



THE NEWSLETTER FOR THANET & DISTRICT REFORM SYNAGOGUE



HIGH HOLY DAYS RABBI CLIFF COHEN

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ETZ CHAIM

שמע וברכותיה

תפלת ערבית לשבת 130

When praying individually it is customary to add here אל מֶלֶךְ נְאֻמָּן (el melech ne'eman) - 'God, the faithful Sovereign'.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

Sh'ma Yisra'el, Adonai eloheinu Adonai echad

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Baruch sheim k'vod malchuto l'olam va'ed.



TDRS Adapt to New Normal

From lockdown in March Thanet and District Reform Synagogue has transformed its services and moved them online. The regular Friday evening pre-shabbat services have been a roaring success and these are set to continue with the addition of High Holy Days services. With all services moving online, TDRS has taken the opportunity to undertake a revamp of the website. This will continue to evolve including members' area and a more online services. The services have enabled people to join in wherever they may be and have facilitated, as you will see from above, real involvement. Most of all it has been pleasing to see so many people becoming more involved in the community.

A Zoom online service in full flow with all the normal aspects of our synagogue services but on the computer, tablet or phone. Here is the Breslaw household with their rendition of Sh'ma Yisra'el

Welcome to Etz Chaim High Holy Days Edition

Welcome to the High Holy Days edition of Etz Chaim. With perhaps the biggest change to our High Holy Days arriving soon, our community continues innovating to make sure we continue to thrive. In the last edition the issues around the Covid pandemic were new and very unsure. Nearly 6 months on and they are less new but still remain unclear. However as a community we have risen to the challenge with the great success of our online services and are looking forward to an interesting and exciting next few months.

In this edition we have some wonderful contributions from both inside and outside the community. From High Holy Days messages from the President of the Board of Deputies and Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner to shabbat readings and the thoughts of some of our members, we have a full and, we hope, interesting issue.

As part of the High Holy Days Etz Chaim continues to runs its Kol Nidre appeal. As always two charities are chosen for the communisnt to support. Details of this years appeal can be found on page 10.

We hope you have a happy and fruitful new year.

ROBERTS

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TDRS INFORMATION

Synagogue Council

Chairman/Treasurer
Ian Smiler

Vice Chairman
David Fox

Honorary Secretary
Simon Wolfe

Council Members
Hélène Cohen,
Roberta Byrne,
Sally Roth,
Tim Spurrier
Katie Blythe
James Breslaw

Community Rabbi
Rabbi Cliff Cohen

Life President
David Mirsky

President
Godfrey Fischer

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Senior Warden

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Newsletter

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Newsletter Contacts

If you have anything you would like to put into the newsletter please contact Tim Spurrier at:

Post - c/o 293a Margate Road, Ramsgate CT12 6TE

Telephone - 01843 851164

Email - newsletter@tdrs.org.uk

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.





Shabbat

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.

Please note that all services are currently suspended until further notice. However, We do have regular pre-shabbat online services. Please contact us if you require any further information about this.

You can contact warden@tdrs.org.uk or 01843 851164 for further information

Services and Festivals Calendar

Because of the Coronavirus the synagogue is closed. There will be no services or social gatherings until further notice. We pray that we will return to normality soon. In the meantime we will notify people when online services are occurring. Should you wish to know more please contact us.

SEPTEMBER 2020

Fri 18 Sep, 29 Elul 5881

7pm Erev Rosh Hashanah Zoom service

Sat 19 Sep, 1 Tishri

10am Rosh Hashanah Zoom service

Sun 27 Sep, 9 Tishri, 7pm

Kol Nidre Zoom service

(Fast commences 6.25pm)

Mon 28 Sep, 10 Tishri, 10am

Yom Kippur service

10am Shacharit & Mussaf (morning and additional services)

2pm Joint MRJ Session on Promises - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85657351354>

3.15pm Mincha (afternoon service)

4.30pm Cheder service, followed by study/discussion session

6pm Yizkor & Neila (memorial and concluding service)

(Fast ends 7.28pm)

OCTOBER

Fri 2 Oct, 14 Tishri, 7pm
Erev Sukkot Zoom service

Sat 3 Oct, 15 Tishri, 10am
Sukkot Zoom service

Fri 9 Oct, 21 Tishri, 7pm
*Erev Simchat Torah/Shemini Atzeret
Torah Zoom service and celebration*

Sat 10 Oct, 22 Tishri, 10am
Simchat Torah/Shemini Atzeret Zoom service

Thu 10 Dec, 24 Kislev
Erev Chanukah - first candle



Jakub Weinles
On the eve of Yom Kippur (Prayer).
(Reproduced as public domain- Wikimedia)

Online Services

Both TDRS and Reform Judaism have a strong tradition of regular services. However with the current CV-19 issues the closing of Synagogue doors means services have now moved online. TDRS have had minyan services online just prior to Shabbat and Reform Judaism are having daily services and classes.

Online Reform Siddur

Reform Judaism has online prayer books available through their website. This has been made available to ensure that we can all be involved in online services both at TDRS and the Reform movement overall. In addition the Machzor for Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah can be found on the Reform Judaism website

MESSAGE FROM RABBI CLIFF COHEN

If we take them seriously, the High Holydays are intended to challenge us. For each of us, the challenge will be greater or smaller from one year to another. We may have just lost a loved one or found happiness with a partner. We may have been made redundant or had a promotion. We may have developed a health issue or recovered from one. Depending on our circumstances, the High Holydays will challenge us in different ways and to differing degrees.

This year, however, the biggest challenge affects us all. The synagogue building remains closed, and all our services will be on Zoom. So how can we create a communal spirit as close as possible to the feeling of praying together? Or to put it another way, how can we make the High Holydays feel like the High Holydays?

Well, the first and most important step we have to take is to lower our expectations. There is actually quite a lot that we can do, but we have to do it knowing that nothing can be the same as the communal atmosphere that we get together in shul. If that were achievable we would not need a building at all. But rather than bemoaning the difference, we can look positively at what is possible and be grateful that we live in a time when technology enables us to do it. Had Covid19 arrived 20 years ago we would all be isolated and left to sit at home with just a machzor for company, but as it is, the majority of us can see and hear each other, listen to the shofar, join in the reading and singing, and exchange greetings. Let us not see as a problem what is really a benefit.

So, with realistic expectations, what else is there? The short answer is that whatever we do, it will feel like the High Holydays if we behave like it is the High Holydays. So here are ten suggestions, with thanks to my colleague Rabbi Jonathan Romain and a couple of additions by myself:

1. Put your computer in a room that is calm and tidy.
2. Put a white cloth on the table, and add a vase of flowers.
3. Ensure you are facing a pleasant view, not something annoying or distracting.

4. Turn off the phone/ leave your mobile in another room.
5. Put on the clothes you would have worn had you come to shul.
6. Put on a kippah, and a tallit for kol nidre and morning services.
7. Light your candles before the evening services and say the blessings.
8. If you are with someone else, be it partner or guest, act as if in synagogue and do not chat during the service.
9. Sit in an upright chair rather than a settee or armchair.
10. On Rosh Hashanah, have apple & honey ready. We can make kiddush together following the evening and morning services.

One further suggestion. On Rosh Hashanah afternoon, Helene and I have always gone to the Ramsgate beach for Tashlich. This is about throwing stones into the sea, having silently named each one for a sin we know we have committed. It replaces the ancient ritual of the scapegoat. The beach is a public place, so with appropriate social distancing, anyone who goes there can see and talk with anyone else without the need for risk assessment or the cumbersome efforts that would be required in the synagogue building. I cannot invite you, but I don't need to, I just need to tell you that we shall be there from about 3.00pm for perhaps an hour (only one hour of sins in a whole year? Yes, we're very righteous people.) and we shall be happy to see anyone else who "happens" to be there.

In the meantime, I urge you all to take good care of yourselves and to do everything you can to keep you and those around you away from the virus.

A happy and healthy New Year to you all.

**Rabbi Cliff Cohen,
September 2020**



COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Notes from the Editor

Welcome once more to the new edition of Etz Chaim. As always I'd like to thank all those who have taken the time to contribute. We always welcome your thoughts and articles.

Since the last edition it has been a difficult few months for many of us. As a community we have been magnificent in rising to the new challenges and coming up with new initiatives. We will no doubt continue to do so.

As we move towards the new year we have plenty to look forward to and as a community I know that we continue to flourish. Although there will be plenty more challenges ahead of us we remain a positive and forward looking community.

Tim Spurrier
Editor

Havdallah Club / Cheder

L'shana tova. As I write this, we are preparing for our first set of remote High Holy Day services, and Cheder are a part of that. During lockdown, we have recorded our own 'Od yovo' with Katie expertly mixing the video and combining the voices of the Cheder Club children who took part.

Now we're preparing to do the same for Avinu Malkeynu, which will be shared in our Zoom Cheder service on Yom Kippur afternoon. Although unable to meet as a Cheder Club during lockdown, it has been wonderful to see so many of our Cheder Club children join us for our erev Shabbat services. They have brought a level of joy and community that has been more important than ever during these difficult months.

We look forward to the time when we can meet up in the same actual space, and meanwhile manage with the virtual platforms afforded us. May the new year bring us all good health and hopefully we will all meet in the not too distant future for those hugs we have all missed. A happy, healthy and joyous New Year.



Prayer is possible, anywhere

by Godfrey Fischer

Life throws many things at us. I'm sure there is a Torah or Talmud lesson here but I haven't got around to checking. (Letters to the Editor, please!) One lesson we have learnt is the need to be adaptable - and Covid-19 has certainly given us the impetus to be so.

So it is with life in the synagogue. Well, to be more correct, life outside the synagogue, for, as you know, our lovely building is closed until further notice in the interests of our health.

We continue to gather together, albeit with a two-dimensional view, but we are still able to interact with each other. I know Zoom services are not everyone's cup of tea (kiddush wine?) but we must make the best of things. And for those members who do not have the facility to join the Zoom services, we can send a DVD.

When will things get back to normal? Who knows? However, we try to make our services meaningful. It is lovely to see all your faces. A bonus is the joy of seeing friends from far-flung destinations joining us. On pages four and five are the dates and times of the various High Holy Day services plus Simchat Torah and Sukkot. We will continue with our regular Friday Shabbat service at 5.45pm. Beyond that, the dates of the festivals are shown for reference but without times. Further details will be sent to you by post or email as and when.

In the meantime, Hazel and I wish you L'Shana Tovah. May you have a meaningful Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. We pray that the year to come will be a happy, peaceful and, especially, healthy one.

Godfrey Fischer
President and Senior Warden.

Reform Judaism Movement Updates

For the latest news and events from the Reform Judaism and Reform communities across the country, sign up for the MRJ Movement Update.

This newsletter email goes out fortnightly and we won't use your email address for anything other than this.

To subscribe, go to:
<http://subscriptions.reformjudaism.org.uk/mailling-lists/> or email Martin Dix at:
martin.dix@reformjudaism.org.uk



Kosher Supplies

Sainsburys in Westwood Cross continue to be our main local supplier of Kosher supplies. They continued to stock both chilled and packaged Kosher supplies. As we keep on saying, use it or lose it. They continue to have a pretty good range of stock.

Kol Nidre Appeal

As always Etz Chaim has chosen 2 charities to support for its Kol Nidre appeal. These have been extremely successful over the years and have made a real difference to the charities that have been chosen.

This year the two charities are:

REFORM JUDAISM – COMMUNITIES THAT CARE and
THANET FAMILY FOODBANK.

Full details of the charities are found in the Kol Nidre appeal flyer and we would urge you to do what you can to support these two worthy charities.

Message from the Chairman

Dear Members and friends,

As we reach the end of summer with the evenings drawing in the calendar moves to the month of Elul and we begin to prepare ourselves for the upcoming High Holy Days. Traditionally special prayers are recited, the shofar is blown, and we visit the graves of departed loved ones. However, this year is not a normal year and our preparations as well as how we will celebrate these days are different. We are living in the midst of a global illness; one that has already claimed countless lives especially among the elderly and people living with long term health conditions, and for many of those who successfully battled the illness recovery to full good health has proven to be a long term challenge. COVID-19 is not choosy; it does not care for ethnicity, religion, skin colour or gender; to protect ourselves we have to change our ways, keep apart, cover our faces, sanitise our hands and for some isolate at home as much as possible. Often, after becoming infected carriers unwittingly start spreading the illness to others before they display any symptoms themselves. Keeping everyone well is a communal responsibility, we are all responsible to each other, family, friends or strangers we meet wherever that may be.

The Shul is closed for all activities, it has been since before Pesach, and could well be until at least Chanukah; since closure our prayers have been and will continue to be recited online from home. Some of you may be aware that the law now permits places of worship to open, however the detailed guidelines for entry, hygiene & cleaning (for instance, do not to touch another person's machzor - prayer book as it would need to be sanitised afterwards), contact tracing, the need for screens,

to keep a distance apart thus restricting the number of people present, as well as the prohibition on singing all make opening an unwelcoming and challenging proposition. Furthermore, every person coming would need to have their temperature checked on entry and to wear a face covering at all times. Many of us fall into the high risk category and for these there is also a disinclination to attend in fear of catching the disease. Remaining closed for services is common across all Reform and Liberal Shuls.

For the High Holy Days we will be joining our community online instead of in person; as we have already seen it works well. Details of services are included elsewhere in this newsletter. We hope that you will join us for all or some these services, they have been specially prepared with the needs of our community in mind and there will be an electronic machzor - prayer book available on screen so you may follow and join in from home. For those without internet there will be an option to listen in by regular telephone.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked in preparing these services, and also Reform Judaism who have been very helpful in so many ways.

Barbara and I wish you Shana Tova and well over the fast.

Ian Smiler
Chairman

MAZEL TOV!

It is with great pleasure that we announce the marriage of **Maria and Larry**.



THOUGHTS AND ARTICLES

Reminiscences of a Very Reluctant Reader by Jon Leigh

It all started a couple of years ago, when Rabbi Cliff and Godfrey asked if I was interested in helping to take the Friday evening services. I was honoured to be asked and after the first few minutes, began to wonder, what had I let myself in for. Whilst I know I can read English, most correctly, most of the time, I will be the first to admit, that whilst I have been saying prayers in Hebrew for about sixty years, I did not consider my Hebrew to adequate to take services.

When I mentioned this to Cliff and Godfrey, they both said, 'No problem', share the service with someone else and you will not have too much trouble.

There is another problem, I said, my family fervently prohibit me singing in public. Although I was a musician whilst I was at school, and can hear when another singer is flat, sharp or generally missing the note, my ability to maintain a note and return to it is almost totally absent. Again, the reply came forth from Godfrey, 'I will be your Chazan'.

From here on in, there was no turning back and a few weeks later, in an email from Helene, MY NAME was there as The Reader for the Friday evening service. It was usual on a Friday that I would collect my grand daughter Summer from Canterbury, take her home, feed her and then dash out, collect Katie and make our way to Ramsgate. Usually, this was a journey filled with laughter, jokes, silly stories and an atmosphere of looking forward to Shabbat. This night was quite different. I unusually was subdued. I had my tallit bag with me, a crib sheet of what was on each page, because when I informed the congregation to turn to a certain page, I meant that page. On our arrival, I was silently hoping for a minimal congregation, but the Shabbat angels had other plans. We had, for a TDRS Friday night service, an almost full house. Yes, I was only going to lead the first part, and yes it was mostly in English and yes, I was amongst friends and yes nobody would criticise if I made a mistake and I had read from the Bimah before but and it was an enormous BUT, this was my first time and thankfully, the Bimah has a front panel and I was standing on carpet, so nobody could see and neither could they hear, my knees knocking.

I eventually came to the end of my section and gratefully handed over to Simon, who had taken services before and we melded quite well and suddenly I realised that I had

enjoyed the experience. So, a pattern was developed, Simon and I would share the service and for a number of Fridays, we took our turn to lead the service.

Then came that fateful night. I arrived, ready to lead the first part when Godfrey approached me. 'Simon will not be here tonight, what would you like to do?' Was the question posed. 'I'll take the whole service, if you can act as my Chazan.' I had arranged over the weeks, that Summer would help me 'lead' the opening hymns and psalms and when Sally was not present, those other parts where the female voice brings such beauty to the service.

So, this was a second 'first'. The whole service and whilst my habit of writing down page numbers had to be very quickly added to, I managed, in spite of the slightly hesitant Hebrew, although afterwards, the lovely members of TDRS had not noticed my hesitations, repetitions and deviations, although that might be a different series of thoughts.

Then on another occasion, I forgot that I had a Chazan and started to sing. Fortunately, there were no bleeding eardrums, nobody went mad and even Summer smiled at me, especially when I promised never to let it happen again.

Friday night leading the service was becoming enjoyable and started to look forward to, 'My Week'. Then disaster struck in the guise of Covid 19. As everyone will know, since March, no Synagogue services. No Shabbat hugs, kisses and that wonderful feeling of community. Zoom is great but it is not the same. Yes, it is better than sitting at home with two candles, a chollah and a prayer book and if this pandemic had happened only twenty years ago, that is what it may have meant. We can all see and hear each other, and my hat comes off and a big thank you to Helene and Katie in organising and conducting our Shabbat services but I have to admit, I miss the Real Thing.

I had begun to enjoy leading the service. I liked being able to choose a reading that had a special meaning for me and I hoped other people would like, too. The Reluctant Reader had matured into the job. Well perhaps, matured is not quite the correct word. I am still nervous, my Hebrew still requires improvement and whilst most of the time, I do announce the correct page, I have been known to talk when you should be singing, although, thankfully, I generally do not sing when you should be talking.

I would like to thank, Cliff, Godfrey, Simon and especially Summer in all their help, advice and support but most of all, I would like to thank YOU, the long suffering congregation. The wonderful members of TDRS, visitors, family friends and other people who have been at a Friday evening service when I have had the honour and privilege of leading the service.

Zoom in the Room

by Marc StClare

Well strange times we live in which has resulted in the phenomenon of Zoom
 Many folk previously used Skype -not excessively, but occasionally, to perhaps link up
 with a relative in Australia . We also have Whats App,Instagram,Snapchat etc for
 frequent social contact and messages. Zoom has however entered our homes
 [actually]in a big way. It has made joining with the Shul for a Service much easier. No
 train to catch or car to drive- so blustery gales are now irrelevant. It has those obvious
 advantage of convenience but also alas no atmosphere-so as to its long term application
 we shall see.

My observations-apologies in advance- from peering in to people's homes...

Godfrey - the photo on the wall of a young boy-is that your grandchild or you as a
 learned handsome child?

Tim - do you think you may have too many books- many people think that is not
 possible.

Sally and Michael - your curtains are certainly eye catching-I am constantly drawn to
 looking at them rather than at yourselves

Cliff and Helene – what decides as to who gets the better headphones?

Jacqueline Rose - your camera position made the candelabra lights above your head
 look like you are endowed with a splendid set of antlers

Katie – it is out of shot but I know your daughter is biting your leg by the expression on
 your face1

Roberta - you are popular and with many fans-most on on the shelves above you.

Simon - very nice hat but the cheque shirt is it actually your pyjamas?

Ian - a crumpled bundle on a work surface just behind you - clothes or a dead cat?

Gerhard - the beautiful many pronged crown of gold leaves you appeared to be wearing
 [from Ancient Persia] really suited you.

The Leigh Breslaws - great choral potential but would like a bit more 'do wop' and 'be
 bop'.

Maybe my camera but are Larry Ray and Tim Spurrier actually the same person-they
 seem to merge.

In spite of these comments please don't go to audio only in future-it would limit the fun
 zoom experience greatly.

I will seek forgiveness on the High Holy Days

TDRS BUILDING PROJECT

An exciting new project to renovate and update the synagogue building is underway at TDRS. This has started off with looking at the social area of the synagogue including the kitchen and communal area. The Synagogue council have appointed a small building project team to oversee and report back on the progress of the project. The council has already agreed the appointment of a professional project designer/planner, Peter Trill, who has been working with the team to move the project forward.

Peter has completed an appraisal of the synagogue building as it is and produced a scheme for potential updating of the social facilities. Peter and the project team have reported back to the council in a special Zoom meeting to discuss and agree the plans. They include modernising toilet and kitchen facilities and opening the synagogue to the rear, where the kitchen current is, into the garden. There was positive support for the plans with an acknowledgement that we are at the very start of this project.

No work is planned immediately as the project is still at the initial stages. However there will be more details of the plans and also exciting future opportunity in the next edition of Etz Chaim.

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HIGH HOLY DAYS MESSAGES

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner's Holy Days Message

As I prepare to leave my current role as Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism after nine years, it is certainly with a tinge of sadness that I consider my last of these messages for the High Holy Days. Serving our

communities, working with the tremendous team at Reform Judaism and supporting my rabbinic and cantorial colleagues across the country - this job has been such a blessing.



What it has allowed me to see is the incredible diversity and energy which together makes up Reform Judaism. Over the last nine years I have been privileged to be able to visit our communities around the UK and I have learnt something new from every one. Being given the opportunity to see our communities as a whole has allowed me to appreciate the incredible tapestry of Reform Judaism that they make together. Each is wonderful in its own right, but together they make something which is also distinctly beautiful. We raise each other to a higher level by working together and amplify our voices by speaking together.

Nothing has more highlighted the importance of reducing the distance between our communities than the ongoing pandemic. As physical synagogue doors closed, the hearts of our communities have remained 100% open. The speed with which we have innovated and reimagined our entire Jewish communal life has been an unbelievable feat. The connections between our communities and the Reform Judaism team have enabled lessons learnt by one community to be shared rapidly and help to improve the experience of all our synagogue members.

We have innovated and we have been resilient. Our congregations have done all they can to support members in need, including those suffering loss of income, those having to isolate or those shielding for extended periods of time. Being a resilient community, able to deal with anything, means being able to support our members most in need no matter what. We have also been brave; there have been decisions

which were not easy, but were necessary for the protection of life. Stopping attendance at funerals and remaining together virtually for these High Holy Days were two such decisions - but both have and will certainly protect lives and realise the most fundamental Jewish value of pikuach nefesh saving lives.

We come to Rosh Hashanah, known alternatively as Yom Ha'Zikaron in our liturgy - the day of remembrance. Over nine years of being Senior Rabbi, there is a lot for me to remember fondly. So many great moments of celebration and joy, interspersed with times of reflection and mourning, have been enhanced by the community we have built. This time is not one for nostalgia, though. Rosh Hashanah and this whole season of repentance teaches us that remembering alone is not enough - it is about applying that memory to improving our future.

I know that the future for Reform Judaism is a bright one.

Every year I have been to RSY-Netzer's Mega Chalutz - the gathering of the leaders of our Youth Movement before they disperse to make summer camp happen. What I have seen there is complete proof that we have a generation of talented and inspirational young people who are passionate about our Movement. These are not our future leaders - they are our leaders now. When you see how our Youth Movement and community youth programmes shape and develop these young adults, you cannot help but be optimistic about what lies ahead. Working together with the experienced leadership we already have across our community, I have no doubt the combination will be unstoppable.

It is a future I still hope to be part of, albeit in a different capacity, as I go to start my PhD in Digital Theology. It has been an honour to play my part in helping the Reform voice be heard more loudly within our communal discourse. Like the Shofar which will ring out into each of our homes during this High Holy Day period, we must all do our parts to enable Reform Judaism to continue to make waves which can be felt across the country.



High Holy Days Message from the President of the Board of Deputies

This has been a year like no other. The global pandemic has affected life more in a short space of time than any other event in peace time.



Of course, the effects have been experienced worldwide with hundreds of thousands dead and millions more badly affected by this virulent virus. We are a small community but we have been hit heavily. Sadly, our death rate has been more than double that of the general community and we have lost some wonderful people since March, taken from us way before their time.

It has been a time to mourn but also a time to act. The Board of Deputies lobbied hard to ensure that local councils could not cremate bodies without first consulting with the families of the deceased. This was a fine example of collaboration between Jews and Muslims who shared the same concerns. We collaborated closely with other community organisations to ensure that UK Jews are received all the help and information possible in the emergency, using all of our resources for the benefit of those affected. We collated a document bringing together all of the special guidelines for Passover this year and devised a card for members of the community to print off, fill out and post through the letter box to neighbours, letting members of the local community know that people are available do a food shop or even just to speak to someone on the phone who is self-isolating. No less importantly, our team has had the sad but necessary duty of collating the deaths we have endured so that we have an accurate record.

Last year, we were in the midst of Labour's antisemitism crisis. Twelve months on and Labour are, in the words of new leader Sir Keir Starmer, "under new management". We set out our Ten Pledges on anti-Jewish racism in January and they were enthusiastically adopted by the new leadership team. The progress we have seen is very encouraging. The scourge of antisemitism has not disappeared from the Labour Party but the determination to address it and take action where it is needed, as in the case of the sacking of Rebecca Long-Bailey, gives all of us reason to be optimistic after a dark few years.

Even Coronavirus could not completely overshadow the worldwide movement which developed rapidly in response to the racist murder of George Floyd. We in the Jewish community felt we needed to formulate our own initiative. The result is the Board of Deputies' Commission on Racial Inclusivity in the Jewish Community which is being

chaired by distinguished journalist Stephen Bush. We need to make sure that we are accepting of people of all backgrounds and I look forward to making progress on this most important of issues.

Those who know the Board of Deputies will understand we work on a diverse set of issues – indeed so much that it is impossible to list everything in a short message.

We exist to ensure that the UK's Jewish community can live freely, happily and continue to practise our traditions.

We are passionate about protecting our religious freedoms, whether the right to circumcise our baby boys in accordance with our tradition or to ensure that employees are able to take time off for Jewish festivals and follow their Jewish traditions within the law.

Our interfaith activities have certainly made the news – for example our support for the Chinese Uyghur Muslims currently suffering oppression in China, has raised awareness of the problems

Through Pikuach, we supervise religious education in Jewish schools, and, pandemic permitting, we travel the country with the Jewish Living Experience exhibition, educating non-Jewish children and adults about our way of life.

We engage with Government ministers, MPs, local councillors, diplomats, faith leaders and with a huge variety of public bodies on behalf of the community we represent.

We can only do this work with the help of communities across the UK, so I thank you for all the support that you all give. Let's hope the New Year truly does bring health and happiness to all of us.

Shana Tovah.

Marie van der Zyl

President
Board of Deputies of British Jews



OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

Leket Israel - Making Big Changes

What do you do when your entire operations model falls apart overnight and you are faced with the problem of feeding 9,000 people with food that you don't have? This is the challenge that Leket Israel encountered when Israel started shutting down in mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As hotels closed their doors and employees were sent home from work, the reservoir of surplus cooked food that Leket Israel had been rescuing for over 17 years dried up.

To ensure that hot meals would continue to be supplied to those in need, Leket Israel did something unique. In a dramatic departure from Leket's food rescue model, the organization began partnering with catering companies around Israel and paid them to cook meals specifically for Israelis in need. Leket's Logistics Department pivoted from redistributing single meals every day to delivering packages of 6-8 meals to each recipient. The meals could then be refrigerated and heated up when needed. The Leket Israel food safety coordinators worked with the caterers to ensure that the food was prepared and packaged safely and that it would last in the refrigerator for a full week.

One additional benefit of this special project was that the caterers were able to bring their workers back from furlough to help cook the meals. Within just a few days, Leket went from supplying 9,000 hot meals daily to more than 11,000 as the need grew.

Itzik Marsiano, Head Chef at Maachalei Hatzafon Catering, shared, **“Because of COVID-19, we had to stop working with many of our customers. However, partnering with Leket helped us tremendously. We were able to keep our staff employed, and we were excited to be a part of the amazing work that Leket Israel is doing to help the vulnerable population in Israel. We received even more satisfaction in our work knowing that we were helping people in need.”**



Share Rosh Hashanah with the Museum of the Jewish People

The following is an invitation from Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv (ed)

On the evening of September 18, 2020 (כ"ט באלול ה'תש"פ) we will celebrate **Rosh Hashanah**. I wish you a Happy and Sweet New Year 'שנה טובה ומתוקה'.

Please let me share with you some words about the Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot. Beit Hatfutsot is more than a Museum. This unique global institution tells the ongoing and extraordinary story of the Jewish people. The Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot connects Jewish people to their roots and strengthens their personal and collective Jewish identity. The Museum of the Jewish People conveys to the world the fascinating narrative of the Jewish people and the essence of the Jewish culture, faith, purpose and deed while presenting the contribution of world Jewry to humanity.



Everyone is invited to be part of the story of the Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot and we would be very grateful if you could tell us the **story of the Jewish communities of England**. We are interested in all aspects of Jewish life that cover a wide range of subjects of Jewish interests and history (synagogues, Talmud schools, cultural centers...). We would also greatly appreciate **visuals, photos and videos** (preferably digital or scanned) for example such as on websites. We are interested in all aspects of Jewish life that cover a wide range of subjects of Jewish interests and history, documenting the community today and in the past, synagogues, yeshiva, Talmud schools, cultural centers, the Jewish home and family ceremonies for example Bat

Mitzvah celebration in visuals, religious holidays, Judaica, education and schools, art, Zionism, cemeteries and other topics of interest to you. These will enter our collection with due credit. To get a better sense for what we are doing in this area, please find our Communities Database: <https://www.bh.org.il/databases/jewish-communities/> and Visual Documentation Database: <https://www.bh.org.il/databases/visual-documentation/>.

I would also like to share with you that **family trees** can be added to the museum's database. Please find our Memi De-Shalit Database of Jewish Family Names: <https://www.bh.org.il/databases/family-names/>. Assuming that a family tree was created with the help of a genealogy database, all what needs to be done is send to Beit Hatfutsot a GEDCOM file of the family tree by uploading it directly to the museum's website at <https://www.bh.org.il/databases/jewish-genealogy/send-us-family-tree/upload-gedcom-file/>.

<https://www.bh.org.il/event/museum-airlines-come-fly-with-us-this-summer/>



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Prices are for a minimum of three editions a year, colour or B&W. Please contact the editor for more details or to place an advert.

READINGS

On our online pre-shabbat services we often ask for contributions and readings. This was the reading on the weekend of Parashat Shofetim written by Tim Spurrier

When asked to do a reading I find it is a time to reflect; to consider and of course to reconsider.

I have been reading a book by Reform Rabbis Jonathan Romain and David Mitchell called “Inclusive Judaism”. It considers at its heart two things, I think. The first is that Judaism has survived, often under great strains and the most difficult of circumstances, by considering and of course reconsidering, in order to adapt and change. It has done this whilst still holding close ideals, morals and ethics that act, if you like, as the bindings to an ongoing, discussion document.

I think the weekly Parashah has been an intensely useful tool to ensure that those discussions continue vigorously and regularly. We are forced to not only consider our past but our present and future as a group, a community but also as individuals. For instance this week Parashat Shofetim has incredibly important ethical standards; concepts such as democracy, justice, integrity and fairness. However if we take these passages in Deuteronomy at face value we would, for example, continue to be stoning people to death. Rightly, we do not believe the stoning of people as either fair or justice. We considered, reconsidered and adapted within an enduring ethical framework.

Rabbis Romain and Mitchell’s second important message is that Judaism is not about blind faith in or obedience to, a god figure, it is what we do; how we act. That those elements of justice, fairness and integrity are things we should not only consider but also act upon. When talking to our own esteemed Rabbi some time ago he introduced me to this idea that in fact the actuality or idea of God is rather secondary. “What!?” I said. “Yes its all about deed not creed” he said. So those ethics and morals are not important because they are ‘god given’, it is that they are right and have been tested over millennia. They are the enduring framework from which to have those discussions. And although it may seem odd that we are here at shabbat often referring to God in our words and me saying the God bit isn’t important, this time was given as a natural break so that we can consider our actions over the past week and how that may change for the good next week.

It is no coincidence that a people are named after someone whose name was changed to reflect the struggles with what was right and wrong, who wasn’t afraid to argue the points and speak up when something seemed unfair. Israel is not only a name but also a state of mind. Our community’s recent discussions and sometimes disagreements about the best way forward under changing circumstances are the perfect example of Judaism in practice. These online services reflect the Jewish tradition of considering,

Guy, aged 5, lives in the UJIA Carmiel Children's Village thanks to...

The connection continues with a UJIA legacy gift

... Gerald (1920 - 2014)

During his lifetime, Gerald Crossman scaled the heights of the music world, playing alongside showbiz greats including Charlie Chaplin, Morecambe & Wise and even Marlene Dietrich. Yet it was after his death that he made perhaps his most life-changing impact.

In 2019, Guy moved into Carmiel Children's Village, giving him a new start in life away from a life of abuse and poverty. This was made possible in no small part thanks to the legacy gift left by Gerald to UJIA in his Will.

To find out more about the huge difference a legacy gift to Israel through UJIA can make, call Harvey Bratt on **020 7424 6431** or email harvey.bratt@ujia.org

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United Jewish Israel Appeal is a registered charity No. 1060078 (England & Wales) and Sc 039181 (Scotland).

reconsidering and adapting to ever changing circumstances and then acting in a shared way forward.

As High Holy Days fast approach there has been much discussion about how synagogue services over those weeks have been a central plank to this and other Jewish communities. Indeed, some other communities have decided that High Holy Days without synagogue attendance of some form is unthinkable. However as Reform Rabbis have argued, how does this sit with the central Jewish belief that the protection of life is primary? Surely the risk of the loss of even one life is too much in order to “keep tradition”, they say. Perhaps it is a risk too far. But as with this, the discussion never finishes, it

changes where circumstances change and we all do the best to make the best decision possible.

I for one am glad that an enduring Jewish ethical and moral framework continues to inform discussions and argument as it has over millennia. Without that we fail to adapt and grow as either individuals or as a community. Long may the discussions continue.

This was a reading by Larry Ray

Extract from *Judaism and Global Survival*, by Rabbi Richard H. Schwartz (Lantern Books, New York, 2002)

Justice, justice shall you pursue. (Deuteronomy 16: 20)

The pursuit of a just society is one of the most fundamental concepts of Judaism. The prevalence of injustice in today’s world makes all the more urgent Judaism’s emphasis on the importance of actively seeking a just society.

Note two things about the Torah verse above, which is a keynote of Jewish social values:

1. Words are seldom repeated in the Torah. When they are, it is generally to teach us something new. In this case, it is to stress the supreme importance of applying even-handed justice to all. Rabbenu Bachya ben Asher, a 13th Century Torah commentator, stresses, “justice whether to your profit or loss, whether in word or action, whether to Jew or non-Jew.”

2. We are told to *pursue* justice. Hence we are not to wait for the right opportunity to come along, the right time and place, but instead we are to actively seek opportunities to practice justice.

Many other statements in the Jewish tradition emphasize the great importance placed on working for justice. The book of Proverbs asserts: “To do righteousness and justice is preferred by God above sacrifice” (Proverbs 21:3). The psalmist exhorts: “Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute” (Psalms 82:3).

The prophets constantly stress the importance of applying justice:

“Learn to do well—seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.... Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and they who return to her with righteousness.” (Isaiah 1:17, 27)

The prophets of Israel were the greatest champions of social justice in world history. Jeremiah (5:28) rebukes the Jewish people when they fail to plead the cause of the orphan or help the needy. He castigates an entire generation, for “in your skirts is found the blood of the souls of the innocent poor” (2.34). Ezekiel rebukes the whole nation for “using oppression, robbing, defrauding the poor and the needy, and extorting from the stranger” (22.29). Isaiah (5:8) and Micah (2:2) criticize wealthy Jews who built up large holdings of property at the expense of their neighbours. The prophetic books are replete with such moral reproof.

The patriarch Abraham even challenges God to practise justice: “That be far from You to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked... shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?” (Genesis 18:25)

Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, former President of Bar Ilan University, points out that Judaism teaches a special kind of justice, an “empathic justice,” which seeks to make people identify themselves with each other — with each other’s needs, with each other’s hopes and aspirations, with each other’s defeats and frustrations. Because Jews have known the distress of slaves and the loneliness of strangers, we are to project ourselves into their souls and make their plight our own.

Based on these teachings, Jews have regarded the practice of justice and the seeking of a just society as Divine imperatives. This has inspired many Jews throughout history to be leaders in struggles for better social conditions. The teachings of the Torah, prophets, and sages have been the most powerful inspiration for justice in the history of the world.

CST wishes our community a peaceful, healthy & safe New Year



It is CST's mission to protect our Jewish communities up and down the country. We are committed to you, and ensuring your security, so that Jewish life can continue to exist and thrive in the UK.

The past year has been filled with challenges, both individual and collective. The pandemic has touched all of our lives, some in deeply tragic ways. The ability to physically meet with friends, family and in community – the networks that can make the most difficult and uncertain of times more bearable – has been removed. Where there is crisis, anger and blame follow, often directed at Jewish people. Now that we can gather together once again, CST is here to make sure it happens safe from prejudice and physical harm.

We wish that the security we provide were not necessary, but sadly terrorism, although rare, is a reality that can happen anywhere. Last Yom Kippur, the synagogue in Halle, Germany, was attacked by

a neo-Nazi. Using a homemade gun, he tried and failed to enter the synagogue, but did kill a passer-by and a customer at a nearby kebab shop. It was the cooperation of the congregants and shul staff, simply properly closing the door behind them, that saved the lives of those inside the service.

CST is here to protect you and facilitate the flourishing of Jewish life. This works best when you work with us. Please be mindful of basic security procedures and of our many dedicated volunteers who are devoting their time and efforts to ensure our safety, allowing us to spend the High Holy Days in peace. We wish you a safe, happy New Year, and a meaningful fast.

Please consider volunteering for CST or donating to us. We are a charity and we cannot do our work without your help. In an emergency, call the Police and then call our 24-hour National Emergency Number 0800 032 3263.

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