



EtzChaim

The movement for
REFORM JUDAISM

Volume 30, Issue 4

Winter 2012/5773



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Thanet & District Reform Synagogue, 293A Margate Rd, Ramsgate, CT12 6TE
Tel. 01843 851164

A constituent member of the Movement for Reform Judaism

Shabbat and festivals at the Thanet & District Reform Synagogue



Join us for Shabbat. The atmosphere is relaxed with familiar prayers using traditional and modern melodies. We use both Hebrew and English and the Hebrew is also transliterated. Kiddush and refreshments follow each service. There couldn't be a better way to connect with your Jewish heritage – no strings attached! (However, phone the synagogue beforehand in case of a change of times.)



Shabbat services are held every Friday evening at 7.30 and on the first and third Saturday mornings at 10.30. Festival evening services commence at 7pm and morning services at 10am, unless otherwise noted below or in the monthly *What's On*

DECEMBER 2012

Sat 8 Dec, No service
Chanukah first candle

Sat 15 Dec, Tevet 2, 5pm
Chanukah Party

JANUARY 2013

Sat 5 Jan, 23 Tevet
Torah breakfast, 9.15am
Service, 10.30am

Sat 26 Jan, 15 Shevat
Tu Bish'vat
Our annual Tu Bish'vat seder for the New Year for Trees will be held, as usual, in the synagogue – time to be advised.

Sun 27 Jan, 16 Shevat, 11am
National Holocaust Memorial Day
Albion Gardens, Ramsgate and other East Kent locations to be advised.

FEBRUARY

Fri 1 Feb, 21 Shevat
Shabbat supper, 6.30pm for 6.45pm
followed by a short service at 8pm

Sat 23 Feb, 13 Adar, 7pm
Erev Purim

Sun 24 Feb, 14 Adar, 3pm
Purim service and party

Tue 26 Mar, 15 Nisan, 10am
Pesach first day service

MARCH

Mon 25 Mar, 14 Nisan, 6.30pm

Communal Seder

Tue 26 Mar, 15 Nisan, 10am
Pesach first day service

APRIL

Mon 15 Apr, 5 Iyar, 7pm
Yom Hazikaron/erev Yom Ha'atzma'ut
Remembrance Day and Israel
Independence Day service and
celebration

MAY

Tue 14 May, 5 Sivan, 7pm
Erev Shavuot
Wed 15 May, 6 Sivan, 10am
Shavuot

JUNE

Sat 1 Jun, 23 Sivan
Torah breakfast, 9.15am
Service, 10.30am
Fri 28 Jun, 20 Tammuz
Shabbat supper, 6.30pm for 6.45pm
Followed by a short service at 8pm

JULY

Sat 6 Jul, 28 Tammuz, 10.30am
Havdallah Club service (date to be
verified)

Mon 15 Jul, 8 Av, 7pm
Erev Tisha B'Av service

AUGUST

Sat 3 Aug, 23 Av, 10.30am
Outdoor picnic service, venue to be
advised

(NB: There is no service at the synagogue today)

Shalom and welcome to Etz Chaim, Chanukah 2012/5773

Message from Chairman, *Ian Smiler*

As a community, we are blessed with ownership of our synagogue premises. With this comes many responsibilities, including maintenance and providing a safe environment.

Over the summer the synagogue exterior was re-painted. Then, recently, I have upgraded the fire safety.

This included hosting a fire warden course, covering the many aspects of fire, especially the dangers of smoke. I looked closely at our fire extinguishers and their use, including giving an opportunity for hands-on practice using Water and CO2 type extinguishers. I also renewed the fire extinguishers, together with specialist stands.



Furthermore, I updated the fire exit signage to clearly indicate the emergency escape routes. We hope these will never be needed but, if they are, we will be prepared.

Enjoy reading this newsletter and I look forward to meeting many of you at our forthcoming Chanukah party.

Best wishes, Ian



And don't forget the shul's collection box, near the entrance!



Message from Editor, *Alison R Noyes*

Like H el ene on page 6, I too have been thinking about the food and drink I consume, and the toiletries I use. I am particularly concerned about the staggeringly widespread use of palm oil (often just labelled "vegetable oil") and soya lecithin (though there are also many other issues). To grow palm and soya, we are cutting down vast swathes of forest and other habitats vital for orang-utans and other creatures. Some supermarkets and other suppliers now assure us they use "sustainable" palm and soya but what does this really mean? I



I fear it is a sop to our consciences and, in any event, even the best supermarkets (such as Waitrose) still use up to 25% non-sustainable products. It is one thing to consume out of necessity but to think of animals actually dying as a result of our ignorance, not to mention our greed, is just appalling. **It is not in keeping with Tikkun Olam!**

The deadline for the next issue is Monday 4th March 2013.

The editor reserves the right to edit, refuse, or postpone any material submitted for publication.

The articles, letters, advertising, and content do not necessarily reflect the views of the TDRS or the Movement for Reform Judaism.

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Keep the light burning!

As I write this we approach Chanukah with the world, as is so often the case, in turmoil and apprehension. The economies of Europe and the UK are still in trouble, Israel and her neighbours once again have us all worrying where, when and if it will all end, human rights continues to be a major issue in too many places, carbon footprint and global warming are still unresolved, and the list goes on.



task that we are not required to complete, but from which we are not entitled to withdraw.

Chanukah demands that each of us ask ourselves not "*what is going to happen?*" but "*what am I personally doing to improve the world?*" More than that, it demands that we then ask ourselves if we are satisfied with our answer.

Rabbi Cliff Cohen



Mazeltov!

To Diana and Anthony da Costa of Broadstairs on the engagement of their elder son, Marcus to Dr Esther Newman, daughter of Sandra and Raymond Newman of Leeds



Overwhelmed!

Against all this, Chanukah holds out a message of hope. It teaches about achieving the seemingly impossible, taking on the seemingly lost cause, fighting the seemingly unwinnable battle and against all odds, keeping the flame alight. It teaches us that we don't know God's plans, that anything can succeed if it is God's will that it should. It reinforces our Jewish optimism that Creation is, slowly and inconsistently but surely, moving towards success not failure.

It also reminds us that God does not work alone. We have our own part to play. It was not God alone who defeated Antiochus and his armies but God's partnership with the Maccabees. So, if we leave it to God to put things right for us, we are likely to be disappointed.

The Maccabees were not perfect, a quality they share with every other hero in our long and glorious history, and this too is part of the Chanukah message. We have to accept that, if we wait for someone perfect to come and work with God, then God's work will not get done. The success of Creation relies on imperfect people like us to engage in Tikkun Olam, the sacred task of perfecting the world, the

One of the things Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner spoke about on her visit to our shul in December was her respect and love for the smaller communities: the way we have to draw on our own resources to keep the momentum of community spirit alive; the care that is shown. Well, Hazel and I have been the happy recipients of such a feeling. There is only one word to describe it - overwhelmed! From the moment I went into hospital for what the medical fraternity call "*cabbage*" (CABG, coronary arterial bypass graft) so many of you have shown kindness and given help in many different ways. You each know who you are. Please accept our heartfelt thanks and love; it has meant so much to us.

Hazel and Godfrey Fischer

And we all wish Godfrey a full recovery - and Hazel a good rest! Ed.

Havdallah Club

At Havdallah Club we have been exploring a range of traditions, looking at how they might apply in the modern world. We have also been exploring different themes relating to Hannah, which we look forward to sharing at the Chanukah party. I am always impressed with the ideas of our growing children, as they think things through, discussing their ideas.

Hélène Cohen



Ethical eating and drinking

Kashrut has always been part of my Judaism but now I find myself asking how does this apply to life today? Keeping kosher has meant thinking before I eat, ensuring the rules have been kept. Now I ask myself different questions. Where has the food come from, is it sustainable, are its producers treated fairly, and how many miles has it travelled?

Ethics concerning food and the treatment of animals and business is not a new idea. There are many references to be found in Torah:

- Genesis 9:4 - *"But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it"* forbids us from eating meat torn from a living animal.
- Deuteronomy 22:6-7 - *"If you come across a bird's nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs you shall not take the mother with the young. You shall let the*
- *mother go but the young you may take for yourself, that it may go well*



with you, and that you may live long" ensures the mother neither sees nor participates in the slaughter of her young.

- Exodus 20:8, in the Shabbat laws - *"For six days, you shall do all of your work but the seventh day is God's Sabbath; you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter or your servant or your animal ..."*recognises that animals need to rest too.

If you look at Leviticus 19:9-10 you will find laws about harvesting, telling you neither to reap to the corners of your fields nor gather up the fallen fruit but instead leave this for the poor and the stranger. This comes in Kedoshim, the Holiness code, showing the importance of ethics in relation to food and farming. There are other references here to business ethics including verse 13, which concludes that *"the wages of a labourer shall not remain with you until morning"*, clearly instructing one on how to treat one's workers. There are also laws on fair pricing. See Leviticus 25:14 - *"when you sell property to your neighbour or buy property from your neighbour, you shall not wrong one another"*.

The reason I put pen to paper today is because I have been following the plight of dairy farmers as they call for a reversal of the 4p per litre price cut. I was pleased to hear that Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Marks and Spencer are all supporting the dairy farmers, with Waitrose and Sainsbury's leading the price paid to them. Their mode of operating is linked to on-farm costs of production. Asda, Morrisons and even the Co-op, due to the way they operate, are leaving the dairy farmers with a price below the cost of production. In articles I have read, it has been stated that someone could have bought 15 pints of milk for the cost

of 1 pint of beer; another made the comparison between bottled water being more expensive than milk.

We are living in a tough economic climate and we are all trying to save money. However, surely that is when our ethics need to stand up to the test? It's easy to think "fair trade" and think about labels, focusing our thoughts on food growers in far-off lands. It's easy to think about the treatment of animals within the food industry – dolphin-friendly tuna, free-range eggs. However, we also need to think about our own farmers and a fair deal for them. If we don't, dairy farms will go out of business and we will be importing milk from other countries, adding yet again to the food miles and denying people in our country a fair price for their product.

Personally, I'm only buying milk from retailers who I know are supporting the dairy farmers. Lo alecha - though I cannot complete the task, I feel compelled to talk about it and hope that others will share in ethical eating. B'te avon! Please refer to the following websites:

<http://fairdealfooduk.com> and
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2012/jul/06/milk-farmers-threaten-protest> and
<http://www.edp24.co.uk/business/farming-news/norfolk-dairy-farmers-take-campaign-for-fair-milk-price-to-london-1-1441294>

Hélène Cohen

I wholeheartedly endorse this! Ed.



From Compassion & Tzedakah

By Rabbi Louis Jacob

Compassion is fellow-feeling or caring concern. In post-biblical Hebrew it is *rahamanut*, interestingly from the

word *rehem*, 'womb', originating from the idea of either motherly love or sibling love (coming from the same womb). In biblical Hebrew it is *rahamim*. The Talmudic rabbis (Yevamot 79a) considered compassion to be one of the three distinguishing marks of Jews. A Talmudic term frequently used for God, particularly in legal discussions, is the Aramaic *Rahamana*, 'the Compassionate', denoting that the Torah, the Law, is God's compassionate gift to Israel.

In Jewish teaching compassion is among the highest of virtues, as its opposite, cruelty, is among the worst of vices. The people of Amalek, in particular, are singled out in the Jewish tradition as perpetrators of wanton cruelty; an uncompassionate Jew is called an Amalekite. Compassion is to be extended to animals as well as humans. It is strictly forbidden to cause unnecessary pain to animals. There is a Talmudic rule (Gittin 62a) that before sitting down to a meal one must first see the domestic animals are fed.

Commenting on the law against killing an animal and its young on the same day (Leviticus 22: 26), the Zohar (iii. 92b) says: *'Thus if a man does kindness on earth, he awakens loving-kindness above, and it rests upon that day which is crowned therewith through him. Similarly, if he performs a deed of mercy, he crowns that day with mercy and it becomes his protector in the hour of need. So, too, if he performs a cruel action, he has a corresponding effect on that day and impairs it, so that subsequently it becomes cruel to him and tries to destroy him, giving him measure for measure. The people of Israel are withheld from cruelty more than all other peoples, and must not manifest any deed of the kind, since many watchful eyes are upon them.'*

There is, in this connection, a revealing tale in the Talmud (Bava Metzia 85a). A

calf, being led to the slaughter, ran for protection to Rabbi Judah the Prince, but the Rabbi said to the calf 'Go! For this you were created', whereupon the rabbi was visited with great suffering. Some time later, Rabbi Judah noticed his servant sweeping out a nest of weasels from the corner of his palace. 'Let them be' he ordered 'it is written [Psalms 145: 9] "His tender mercies are over all His works"', whereupon the suffering departed from him. The point of the story seems to be that cold calculation, even when justified, is no substitute for compassion.



Happy in Hythe!

I discovered Hythe by accident some three years ago. In fact I'd asked a slightly deaf taxi driver in London to take us to Rotherhithe but he misheard ... £276 later!

I left Central London to escape the litter, aggression - and noisy, scavenging seagulls now plaguing that city!



As for me, well I was born at an early age.

After drama school initial work ranged from theatre to being a Butlins Redcoat. Inadequate financial rewards however eventually meant the lure of the property market won - so I spent five happy years as a much reviled Islington Estate Agent.

I subsequently opened two specialist collectors shops: The Mad Colonel and

Get Stuffed before moving on to providing clinical hypno-therapy to clients and then performing stage hypnosis.

In 1993 friends with a Casting Agency begged and pleaded, well actually just mentioned, that I return to 'showbiz'. I duly obliged. Since then numerous film and TV appearances include Silent Witness, The Bill, Dom Joly Show, Dracula (Japan TV), Evita, This is your Life (not mine!), Sky News, ITN News, etc with photographic and commercial credits for Abbey, Hellman's Mayonnaise, P&O Cruises, etc.

Whilst I think I look very much like Angelina Joli, others insisted I was more like Arsenal Manager, Arsene Wenger. This has provided an additional dimension, recently appearing as Mr Wenger with Rory Bremner (Bremner, Bird and Fortune), James Corden (A League of their Own), GM TV, Barclaycard Commercial, Sun Newspaper, etc.

Work is inevitably infrequent and spasmodic but ... to be continued!

We very much enjoy our new Kent location, together with the warm welcome from all at TDRS

Marc St Clare



What TDRS members do outside the shul

We really want to hear what you do, so please write to the Editor. Notes will do as the Editor can write your story from these. Please include a photo, by email if possible!



From the New Yorker some time ago

The Last Maccabee

“Hear me, O God!” he shouted, raising his broad bronze sword. “Though you may test me my sorrow shall be a grindstone! My suffering shall be a crucible! And I will not rest until this sanctified land is delivered into the hands of the righteous!” He beat his chest and let out a piercing war cry that struck fear into the hearts of his enemies. Five minutes later he was escorted out of the building by security.

The Visitor

On a bitterly cold night on the outskirts of Vilkovishk, Velvel the Tailor and Gronam the Milkman were playing a friendly game of dreidel when they heard a knock at the door. Surprised, Velvel opened the door to find an old man with a long grey beard shivering in the darkness. Quickly Velvel brought him to the fire and served him hot soup.



When the colour returned to the old man's face he noticed the others were playing dreidel and asked to join them. What followed was the greatest exhibition of dreidel that the two men - or any men - had ever seen. In less than an hour the old man had parlayed twelve kopeks into 60 roubles until his companions had nothing left to gamble.

Astonished, Velvel asked how it was possible for a man to have such luck. “My friends” the old man replied “it is not luck for I am the Prophet Elijah, come to reward your generosity with innumerable heavenly blessings”. The men rejoiced and they kissed Elijah's

hands and cheeks. And Elijah blessed them, their houses, and their animals but somehow he neglected to give back the 60 roubles.

In the course of the holiday Elijah repeated the scam 23 times.

The Judgement of Velvel

Standing at the Gates of Eden, Velvel the Tailor watched with apprehension as the Angel weighed his sins and virtues upon the Scales of Justice. And, although Velvel had been honest in his business dealings, and had recited the Shema every night, his penny-pinching, along with his habit of stuffing his neighbours' mezuzahs with scrolls of prosciutto, had tipped the balance against him.

Just as the Angel was about to cast him below, Velvel remembered the night when Elijah had come to his house in the guise of an old man and fleeced him at dreidel. And so, hearing the tale, the Angel called on Elijah and Elijah appeared before them. “It's true” said Elijah “it was a cold night, and Velvel showed me great hospitality”. And Elijah mounted the Scales of Justice and tipped Velvel's balance toward righteousness.

Suddenly a 20-man SWAT team appeared and surrounded Elijah. Within seconds, the Prophet was under arrest, charged with 89 counts of fraud. The Angel shook Velvel's hand. “Thanks for your co-operation” he said “we've been trying to nail this guy for years”. “Glad to help” said Velvel, removing his wire, “now, how do I get back to earth?” The Angel shifted awkwardly and said “Well, you're still dead”.



Board stands with Israel as bomb explodes on Tel Aviv bus

The situation in Southern Israel and Gaza continues to trouble all those who care about the region. The Board released this statement concerning the rocket attacks targeting the people of Southern Israel: Israel has a right, indeed an obligation, to defend its citizens but of course any loss of innocent life is a cause of deep sadness. On Sunday, at the Board's monthly plenary meeting, the Israeli Ambassador to the UK, Daniel Taub addressed Deputies. He thanked the community for all of their efforts in supporting Israel. Today news reached us that a terrorist bomb had been exploded on a Tel Aviv bus. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected, on both sides of the border. The Board of Deputies will continue to support Israel's right to defend herself and we pray for a speedy and lasting peace for all people of the region.



But good news!

President welcomes Gilad Shalit to London



Last Friday Board President Vivian

Wineman and Public Affairs Manager Jamie Slavin attended a reception at the Israeli Ambassador's residence to thank the Board and other communal



organisations for their contribution to the campaign to free Gilad Shalit. The guest of honour was Gilad Shalit himself.

The Board ran several campaigns to highlight Gilad's plight. Foremost amongst these was Faces for Gilad, a photo campaign which asked supporters to photograph themselves calling for Gilad to be freed. Over 1,000 photos were submitted to Faces for Gilad from as far afield as Europe, the US and South America.

The Board also ran a yellow ribbon campaign, which asked members of the community to wear a yellow lapel ribbon to highlight Gilad's plight. Ribbons were distributed in communal shops in London, Leeds, Manchester and Glasgow and at youth movement summer camps.

Around 30 people attended the reception and heard Ambassador Taub thank the community for all of their efforts. The sense of joy at finally seeing Gilad free and able to enjoy the rest of his life was palpable.



Condolences

We send our condolences and prayers to those who have lost loved ones since publication of our last newsletter

To daughter Judy, son Anthony and their families on the sad loss of Irene Ruback

Zichronam livrachah
May her memory be for a blessing



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Full Page Advert	£50.00 per annum
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Prices are for four editions a year, colour or B&W. Please contact editor *Alison* for more details or to place an advert.



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