

Kehilath Jeshurun Bulletin



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RABBI HASKEL LOOKSTEIN REVIEWS "THE PROMISE" AT SISTERHOOD OPENING MEETING

The 1969-70 program year of the Kehilath Jeshurun Sisterhood opened last Monday for a large gathering of women who enjoyed a varied program of organizational, philanthropic and cultural value. The highlight of the afternoon was a review of Chaim Potok's new novel, "The Promise" by Rabbi Haskel Lookstein.

A Disappointing Sequel to "The Chosen"

The Rabbi characterized this second novel of Potok as an attempt on the part of a young and developing novelist to exploit a pattern in a second novel that had proven itself successful in a first. Clearly, "The Promise" has the same structure as its predecessor: the protagonists are the same, only older; the struggle for religious freedom in research and philosophy is continued and intensified; a universal theme is presented in a parochial setting.

Whereas in "The Chosen" the novelist portrayed the universal problem of parents raising their children in their own image, in "The Promise" a different universal problem, commitment and choice, is portrayed. This problem is pithily presented by the author in a quotation from Pascal which precedes book one: "Yes, you must wager. It is not optional. You are embarked." As Potok sees it, the drama of life is enacted upon the stage of human decision. That drama is rendered significant by the choices man makes. In

(continued on page 2)

You and Your Friends
are cordially invited to attend

THE OPENING LECTURE

of the Kehilath Jeshurun Lecture Series
on the general theme

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO THE HALAKHIC WAY OF LIFE

This Wednesday evening, November 5th, at 9:00 P.M.

RABBI HASKEL LOOKSTEIN

WILL DISCUSS

"SITUATION ETHICS AND THE NEW MORALITY"

Question and Answer period to follow

Refreshments will be served

— NEXT WEEK —

The Men's Club will Sponsor

A CONVOCATION

in honor of

HON. REHAVEAM AMIR

CONSUL GENERAL OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

on

Tuesday evening, November 11th, at 8:30 P.M.

in the Auditorium of the Synagogue House

RABBI JOSEPH H. LOOKSTEIN WILL PREACH THIS SATURDAY AT 11:00 A.M.
"MAYORALTY ELECTION IN NEW YORK — A NON-POLITICAL APPRAISAL"



What kind of Tzadikim in Sodom?

One of the great moments in the life of Abraham occurs when he stands before God and challenges him to save the city of Sodom on the grounds that there may be as few as ten *tzadikim* in Sodom. What kind of *tzadik* was Abraham looking for in a corrupt civilization like that of Sodom? One answer is provided by Rabbi Yochanan in Bereshit Rabbah. He notes that throughout the dialogue the word *tzadikim* is always spelled without the second "yod". The reason for this is that Abraham was not referring to fully righteous people. These hypothetical *tzadikim* for whom he was looking had a deficient spelling because Abraham anticipated some deficiencies and shortcomings in their righteousness. The implication is that even if only ten such deficient *tzadikim* could have been found, Sodom would have been saved.

It is obvious that Abraham understood the need for a relative standard in judging people. What can be expected of a person depends upon the kind of environment from which he comes. For example, if one lives in a fully Sabbath observant community, he begins with inestimable advantages. There are certain communities in which it is almost impossible to violate the Sabbath and, besides, there is no one to violate it with. One's righteousness would then have to be measured not only in terms of the formal observance, but more in terms of the richness of one's spiritual experience.

In a less observant community, on the other hand, the obstacles and pitfalls are much greater and a simple adherence to Sabbath rules would have to be considered a genuine religious achievement. When we evaluate a *tzadik*, therefore, we cannot discount the effect that his environment exerts upon him both positively and negatively.

There is a further aspect of righteousness which Abraham sought in trying to save Sodom. He spoke of the possibility of finding *tzadikim b'soch ha'ir* — righteous people in the midst of the city. Apparently, Abraham felt that a *tzadik* is identified only in part by his behavior before God. In the main, we want to know what kind of a *tzadik* he is before man — "in the

the end, the drama is reviewed and criticized by the Universal Critic who analyzes our choices and evaluates our life as a "hit" or a "flop."

The choices that are made in the novel vary according to the characters, but each character makes them in the face of doubt and uncertainty. Reuven Malter chooses to defy his teacher and preserve his own intellectual integrity by interpreting a passage from the Talmud in a critical manner at his smicha examination. His teacher, Rav Kalman, who is predisposed to fail him, chooses to gamble on his essential good sense and reliability and grants him ordination.

Danny Saunders gambles in the choice of treatment for Michael Gordon while Michael's parents accept the decision with trepidation. Rachel gambles that a sophisticated woman can make a successful marriage with the psychologist son of a great Chasidic Rebbe.

Man's choice is thus the central theme of "The Promise". It is the novel's strength because this theme is so important in an age where commitment is a prime value. It also represents the essential weakness of the book because the choices that are made seem contrived and unnatural for the characters who make them. The psychology is of the textbook variety; the smicha exam heroics are artificial and unmoving; and Rachel's choice hardly seems much of a gamble because we know very little about what motivated her to choose the way she did.

Potok made a hit with his parochial

midst of the city" — in the every day concerns of urban life.

It is nice to be a *tzadik* when one stands before the Holy Ark, when one sits in the synagogue on the Sabbath wrapped in his Talith. In the final analysis, however, the measure of a Jew is how much of a *tzadik* he is in the marketplace, in business, in his relationship with patients as a doctor, with clients as a lawyer, with students as a teacher.

Perhaps Abraham understood the magnitude of the task. He realized that fifty ordinary *tzadikim* could not save a city. If, however, these fifty were *tzadikim b'soch ha'ir* — if their righteousness were manifested in their mundane, everyday activities — these fifty could save an entire civilization, even the civilization of Sodom.

H. L.

Review of "The Promise" Cont'd)

picture of a universal theme in "the Chosen." While some criticized it as being more soap opera than novel, it was nevertheless alive, moving, even compelling. "The Promise" on the other hand, tries to do the same thing with less success. The results are rather dull and uninspiring.

The Rabbi observed that The Chosen made The Promise something of a best seller. He ventured the opinion that Chaim Potok's next novel will have to make it on its own.

Federation Film Shown

An absorbing film from the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies was shown for the first time to our Sisterhood audience. Mrs. Edward M. Siegel, Manhattan Women's Division Campaign Chairman, spoke briefly following the film.

New Members Enrolled

The following ladies became members of the Sisterhood. They were introduced by Mrs. Joseph H. Lookstein, membership chairman.

Mrs. David Goldberg
Mrs. Irving Levine
Mrs. Fannie Silverstein
Mrs. Al Warren

Dr. Nesher to Speak on Nov. 24th

The next meeting of the Sisterhood will be held on Monday, November 24th, at 12:30 P.M. in the Social Hall. On that occasion, Dr. Aryeh Nesher, Executive Director of the Israel Education Fund will speak on "Moslem vs. Jew. Is Co-Existence Possible?"

KIDDUSH SPONSOR

The kiddush this Sabbath at the close of services will be sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Adams in honor of their 52nd wedding anniversary, as well as the marriage of their grandson, James Adams to Miss Barbara Sadoff, which took place in June.

SISTERHOOD KIDDUSH HOSTESSES

Saturday, November 1st

Mrs. Samuel Feder
Mrs. Theodore R. Fink
Miss Fannie Fischer

WITHIN OUR FAMILY

Birthdays—

Many happy returns of the day to A. Milton Brown, Mrs. Jules Gourary, Mrs. Gedeon Heller, Samuel S. Silverstein, Isidore Wassner and Mrs. Isidore Wassner.

Anniversaries—

Warmest greetings to Mr. and Mrs. Herman Riederman.

Condolences—

We record with sorrow the passing of Julius H. Golding, devoted son of Mrs. Dora Golding and brother of Mrs. Helen Brody; Elizabeth Kuttler, beloved mother of Mrs. Ruth Wax; Etta Herschkowitz, dear sister of Martin G. Haber.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the above mourners and to all the members of the bereaved families. We pray that they may be spared further sorrow for many years to come.

SISTERHOOD HAPPY DAY FUND

We acknowledge with thanks contributions to our Sisterhood Happy Day Fund from Mrs. Rose Alpert, Mrs. Minna Andrews, Mrs. Leo Davenport, Mr. and Mrs. Martin E. De Graaff, Mrs. Frances Feder, Mrs. Hilda Fischman, Mrs. David Gordon, Mrs. Clara Gross, Mrs. Isidore Grossman, Mrs. Harry Heyman, Mrs. S. Honig Klein, Mrs. Richard Kolb, Mrs. Charlotte Lebovics, Mrs. Gertrude Lookstein, Mrs. Abraham L. Marcus, Mrs. B. Miller, Mrs. Jacob Miller, Mrs. Morris Morgenstern, Mrs. Isaac E. Okun, Mrs. Louis Orwasher, Mrs. Tessie Postel, Mrs. Henry M. Rem, Mrs. Rose Sax, Mrs. Mary Schleifer, Mrs. Rita Shulman, Mrs. Elliot W. Siegel, Mrs. Abraham Silver, Mrs. Samuel S. Silverstein, Mrs. Ruth Spilky, Mrs. Meyer Texon, Mrs. Hannah Vogel, Mrs. Lenore Ward, Mrs. Ella M. Weiss, Mrs. Bertha Witkin and Mrs. Robert H. Zessman.

Contributions should be sent to the Chairmen of the Happy Day Fund, Mrs. Harry Heyman, 120 East 81 Street or Mrs. Leon Spilky, 1160 Park Ave.

YOUTH GROUP ATTRACTS EIGHTY-FIVE TEENAGERS TO YOUTH SABBATH

A delightful spiritual experience was enjoyed by the young people of this congregation together with their friends, as member of Shachar, over last weekend. Incidentally, the adult congregation was the beneficiary as participants in a delightful Shabbat morning davening.

We congratulate David Hostyk the President of the Youth Group, who together with his Officers, planned and executed this marvelous weekend. Similar accolades to David Kahn, the advisor to the group, and to Gilbert Kahn who helped to chaperone the weekend.

Special plaudits to Samuel Friedman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph N. Friedman, who served with such expertise and proficiency as Cantor for Musaf last Sabbath. Not only did he chant the prayers beautifully; he also had the entire congregation singing with him. We also wish to congratulate Emanuel Nack, who davened Shacharith and Alvin Smilow who davened P'sukey d'zimrah at the beginning of the service.

Our thanks also to the following who read the Torah with precision and enthusiasm:

Craig Barany
Michael Bartel
George Blumenthal
David Hostyk
Robert Levine
Jacob Merkin
Samuel Newborn
Alvin Smilow

SISTERHOOD NEEDIEST CASES

We acknowledge with thanks contributions to our Sisterhood Neediest Cases Fund from Mrs. Edward Lebowitz, Mrs. Morris Morgenstern and Mrs. Max Scheffler.

Contributions should be sent to Mrs. Joseph Roth, Chairman of the Neediest Cases Fund, 891 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10021.

HEADLINES OF JEWISH INTEREST

Real Buying Power of Israel Families Rises

The real purchasing power of families in Israel has increased 21% over the last five years, according to figures released last week by the Central Bureau of Statistics. The average urban family in Israel spends \$260.00 per month in the marketplace, apart from taxes and savings, the Bureau reported.

Mizrachi Women Vote \$1,865,000 Budget

At its recent convention the Mizrachi Women's Organization of America adopted the largest budget in its history for its ongoing programs of child care, youth aliyah, social service and vocational education programs in Israel. Taking part in the deliberations were several members of the congregation including Mrs. Joshua L. Lewis who served as Chairman of the Convention. She serves as New York and New Jersey Regional Chairman for the Mizrachi Women's Organization of America throughout the year. Delegates from our congregation included Mrs. David Goldberg, Mrs. Benjamin Kaufman and Mrs. Richard Kolb.

Jewish Demographic Data

According to the American Jewish Yearbook just published last week by the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Publications Society of America, the Jewish population of the world stands at present at 13,786,000. Of these, 5,869,000 live in the United States and 2,436,000 live in Israel. European Jewry numbers 4,019,000. Of these, 2,594,000 are in the Soviet Union; 535,000 are in France while 410,000 live in Great Britain.

Cong. Kehilath Jeshurun

125 East 85th Street
New York 10028, N.Y.
HA 7-1000

Synagogue Officials

Joseph H. Lookstein Rabbi
Haskel Lookstein Assoc. Rabbi
A. Joseph Cohen Cantor
Israel D. Rosenberg Ritual Director
Walter J. Krug Exec. Director

Officers of the Congregation

Max J. Etra Hon. President
Harry W. Baumgarten President
Nathan Salzman Vice President
Joseph S. Gershman Treasurer
Edward Low Secretary
Mrs. Leon A. Feldman Pres. Sist.
Martin R. Rochlin Pres. Men's Club

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**FRIDAY**

Lighting of Candles 4:35
Evening 4:50

SATURDAY

Morning 9:00
Junior Congregation 10:15
Pre-School Service
Dining Hall 11:00

Weekly Portion: Vayera**Genesis 18:1 - 22:24****Haftarah: II Kings 18:1 - 22:24**

Evening 4:45
Conclusion of Sabbath 5:25

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Morning 7:30
Sunday Morning 8:30
Evening 4:40

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1-LAZAR WOHL
1-MAX SCHNEIDER
1-FEIGA RACHEL SORIN
2-LILLIAN ROTHSTEIN
2-SIMON GROSS
2-MARGUERITE POPKIN
3-WILLIAM KIRSHON
3-ISRAEL J. KAY
3-SARAH SILVERMAN
4-MARCUS SCHUMAN
4-SAMUEL FEINER
4-KREINE FISHEL
4-OSHER LITWINS
4-ISIDOR ETRA
4-MAYER GROSSMAN
4-IRMA JACOBY
4-SYLVIA LUSTIGMAN
4-ALBERT WARNER
5-MORRIS D. EICHLER
5-ALBERT LEVEY
6-MEYER ROTHSTEIN
6-SARAH H. JASPAN
7-FRANK MANDELBAUM
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**K. J. CALENDAR
THIS WEEK****Saturday, 3:00 P.M.**

Youth Groups

Girls, Grades 3 & 4

Girls, Grades 5 - 7

Boys, Grades 5 - 7

Wednesday, 9:00 P.M.

Public Lecture

COMING EVENTS**Monday, Nov. 10th, 12:30 P.M.**

Sisterhood Board Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 11th, 8:30 P.M.

Men's Club Convocation

**ADULT INSTITUTE SCHEDULE
FOR THIS WEEK****Saturday, 8:15 A.M.**

Class in Chumash with Rashi

Monday, 11:00 A.M.

Studies in Judaism

Monday, 8:30 P.M.

Talmud Class

Wednesday, 8:00 P.M.

- 1) Hebrew to Read Siddur by
- 2) Maimonides' Code of Law
- 3) The Weekly Portion

RESERVE . . .**SATURDAY EVENING****FEBRUARY 14, 1970**

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