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West Side Institutional Review

Vol. XXXV, No. 5

January, 1972

Teves-Shev'at, 5732

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RABBI REICHEL'S TALMUD CLASS SIYUM ON SATURDAY, JAN. 15

In celebration of the completion of the study of *Tractate Berachoth*, the Talmud Class of our Rabbi O. Asher Reichel welcomes the entire congregation to the Siyum at the Seudah Shlishis on Saturday afternoon, January 15th, at 4:00 following Minchah at 3:30. Mr. Julius Schreiber, our member, will be the host of the festive Seudah in honor of the *yahrzeit* of his mother.

Our readers are invited to join Rabbi Reichel's Class conducted in English in Tractate Sanhedrin on Saturday afternoons one hour before Minchah.

Talmud Classes in Yiddish are held by Rabbi Moishe C. Pekier Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings at 9:00.

WSIS BENEFIT OPERA - LA TRAVIATA

SATURDAY NITE, MARCH 4 at 8:00

NEW YORK CITY OPERA, LINCOLN CENTER

For the last three months the Opera committee has been selling tickets to those not associated with the Synagogue, while the response of our membership has been minimal. The Opera Committee must have the help of all our members and congregants to sell the 2,500 seats in the New York State Theatre. Unless our congregants will cooperate in the sale of tickets the coming month, our Opera Benefit could fail.

This year we have one of the greatest productions and the best artists the New York City Opera can offer.

Each and everyone of us is asked to contact the Synagogue office (877-7652) and participate in this year's Opera Benefit by making it a successful one.

A synopsis of the opera appears on page 4.

DR. MERKIN TO SPEAK ON "FAMILY PROBLEMS OF

TODAY: A PHYSICIAN'S VIEWPOINT"

ON SUNDAY, JAN. 16, 11 A.M.

At our Sunday morning Friendship Series Lecture on January 16th, we shall hear our distinguished member, Dr. Leon Merkin, who is the author of the newly published book *THE OLD AGE STORY* written for the layman.

Our guest speaker received his M.D. from the University of Berlin. He practiced medicine in Germany and England before he settled on our shores. A prolific writer and lecturer, he has held posts as Chief Editor of *Health Almanac* and President of the Federation of American-European Medical Societies, among his many professional affiliations.

Dr. Merkin was recently appointed Medical Editor of the New York Yiddish daily *The Day-Jewish Journal* in which he writes medical articles and answers personal medical problems of its readers. Of great interest to our readers is Dr. Merkin's new book of medical advice *THE OLD AGE STORY* which is based on years of practice. The book may be purchased in our Syna-



Dr. Leon Merkin

gogue office; autographed copies will be available following his lecture. Sufficient time will be allotted for questions from the audience.

The program is sponsored by the Rebecca F. Goldstein Memorial Fund. Refreshments. ADMISSION FREE.

OUR ANNUAL DINNER

Those who expected our annual dinner held on Sunday evening, December 5th, to be a carbon copy of last year's, were in for a big surprise. The biggest expression of surprise that evening appeared on no other face than that of our indefatigable President, Isaiah O. Zucker, upon the announcement that he was chosen by the Dinner Committee to receive a special Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein Medal. Thus Mr. Zucker joined the roster of our Guests of Honor: Max Denberg, Alexander Dimant, Mrs. Sylvia Foont, Freddy Heiser, Mrs. Martha Horwitz, and Mrs. Ida Shlansky. Mr. Heiser was not present to receive his award due to the illness of his wife, Arlene, for whom we wish a speedy recovery.

In honor of Mr. Denberg's birthday celebrated that day, his family announced a joint contribution of one thousand and five hundred dollars.

Congratulations to Chairman Herman H. Cohen and his Committee for another successful congregational affair.

* * *

In conjunction with the Dinner a Souvenir Journal will be published very shortly. We trust that all our members and friends will take advantage of this extension of time (the deadline is January 18) for inserting their ads and soliciting others.

Ad blanks are available upon request in our office.

MR. & MRS. LEAGUE NEWS

The hosts at the Board meeting on Wednesday, January 19th, will be Mr. and Mrs. Max Schwarz.

CHAMISHAH ASAR B'SHEVAT MONDAY, JANUARY 31

Chamishah Asar B'Shev'at (the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month Shevat) is the Jewish "Arbor Day."

In Temple times this day determined the dating of the produce relating to tithes. The Mishnah refers to this day as Rosh Hashanah L'Ilanos (New Year for Trees). It is also called Tu (the *teth* and *vav* Hebrew letters total fifteen) B'Shev'at.

Chamishah Asar B'Shev'at is observed by the eating of fruit products for which the Holy Land is noted, such as dates, figs, olives, pomegranates, grapes, almonds and carob ("bokser"). We par-

Bazaar Coming Soon

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take of one of these fruits, which we have not as yet eaten during the year, for the purpose of making the blessing of "Shehechiyanu."

West Side Institutional Synagogue

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RABBI O. ASHER REICHELEditor

PRAYER SCHEDULE*Week of January 9*

Sunday Morning7:30, 8:30
Daily Mornings6:45, 7:50
Minchah—followed by Exposition
of Halachos by
Rabbi Reichel4:40
Fri., Jan. 14—Candles by4:34
Minchah4:40
Sat., Jan. 15—Sedrah: Va-era9:00
BLESSING OF NEW CHODESH
Minchah3:30

Cantor: Aaron I. Reichel

Torah Reader: Michael Widlanski

Seudah Shlishis—Siyum of Rabbi

Reichel's Talmud Class

Sabbath Terminates5:32

Week of January 16

Sunday Morning7:30, 8:30
Daily Mornings6:45, 7:50
Monday—ROSH CHODESH
SHEVAT6:30, 7:40
Minchah4:45
Fri., Jan. 21—Candles by4:42
Minchah4:50
Sat., Jan. 22—Sedrah: Bo9:00

Rabbi Reichel's Talmud Sanhedrin

Class (in English)3:35

Rabbi Pekier's Talmud Kesubos

Class (in Yiddish)3:35

Minchah4:35

Cantor: Jonathan Herlands

Torah Reader: Steven Tiefenbrunn

Sabbath Terminates5:41

Week of January 23

Sunday Morning7:30, 8:30
Daily Mornings6:45, 7:50
Minchah4:50
Fri., Jan. 28—Candles by4:50
Minchah4:55
Sat., Jan. 29—Sedrah: Beshalach9:00
Talmud Classes3:40
Minchah4:40

Cantor: Hillel M. Reichel

Torah Reader: Theodore Widlanski

Sabbath Terminates5:48

Week of January 30

Sunday Morning7:30, 8:30
Daily Mornings6:45, 7:50
Minchah5:00
Fri., Feb. 4—Candles by4:58
Minchah5:05
Sat., Feb. 5—Sedrah: Yisro9:00
Talmud Classes3:45
Minchah4:45

Cantor: Shelly Schneider

Torah Reader: Philip Widlanski

Sabbath Terminates5:55

Week of Feb.—Minchah5:10

Fri., Feb. 11—Candles by5:07

Minchah5:15

Sat., Feb. 12—SHABBOS SHEKOLIM

BLESSING OF NEW CHODESH

~ MEN'S CLUB NOTES ~

JACOB FRANKEL, NEW MEN'S CLUB PRESIDENT

INSTALLATION OF NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS
AT SUNDAY MORNING BRUNCH, JAN. 23 at 10:30 A.M.

Men's Club Sabbath Saturday, Jan. 29



Jacob Frankel, President



**Jacob Goldberg
Men's Club Sabbath Chairman**

Our Men's Club members and their wives are invited to the gala Installation Brunch on Sunday morning, Jan. 23rd at 10:30 o'clock in the Ballroom, for its newly elected officers: Jacob Frankel, President (succeeding H. William Hirsch); Gerard Benjamin, Vice-President; Benjamin Etzkowitz, Treasurer; Alan J. Cohen, Recording Secretary; Bruno Bayer, Sergeant-at-Arms. Our very best wishes to them.

At the Men's Club Sabbath beginning Friday night, Jan. 28th, Fred Chariton will be Cantor, Benjamin Etzkowitz will lead in Pesukei Dzimirah, Bruno Bayer will be Cantor for Schacharis; Jacob Frankel will speak; and Dr. Samuel Greenberg will be Cantor for Mussaf. The Men's Club will host the Kiddush and the Seudah Shlishis that day.

AUCTION SALE COMING

Our readers and their friends are cordially invited by our Women's League and Mr. & Mrs. League to participate in an exciting auction of silver, crystal, and decorative objects on a Sunday in the latter part of February (the date will appear in our next issue). The proceeds of this event will benefit our Synagogue.

We could use of course additional appropriate items for this project. Please contact the Auction Committee at our office, phone 877-7652.

ISRAELI BOND DRIVE

At our Sabbath morning services an urgent appeal was made on behalf of Israeli Bonds. Our readers may order bonds as well as redeem their pledges at the Synagogue office. Checks should be made payable to "State of Israel."

A Word to the Wise

Beware of strangers (including sympathetic looking people) in public places who offer quick, get-rich schemes. It is advisable not even to stop to listen.

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GETTING PERSONAL**Mazel Tov to:**

Mrs. Esther Cooper, our Women's League member, upon the *engagement* of Carol Jean, daughter of her children, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Yormack, to Lee Kelvin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Brown; Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Werblud, our members, upon the *engagement* of Michael Lee, son of their children, Dr. and Mrs. Bernard Grubin of East Orange, to Jamie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Kaplan of Bridgewater; Mr. and Mrs. Nash Aussenberg upon the *engagement* of their daughter, Debbie, to Alvin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rapp.

Mr. and Mrs. Irving Kobrin, our members, upon the *marriage* of their son, Richard, to Gloria, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Bienenstock; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Moed upon the *marriage* of their daughter, Sandra Susan to Jeffrey, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mehl.

Mrs. Bella Ben-Ishai upon the *birth* of Leora to her children, Mr. and Mrs. Mel Sandberg; Mrs. Emma Greenberg, our member, upon the *birth* of Rachel, the third daughter of her children, Dr. and Mrs. Marshall S. Greenberg.

Our Honorary Trustee and Mrs. Sam Davis upon the *Bar Mitzvah* of Paul Stuart, son of their children, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Davis; our member, Mrs. Joseph Liebergall, upon the *Bar Mitzvah* of Melvin, son of her children, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Liebergall.

* * *
Congregational thanks to the Widlanski brothers for their Torah readings on Shabbos Chanukah.

Mr. Bruno Bayer has been a recent Seudah Shlishis host.

Welcome home from abroad to Mr. David Ben-Ishai, Mrs. Emil Glucker, and Dr. and Mrs. Louis Wexler.

REBECCA F. GOLDSTEIN WOMEN'S LEAGUE

OPEN MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, JAN 24

You and your friends are cordially invited to attend an Open Meeting on *Monday, January 24th at 12:30 P.M.* Mrs. Fred Goldstein will lead us in a discussion of a new book *THE GRANDEES* by Stephen Birmingham who is also the author of the former best seller *OUR CROWD*. Read this book before the meeting so that you can take part in the discussion. Coffee and cake will be served.

Please Reserve the Following Dates:

Board Meeting: Monday, February 14th
Annual Donor Luncheon: Tuesday, March 14th at the Hotel Brewster

SPECIAL GREETINGS

Heartiest congratulations to our members, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Heyman, who are celebrating their golden wedding anniversary; and to our member Mr. Max Koch, who celebrated his 80th birthday.

Happy Anniversary to the:

(Jan. 15 - 30)

Prof. Josef Alexanders, Bennett Carters, Dr. Simon Dacks, Fred Ehrmans, Leslie Katzs, Rabbi Seymour Kleins, Irving Kobrins, Adolph Meirowitz, Milton Mirkens, Herbert L. Ortner, Harold Pashs, Rabbi Mayer Y. Portnoys, Daniel Richs, Elliot Wohls.

(Jan. 31 - Feb. 13)

Saul Bergmans, Joseph E. Cohens, Dr. Arthur H. Hechts, Leon Hermans, Harold Kaplans, Stephen Kleins, Moses Mullers, Norman Ostrows, Sigmund Schlesingers, Max Selskys, Harvey Z. Shapiros, Leon Taubers, Max Zahlers.

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(Jan. 15 - 30)

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(Jan. 31 - Feb. 13)

Audrey Adelson, Mrs. Rebecca Becker, Rabbi Isidor M. Binder, Henry Cohen, Jay M. Cohen, Mrs. Joseph E. Cohen, Mrs. Meyer Deutsch, Vice-President William Foont, Mrs. Jacob Frankel, John D. Garrett, Mrs. Ben Glazer, Michael Goodman, Mrs. Arthur H. Hecht, Mrs. Leopold Hirsch, Deborah Krauss, David Lerner, Linda Levine, Mrs. Annette Pash, Mrs. Myron Smith, Richard Weinstein, Abraham Widlanski.

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Condolences

We sorrowfully record the passing of the following of our Congregational Family and extend our sympathy to their dear ones:

Ann Freeman — sister of our members, Messrs. Max, Harry, and Isidore and Mark Denberg.

Rae S. Harris — sister of Mr. Charles Shinsky, our member.

Ida Lipstein — our member.

Samuel Redlich — brother of Mr. Sol Redlich, our member.

Alex Schlessel — father of our member, Mrs. William D. Weiss.

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LA TRAVIATA

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS BY GIUSEPPE VERDI

Would you believe that *La Traviata*, one of the most popular of all the works in the operatic literature, was a dismal failure at its first performance? It was. Of course, the fact that the Violetta was a grotesquely fat prima donna didn't help matters. At the most tragic moment of the performance in the last act, when Dr. Grenvil announced that Violetta was dying of consumption, the response of the audience was a burst of laughter. The audience also did not take kindly to the innovation of clothing the characters in modern dress. At the second performance, the period was set back 150 years and the Violetta was a more personable soprano. Since then the popularity of *La Traviata* has grown steadily until today audience requests for this all-time favorite are almost insatiable. The libretto is based on a play by Alexandre Dumas, "*Le Dame Aux Camelias*"—The Lady of the Camelias.

THE STORY

ACT I

After a short prelude, the curtain rises on the sumptuously furnished drawing room of Violetta Valery, a beautiful courtesan, in her Paris home. She is giving one of the brilliant parties for which she is famed. She is seriously ill but nothing deters her from pursuing the constant round of pleasures for which she lives. As she receives her guests, there is no indication of the gravity of her illness.

Among the guests to arrive is Gauthier, Viscount of Letorieres, who introduces his friend Alfredo to Violetta. He does little to hide his profound love for her but she merely receives him flirtatiously. She, in fact, tries to discourage his expressions of love. A spark of jealousy is immediately ignited in Baron Douphol, another ardent Violetta admirer, who is to become Alfredo's bitter rival.

As toasts are offered, Alfredo is coaxed into singing and the result is one of the most famous of all drinking songs, "*Libiamo*". As he sings, his eyes catch those of Violetta and first she and then the entire chorus join to bring the song to a rousing climax. As Violetta starts to lead her guests to the ballroom, she suddenly appears faint, but insists it is just a dizzy spell. Alfredo shows his great concern and pleads with her to be more careful of her health. He tells her he would like to be near her always to watch over her, but she tries to make light of his solicitations. However, when Alfredo in the very beautiful aria, "*Un di felice*" tells Violetta that he has been madly in love with her for more than a year, she is finally convinced of his sincerity and pleads that she is unworthy of his love. Mildly rebuffed, Alfredo is leaving the

room when Violetta calls him back. She hands him a flower from her person and says he may see her when it fades.

The departure of all the guests leaves Violetta pensive. For the first time she feels a sincere love and contrasts it with her meaningless life. Her thoughts find expression in another aria of poignant beauty, "*Ah, fors' é lui*." Her moods change and she finally bursts into the brilliant "*Sempre libera*". At the climax of the act, Violetta is vacillating between thoughts of her new-found love and her determination to continue her life of newer and wilder pleasures.

ACT II

Act two finds Violetta and Alfredo living peacefully in his country home near Paris. Violetta has given up her care-free life of excitement and has become completely devoted to Alfredo. But the heavy financial burden to meet expenses, has required Violetta to sell some of her possessions. When there is still a shortage, Alfredo leaves for Paris to raise money but cautions the maid, Anina, not to divulge to Violetta the reason for his trip.

A shadow is cast over the serenity of the household by the entrance of Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont. He accuses her of living lavishly on Alfredo's means and bringing about his ruin. In angry reply, she shows her visitor a document arranging for the sale of her properties. Defensively he alleges that Violetta's past is a blot on Alfredo's life with her. Violetta's answer is that her deep love has wiped clean the sins of her past. Giorgio is impressed with Violetta's sincerity and demeanor but nevertheless asks her to leave his son, since her alliance with him could endanger the coming marriage of Alfredo's sister. The final and convincing weapon that the elder Germont employs is the warning that when Violetta's beauty fades, Alfredo will tire of her and leave her. After embracing Violetta as a daughter, the father leaves with a feeling of sadness even though he has achieved success.

Violetta pens a farewell note to her lover which is handed to Alfredo after she leaves hastily in tears. He leaps to the conclusion that Violetta has left him for another lover. He feels that his suspicions are confirmed when he discovers an invitation to Violetta from her friend Flora in Paris. His father steps forward and attempts to console him, reminding him of his happy childhood in Provence in the haunting aria, "*Di Provenza*". Alfredo, however, will not be consoled. In a blind rage, he rushes off to seek his revenge.

ACT III

We are back in Paris at a gay party

given by Flora. The separation of Violetta and Alfredo is a topic of conversation among the guests. Alfredo enters and almost immediately sits down to gamble with the remark that those who are unlucky in love are lucky at cards. Hard on his heels, Violetta comes in escorted by Baron Douphol, Alfredo's hated rival. She is filled with a strange feeling of foreboding. Alfredo is a reckless gambler that evening and when he accepts the Baron's challenge at the gambling table, his streak of luck results in heavy losses for the Baron.

As the guests withdraw to another room for supper, Alfredo and Violetta come face to face. Violetta pretends to be in love with the Baron in a futile attempt to have Alfredo merely forget her. Instead, he is moved to uncontrolled fury. He calls together all the guests and, in their presence, he accuses Violetta of having bought his love by cashing in her possessions. His motive, in accepting were pure, he says, because he loved her so deeply. He flings his winnings at her feet with the cry that he is now repaying her. The elder Germont, who has entered in time to witness the shameful act, joins all the others in reviling Alfredo as Baron Douphol challenges him to a duel. Violetta tearfully proclaims her undying love for Alfredo and is supported in a half-faint by Dr. Grenvil and Flora. Giorgio Germont leads his remorseful son away and the guests slowly depart as the curtain falls.

ACT IV

The curtain rises on a room in Violetta's Paris apartment as it begins to lower on Violetta's span of life. Her maid, Anina, has learned from Dr. Grenvil that the end of her mistress is near. With the carnival noises entering from the street as a background, Violetta reads a letter from Giorgio Germont telling that he has informed his son of her sacrifice and that Alfredo is hastening to her. Her reflection in the mirror horrifies her with the change that has come over her.

In the midst of a sinking feeling of the impending end, Violetta is revived by Anina's announcement of Alfredo's arrival. The lovers embrace ecstatically and Alfredo promises to take Violetta away from Paris where they will live in the country in peace and happiness. The embrace and conversation are cut short by a fit of coughing and Violetta, with a renewed desire to live, prays for help. But she is now beyond help. The doctor enters with Alfredo's father, who bestows his blessing upon the dying woman. Violetta gives Alfredo a miniature of herself as a token of her undying love. A cry of joy, almost hope comes from her lips as she falls lifeless at the feet of her grief-stricken lover. The final curtain falls on a scene of great serenity and even greater sadness.

By Herman H. Cohen
Co-Chairman, Opera Committee

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