Congregation. Rabbis Baerwald and Heilbronn alternated in officiating at services. An active Youth Group and *Chevra Kadisha* were started. The first burial plots were purchased in Cedar Park Cemetery. On Shavuoth 1943, the Congregation suffered a major loss in the untimely death of Rabbi Dr. Heilbronn. His warm and thoughtful manner left its mark on the Congregation.

This had been a period of organization, of taking root. Membership fees were small and congregational budgets limited. Services and most social functions were held in the Paramount Halls. The Hebrew School was to be found in the homes of its teachers; similarly, congregational "offices" meant the living room of the sexton. Each Bulletin was 8 mimeographed pages, containing primarily congregational and family notices and some advertisements.

Over the years the Congregation grew and became more affluent, reflecting increasing acclimatization and prosperity of its members. Membership increased from about 200 families in 1940 to 750 by 1948. High Holy Day services required 2 and 3 halls, the services of a second rabbi, several cantors and a second choir.

In 1943, the Bulletin was enlarged to include 2 to 3 articles; English appeared in its pages, and each issue was printed. Torahs, ritual objects and synagogue decorations were donated.

The congregation had long felt the need for having its home in its own building. To this end, a two-story building at 571 West 182nd Street was purchased in 1946. The upper floor became available in early 1947 to our Hebrew School and for weekday services. During 1948 the sanctuary was constructed, culminating in its dedication on September 26, 1948 as the new synagogue and home of the Congregation. The basement was reconstructed as the social hall and the offices moved into the upper floor of the building.

In possession of its own building, Congregation Beth Hillel entered a period of intensified and expanded activities, extending into the mid-1960's. Membership remained stable at 700 to 800 families. High Holy Day Services were held in the synagogue and two halls. By 1951, 14 Torah scrolls rested in the *Aron ha-Kodesh*. A Shabbat Youth Service was initiated in 1949, "Lernen" between Mincha and Maariv on Shabbat in 1950. A Young People's League was started in 1950 and the first community Seder took place in 1951. Concerts, bazaars, holiday festivities, dinners dances, Youth Group and Hebrew School presentations and programs were sponsored successfully during the course of each year. Annual Blue Card and UJA drives were well-supported. Guest sermons and lectures were delivered by distinguished visiting rabbis and scholars. The Hebrew School consisted of 6 grades, post-graduate courses, and a yearly enrollment of 80 to 130 students. The Parent Association gave strong support to the School. The "Bulletin" increased in number of articles and advertisements; its size doubled, and English became the predominant language. Additional plots were bought in Cedar Park and Beth-El cemeteries.

(continued on page fifteen)

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONG. BETH HILLEL (conclusion)

The Congregation's cherished first cantor, Hermann Silbermann, died in 1955 to be succeeded by cantor Fred Kornfeld. In the same year, Rabbi Dr. Baerwald retired. His personality and dignity, scholarship and erudition, acted as a force to unite and stabilize a community in transition. On the first day of Sukkoth 1955, Rabbi Dr. Hugo Stransky assumed the rabbinate of the Congregation. His initiative resulted in several innovations while maintaining the orientation, standards and traditions of his predecessors.

The Congregation adopted the Birnbaum and later the Ben Zion Bokser prayer books for the High Holy Day and all other services, respectively. German alternated with English sermons. The educational, religious, cultural and social activities of the preceding years continued. Professor Ernst Simon, noted philosopher and educator at the Hebrew University, functioned as alternate preacher during the High Holy Day and Sukkoth services and as guest speaker for nearly 20 years. In 1957, the first annual *Kristallnacht*-Memorial service was held. In 1961, the Family Club was started, a weekly program designed especially for the older members of the Congregation. In 1965/66, the Congregation festively celebrated the 25th anniversary of its existence.

During the last 15 years, congregational membership was characterized by an aging process and a small but steady decline in numbers, from 730 families in 1962 to about 450 in 1979. The seating capacity of the synagogue sufficed for the High Holy Day Services. Enrollment in the Hebrew School in 1960 was about 120 pupils; by 1970, the School, Youth Services and Parent Association had ceased to exist. The congregation adapted to the changing conditions by intensifying older programs and moving into new areas. Perhaps most significant was the increased role of Congregation Beth Hillel in community activities. It was represented on community councils, before local community boards and at various deliberative functions potentially affecting Washington Heights Jewry and the Congregation. The Congregation joined the Washington Heights Council for Soviet Jewry; annual UJA and Israel Bond drives were vigorously and successfully conducted. Yeshiva Rabbi Moses Soloveichik received help during a time of need. The traditional synagogal activities continued unabated. Daily, Shabbat and Holy Day Services, with Kiddushim and "Lernen", remained the focal points of congregational religious life. The diversified program of cultural and social activities was continued and the Family Club remained a popular Tuesday afternoon meeting. In 1969, major reconstruction of access to the lower social hall was carried out.

The Congregation celebrated its 36th Anniversary in 1976. The annual number of Bulletins was decreased in 1977 to 4, with format and contents unchanged, and the philosophy of serving the members with information and education via a literate publication upheld.

Cantor Kornfeld, appreciated for his knowledge of liturgical melodies and contributions to beautifying our Services, retired early in 1977, to be followed by Mr. Mark Hess.

After 20 years as rabbi of Congregation Beth Hillel, Dr. Stransky vacated his rabbinate in 1976. His synthesis of Central European and Anglo-American conservative Judaism; his activities in several New York religious and emigrant groups, and his innovations in religious observances were important determinants in the further successful development of Congregation Beth Hillel. He was succeeded in the Summer of 1976 by Rabbi Abraham L. Hartstein, the first American-born to officiate at Congregation Beth Hillel. His tenure was marked by upholding congregational traditions with new and thought-provoking perspectives.

Congregation Beth Hillel had served its members, the Jewish community of Washington Heights, and transplanted German Jewry for 40 years. Its Lay Leadership was ably headed by Presidents Hermann Schuelein (1940 - 1946), Richard Jung (1946 - 1948), Ludwig Bauernfreund (1948 - 1953), Leopold Landenberger (1953 - 1956), Paul Simon (1956 - 1972), William Blank (1972 - 1978), and Oscar Wosrtsman (1978 - 1980). The Executive Secretaries, Joseph Silbermann, Fred Dreifuss, Stephan Mondschein and since 1965, Manfred Walden effectively discharged the administrative functions of the Congregation. The Congregation had played its role for four decades with distinction, peace and success.

(This article is based on one written for the 1976 Festschrift in honor of the 36th Anniversary of Congregation Beth Hillel, and brought up-to-date.)

Dr. Eric Bloch

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HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Congregation Beth Israel Of Washington Heights

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

What do we plant when we plant the tree?

We plant the ship that will cross the sea,

We plant the mast to carry the sails,

We plant the planks to withstand the gails —

With gifted pen, the poet can paint vivid pictures that have the power to rouse the imagination; what we do today can lead to undreamed results. Long before Henry Abbey composed his "What Do We Plant," this thought was formulated by Ben Azzai in the Mishnah: "Be eager to do even a light *mitzvah*...for a *mitzvah* induces another *mitzvah*." (Fathers IV 2)

Congregation Beth Israel of Washington Heights was planted by Cantor Jack Schartenberg when he arranged for and led High Holiday Services in early October 1948. This seedling *mitzvah* germinated, sprouted and grew to go on and produce many, many more. Heartened by the dignity and popularity of the holiday services, many of the worshipers expressed the desire to establish a permanent congregation. In response to an exploratory inquiry by Cantor Schartenberg, a small group of visionaries called for a meeting on November 30th and with an initial membership of 66 persons, the congregation was formally founded.

A place of worship, in the Paramount Building, was rented (only recently vacated by Congregation Beth Hillel which had moved to its own building), a name selected (inspired by the historic establishment of the State of Israel half a year earlier, the name Israel was reverently embodied in the new congregation's designation), and by Shabbos Vo-ero, January 29th, 1949, the solemn and festive dedication took place. By that time membership had already doubled.

This growth continued, rising to a peak of 600 members, drawing on the many as yet unfiliated residents of the Washington Height area who were clinging to age-old Jewish traditions, had been uprooted from various parts of Germany and had come to start life anew in the security and freedom of the United States.

Founded and maintained in accordance with the principles of Torah, Avodah and Gemiluth Chasodim, Congregation Beth Israel afforded its members the opportunity to participate in a Kehillah life such as experienced and practiced in the European congregations of old. At the same time great emphasis was placed to skillfully and authentically create an environment in which both, old and young, could feel completely at home. This resulted in a refreshingly comfortable atmosphere that was free from the ills and sores of our society's unhealthy generation gap. A spirit of kinship prevailed so that everyone, boys and girls as well as men and women contributed with genuine enthusiasm to the welfare of the congregation. As a logical and natural consequence, the devotion and loyalty of all remained steadfast. Even when, due to circumstances, members moved away or students who had grown up settled elsewhere, the fond memories had forged strong bonds which neither time nor distance could erode.

For the first six years services were held at 601 West 183rd Street. The services, conducted by Cantor Schartenberg and enhanced by a men's and a boys' choir, enjoyed increased attendance. A Hebrew School was founded which grew from seven students to an enrollment of 150. Cemetery grounds were purchased. A Chevra Kadisha, Sisterhood and Parents-Association were established and these organizations were active in their respective fields.

The administration was in the hands of officers and trustees who worked selflessly for the benefit of the Kehillah, under the presidencies of Albert Moses, Julius Hamburger (of blessed memories) (1949 - 1959), and (1959 - 1980) Mr. Adolph Heimer, whose retirement from the administration was accepted with reluctance, and who was by acclamation elected Honorary President at the first general membership meeting of the newly merged Congregation Beth Hillel and Beth Israel.

In 1950 the congregation engaged Rabbi Dr. S. Schulson and Dayan Dr. I. Grunfeld (of blessed memories), followed by Rabbi Bernhard Lubinsky in 1951. The next year Rabbi Shlomo Kahn became the spiritual leader of the congregation, who taught, guided and enriched it ever since.

(continued on page nineteen)

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CONG. BETH ISRAEL OF WASHINGTON HEIGHTS *(conclusion)*

To strengthen and heighten the religious niveau of the congregation, regular shiurim and study groups were maintained, sermons and lectures delivered, a library of Jewish literature and of film-strips established, HAKOHOL and the Rabbi's Newsletter published, and for the constantly increasing and bustling youth, there were organized a Sunday Morning Breakfast Club, recreation evenings, Oneg Shabbos, youth groups (Chalutzim and Shoshanos), and an annual Youth Shabbos at which the entire service was conducted by the youth. Many of these innovative programs served as models for other congregations who, impressed by their success, followed suit.

Among the numerous events that enlivened 30 years of Congregation Beth Israel and which accompanied regular Torah study, prayer service and customary functions of Chevra Kadisha and Sisterhood, were parties, celebrations and special services, annual bazaars, festive rededications of Sifre Torah, solemn dedications of additional cemetery grounds, UJA and Israel Bond drives, Testimonial Dinners (honoring Rabbi Kahn, Cantor Schartenberg, Mr. & Mrs. Adolph Heimer, David Meyer), Anniversary Banquets, Hebrew School graduations, Chanukah and Purim celebrations, and of course the unforgettable dedication of the Synagogue on 181st Street in January 1955 with a dignified procession of Torah Scrolls followed by the entire membership through the streets of Washington Heights.

Congregation Beth Israel looks back with pride on a history of three decades packed with work and toil and happenings, recalling fondly the countless happy family events which are part of our history — births, Bar Mitzvahs, weddings, anniversaries — and honors the memory of members who have passed away, whose names are permanently enshrined in our hearts.

Congregation Beth Israel views with sincere gratitude and appreciation a long list of persons who have selflessly sacrificed time, energy and money in serving the Kehillah. May the knowledge and the satisfaction of having done their duty and more than their duty, be their reward.

A nation-wide trend of cities decline and of moving to the suburbs also took its toll of Congregation Beth Israel. A pooling of resources was a sensible solution to the unsettling diminishing of membership. Although attendance at Shabbos and Yomtov services was still highly gratifying and satisfactory, the daily minyanim became imperiled. In January 1979 joint weekday services of the two Kehillos, Congregation Beth Hillel and Beth Israel were introduced, a project which was immediately blessed with such rare harmony and brotherly friendship, that it encouraged and strongly suggested the full merger which subsequently took place, to the benefit of both former congregations, and setting a shining example, indeed a landmark, of achievement and peace — *lechaim ulesholom*.

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The Mutual Merger

The preceding histories of both Congregations BETH HILLEL and BETH ISRAEL clearly demonstrate the constant need of reviewing congregational activities, of adapting to altered circumstances and of carrying on the never ending task of assuring continuity.

In January 1979, both congregations saw the need to combine weekday Services, with morning Services being conducted at Beth Israel and evening Services at Beth Hillel. Thoughts of a merger of the two congregations were discussed informally by the respective leadership. After the High Holy days of 1979, these exploratory conversations turned into intensive negotiations with the aim of effectuating a complete and mutually satisfactory merger. There was never any doubt in the mind of the Officers participating at these meetings that matters could be worked out, that all issues and items would be resolved to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement for submission to the memberships.

At separate and well attended meetings of each congregation on February 8, 1980, the majority of each membership gave overwhelming approval to the merger, which was confirmed shortly thereafter by the Supreme Court of the State of New York.

The first combined Shabbat Service was held on May 10, 1980 which was a special festive and solemn occasion. With this Service, a new chapter was started, to be added to the history of the proud existence of both congregations.

On May 11, 1980 the initial General Meeting of the now "New in Name Only" congregation took place. In accordance with the merger agreement, a new President, Officers and Board of Trustees were elected and new amended By-Laws approved. New Presidents, Officers and Trustees for the Chevra Kadisha and Sisterhood were elected at subsequent general meetings of these affiliated organizations.

May the Congregation draw new strength from the above accomplishment and prevail for many years.

Oscar Wortsman

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The Golem — Idea, Legend, History

RABBI ABRAHAM L. HARTSTEIN

Recently, I was asked an intriguing religious question. In this age of technocracy, computers and mechanization, could a robot be counted towards a minyon?

The answer was simple because this question had already been asked previously. In the response of Rabbi Zwi Hirsch Ashkenazi, and his also famous son Jacob Emden, they had discussed whether or not it is permitted to include a legendary golem creation in a minyon, and had prohibited it. Both of these Rabbis, highly esteemed for their Rabbinic Scholarship, were descendants of Rabbi Elijah of Chelm (d. 1583), with whom most of the known legends were related.

The best known form of the popular legend is connected with Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel of Prague, known as the Maharal, who was the most outstanding Rabbinic personality of his time. No historical basis has been found by scholars, either during his life or the circumstances of the time regarding the Golem, and it is generally believed that the legendary tales were transferred from R. Elijah of Chelm to R. Loew during the 2nd half of the 18th C.

There is, however, a local legend of Prague declaring that Rabbi Loew created the golem so that he would serve him, but was forced to return him to dust when the golem began to run amok and endanger people's lives. The legend was tied to the Altneuschul synagogue and with an explanation of special practices in the prayers of the Prague congregation.

The popular legend of the golem as a benevolent robot captured the imagination of creative writers and artists in Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Germany. The most outstanding novel about the golem, "DER GOLEM," was written in 1915 by Bavarian Gustav Meyrink as a terrifying allegory in a chilling atmosphere concerning man's being reduced as a robot by the pressures of modern society. Austrian playwright Rudolf Lothar wrote a volume of stories entitled "Der Golem — Phantasien und Historien." The German novelist Arthur Holitscher produced a 3-act drama "Der Golem" in 1908 while the Prague German — language poet Hugo Salus wrote verse on "Der hohe Rabbi Loew". A 4-act Kabbalistic drama was written by Johannes Hess called "Der Rabbiner von Prag", which also helped spread the legend.

The famous Hebrew story writer David Frischman wrote a powerful story about the golem, and the Yiddish dramatist H. Leivick's "Der Golem" was staged in Moscow by the Habimah Theatre in Hebrew.

A classic silent film in German was produced in 1920, and was redone by Julien Duvivier in French in 1936, and after World War II was rewritten in a Czech film.

The legend also produced music to accompany Leivick's drama, an opera by Eugen D'Albert with libretto by F. Lion with a premiere in Frankfurt in 1926, and a suite for orchestra by Joseph Achron in 1932. This "Golem Suite" was composed under the influence of the Habimah production, but the opera did not survive in the operatic repertory. In 1962 "Der Golem" was presented as a ballet by Francis Burt in Vienna with choreography by Erika Hanka.

If a legend can produce so many currents in arts and letters, we have to try to understand it first as an idea, its source and history, and to comprehend its true meaning to grasp its hold on mankind's imagination.

What is a Golem? It was "a creature, particularly a human being, made in an artificial way by virtue of a magic act, through the use of holy names."

The possibility of creating living beings in this manner was widespread in the magic of many peoples. Even today modern science believes that life can be created in the laboratory! These modern witch doctors, dressed in white are more sophisticated, but still oriented to magical gifts while espousing the reality of science.

Among the Greeks and Arabs this ability to create living beings was sometimes related to astrological speculations and to connect the stars with human beings by uniting the heavenly forces. Astrology of this type is a handmaiden to idolatry, necromancy and sorcery, and idols that can communicate.

(continued on next page)

THE GOLEM (continued)

Judaism rejects all of these, for only the Divine Creator grants life. We reject the fatalism of astrology and voodoo, and the subjugation of magical properties for one's pleasure or profit.

And yet, there is a magical exegesis in Rabbinic tradition concerning the creative power of speech and of letters. In the Bible the word "golem" appears only once, in Psalm 139.16 "Thine eyes did see my *unformed substance*" (GOLMI). From this philosophic concept of matter without form, unformed and imperfect, originated the talmudic usage of the term. Matter without form meant body without soul, a "golem", as Adam was called in a talmudic legend concerning the first 12 hours of his existence on the 6th day of Creation (Sanhedrin 38b). While yet in this state, he was accorded a vision of all the generations to come (Genesis Rabba 24:2). "Rabbi Judah ben Rabbi Simon said: While Adam lay a shapeless mass before Him at whose decree the world came into existence, He showed him every generation and its Sages, every generation and its judges, scribes, interpreters and leaders, etc." Adam, the golem, was granted a hidden power to see, but did he grasp the meaning of what he saw?

The motif of the golem as it appears in medieval legends originates in the talmudic legend in the Gemara Sanhedrin 65b.

Rava created a man and sent him to Rabbi Zera. The latter spoke to him but he did not answer. He asked, "Are you one of the companions? Return to your dust." We also find a reference to two Amoraim who busied themselves on the eve of every Sabbath with the *Sefer Yetzira* and made a calf for themselves and ate it.

Such legends were brought as evidence that "if the righteous wished, they could create a world," and are connected apparently with the creative power of the letters of the name of G-d and the letters of the Torah in general (See BERACHOT 55a and Midrash Psalms 3).

The SEFER YETZIRA (Book of Creation) is a book of speculative nature with affinity to the magical ideas concerning creation by means of letters. There are various transformations and combinations of letters which constitute a mysterious knowledge of the secret of creation. During the Middle Ages this work was interpreted in some circles in France and Germany as a guide to magical usage. Later legends in this direction were found at the end of the commentary on this work by Rabbi Judah b. Barzillai (at the beginning of the 12th century). There the legends of the Talmud were interpreted as purely symbolic and contemplative, so that when the sages wanted to eat the calf which was created by the power of their "contemplation" of the book, they forgot all they had learned.

In the 12th and 13th centuries the Chasidei Ashkenaz developed the idea of the golem as a mystical ritual, used to symbolize the level of achievement at the conclusion of their studies. In this circle "the golem" became a fixed creature but with only a symbolic meaning for these mystics in a special ceremony of combining letters and the secret name of the Almighty.

One of these legends related to such a ceremony, is that the word EMET (TRUTH), which is the seal of the Holy One, was written on the forehead of the golem and when the letter alef, the first letter of the word was erased, there remained the word MET (DEAD). (See Talmud Shabbat 55a and Sanhedrin 64b) Other legends concerning the creation of such a golem by the prophet Jeremiah and his so-called "son" Ben Sira, and also by the disciples of R. Ishmael, the central figure of this literature called HEIKHALOT.

In the legends about the golem of Ben Sira there is also a parallel to the legends on images used in idol worship that are given life by means of a name. The golem expresses a warning about idol worship and demands his own death. In some sources it is said the golem has no intellectual soul and therefore cannot speak, but other opinions attribute to him this power of communication. Kabbalists varied about the nature of the creation of a golem. Moses Cordovero, one of the most illustrious Kabbalists, was of the opinion that man has the power to give "vitality" alone to the golem, but not life (NEFESH), not spirit (RUACH), and not a soul (NESHAMAH).

In the popular legend the golem became an actual creature, who served his creators, and fulfilled all tasks placed upon him. Such legends appeared in Germany in the 15th century and spread widely, so that by the 17th century they were well-known to all.

The legend grew but we must remember its relationship to the concept of TECHIYAT HAMEITIM (resurrection of the dead) in that by placing the name of the Creator in their mouths or their arm, and by removing the parchment containing the name in reverse, they would thus cause their death. Such legends existed in Italy from the 10th century on (see MEGILLAT AHIMAAZ).

(continued on next page)

THE GOLEM (conclusion)

The creation of an alchemical man, such as a 6-million dollar man and other Jewish fantasies, has a long non-Jewish history and was discussed much earlier by Paracelsus in his idea of a "Homunculus", a figure in which certain primary matter was added as substance and which after forty days is brought to life, developing from the putrefaction of the raw material. The famous Frankenstein monster of Mary Shelley's novel was a product in conformity with this vein of thought, although it has been suggested that she got the idea from the Golem legend. Similarly, it is related that Goethe's ballad "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" was inspired by a visit of Goethe to the Altneu Schul in Prague, where Rabbi Loew was supposed to have turned his golem into clay on a Friday eve at dusk after it had run wild just as the 92nd Psalm had been concluded, so that a tradition of repeating that Psalm on Friday nights was established there. The ashes of the golem were supposed to have been buried in the attic of the synagogue. One of the most prominent successors of Rabbi Loew, Rabbi Ezekiel Landau once, after much fasting, is said to have gone up to look at the remains of the golem. On his return he gave an order, binding on all future generations, that no mortal must ever go up to that attic!

When I was asked the question regarding a golem or robot, being part of a minyan, and had responded that it would be prohibited, further discussion ensued. I pointed out also that disassembling a robot would not be the basis for a crime of murder. "But Rabbi", I was asked, "if a man is asleep we count him to a minyan — why is the robot less than a sleeping man?" In your question rests the answer, I responded, "man is a divine creature even when asleep, the robot was man-made."

When we speak of man as "created in the Divine Image", it does not mean that he or she is a divinity. We emphasize that the act of the creation of people is a divine act, which grants human beings the potentials of creativity and spiritual development. Because every human being is sacred, infused with life given by G-d, the human body is holy and to be cared for with great reverence both in life and after death. Moreover, our bodies do not belong to us to do with them as we please. That is why in one sense, cremation, abortion and suicide are anathema to Judaism.

Reverence for Life is a Jewish Sine Qua Non for ourselves, and for others. Is this not the theme of our Holy Days when we pray for a year of Life, extended to give us another chance to make life more meaningful, and to appreciate the opportunity of a rebirth of spirit in serving our Creator and His Creation?

To exist like a robot or golem, a product of industry, is to participate in an unholy world. But to live in the dimensions of holiness as a creature of the Divine, gives purpose and meaning to an exciting and adventurous future, unknown but unafraid. Because each day is a new day, "a world comes into being", and we have Faith and Hope and Joy and Blessing and Appreciation that we have been granted this chance to fulfillment.

May we be blessed with a year of discovering the Divine within us, bringing it to maturity, and sharing it with all for a brave new world.

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Who May Sound The Shofar?

The famed Rabbi Levi Yitchok of Berditshev always announced two weeks before the Rosh HaShono holiday that he would interview candidates for *Ba'al Tokeah* (sounding of the Shofar). Dozens would apply, for it was considered a high honor to officiate.

As each was ushered into the rabbi's study, the rabbi asked: "What are your thoughts when you sound the Shofar?"

Wanting to make a favorable impression, the candidates vied with each other in telling of holy thoughts and pious meditations. But the rabbi was visibly vexed. Then came a simple man who answered the rabbi's question:

"Rabbi, I am ignorant and poor. I have four grown daughters and no means for fitting weddings, let alone dowries. When I stand before G'd with Shofar in hand, I have this prayer in mind: 'Master of the world! I have done Your will and kept Your commandments; now You do my will and provide for my daughters!'"

Delighted, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok cried: "You are an honest man and your prayer is sincere. You will be my *Ba'al Tokeah*!"

(Israel Ehrlich:
Rabbi Levi-Yitzchok of Berditshev)

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G'tt Betet Auch? Eine Betrachtung zu den Grossen Bettagen

Die Juedische Idee von Gebet entspringt einer besonderen Auffassung von G'tt und Mensch und deren Wechselbeziehung. Der glaeubige Jude nimmt die Existenz eines G'ttes in der Bibel als grundsatzlich an und bedarf keines Beweises. G'tt ist fuer das Judentum die groesste Realitaet und darueber hinaus wissen wir auf Grund menschlicher Erfahrung, dass Er die Welt leitet und um die Existenz des Menschen besorgt ist. Er teilt sich dem Menschen mit und der Mensch, das endliche Wesen, empfindet im Kehrwert den Drang, sich zu dem Unendlichen, dem Ewigen zu wenden. Diese Zuwendung zu "Ihm" wird *Gebet* genannt, Sein Zuwenden zum Menschen — *Segen*. Dieser Verkehr zwischen dem Endlichen und Unendlichen ist symbolisch am schoensten in der Vision der Jakobsleiter ausgedrueckt und deutet auch grundsatzlich den Unterschied im Inhalt der Richtungen an. Waehrend der Mensch sich nach oben wendet im "Gebet", wendet sich G'tt zum Menschen mit "Segen".

Professor Salomon Schechter, der einstige Rektor und Theologe des *Jewish Theological Seminary of America* machte gelegentlich die humoristische Bemerkung, "In Fruerehen Jahren, da die Juden fast ueberall taeglich beteten, genuegte ein *Siddur*. Heute, da so wenige diese Praxis behalten haben, sind wir gesegnet mit so vielen verschiedenen Gebetbuechern." Zu den Feiertagen *Rosch Haschana* und *Jom Kippur* sind jedoch die Synagogen gefuehlt und wir nehmen daher an, dass die meisten Juden beten. Der *Machsor*, das Gebetbuch fuer die "Hohen Feiertage," hat dementsprechend einen Vorzug vor seinen beiden Partnern, naemlich dem Gebetbuch fuer die Wochentage und Sabbate und dem fuer die drei Wallfahrtsfeste. Das Beduerfnis zu beten, erstreckt sich zu den "Hohen Feiertagen" auch auf diejenigen, die weniger bewandert sind mit dem juedischen Ritus und der Gebetordnung. Es besteht kein Zweifel darueber, dass wir zum Jahreswechsel das Bestreben haben, in gemeinsamen Gebeten mit Glaubensgenossen uns zum Unendlichen zu wenden, gleichwohl viele keine Uebung im Beten haben. Wir moegen davon ueberzeugt sein, dass so mancher von ihnen in seinem Innersten den Wunsch hegt, "Oh, mein G'tt, lehre mich wie zu beten. Gib doch meinem Mund ein, die richtigen Worte zu sprechen."

Diesen Teilnehmern der oeffentlichen Andachten moege zum Trost gereichen, dass es auch in fruerehen Zeiten in der Betgemeinschaft solche gab, die nicht wussten, wie zu beten. Das juedische Folklore ist reich an phantasievollen Geschichten, die die fremdanmutenden Methoden beschreiben, welche von unkundigen oder unartikulierten Betenden angewandt wurden, in ihrem Streben sich mit G'tt zu verstaendigen. Hierfuer geben wir wieder einige Beispiele.

Weltbekannt ist das reizende Histoerchen von dem Hirtenknaben, der sich bei der *Jom Kippur-Andacht* in der gefuehnten Synagoge in unfreiwilligem Schweigen nicht mehr beherrschen konnte. Fachgemaess legte er schliesslich seine Finger an den Mund und gab einen lauten, schrillen Pfiff von sich. Die Betgemeinschaft war entsetzt und wollte den Jungen mit Schlaegen aus der Synagoge entfernen. Der Rabbi jedoch verhinderte dies mit einem verstaendnisvollen Laecheln und setzte sein Gebet umso inbruenstiger fort.

Ein drastischer, ungewollter Zornausbruch in der Synagoge wird von einem des hebraischen Lesens unkundigen Bauer berichtet. Er haette das Gebetbuch wuetend zum Fenster hinausgeschleudert, dann seine Blicke und seine Stimme himmelwaerts mit der Bitte zu G'tt gerichtet, er moege sich selbst Sein, Ihm genehmes Gebet aus dem Gebetbuch aussuchen und ihm-dem Bauer-zu seinen Gunsten anrechnen.

Und schliesslich der Bericht von einem simplen Dorfjuden, der den ganzen Tag geduldig in der Synagoge sass und ununterbrochen das *Alef-Bejt* auf der ersten Seite eines Gebetbuches fuer Kinder hersagte. Sooft er an das Ende der Buchstabenserie anlangte, bat er in seiner Einfaeltigkeit G'tt, aus den Buchstaben Worte zu formen, die Worte in Paragraphen zusammenzusetzen und daraus die Gebete zu komponieren, die zu lesen er im gedruckten Text nicht imstande war.

(continued on next page)

G'TT BETET AUCH? (continued)

Alle diese Personen haben eine Brücke zu G'tt in ihrer Weise gebaut. Ihre Bitten und Taten waren ernste und aufrichtige Versuche fuer einen erhabenen Dialog mit "Ihm". Sie bezeugen die Richtigkeit der Behauptung des amer*kanischen Philosophen und Psychologen William James (1842 - 1910), dass "Mensch betet, weil er nicht anders kann — er muss beten".

Es ist wohl mit Recht anzunehmen, dass wir alle an diesen "Hohen Feiertagen" einer Leitung fuer unser Beten beduerfen, moegen wir auch wissen, wie zu beten und uns im *Machzor* auskennen. Wir moegen uns nicht zufrieden geben mit dem Hersagen oder dem stummen Lesen mit Hilfe der Augen. Es kommt darauf an, wie man betet. Wir wollen doch ueber das gedruckte, sich oft wiederholende Material hinausgehen und waeren gluecklich, wenn wir unser persoenelechtes Meditieren in Worte fassen koennten. Solche Gebete sind nicht artikuliert. Wo koennen wir Hilfe finden? An wen sollen wir uns wenden?

Da muessen wir schon unsere Blicke in die lichte Vergangenheit unserer Vaeter und unsere glorreiche Literaturgeschichte werfen. Von Moses wird wohl im *Midrasch* behauptet, dass G'tt ihn beten lehrte. In unserem Streben nach einem hoeheren Niveau genuegt es, sich an die Vorbilder unserer Patriarchen, Propheten, Koenige, Poeten, Gelehrten und Mystiker zu halten. Von ihnen angeregt wuerden wir unsere Gedanken und Gefuehle weiten und ein jeder seiner persoenelechsten Faehigkeit und Bildung gemaess Gebete verfassen koennen. Das ist ja auch der tiefere Sinn der Auffassung, dass unsere Gebete die einstigen Opfergaben ersetzen.

So wuerden wir auch zu der Frage gelangen: *Betet nicht auch G'tt?* Kinder fragen oeffters so ihre Eltern oder Lehrer, sie moechten gerne Ihn beten hoeren und Seine Gebete wiederholen. Wenn uns Symphonien der Engel vom Throne G'ttes uebermittelt werden koennten — mehr als wir in der *Keduscha* und an anderen Gebetstellen von unseren Lehrern angewiesen bekommen haben — wie gerne wuerden wir dann in ihren Chorgesang einstimmen. Wenn der Meister der Welt uns mit einer solchen Uebertragung begnaden wuerde, wuerden wir da nicht naheifern in der Komposition von Gebeten?

Und siehe, wie kindisch auch und fremdartig die Frage, ob G'tt auch betet klingen mag, sie wird von den talmudischen Gelehrten im *Traktat Berachot* (7a) diskutiert und positiv beantwortet. Rabbi Jochanan im Namen von Rabbi Josi sagt, *G'tt betet*, denn der Prophet Jesaja berichtet (56.7) in Seinem Namen: *Ich bringe sie nach meinem heiligen Berg und erfreue sie in meinem Bethause....* Der Herr spricht also von *Seinem* Bethaus und nicht von *ihrem*, der Menschen Haus der Gebete. Darauf folgt konsequenter Weise die Frage, was fuer Gebete der Herr spricht. Die Antwort ist ein Text, der so einfach und anspruchslos erscheint, dass man ihn als unwahrscheinlich mit dem Schoepfer der Welt assoziieren moechte. Die darin enthaltenen Qualitaeten sind jedoch so schwerwiegend fuer die Jahreszeit der Busse und Bitten, dass wir es in drei Teilen frei fassen wollen.

Moege es mein Wille sein, Zorn und Wut zu baendigen. Moechte doch mein Mitleid meinen Unwillen besiegen bittet G'tt sich selbst. Zahlreiche Stellen in der Heiligen Schrift verzeichnen zeitweilige Ausbrueche von G'ttes Unwillen und Zorn. Doch ein diesbezugliches Gebet des Meisters des Universums bewegt den Menschen ungewoehnlich. Wir wuerden ein gewichtigeres Gebet und mehr sophistischen Inhalts erwarten. Unsere talmudischen Gelehrten scheinen aber G'ttes Zorn mit der grossen Leidensgeschichte des juedischen Volkes zu verbinden. Unsere eigene Gegenwart hat uns ja eine unfassbare Erfahrung im "Holocaust" oder im "Jom Kippur-Krieg" gebracht, die immer wieder die Frage an G'tt ausloest *WARUM*? Mit diesem Aufschrei ist der Dialog mit dem Allmaechtigen eingeleitet. Vielleicht hatten die Talmudgelehrten das Problem der Leiden und Martyriums im Sinne gehabt als sie ein Gebet um Beherrschung des Zornes G'ttes in seinen Mund legten. Sie bitten es als eine Quelle des Trostes in Beantwortung unseres Strebens nach einer Erklaerung der an uns veruebten Greuelthaten. G'ttes Gebet besagt, dass eine Wendung zum Guten vom Schoepfer des Menschen zu erwarten sei. Die zwei markantesten Beispiele aus der Urzeit ist einmal die Suendflut, die mit dem Versprechen endete (Genesis 9,15), *so werde ich gedenken meines Bundes....*, und dann die Suende mit dem "Goldenen Kalb", deren Ausklang die dramatische Erklaerung G'ttes ist (Moses II, 32, 14), *da reute den Ewigen das Unheil, das er ueber sein Volk verhaengt hatte*.

(continued on next page)

G'TT BETET AUCH? (continued)

Der zweite Teil des goettlichen Gebetes ist ueberraschend menschlich und elementar: *Moegen die Beziehungen zu meinen Kindern von Gefuehlen des Mitleids durchdrungen sein. Moege Gnade und Erbarmen meine Erregungen ueberwinden.* Also dem Talmud nach hat G'tt Gemuetsbewegungen. Wir fordern daher in diesen Tagen mit Recht und Aussicht auf Erfolg, dass G'tt in seinem Richten Besorgnis um uns hege und Mitleid mit uns habe, das er doch selbst das "Erbarmen" als seinen Gesellen am Richterstuhl verlangt. Die juedische Lehre versaemt keine Gelegenheit die Bedeutung eines mitleidigen Herzens zu betonen. Der Allmaechtige wird von uns als der "Allbarmherzige" angesprochen. Und wenn unsere Lehrer der Fruehzeit Mitleid fuer das juedische Volk zum Ausdruck bringen wollten, dann sprachen sie von "mitleidsvollen Kindern, Soehnen midleidsvoller Ahnen", *rachmanim benej rachmanim hem*. Der Ewige und Israel begegnen sich mit dem Element der Barmherzigkeit auf der Verbindungsbruecke des Gebetes.

Das dritte Gebet G'ttes ist nicht viel anders als das vorhergehende. Wir koennen es in folgende Worte kleiden: *moegen meine Rechtssprueche und Urteile nicht auf der Strenge des Gesetzes und des Richtens allein beruhen und moege ich stets geneigt sein meinen Kindern in dubio pro reo, die Moeglichkeit des Zweifels und der Unsicherheit zuzugestehen.* Mit anderen Worten, wenn G'tt uns richtet, will er Nachsicht und Wohlwollen anwenden, so manche Folgen unserer Launen uebersehen, um der Neigung fuer Vergeltungsmassnahmen zu widerstehen. Er will *erech apajim* sein, geduldig unsere Schwaechen betrachtend Suenden vergeben. Dieses Gebet ist uns besonders willkommen, weil es in uns ein Empfinden der Erleichterung und der Dankbarkeit ausloest. Denn wir bekennen, *solltest Du auf der Strenge des Gesetzes bestehen, da koennte keiner als rechtschaffen vor Dir erscheinen!*

Den Inhalt dieser drei Gebete sollen wir beherzigen und nacheifern in unseren Beziehungen zu unseren Nebenmenschen, in unserem Handel und Wandel. Sie enthalten Tugenden von hoechster Qualitaet. Sie tragen den goettlichen Stempel fuer unsere persoенliche innere Genesung und fuer das Wohl der Gesellschaft auf dem Pfad von Tugend und Ehre, von Menschlichkeit und Frieden. Die Meditationen G'ttes moegen ergaenzen des *Machsors* ueblichen Gebete und Bitten fuer Leben Gesundheit, Wohlstand, und Glueck. Gebete sind Tore des Schicksals, die zu oeffnen und zu schliessen vermoegen. Und Koenig Salomon gemahnt uns zu bedenken (Sprueche 16,11): *Balanx und Waagschalen der Richtigkeit sind des Herrn, des Menschen Werke sind die Steine im Beutel.*

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WHEN SOVEREIGNS MEET

This year, as not infrequently, Yom Kippur occurs on Shabbos. Far from clashing, the two are harmoniously compatible, converging in convivial companionship.

To be sure, some minor adjustments are made. Shabbos yields its traditional Sabbath meals, in deference to Yom Kippur's solemn fast. Yom Kippur omits some of its supplications and *tachanun*-like prayers, so as not to mar the Sabbath repose. But these are gifts of love, offered freely in a spirit of accommodating respect rather than as concession or compromise.

Among the days of the week, Shabbos reigns supreme. Among the holy days, Yom Kippur is undisputed king. How do the two size up to each other?

In solemn holiness and grandeur, Yom Kippur towers gigantically. In compelling, practical severity and majesty, Shabbos ranks incomparably.

A beautiful hymn describes them as they meet (Pizman, Slichos, Yom Kippur Shacharis):

*Sacred reigning peers
Fondly embrace today,
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Behold, how good and pleasant to see
Brethren, dwelling in unity!*

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A Day Of The Heart

New York City's annual Salute to Israel Parade — which usually takes place after the Shavuot holidays — was held on June 1st. The throngs, lining the sidewalks of Fifth Avenue, witnessed — bathed in bright sunshine — a seemingly unending joyful procession of ornamented floats, graceful dancing groups, disciplined marchers — and proud young parents, wheeling their little ones in strollers. Whether bystander or marcher, the common denominator was *Achdut Israel* — the unity of Our People. Stirring symbols were on display of Jerusalem's ancient walls, of Israel's armed strength and also of its desire for Peace. Yemenite dancers and a little Ethiopian boy, with the fringes of his Arba Kanfot clearly convincing us (if his yarmulka shouldn't suffice) proved that physiognomies may be different, but the *Nefesh* akin. Marchers of a wide range of Jewish identification attested to a unity that admits ideological diversity. And as an Irish policeman was quoted (perhaps with an apology to the Levy's Bread commercial) 'You don't have to be Jewish to march in this parade'. Its poignant motto was: One People, One Heart, an especially fortuitous choice, since the word *Lev* also spells out Israel's 32nd year of existence.

Later in the afternoon the solidarity of our hearts was evidenced again under sadly different circumstances. A capacity crowd had gathered in the synagogue of K'hal Adath Jeshurun to bid farewell to their late President Dr. Raphael Moller. Stirring eulogies evoked the blessed memory of an extraordinary physician, whose life was religion and healing. Dr. Moller lived faithfully by the oaths of Hippocrates and Maimonides, dispensing comfort and confidence. His treatment would often even include the study of Gemara with his patients. The sadness of parting was palliated by gratitude that this Jewish heart had been allowed to beat for so many years to give devoted service to community and mankind. Small wonder then, that many of those who had attended the joyous Israel Parade gathered again at this solemn Hespel!

One of our own very active members had the opportunity to complete this remarkable day in a threefold chord of concerned participation. A few years ago through her initiative, our Congregation hosted a meeting of the Police Community Council. Her frequent attendance at such meetings engendered a friendly relationship with the Rev. Father Edmond T.P. Mullen, Chaplain of the 34th Police Precinct, who is the Rector of The Holy Trinity Parish Church. June 1 coincided with the 10th anniversary of Father Mullen's rectorship and, as on the prior occasion of the 25th anniversary of his ordination, she was invited to the dinner celebrating this festivity. As a matter of courtesy, dairy food was provided especially for her.

A Day of the Heart it was, but it is as little tied to any particular calendar date, as Brotherhood Week might be to the period between Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays. Let's just be sure, it is NOT "Brotherhood Weak" the rest of the year....We can do it by trying to make it a Day of the Heart on any given day.

Theodore H. Spaeth

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The Festival Of Wandering And Rest

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG

born into an assimilated German Jewish family, he was on the brink of conversion to Christianity, but reverted to Judaism and became its devoted protagonist; an existentialist thinker and author of The Star of Redemption, a major, Jewish theological work; translator of the Hebrew Bible into German in collaboration with Martin Buber; head of the Free House of Jewish Study in Frankfurt on the Main (1886-1929)

The Feast of Booths is the feast of both wanderings and rest. In memory of those long wanderings of the past which finally led to rest, the members of the family do not have their merry meal in the familiar rooms of the house but under a roof which is quickly constructed, a makeshift roof with heaven shining through the gaps. This serves to remind the people that no matter how solid the house of today may seem, no matter how temptingly it beckons to rest and unimpaired living, it is but a tent which permits only a pause in the long wanderings through the wilderness of centuries. For rest, the rest of which the builder of the first Temple spoke, does not come until all these wanderings are at an end, and his words are read at this feast: "Blessed be He that has given rest unto His people."

The passages from the Prophets read on the occasion of this festival again prove—if there is still need of such proof—that this double meaning is the meaning of the feast, that it is a feast of redemption only within the circle of the three festivals of revelation. Because of this, redemption is celebrated here only as the hope and certainty of future redemption; and while this feast is celebrated in the same month as the Days of Awe, which are the feasts of a redemption present and eternal, and borders on these Days in neighborly fashion, it does not coincide with them. On the first day of the Feast of Booths the majestic closing chapter from Zechariah is read, the chapter concerning the day of the Lord with the prediction that concludes the daily service; "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the Lord be One, and His name: One."

This ultimate word of hope concludes the daily service of the assembled congregation and also comes at the conclusion of the spiritual year. On the other days of the festival, these words are paralleled by the ones Solomon spoke at the dedication of the Temple, when the wandering ark at last found the rest the people had already found under Joshua. Solomon's concluding words wonderfully connect the hope for future recognition "that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord, He is God; there is none else," with a warning to the one people: "Let your heart, therefore, be whole with the Lord." And in the chapter from Ezekiel read at this festival, classical expression is given to this merging into each other of unity of the heart, unity of God, and unity of peoples which, in the concept of the sanctification of God's Name through the people for all the peoples, forms the inmost basis of Judaism.

Thus the Feast of Booths is not only a festival of rest for the people, but also the festival of the ultimate hope. It is a festival of rest only in that it breathes hope. In this festival of redemption there is no present redemption. Redemption is only a hope, only something expected in the source of wanderings. And so this feast cannot be the last word, since it does not include redemption in its own domains but only glimpses it and lets it be glimpsed from the mountain of revelation. As the Sabbath flows back into the weekday, so this close of the spiritual year is not permitted to be an actual close but must flow back into the beginning. On the festival of Rejoicing in the Law, the last word in the Torah gives rise to the first. And the old man who, in the name of the congregation, is in charge of this transition, is not called "husband of the Torah," but goes by the name of "bridegroom of the Torah." It is not without good cause that the book full of corroding doubt, Ecclesiastes, is assigned to be read at the Feast of Booths. The disenchantment which follows upon the Sabbath the moment its fragrance has been breathed for the last time and the weekday asserts itself in all its old unbroken strength is, as it were, included in the festival itself through the reading of Ecclesiastes.

(continued on page thirty three)

טובה

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THE FESTIVAL OF WANDERING AND REST *(conclusion)*

Although the Feast of Booths celebrates redemption and rest, it is nevertheless the festival of wandering through the wilderness. Neither in the feasts that unite people at a common meal, nor in those that unite them in common listening, does man have the experience of community begot by ultimate silence. Beyond the mere founding of the community in the common world, beyond the expression of the community in a common life, there must be something higher, even if this something lies at the farthest border of community life and constitutes community beyond common life.

Translated by William W. Hallo

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לשנה טובה תכתבו

PAUL LEVIE, Proprietor

The Festival In The Hassag Labor Camp

M. YECHEZKIELI

Hassag. It was called a labor camp, but it was a slaughterhouse—no more, no less. We were the remnants of the Chenstochover ghetto. Our families had been sent to their death. Only we few remained—like limbs torn from their bodies, writhing with pain, living a life without life....

Sukkot, the festival which brings farmers and city apartment-house dwellers alike into temporary huts, somehow found its way to Hassag. We discovered an unused corner between two factory buildings. Lumber was piled up, as if in storage, for the *sukkah* walls, and somewhat about these walls, branches were unobtrusively stacked for the *sukkah*. We slid in and out of this temporary dwelling with our treasured crusts of bread, thinking of the protective booths in the wilderness, hoping for the *sukkah* of the Leviathan.

So we had our Sukkot in those stolen moments, for the experience of eating in the *sukkah*, no matter how makeshift it was, was a genuine experience, but what could take the place of a *le-hayyim* for the next holiday—Simhat Torah—Joy of the Law? We had no Torah Scroll, and joy was absolutely foreign to Hassag. Worse yet, on that date, just one year earlier, we were witnesses to the liquidation of the Chenstochover ghetto. Simhat Torah—a day of unbridled joy? Hardly. Yet Simhat Torah was brought to Hassag by this cobbler, who was so obscure to us that I cannot even recall his name. Here is how it happened.

One day during the week of Sukkot, a whispered message flitted around the camp: the shoemaker had been delayed on his return from the ghetto. When he finally appeared, he did not head for the kitchen for his especially generous portion, but instead he hurried into the depths of his hut. What had happened? The impossible—no, the incredible had come to pass for the second time in a month! He had successfully spirited a *Sefer Torah* out of the clutches of the dreaded Gestapo and smuggled it into our camp. How? He simply rolled it around and around his body, let his loose outer shirt hang over it, and then walked into the camp. Where he had gotten it from, he adamantly refused to reveal.

Once again, the "clean-up" squad advanced their pet theory—that he had found it in the S.S. stores of Jewish properties, from where he had procured the *shofar*—but they were at least partially wrong. It had not been nearly as easy to get the *Sefer Torah*. The S.S. maintained an extremely heavy guard on their large holdings of Jewish plunder, and were particularly careful with *sefarim* and other religious objects, regardless of their intrinsic value. Our intrepid cobbler decided to bribe one of the guards, but since he was not exactly solvent then, he offered the corporal something that he could never have purchased for any sum—a pair of officer's boots! (The Germans seem to have regarded handcrafted boots as a singular luxury and thus reserved them for high-ranking officers. Hence, too, the cobbler's privileged status.)

(continued on next page)

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LABOR CAMP (conclusion)

We later found out that he had literally saved the *Sefer Torah* from desecration because a short while later the Gestapo burned all the *Sifre Torah*, other *sefarim*, and various sacramental cloths and articles in one gigantic bonfire. This one *Sefer Torah* was the sole surviving remnant of the sacred articles of the ghetto. The cobbler selected it because of its small size, for that made it feasible for him to wrap it around his midriff without causing a telltale bulge, and later, in camp, its size permitted easy concealment.

We had instituted a regular *minyan* on Shabbat in one of the barracks, and it was there, on Shabbat Hol ha-Moed Sukkot, that the heroic shoemaker turned to us and demanded, "Who wants to hide the *Sefer Torah*?"

A companion of mine and I decided to assume the responsibility. We immediately removed a board from the head of one of the wooden cots we slept on and, in the hollow under it, concealed the Scroll.

The news of the Scroll's arrival had naturally electrified the entire camp. On Simhat Torah night we held crowded *hakkafo*t in the cramped, rundown shack we called home. These *hakkafo*t would have been outlandish in any other situation. The *Sefer Torah* remained safely ensconced in its hollow behind the board. We stealthily walked around the wooden cot that contained our sacred treasure. As we passed, we leaned over and kissed the board that lay directly above the *Sefer*. We knew that if we carried the *Sefer Torah* in our arms, as in conventional *hakkafo*t, we would have been running a great risk. Don't think it was our lives that we were protecting! Of course being caught carrying the Torah would have meant sure death, but what value did our lives have anyway? It would have been worth it! But the Scroll would have also been destroyed—God forbid!—and this was a loss we would not risk.

And so it went, far into the night. The silent "dancers" held themselves strenuously in check, as the joyous songs surged repeatedly to their lips.

One song echoed softly in our ears. Because of its obvious relevance, we could not contain it within us. And as we walked around the *Sefer*, we were almost deafened by the silent screaming of its chords that enveloped us all:

"Rejoice and be gay on Simhat Torah, because it (the Torah) is our strength and our light....!"

Reb Noach looked up from his cold glass of tea and peered into the faces of his listeners.

"Do you think I made up this story? Have you ever been at the Gerrer Bet Midrash in Bnei Brak? Well, the Sefer Torah is there. I brought it there after the war."

Translated by Moshe Barkany

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To All Our Customers and Friends

לשנה טובה תכתבו

HOSHANA RABBAH

HIRSCHEL REVEL

Hoshana Rabbah, the twenty-first day of Tishri, which is the seventh day of the Sukkot festival and the last of its intermediate days (Hol ha-Moed), has been of special significance since biblical times. Talmudic sources relate that on every day of the Sukkot festival there was a procession around the altar in the Temple, each person holding in his hands the four plants, *lulav*, *etrog*, myrtle and willow, bound together. While circling the altar they would chant in unison, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, save now! We beseech Thee, O Lord, make us now to prosper" (Psalms 118.25), and "I and He, save now." On Hoshana Rabbah, however, the people would first march joyfully to Motza (about thirty minutes' distance from Jerusalem), where they would cut many willow branches, and then return to the Temple, where they decorated the altar with them. After making seven circuits around the altar they would beat a small bunch of willow sprigs against the ground. According to some, this custom of beating the willow sprigs is a Sinaitic origin, while according to others, it originated in the time of the prophets, either as a general practice, or as a practice of the few.

In the gaonic period these circuits were repeated at the afternoon service. The seven circuits recall God's mercies at the time when the wall of Jericho collapsed after it had been circled seven times. The willow was the symbol of the fruitfulness of rain, for tradition held that on the next day (Shemini Atzeret) the amount of rain to be sent to the earth for the ensuing year was determined.

In later and in modern times the custom is to take the Scrolls out of the ark, and make seven circuits, singing short liturgical litanies, which are called *Hoshanot*. This is why the day is referred to as Hoshana Rabbah, or "the day of many *Hoshanot*," although originally the day was known as "the day of willow sprigs." The word "Hoshana," which is found six times in the New Testament, where it is used to denote a cry of admiration and jubilation, is based upon this usage. After the seven circuits are completed, the bundle of the four plants is put aside, and while the verse, "The messenger announces good tidings" is repeated three times, a bundle of the willow sprigs is beaten a few times against the floor or against a bench. . . .

The *Zohar* has popularized the conception of Hoshana Rabbah as a "day of judgment," when the decrees decided by God on Yom Kippur for every individual commence to take effect. According to a midrash cited by Isaac Tyrnau in his *Minhagim* (under Hoshana Rabbah), God promised Abraham that if his children had not been forgiven on Yom Kippur, they would have an opportunity until Hoshana Rabbah to repent and be forgiven. However, from the *Midrash ha-Gadol* which reads, "on this day (Hoshana Rabbah)... Israel... enters into their blessings," it would seem that Hoshana Rabbah has a significance independent of that of Yom Kippur. For while on Yom Kippur one's fate for the ensuing year is sealed insofar as punishments for past misdeeds are concerned, the extent of the blessings which will fall to one's lot is not determined until Hoshana Rabbah, after God has had an opportunity to observe how wholeheartedly one has carried out the commandments relative to the Sukkot festival, and to what extent he deserves to be rewarded....

Since the time of Abudraham (fourteenth century), many Jews have observed the custom of remaining awake the night of Hoshana Rabbah, spending the time in study and in reciting the *Tikkun*, which contains selections from the Bible, Talmud, and *Zohar*, as well as special prayers. Unpaid pledges to charity are usually paid on this day. Although some were accustomed to fast on Hoshana Rabbah, this practice was forbidden by Simon ben Zemah Duran, because fasting is not permitted on the intermediate holidays. In honor of the sanctity of the day, candles are often lit and ritual baths are taken as on Yom Kippur, and the *kittel* is worn over the Sabbath clothes. Some congregations include sections from the Yom Kippur liturgy, as the general plan of the prayers is somewhat changed in order to conform to the sanctity of the day.

(continued on page thirty nine)

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HOSHANA RABBA (conclusion)

Many interesting superstitions and customs have arisen in connection with Hoshana Rabbah. The oldest and most famous of these is that if one looks at his reflection on the night of Hoshana Rabbah and if one's head is missing from the reflected shadow, one will not live out the year, unless he repents and is then visited by a severe illness. The root of this superstition is found in the *Zohar*. A variation of this superstition is that if one looks at his reflection in a dish of well-water and if the eyes and the mouth of the reflection are closed, one will not live out the year. These superstitions were already decried by Moses Isserles (sixteenth century) and they were ridiculed by Rabbi Jacob Ettlinger. Since the thirteenth century it has been customary for pious Jews to save the willow sprigs after they are beaten and use them as fuel to heat the oven in which the Passover *matzot* are baked. These used willow sprigs, when placed in a secluded spot in the home, were supposed to banish fear and make for a sense of security.

Soviet Jewry

Just prior to the Moscow Olympics openings, a dramatic protest ceremony was staged at the Grand Army Plaza on Fifth Avenue, last July 17th. Arranged by the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry, dignitaries from all parts of the city participated, speakers decried the Soviets' cynical lack of sportsmanship in refusing to grant freedom to dissidents and prisoners and presenting to the world a picture of fairness in competition. Washington Heights-Inwood was represented by Rabbi Shlomo Kahn, Chairman of the Washington Heights-Inwood Council for Soviet Jewry, Congressman Weiss and State Senator Leichter.

Freedom Awards for Heroism in absentia were presented to dozens of imprisoned and accepted on their behalf by attending dignitaries. Rabbi Kahn accepted the award on behalf of Eliyahu Essas, a noted Moscow refusenik who is known for his heroic efforts in studying and adhering to religious values under almost impossible conditions.

The chief area of activity of the Washington Heights-Inwood Council is immediate help to Jewish families in the USSR. Emigration has been severely curtailed. Thousands desperately require assistance. Many, cut off from their livelihoods, face starvation. Packages (costing ca. \$200 each) can support a family for six months and heart-wrenching requests reach the Council which must be granted.

The Council's major fund raising event is its annual Benefit Concert. Please reserve Saturday night, December 27th, for an exciting evening with the brilliant artist David Bar-Illan, at Yeshiva University's Auditorium. For information contact the Washington Heights-Inwood Council for Soviet Jewry, 571 West 182nd Street, or call 781-0115.

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The Story Of The Melody

SHMUEL YOSEF AGNON

born in Galicia in 1888 and from 1924 on resident of Jerusalem, where he died in 1970; master of an original style and prolific pen, he authored several novels, hundreds of short stories and anthologies of Jewish folklore; recognized as the foremost modern Hebrew writer, he received the Nobel Prize for Literature, the first author in the holy tongue to be so honored

It was the evening of the Festival of Rejoicing in the Torah. That evening the rabbi's house of study was full of bright lights, every light fixture glowing with a radiance from on high. Righteous and saintly *Hasidim* clothed in white robes of pure silk, with Torah Scrolls in their arms, circled the pulpit, dancing with holy fervor and enjoying the pleasures of the Torah. A number of *Hasidim* as well as ordinary householders get the privilege of dancing with them, and they cling to the sacred Torah and to those who selflessly obey the Torah, and they forget all anger and all disputes and all kinds of troublesome trivialities. And their young children form an outer circle around them, each child carrying a colored flag, red or green or white or blue, each flag inscribed with letters of gold. On top of each flag is an apple, and on top of each apple a burning candle, and all the candles glow like planets in the mystical "field of sacred apples." And when young boys or girls see their father receive this honor, carrying a Torah Scroll in his arms, they immediately jump toward him grasping the Scroll, caressing, embracing, kissing it with their pure lips that have not tasted sin; they clap their hands and sing sweetly, "Happy art thou, O Israel," and their fathers nod their heads toward the children, singing, "Ye holy lambs." And the women in the outer lobby feast their eyes on this exalted holiness.

When the seventh round of the procession around the pulpit is reached, the cantor takes a Torah Scroll to his bosom and calls out to the youths: "Whoever studies the Torah let him come and take a Torah Scroll," and a number of fine youths come and take Scrolls in their arms.

Then the cantor calls out again. "The distinguished young man, Raphael, is honored with the honor of the Torah, and with the singing of a beautiful melody."

Raphael came forward, went to the ark, accepted the Scroll from the cantor, and walked at the head of the procession. The elders stood and clapped their hands, adding to the rejoicing. The children stood on the benches chanting aloud, "Ye holy lambs" and waving their flags over the heads of the youths. But when Raphael began to sing his melody all hands became still, and everyone stood motionless without saying a word. Even the older *Hasidim* whose saintly way in prayer and in dancing with great fervor is like that of the ancient sage Rabbi Akiba — of whom it is told that when he prayed by himself, his bowing and genuflecting were so fervent that "if when you left him he was in one corner, you found him in another corner at the next moment" — even they restrained themselves with all their might from doing this. They did not lift a hand to clap because of the ecstatic sweetness, even though their hearts were consumed with fire. The women leaned from the windows of the women's gallery, and their heads hung out like a flock of doves lined up on the frieze of a wall.

Raphael held the Scroll in his arm, walking in the lead with all the other youths following him in the procession around the pulpit. At that moment a young girl pushed her way through the legs of the dancers, leaped toward Raphael, sank her red lips into the white mantle of the Torah Scroll in Raphael's arm, and kept on kissing the Scroll and caressing it with her hands. Just then the flag fell out of her hand, and the burning candle dropped on Raphael's clothing.

After the holiday Raphael's father brought an action before the rabbi against the girl's father in the matter of Raphael's robe that had been burned because of the girl. The rabbi, indulging himself in the pleasure of a wise remark, said to the girl's father, "God willing, for their wedding day you will have a new garment made for him." Immediately they brought a decanter of brandy and wrote the betrothal contract. And for Raphael's and Miriam's wedding a new garment was made for him. This is the story of the melody.

Translated by Isaac Franck

PEACE AND EVERLASTING MEMORY TO

Eugenie Kahn, nee Alexander	f'ly	Germany
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Justin Brown		Nuernberg
Rosel Lamm, nee Rosenau		Gunsenhausen
Hedwig Meyer, nee Cahn		Germany
Frieda Mayer, nee Stern		Munich
Walter Lachmann		Landeck/Westpreussen
Arthur Simonsohn		Germany
Theodor Wallach		Germany

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WE REMEMBER

*the departed Brothers and Sisters inscribed on the Memorial Windows
and Bronze Tablets in our Synagogue.*

<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Elul</i>		<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Tishri</i>	
6	25	Ferdinand Baumann	14	4	Zacharias May
6	25	Bernhard Groeschel	14	4	Max Schorsch
6	25	Dina Hirschmann	15	5	Esther Rosenberg
6	25	Sally Kahn	16	6	Joseph Oppenheim
6	25	Dr. Leo Stahl	16	6	Wolf Plaut
8	27	Traute Feith	17	7	Pauline Hirsch
8	27	Daniel Guggenheim	17	7	Moritz Veisz
8	27	Ida Meyer	18	8	Bertha Michel
8	27	Jacob Sommer	18	8	Eva Nordlinger
9	28	Robert Arnstein	19	9	Irma Loew
9	28	Albert Kronenberger	19	9	Netty Michels
9	28	Erna Michelson	19	9	Kurt Rosenthal
9	28	Salomon Ottenheimer	19	9	Margaret Ullman
9	28	Jacob Simon	20	10	Frieda Adler
10	29	Jenny Holzer	20	10	Selma Adler
10	29	Elizabeth Levy	20	10	Rebekka Aron
10	29	Julius Menges	20	10	Herta Avrutin
10	29	Adolf Pollack	20	10	Julius & Ella Braun
			20	10	Dorothea Cohn-Victor
			20	10	Max & Blanka Dreifus
			20	10	Johanna Eichtersheimer
			20	10	Jacob & Rose Eisen
			20	10	Wilhelm Frenkel
			20	10	Emma Frenkel
			20	10	Cilly Fuld
			20	10	Hannelore Fuld
			20	10	Theobald Gold
			20	10	Ida Gold
			20	10	Anni Gold
			20	10	Else Goldband
			20	10	Lina Goldschmidt
			20	10	Leo, Martha & Heinz
					Hirsch
			20	10	Ella Jacobsohn
			20	10	Siegfried Franziska, Hildegard,
					Werner Jacobson
			20	10	Bernard Katzenstein
			20	10	Ernst Kaufmann

(continued on next page)

WE REMEMBER *(continued)***Sept. Tishri**

20	10	Frieda Kayem
20	10	Irma Kayem
20	10	Ella Lachs
20	10	Rita Lachs
20	10	Julius Lasker
20	10	Amalie Lauter
20	10	Rebecca Lebrecht
20	10	Samuel Less
20	10	Alfred & Eduard Lippmann
20	10	Hilda Loeb
20	10	Joseph Loeb
20	10	Albert Loew
20	10	Bertha Loew
20	10	Emmi, Leo, Ruth & Walter Neuburger
20	10	Isidor & Mathilde Rosenbaum
20	10	Pauline Scherlinski
20	10	Lucy Scherlinski
20	10	Carl Seidenberger
20	10	Carl & Luise Stahl
20	10	Fraenzi Starer
20	10	Karoline Stern
20	10	Betty Strauss
20	10	Zadock Strauss
20	10	Fanny Tannenwald & daughter Felicia
20	10	Israel & Klara Tannenwald & son Manfred
20	10	Hedwig & Trude Traub
20	10	Carl Veis
20	10	Sally Wallach
20	10	Thekla Wallach
20	10	Josef & Sara Wojdyslawsky
20	10	Elisabeth Wolf
20	10	Herman Wolf
20	10	Richard Wolf
20	10	Jacob Wolffs
21	11	Max Braun
22	12	Salomon Kraemer
23	13	Moritz Hanauer
23	13	Siegfried Mannasse
23	13	Simon Neuburger
23	13	Meta Textor
25	15	Rudolph Berney
26	16	Gustav Groeschel
26	16	Michel Kahn
26	16	Justin Klau
27	17	Benedikt Hirschmann
27	17	Henry Mannheimer
27	17	Helene Rosenfeld

Sept. Tishri

27	17	Julius Rosenthal
27	17	Sophie Stahl
28	18	Herman Furcht
28	18	Ricka Hirschheimer
28	18	Ida Stein
28	18	Fina Strauss
29	19	Julius Graf
29	19	Mirtel Michel
29	19	Malka Tavdidishvili
30	20	Mariane Bacharach
30	20	Nanette Bauernfreund
30	20	Johanna Falkenstein
30	20	Max Sonn
Oct.		
1	21	Isidore Boettigheimer
1	21	Adolph Kaufherr
1	21	Julius & Hanna Schloss
1	21	Isaac Schnurman
2	22	Henry Kahn
2	22	Laura Neumann
2	22	Sally Nordschild
2	22	Frieda Stock
3	23	Gustav Kaufman
3	23	Meta Lauter
3	23	Salomon Wollenreich
3	23	Sigmund Yunker
4	24	Henry Veisz
5	25	Fred Goodman
5	25	Wilhelm Heldmann
5	25	Dr. Otto Kafka
5	25	Samson Schmidt
5	25	Simon Schoenberger
6	26	Martha Dreyfus
6	26	Justin Friesner
6	26	Mathilde Furcht
7	27	Johanna Adler
7	27	Albin Heldmann
7	27	Bertha Hollander-Goetz
7	27	Sol Krell
7	27	Victor Reichenberger
8	28	Herman Glauberg
8	28	Dr. David Gross
8	28	Frieda Horwitz
8	28	Adolf & Klara Rosenberg & sons Josef, Martin & Helmut
8	28	Leopold Rosenfeld
9	29	Therese Feingold
9	29	Max Hirschenberger
10	30	Sol Gernsheimer
10	30	Toni & Melanie Marx
10	30	Bertha Mayer
10	30	Selma Sonneberg

(continued on next page)

WE REMEMBER *(continued)***Oct. Cheshvan**

11	1	Max Stuehler
12	2	Rudolf & Eliese Solomon
14	4	Daniel Baer
14	4	Siegfried Marx
14	4	Neftal Mueller
15	5	Henry Rosenbaum
15	5	Paula Weinstein
15	5	Rachela Wolf
16	6	Isidore Weil
18	8	Otto Benjamin
18	8	Fred Freedman
18	8	Daniel Rosenthal
18	8	Sally Rosenthal
18	8	Fanny Schoenberger
19	9	Auguste Regenstein
19	9	Anton Sachs
20	10	Louis Herzberg
20	10	Max Lazar
21	11	Rudolf Buxbaum
21	11	Herman Hirsch
21	11	Jettchen Hirsch
21	11	Julius Schaler
21	11	Arthur Simon
22	12	Friedl Kraus
23	13	Albert Breitman
23	13	Eugene Levy
24	14	August Bauer (Bauernfreund)
24	14	Jenny Homburger
24	14	Regina Leiter
24	14	Helen Mainzer
25	15	Amalia Bergman
25	15	Else Hess
25	15	Adolf Reiter
25	15	Ludwig Schwarz
25	15	Jacob Stern
26	16	Simon & Lina Nussbaum and children
26	16	Rebekka Strauss
26	16	Setti Yunker
27	17	Betty Fuld
27	17	Friederike Goldschmidt
27	17	Ludwig Greenbaum
27	17	Joe Issi Kahn
27	17	Meier Rosenfeld
27	17	Recha Schiff
28	18	Sophie Lowenstein
28	18	Moritz Silberman
28	18	Louis Snopek
28	18	Albert Strauss
29	19	Max Badt
29	19	Dr. Paul Hes

Oct. Cheshvan

29	19	Theodora Hammerschlag
29	19	Julius Levite
29	19	Nathan Reis
29	19	Jette Stein
29	19	David Stern
30	20	Moses Baer
30	20	Dina Forchheimer
30	20	Joseph Hartoch
30	20	Hannchen Lehmann
30	20	Sophie Levi
31	21	Alfred Berger
31	21	Dr. Samuel Kirsch
31	21	Fred Kraus

Nov.

1	22	Siegfried Adler
1	22	Max Griesheim
1	22	Isidor Herrmann
1	22	Dora Lissauer
1	22	Hedwig Meyer
1	22	Esther Nadel
2	23	Bertha Neumark
3	24	Shmuel Auer
3	24	Isidor & Ella Dreifuss Hannelore & Fritz
3	24	Emily, Emma Simon
4	25	Adolf Stein
5	26	Henry Rosenthal
6	27	Samuel Badt
6	27	Jack Fuld
6	27	Selma Hammerschlag
7	28	Toni Oppenheim
7	28	Arthur Schwarz
8	29	Erwin & Johanna Blumenthal
8	29	Heinrich Leitner
8	29	Lina Less

Kislev

9	1	Hans Fuerstenberg
9	1	Salomon Kaufman
9	1	Melitta Markowics
9	1	Albert & Julie Steuer
10	2	Herta Nathan
10	2	Hermine Schwarz
11	3	Jacob Feuer
11	3	Siegfried Levy
11	3	Moses Neuburger
11	3	Sophie Zeilberger
12	4	Louis Neumann
12	4	Helen Reichsfeld
12	4	Joseph Simon
12	4	Harry Walter
13	5	Emilie Holzer

(continued on next page)

WE REMEMBER *(conclusion)***Nov. Kislev**

13	5	Frieda & Max Schoenfeld and daughter
14	6	William Goldschmidt
14	6	Henry Gutwillig
15	7	Eugen Hirsch
15	7	Hanna Meyer
15	7	Harold Ullmann
16	8	Rose Boettigheimer
17	9	Ernst Heilbrunn
18	10	Hugo Kaufmann
19	11	Regina Klein
19	11	Mina Hamburger
19	11	Moritz Saeman
19	11	Frieda Schwarz
19	11	Max Stern
20	12	Johanna Baumann
20	12	Karoline Gottlieb
21	13	Samuel Bernheim
21	13	Isaac Frankel
21	13	Max Hirschhorn
22	14	Kurt Schoemann
22	14	Lina Weinstock
23	15	Emil Dreifuss
23	15	Simon Goldstein
23	15	Rafael Mannheimer
23	15	Marcus Stern
24	16	Sarah Heinsfurter
24	16	Julie Ransenberg
24	16	Amalie Schoenberg
24	16	Frederick Weil
24	16	Rosa Williams
25	17	Leopold Friedberger
25	17	Eugene Hirsch
25	17	Regina Lichtenstein
25	17	Meta Schaefer

Nov. Kislev

25	17	Dr. Hermann Schuelein
25	17	Emmy Siesel
25	17	Josef Traub
26	18	Dr. Maximilian Klanfer
27	19	Ida Basch
27	19	Joseph Goldschmidt
27	19	Bertha Goldwein
28	20	Johanna Baer
28	20	Arthur Baruch
28	20	Adolf Goldwein
28	20	David Greenbaum
28	20	Herman Kayem
28	20	Hedy Price
28	20	Adolph Rothschild
28	20	Else Wolfsheimer

Dec.

1	23	Rosa Herze
1	23	Martin Reich
1	23	Fred Wolf
2	24	Ella Jonas
2	24	Ferdinand Kahn
2	24	Leo Kaufmann
2	24	Sol J. Loew
2	24	Marianne Scharenberg
3	25	Lichtenstein Family
3	25	Salomon Reinheimer
3	25	Max Stein
3	25	Hanna Wormser
4	26	Ernest Jochsberger
4	26	Arthur Neu
4	26	Jacob Strauss
5	27	Ralph Horn
5	27	Jacob Kramer
5	27	James Wilson

*The names of the departed will be read by the Rabbi during the
Morning Service on the Shabbat preceding the Yahrzeit.*

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