



A cricket match in Lod in 2012. Cricket was introduced in Israel by the British during the Mandate .

A Brief History of Jews and Cricket

David Alroy - The False Messiah

Discovering Leah

A Cornish *Sefer Torah*

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Westminster Welcomes New Members & Friends



Photograph of Kent House by Chris Rees

Please note that for our online edition we do not include Lifecycle and New Member Updates

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As we reflect at this time of year on how to be better, and consider that difficult story that we just heard on *Rosh Hashanah* of Avraham, called to sacrifice, I have been disturbed by a comparison that our *Torah* sets up between Avraham and a seemingly unlikely source. Bilaam (in *parshat Balak*) the mercenary prophet, gets up early, readies his donkey, and sets off with two young lads - to curse the Israelites. Avraham, our forefather, got up early, bound his donkey, and set off with two young lads.

What are we to make of this pointed echo?

The similarity between the two figures and their early rising might firstly make us reflect, and ask, when I get up and take on the day, am I Bilaam, driven by expediency, or Avraham, reflective and humble? It can look almost exactly the same, as we go about our routines. The echo might move us to find time regularly to reflect on what motivates us, on what we're trying to bring to the world. The similarity between Bilaam and Avraham could help us guard against being either too certain in our views and actions, or too unreflective. If we're just going about our business, however keenly, we're like Bilaam. In this view, Bilaam provides something of an alarming photographic negative inviting us to consider our behaviour carefully.

The comparison also, though, establishes something of a filmic split-screen (of unthinking disregard versus considered commitment and love) and invites us to contribute to the side of love, to act from love.

Rashi, the eleventh century French commentator, says that we learn from

this comparison between Bilaam and Avraham that, 'Hate can distort or cancel the bounds (of convention) just as love can'.

He imagines the Holy Blessed One saying to Bilaam, when he gets up early and binds his own donkey, 'Hah, you wicked one, Avraham already once got up even earlier than you to confront good trouble'.

The teaching that love or hate can break the bounds we often live within is based on an insight that either Avraham or Bilaam had the coterie to have someone else ready their donkey, but they do it themselves keenly.

Seeing in this mirror-image the potential boundlessness of hate and love can alert us in our world to the ubiquity of hate and the power of love. Negative feelings, such as resentments and selfishness, don't announce themselves as hate, but they can seep in, and accumulate, without a conscious return to love.

The American author, Bell Hooks describes love as 'The will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth'. Love does break the bounds. It can wake us early, and make us grow, including into having concern for others. We might think of an act of love as an act that gets us thinking about someone else, or thinking about a 'good', which is bigger than ourselves.

The comparison between Avraham and Bilaam encourages us to see our life's mission to bring such enthusiasm to the doing of love that we overcome the rapid spread of corrosive negativity and mundane cruelty.

We can each build our motivation from love, and build our consciousness from acts of love.

Do as many as possible, as eagerly as possible.

Be aware that growing into this way of being might be the way you have the most influence. This eager application of thoughtfulness might make more difference than our opinions or our achievements, as we contribute to this currency of kindness.

There are practical ways to act from love;

you can identify and note what positively motivates you (the learning and spread of *Torah* and kindness in my case) and - considering how much they are driving you - return to these values, rather than your fears.

You can actively cultivate *zerizut*, the alacrity, the keenness, that Avraham and Bilaam bring from opposite directions, and bring this to kindness. I once took a class in which we spent a week trying to cultivate this attribute in our lives. Our task was, whenever confronted with a choice of how to spend our time, to deliberate carefully and then act immediately. I struggled. I was used to just slumping in the evening rather than deciding. We were also to try to say hello to others first before they greeted us. I struggled, wondering where the 'cross the road early and convincingly' option was. I'm returning to these struggles as each of us might.

Amongst all those presents that came to my office there was one that Leah, my partner, on the phone, told me to open before Shabbat. This was the one I was especially moved by. It was a miniscule plant and pot from her, with a note that included, 'I love you very much and am so impressed by the double shift you're pulling right now as full time Rabbi and full time Dad. And thank you for all your love and care to me. I need it!'

It moved me, like the best acts, to be better - for I could be more loving, caring and mindful to Leah, who is so thoughtful as to write and send that when greatly sleep-deprived, and when anything beyond tending to Jules is a wild luxury. I'm moved by love to be more loving, to be more thoughtful, to deliberate kindly and modestly, and act keenly. I hope we all are.

Rabbi Benji Stanley

Discovering Leah



Vision of Rachel and Leah by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

The story of the two sisters, Leah and Rachel, their marriage to the same man, Jacob, and the children they bore, is a complicated one and in many ways a tragic one. The account of them in the Old Testament is well known: how Jacob sought a wife, found the two sisters at the well, falling in love with Rachel, the younger sister, and working for seven years to gain her hand in marriage. The girls' father, Laban, exchanged the two at the marriage ceremony, so that Jacob was deceived into marrying the veiled Leah and had to work for Laban for another seven years to finally marry his first love, Rachel.

Rachel was the more beautiful, but Leah had 'tender eyes'. Their mother was Adina, of whom we know very little, though the fact that two such worthy daughters were born to a man who could so betray them, indicates, say the rabbis, that his wife was a good woman – her name means 'delicate'.

The Bible story goes on to explain how the twelve sons of Jacob were born: four mothers are involved. Leah, it seems, was lonely – Jacob preferred her sister Rachel – and God understood and gave her many children to compensate. Her first four sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Then came two more, Issachar and Zebulun, as well as a daughter Dinah. But Rachel still had no children. Instead she offered her handmaid Bilhah to her husband and two more sons were born, Dan and Naphtali.

Leah, too, tired of bearing children, suggested that her own handmaid, Zilpah, should bear children to Jacob. Sure enough, two more sons came along, Gad and Asher.

Now comes the extraordinary story of the mandrakes. Reuben, the first-born son, came back from the fields with mandrakes. The mandrake is believed to assist in conception, and was widely used in magic potions because of its medicinal properties. Its roots take a human form and the plant is believed to scream when uprooted. It is hallucinogenic and has many curative properties. Harry Potter knew it well! Rachel offered to switch with Leah a night with Jacob, in exchange for the mandrake. Then Rachel finally produced two sons, Joseph and Benjamin. At last the prophecy came true, Jacob had twelve sons, the future twelve tribes of Israel.



The Mandrake

Jacob does not hide his preference for Rachel over her older sister. When the family are later faced with the possibility of danger from Esau's family, he sets Leah and her children in the front line keeping Rachel behind in case she is faced with peril.

Many stories from the Rabbis embroider the Bible story. Rashi maintained that Leah was to marry Jacob's twin brother Esau. Jacob, according to tradition, was a God-fearing scholar while Esau was a hunter. Rebecca, Laban's sister, had two sons, while her brother had two daughters. What better than if the elder daughter, Leah, married the elder son, Esau (older by only moments) and the two younger children also married? Leah is clearly upset by this and God answers her prayers.

Leah, like Rachel, was one of the Hebrew matriarchs and is buried in the cave of Machpelah, together with other

patriarchs and matriarchs of Hebrew history. Known to Muslims as the Ibrahimi Mosque, Machpelah is one of a series of caves situated some thirty kilometres south of Jerusalem in the heart of the Old City of Hebron in the West Bank. According to the Abrahamic religions, the cave and adjoining field were purchased by Abraham as a burial plot. The site is considered a holy place in Judaism and Islam. According to tradition, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with their wives Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah, were buried in the cave. Rachel does not lie with them. Her tomb is in the city of Bethlehem, just south of Jerusalem.

For centuries, it lay on a deserted roadside, and Rachel's descendants would come here to pour out their hearts to her – the mother who dwells in a lonely wayside grave in order to be there for her suffering children.

The story of Rachel and Leah, as told in the Bible, raises difficult questions concerning the rights of a man to have more than one wife at any one time. There are clear instructions that a man should have only one, but almost every leader of the Israelite people had several, some such as Solomon, several hundred. Abraham, David and Jacob had reason to do so. It might have been to produce children and continue the birth line, or in Jacob's case, through trickery. The Torah does not forbid it.

In fact, in Deuteronomy 21 it is explicitly accepted when the question of legacies arises. The text says, 'If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, when he wills his property to his



Jacob meeting Leah & Rachel by Raphael

sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love.' Surely the exact position of Jacob and his two wives, and the situation that can arise today when members of a family take such a matter to court.

Around 1,000 CE, Rabbi Gershom, the distinguished Talmudist and Halachist, summoned a Synod at which he laid down certain customs, some of which have pertained ever since. They included prohibiting polygamy, requiring the consent of both parties to a divorce, modifying the rules concerning those who became apostates under compulsion, and prohibiting the opening of correspondence addressed to someone else. Several have passed into the behaviour patterns of other faiths than Judaism and have come to be accepted as a proper way to conduct one's life.

Leah remains the object of our pity and our sympathy, fated to marry a man who does not love her, through trickery, but she remains one of the leading ancestresses of Biblical history, for in the book of Ruth, the forebear of King David, when she is welcomed into the house of Boaz, we are told, 'the Lord makes the women that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel.'

Philippa Bernard



Tomb of Leah

Joshua's story

Joshua Waterman is eighteen years old. He is going up to University now, and when he leaves he hopes to join the Police Force. He has a twin brother and lives in North London. He sent us this account of a momentous day in his life.



Joshua in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, proudly wearing his Gold DofE award

Last year I completed my Gold Duke of Edinburgh award. The award ceremony took place in May this year at Buckingham Palace.

To earn my award, I had to complete a skill, a physical activity and volunteering for a prolonged period. I also took part in an expedition as well as a residential stay. My skill was learning about the police force during my attendance at police cadets. During my time as a volunteer police cadet, I have learnt valuable skills and knowledge, such as how the police complete a stop and search as well as taking part in test purchases. My physical activity for the award was running and improving my fitness level for an annual police cadet competition involving cadet groups from the whole of London. Through volunteering at a local beaver scout group, I also gained the opportunity to improve my leadership skills. My expedition, which was four days hiking in the Hertfordshire countryside, allowed me to improve my navigational skills. Finally, my residential stay was in Snowdonia where I completed a

mountain skills course which taught me planning, exploring, and navigating mountainous terrain. We also had a night wild camping which is pitching up tents after a long day's hike in the remote mountains where there are no facilities.

The culmination of this award allowed me to spend the morning with my dad in Buckingham Palace gardens. As I walked through the Buckingham Palace gates, I was reminded of my achievement. Throughout the experience, I had the pleasure of listening to distinguished speakers at different satellite stages within the garden. This included hearing from Rav Wilding, a former soldier and police officer who has since become a popular television presenter, and Jon Culshaw who is a comedian and impressionist. These inspiring speeches talked about the importance of our achievements, emphasising the positive impact we had made in our communities.

Then there was an address by Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, who is a patron of the DofE award. His Royal Highness' speech encouraged us to be proud of ourselves; since achieving his own award in 1986 he has been a strong advocate for DofE.



The Gold Award Badge

We also got to explore the vast grounds of Buckingham Palace gardens. From seeing the lake to the rose garden, it was enjoyable to walk around. After the event there was also an opportunity to read about the history of the garden within the day's programme.

The day at Buckingham Palace was a memorable and enjoyable day, and an experience which I won't forget.

Joshua Waterman

A Brief History of Jews and Cricket



The Maccabi Vale Cricket Club with their 'Mascot'

Mike Yarwood, the mimic and comedian, used to tell an old joke that there is no book shorter than one documenting all the famous Jewish cricketers. That may have been true of the times when Jews left their homelands in Eastern Europe to settle in this country. But soon they were admitted to public schools and universities, wore English clothes, spoke the language like natives, and to be really English, learned to play cricket.

Within the British Empire, as it was in earlier days, cricket was becoming popular. The first international matches took place in the late nineteenth century, and the first known openly Jewish cricketer was the South African, Norman Gordon.

Born in 1911, and known for his pace and accuracy, Gordon played first-class cricket for Transvaal from 1933–34 as a right-handed fast bowler and a tail-end right-handed batsman. He made his Test debut against England in December 1938, playing every Test of the five-match series. In the first Test, he took his best Test match figures of 7 for 162, including 5 for 103 in the first innings. He was stumped by Les Ames – noted by Wisden as the greatest wicket-keeper-batsman of all time – for a first-ball duck in the drawn match. In the second match he took 5 for 157. However organisers of the Test Matches felt that if he were to play in England he might be the object of anti-Semitic outbursts from the fans. Gordon was also the oldest living Test cricketer before he passed away at the age of 103.

Cricket spread globally with the expansion of the Empire. By this time,

elite Jews, often introduced to the game at school or university, had leisure time to relish cricket as a supposed promoter of Anglo-Saxon civic ideals. One of the earliest Jewish cricket clubs was the Bombay Jewish Cricket Club, offering a taste of home for privileged amateurs. In South Africa and Australia, Jews were also drawn to cricket as an opportunity for otherwise sedentary intellectuals and others to maintain physical fitness.

One such was London-born Israel Abrahams, author of *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* and *Chapters on Jewish Literature*. He was educated at Jews' College, where he wrote about cricket for the college Journal, and at University College, London. At Cambridge he had further opportunities to play a higher standard of cricket. In 1902, after teaching for several years at Jews' College, Abrahams succeeded Solomon Schechter, to teach Talmud and Rabbinic Literature at Cambridge. However, Schechter was annoyed that Abrahams spent too much time on the cricket pitch and remonstrated with him. 'You must excuse my frankness with you,' Schechter wrote, 'but this is a Rabbinic Chair, and the first thing which will be required from you is not Hellenism or English history, but the exposition of Rabbinic texts.'



Norman Gordon, the first international Jewish Cricketer

Jewish writers who had an English education were of course introduced to cricket at school. The poet Dannie Abse was one; he went to the local Welsh school and although as far as we know he never achieved any skill at the game, he obviously loved it, writing about a match he watched as a boy:

*A three-spring flash of willow
And suddenly, the sound of summer
As the thumped ball, alive, would leave
The applauding ground
Once, hell for leather, it curled
Over the workman's crane
In Westgate Street
To crash, they said, through a discreet
Angel Hotel windowpane.*

Siegfried Sassoon, too, played cricket as a young man, picked for his village team, and when he went to public school, Marlborough, played for his House, once taking 7 for 18 in a house match. He wrote several poems about cricket which were published in the magazine *Cricket*, believed to be among his earliest known poems. Of an Oxford vs Cambridge match he wrote,

*Meanwhile some Cantab slogs a fast
half-volley
Against the ropes. "Good shot, sir! O
good shot!"
Ejaculates the Dean in accents jolly . . .
Will Oxford win? Perhaps. Perhaps
they'll not.
Can Cambridge lose? Who knows? One
fact seems sure;
That, while the Church approves,
Lord's will endure.*

Many other assimilated Jewish writers spoke of their cricketing experiences. Tom Stoppard and Harold Pinter were both cricket enthusiasts, writing fondly of the game in their plays. Stoppard's love of the game was apparently part of his attempt to be 'more English', engendered by his anti-Semitic stepfather. He wrote in *The Real Thing* that the distance a ball is sent by a cricket bat is like the impact of ideas put forth in dramas: 'What we're trying to do is write cricket bats, so that when we throw up an idea and give it a little knock, it might ... travel.' Pinter, in his play *No Man's Land*, named his characters after early famous cricketers and the film *The Go-Between*, for which he wrote the screen-play, dramatises a cricket match.

One nation which followed its English forebears in loving cricket was Israel. Theodor Herzl wrote in his novel *Altneuland* that in future, young Jews would 'avoid ghetto pallor by playing



Israel's National Cricket Team 2012 European Championships in Corfu

cricket on idyllic green fields'. Cricket was included by Herzl among competitive games that would be played 'like the English do' in an ideal Jewish colony. And indeed early settlers constructed cricket pitches to make recent immigrants from South Africa, India and Australia, as well as Britain, feel at home. When Jewish Norman Bentwich, Attorney General for the British Mandate there, dropped a catch, he was apparently concerned that the High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, also a Jew, would put a blot on his career because of it!

A number of Indian immigrants were determined not to lose their cricketing skills. For eight years they practised on a concrete strip and were regarded as eccentric lunatics by their fellow citizens. Local enthusiasts managed to keep the game going once the British had left in 1948, but the game was struggling until the mid-1960s, when an influx of Jewish immigrants from cricket-playing countries revived the game - mainly South Africa, United Kingdom, and the Indian Sub-continent.

The first national league was formed in 1966, which led to the formation of the Israel Cricket Association (ICA) in 1968. Games were played on dusty, grassless football fields, on matting wickets. Israel became an associate member of the International Cricket Council in 1974.

In Britain cricket was popular with Jews born and brought up in England. The influence of Maccabi on Anglo-Jewish sports has been immeasurable. It quotes that its mission is to 'support the long-term future of British Jewry by engaging and developing the entire Jewish community with a broad range of sporting, educational, social and health

and wellbeing activities.' And cricket is an important part of those activities. One Jewish woman has played Test cricket for England: Netta Rheinberg unfortunately scored two ducks in her only Test Match in Australia. She was secretary of the Women's Cricket Association and also membership secretary and vice-chairman of the Cricket Society. She edited the magazine *Women's Cricket*, reported on women's cricket for *Wisden* for more than thirty years, and wrote a regular column for *The Cricketer*.

Within the Maccabi umbrella of sporting sponsorship is the Vale Cricket Club in North London. The Club was formed from the North Middlesex Jewish Youth Club based at Wembley Synagogue, and played its first match on 23rd May 1956, under the youth club name. When the youth club was disbanded in 1960 the cricket section was offered the cricket equipment for a nominal sum and VCC came into being, the name being chosen



Zaki Cooper and Daniel Lightman at the Lords' Exhibition

from Vale Farm where the home fixtures were played. It soon formed a second XI and grew to be recognised as the UK's leading Jewish Cricket Club winning many inter-club matches. With the support of senior players and enthusiastic parents the club has over 100 members. David Connick, of Westminster Synagogue, played in Israel for Maccabi twice, once in 1977 when they lost to South Africa. This was the match in which Mandy Yachad played wearing his *tzitzit*. David won two silver medals when he played again in 1985. Another Jewish Cricket Club, also in North London, is the Belmont and Edgware Cricket Club, established in 1974, with an extensive fixture list, offering a warm welcome for

Jewish cricketers and enthusiastic supporters.

But perhaps the biggest boost to Anglo-Jewish cricket is the current Exhibition at Lord's - *Cricket and the Jewish Community*. The authors of a book about the sport, Zaki Cooper and Daniel Lightman, both keen followers and members of the MCC, brought the idea to the committee at Lord's and it was warmly welcomed. The MCC's head of Heritage and Collections led a team of curators to present an extraordinary display of cricketing and Jewish memorabilia.

Few would have realised that when the South African Mandy Yachad went out to bat in a test match, he was wearing *tzitzit*, now displayed in the exhibition. The story is told of a Jewish woman who baked a special cake for the commentators when Brian Johnson grumbled that they had no part of the tea served to the players. Other Jewish players are well represented, including Lord Dalmeny who captained Surrey while an MP, commuting between the House and the Oval. Also featured are Dr Ali Bacher, captain of the great South African team of the late 1960s and the Jamaican Ivan Mordecai Barrow, a wicket-keeper batsman who remains the only Jew to have scored a Test century, for West Indies against England in 1933. Given this summer's Ashes series, there is particular interest in Julien Wiener, who opened the batting for Australia against England in the 1979-80 Test series, Michael Klinger, whose prolific run-scoring, particularly in one-day cricket, earned him the title the 'Jewish Bradman', and Ruth Buckstein, the only Jewish woman to have played Test cricket for Australia, who scored 83 in her only Ashes Test. The Exhibition which runs for two years, was opened by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis.

It would be difficult to mention any nationally known Jewish cricketers, but the sport has a huge following among the Jewish community and its supporters look forward to the time when a Jewish captain will lead an English XI on to the pitch at Lord's, and retrieve the Ashes for England.

Philippa Bernard

Fritz Haber (1868-1934) 'Judge not lest ye be judged': The mixed blessing of Fritz Haber



If one is asked to name the greatest scientist of all time the field would probably narrow to a handful of candidates, most of whom are part of our general knowledge: Isaac Newton, Galileo, Michael Faraday, Charles Darwin, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein. There are, of course, many other prominent thinkers one could mention, but most people have heard of my selected list. However, there is one name missing, unknown by the majority of the non-scientific community, who is, arguably, the most influential scientist of all time; but a man who courted controversy for his enormous positive contribution to humanity and its opposite.

Fritz Haber was born in Breslau, Germany, now Wrocław, Poland. He came from a wealthy mercantile family. There must be something in the water or air of Breslau because it has produced so many Jewish intellectuals. Haber's family were semi-assimilated into German society, supporting the Jewish community and observing some elements of Jewish traditions. Like many Jews who wanted to be accepted by the host society, Haber regarded himself as more German than Jewish; and, indeed, later in his life one would describe him as a German nationalist. He attended schools that had

Catholics, Protestants and Jews, far from strict faith education establishments. After his formal schooling he went to the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin, where, having gained his father's permission, Haber studied chemistry. He moved from one university to another and having received his degree, returned to Breslau to work in his father's business, helping to develop synthetic dyes. Although relations between father and son were strained, Siegfried Haber did use his influence to secure a number of practical apprenticeships for Fritz, where he gained valuable knowledge of chemical technical processes. Once again returning to Breslau in 1892, by which time Fritz had been awarded a PhD in chemistry, Siegfried and Fritz found it impossible to work together. Fritz tried to persuade his father to abandon natural dyes in favour of synthetic ones, which Siegfried ignored; later, following global trends, he adopted synthetic dyes! Siegfried urged his son to return to academia because Fritz had no head for business.

The stage was set for Haber's great scientific contribution

The stage was set for Haber's great scientific contribution. Most of us have little knowledge of the importance of ammonia, except when using sulphate of ammonia in our gardens. It is a chemical that has transformed the world, from farming to explosives. This substance is found in nature, being produced from nitrogenous animal and vegetable matter, but the quantities are relatively small, so to artificially produce huge quantities of ammonia would prove most beneficial to crop production and as an enrichment to animal stock feed. The Haber Process extracted nitrogen, a gas that makes up 78% of our atmosphere, and hydrogen from natural gas and pumped them through pipes under very high pressure. The pressurised gases are heated to 450°C, and then passed through a tank containing an iron catalyst. The reaction liquid is cooled so that liquified ammonia can be removed. Haber was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1918 for his ground-breaking achievement. However,

some refused to attend the ceremony because of Haber's involvement in the production of Chlorine Gas in the First World War. We have all seen pictures of those suffering from Chlorine Gas poisoning. Being heavier than air it descended into the trenches causing corrosive irritation to eyes, skin and the respiratory tract. Exposure resulted in pulmonary oedema that effectively meant death by drowning.

In making a judgement as to whether Haber was the greatest scientist of all time, one needs to be clear about criteria. Did he change our understanding of the Universe; of how life evolved; of technological advances such as the transistor and silicone chip; the motor car; aircraft; and advances in medicine? Inevitably one ends up making a value judgement and that requires selecting a few attributes or one monumental discovery that has impacted humanity on a scale that is unprecedented, and the development of artificial fertiliser is such an accomplishment. This has enabled farmers to produce vast quantities of food that have fed and continue to feed billions of people, many of whom would not be alive today had it not been for Haber's work. It has been conjectured that the human population would not have grown from 1.6 billion in 1900 to over 7 billion today.

There have been many geniuses who have contributed to war technology: Leonardo da Vinci, J.R. Oppenheimer (one of the principals in developing the nuclear bomb), who famously said, 'Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds', and Werner von Braun to mention a select few.

The lives of all human beings are recorded in the credit and debit columns of the ledger of life. The religions of the world recognised that none of us is free from sin and, ultimately, we face judgement by a higher authority than on Earth. In the rite of the weighing of the heart, as part of the ancient Egyptian mummification process, the heart of the deceased is weighed in the scale against the feather of the goddess Maat, who personified order, truth and what is right. Did the good of Haber's life outweigh his involvement in furthering destruction of

life in war? That is a matter of judgment, and it can only be, on Earth, a preliminary verdict.

Haber's life was not free from tragedy. Fritz's mother Paula had a difficult pregnancy and died three weeks after his birth. His father was devastated and may well have blamed his son for the loss of his wife; and this would go some way to explain the difficult relationship between father and son. Fritz Haber's wife, Clara Helene Immerwahr, a chemist, committed suicide in 1915, perhaps a response to her husband's involvement in supporting the German war effort; she was a pacifist. Two of his children committed suicide but other children who



In his laboratory in 1905

left Germany survived. However, several members of the Haber family died in Nazi concentration camps

With the rise of National Socialism, Fritz Haber was dismissed from his post at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute. He had hoped his conversion to Christianity in 1892 and his service to Germany during the First World War would have counted for something. He left Germany in 1933, travelling to a number of countries, including a short stay in England where he met a fellow chemist, Chaim Weizmann. Weizmann offered him the directorship of the Sieff Research Institute in Rehovot, but he never took up the post, dying from heart failure in a Basel hotel in 1934, aged sixty-five. Albert Einstein, a life-long friend, gave a eulogy at his cremation: 'Haber's life was the tragedy of the German Jew - the tragedy of unrequited love'.

Rabbi Kamila Kopřivová, PH.D.



On 4th September at Kent House, our young student rabbi became our Second Rabbi - to the great pleasure of us all. We are delighted to welcome her in her new and official capacity.

On this special evening, Rabbi Kamila Kopřivová received her *Semichah* (Ordination). The ceremony, was presented by Rabbi Alexander Kovtun and Helene Bar, and Kamila was ordained by Rabbis Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris and Dr Charles Middleburgh, all under the auspices of the Leo Baeck College.

The Service was led by Rabbi Benji Stanley, and Yoav Oved's singing added to the beauty of the occasion. It was a fittingly modest but memorable and moving Service, witnessed by a 'full house' of College Members and our own members.

Kamila became interested in religion as a child, although she had intended to pursue a career as a scientist. In her teens, a teacher gave her Martin Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim* and this sparked her desire to know more about Judaism.

Kamila has an impressive record of achievements, and she speaks four

languages, Czech - her mother tongue - English, Hebrew and German. She earned her PhD in Jewish Theology at Charles University, Prague, and went on to study at Abraham Geiger Kolleg in Potsdam, and the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem.

Journalism has also been part of her development. She worked as a Science writer and social media manager while at Charles University and she has lectured both there and at the Faculty of Arts, Potsdam University, on the 'Challenges of twenty-first century Judaism', and on Biblical Hebrew.

She says that she had heard about Westminster Synagogue and how it had been instrumental in saving 1,584 sacred Czech Scrolls, and she had made up her mind that one day she would come to London to see the Synagogue for herself.

Then, while studying in Jerusalem, she met Rabbi Benji Stanley and was amazed to discover that he was the Rabbi of Westminster Synagogue! It was thus, while continuing her training at Leo Baeck College, she came to be our student rabbi. As such, she has been a tremendous asset from the start.

Her gentle nature has endeared her to all of us - especially the young. She has taken *Shabbat* Services and delivered thoughtful addresses. She has a lovely singing voice which is evident when she chants from the *Torah*. Kamila also enjoys the art of *sofrut* - Hebrew calligraphy - an extremely specialised skill.

Over the years, each of our four rabbis has brought something special and different to our congregation. Each of them has been exactly the right person at the right time. How fortunate we have been - and now our good fortune continues with the appointment of Kamila Kopřivová. We welcome her with open arms. *Mazal Tov!* and *Yasher Koach!* Kamila.

Claire Connick

The Jews' Temporary Shelter



At the end of the nineteenth century a great number of Jewish people fled religious persecution in Eastern Europe, with many of them settling in the East End of London. Many arrived with few possessions and had no contacts in the city, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

The already established Jewish community took numerous steps to make sure that new immigrants settled in without harming the established community's reputation. The Jews' Temporary Shelter (JTS) was founded in 1885 to help assist these poor Jewish immigrants, providing them with temporary accommodation (up to two weeks), meals, and possible contacts for work.

Though the services provided were basic, the Jews' Temporary Shelter offered a welcoming environment to thousands of immigrants, continuing to assist refugees from Belgium during World War I and Jews fleeing from Germany and Austria in the 1930s.

A key advocate for the Jews' Temporary Shelter was Otto Schiff, who was awarded both the OBE and CBE for his work assisting refugees after both world wars. In March 1933 he established the Jewish Refugees Committee, pledging that no refugee would become a public charge. Despite the enormous numbers arriving in Britain, sufficient money was allocated for their upkeep by the Central British Fund and the Council for German Jewry until the end of 1939.

Otto Schiff (featured in the *Quarterly* of January, 2018) was elected Life President of the Jews' Temporary Shelter in 1948, and the impact he had on countless Jewish refugees' lives is insurmountable.

A public meeting was held at the Jewish Working Men's Club, and as a result a shelter was opened in Leman Street, promoted by three wealthy and influential Jews. The group was led by Herman Landau who had arrived from Poland in 1864 and become a banker and an influential member of the Jewish community. He said it was to be 'an institution in which newcomers, having a little money, might obtain accommodation and the necessities they required at cost price, and where they would receive useful advice'. Initially, funds came from the Rothschild family and from individual subscriptions, but in the coming years the shelter was often on the brink of running out of funds.

This Shelter opened in Leman Street on April 11 1886, moving later to Mansell Street, both in the Aldgate area. The Shelter also worked with the Soup Kitchen for the Jewish Poor and other charitable bodies in the East End.



Russian Jews in the Shelter

The Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter was a very functional title. And indeed, its function was to provide protection and temporary accommodation for Jewish migrants, migrants and occasionally the homeless and the non-Jew. However, surprisingly, the existing Jewish community were not all in agreement as to the worth of the project. The President and Council of the Jewish Board of Guardians and many leading members of the Anglo-Jewish community, such as Arnold White, strongly opposed this

initiative, fearing that it would encourage an influx of immigrants who would adversely affect their own lives. The word 'Poor' was removed from the Shelter's title in 1914.

Shamefully, there was a move to contact rabbis in eastern Europe to ask them to discourage economic migrants in particular, painting a dark picture of unemployment and poverty that awaited them in the UK. Jews who were enjoying hard-won prosperity feared for their position and any backlash against the immigrants that might sweep them up.

Landau responded to the opponents of immigration by emphasising the health and work skills of the majority of immigrants as well as their general preference for moving on to other countries. He argued that assistance in establishing the Shelter had come mostly from poor Jews of the East End who were willing to support the shelter with weekly subscriptions. The Shelter would be spartan in style and offer only temporary accommodation. He was anxious to emphasise the basic character of the Shelter. He persisted in working for good relations between the various Jewish charities and in the end they did rebuild cordial relations, largely due to the calibre of those working for the Shelter. His most convincing argument was that by protecting migrants, the Shelter enabled them to journey forward to America and elsewhere instead of being trapped in the UK. He estimated that 40% of those who wished to proceed to America or South Africa were being prevented from doing so by dockside robberies, and he detailed how criminals were defrauding the trusting immigrants of whatever cash they might have on entry. He also gave evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee.

The Shelter's first annual report in 1886 reflected the need to be on the defensive. In 1890, the annual report noted a 50% increase in the numbers coming to the Shelter. But it also focused on statistics for how many people returned home and how many emigrated successfully, concluding that successful transmigration was increasing. 'These figures,' said the chairman, 'are a complete answer to those



A family seeking refuge in the 1950s

who denounce the so-called Jewish Invasion.'

By 1900 the mood was confident. The Shelter had found its role. The 1900/01 annual report stated that 'ships entering the Thames from Hamburg telegraphed to give their time of arrival'. For many years the Shelter's superintendent was required to meet every incoming ship that might be carrying immigrants in the Port of London and to approach people to prevent them being robbed or taken into sweat shops as slave labour.

Landau was asked why these victims did not immediately seek police aid. He replied: 'These poor folks feared to call for the assistance of the police because they thought the English police were much the same as the dreaded *objescik* whom they had left behind.'

Soon after this the police did raid the Shelter. They claimed that, because it charged those staying there, it should have been registered under the Common Lodging House Act and was therefore breaking the law. The Shelter had to stop requiring payment, finding respectable lodgings for those who were able to pay and giving the free accommodation to those without money. Landau suspected that the police were in cahoots with those trying to prevent immigrants from reaching the Shelter.

In 1900 the Shelter had two hours' notice of the arrival of 253 Jews expelled from South Africa by the Boer government. Five months later 650 arrived from Romania. Between 1902

and 1905 the Shelter processed 16,000 people. It chartered a special ship to sail to America. Every individual needed careful questioning and identification, involving many, many hours of painstaking work. The Shelter soon gained a reputation for doing sterling work in a responsible manner, developing skills in working with the authorities to ensure the smooth passage of migrants.

1892 saw complaints that migrants' luggage had been stolen by shipping agents. So the superintendent went to Hamburg. As a result, a Hamburg bureau was established and there were no further complaints. During a cholera outbreak in 1893 the Port of London Authority medical officer asked the Shelter to help to keep a check on arrivals. In 1896 reports reached the Shelter that emigrants were being robbed and their luggage taken, with extortionate sums demanded for its return. Falsely high fares were being demanded for tickets. The Shelter complained to the Dutch consul and sent a delegation to confer with the Dutch Shelter organisation. The delegation visited the ticket officials and made various suggestions for the protection of these poor people, after which there were no more complaints. In 1905 the Shelter established a system whereby letters shown by migrants at German borders were sent to London to the Shelter for verification, so German shipping agents could no longer claim they were false. The Shelter also supervised the handling of immigrants' money at the German border.



A Seder in the Shelter

This period of intense activity came to an end after 1905 with the passing of the

Aliens Act. It was the first time in peacetime that legislation had attempted to limit immigration to the UK. When the Bill was debated in the Commons, Herbert Asquith (Liberal Home Secretary) criticised it and talked of the large numbers of Russian refugees he had seen in the Shelter on a visit he had made shortly before the debate. Nevertheless, the Bill was passed and the Shelter became involved in attempting to ensure that it was administered fairly.

During the Second World War the Shelter offered temporary housing to people who had been bombed out, but in 1943 the Mansell Street building was requisitioned to house American troops, after which the Shelter was limited to an advisory service until the end of the war.

In 1946, one hundred children from displaced persons' camps were received at the Shelter as it continued to serve a useful purpose, helping refugees from all over Europe. In 1973 the Shelter moved to better and smaller accommodation in Mapesbury Road, north-west London.

In the 1990s the trustees re-evaluated the way the Shelter was running. The conclusion had to be that the trustees had failed to note the low numbers of people requiring help, and the high cost of staffing a largely empty building. The charity had a considerable income from its investment and this was now being wasted. So a consultant was appointed, which resulted in the Shelter's closure in its present form. The building in Kilburn is currently leased to Hillel for student accommodation.

The investment income of the Shelter is now used to make grants to help Jews with housing-related needs, and for emergency accommodation, and there is an administrator on duty for five hours a week, working rent-free from Hillel's offices. Grants are approved and emailed to the administrator who can therefore respond to an application in less than one week, making it probably the fastest functioning charity ever.

Claire Connick

What is anti-Semitism?

Our contributor, Valerie Singer, together with her husband, Paul, was a member of WS from 2007 to 2010. She edited the Quarterly from late 2008 up to, and including, the summer of 2010 before returning to the US. She recently revisited Kent House and attended a function here.

Mark Gardner, MBE, Chief Executive of the Community Security Trust (CST), defined anti-Semitism as a certain perception of Jews expressed as hatred. It often manifests in charges that Jews are conspiring to harm humanity, and that when things go wrong, Jews are the cause. At its core, anti-Semitism is anti-democratic and anti-intellectual, and distorts public opinion on often complex geopolitical themes, like the UK's support of Israel.

Joel Rosen, the outgoing President of the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), noted an increase in anti-Semitic incidents on campus, including harassment and intimidation around protest events.

Dame Margaret Hodge, Labour MP for Barking and Dagenham, minced no words. Anti-Semitism is Jew hate.

So began the first in a series of discussions, hosted by Westminster Synagogue and led by Lord Leigh.

Admittedly, as an American living in the US, I knew very little about the recent charges of rampant anti-Semitism within the Labour Party. To put it mildly, we have had our hands full with our own political turmoil and incidents over the last several years.

It was only when I descended into the rabbit warren of UK politics that I realized that the situation in which the British Jewish community found itself under Jeremy Corbyn was far more complicated than I was aware.

Anti-Semitism in the UK isn't new, of course. One of the worst anti-Semitic massacres occurred in York in 1190, when the entire Jewish community was trapped inside the tower of York Castle.

Most perished either by suicide or murder; others were forcibly baptized by their attackers. This was followed by the Edict of Expulsion one hundred years later, expelling all Jews from England, an act from which I contend the UK Jewish population has never fully recovered.

This historical precedent has persisted. Historian Robert Wistrich writes that by 1980 'Britain's radical Left had become explicitly or implicitly anti-Semitic in its demonization of Jews, its equation of Zionism with racism or Nazism and its malevolent undermining of any moral basis for Israel existence.'

To Mr. Wistrich's point, today's anti-Semitism in the UK, although not without its tropes, is nuanced. The specious and untethered connection between British Jews, anti-Zionist rhetoric, and pro-Palestine support is an example of a complex 'what about-ism' that, in its simplest terms, is often used as a public relations weapon to turn public opinion against the Jewish community.

the Union of Jewish Students raised an alarm when senior members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps were invited to speak

Attempts by Jeremy Corbyn to do just that, while promoting, as an accepted fact, that despite evidence to the contrary, he has fought against racism his entire life, set the Labour Party up for inner turmoil. Many of its MPs, including Dame Margaret, were maliciously harassed by Corbyn's supporters in the wake of the controversy. In 2019, nine MPs quit the party in protest and solidarity.

The CST continues to report an increase in anti-Semitic events, largely attributed to social media, including Twitter (now 'X'), where standards for censorship of hate speech are relaxed under its new ownership. In August, the Union of

Jewish Students (UJS) raised an alarm when senior members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps were invited to speak at university campuses around the country.

On this side of the pond, the last several years have played out similarly for American Jews, but with a few added wrinkles on both sides of the political aisle. In the US, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), anti-Semitic incidents surged by 34%, the highest number since it began tracking anti-Jewish violence. As in the UK, social media, and particularly Twitter (now 'X') is the hate platform of choice.

The US Democratic party, long the purported bastion for anti-racism, has thread itself into an ever-entangled moralistic knot. While the Biden-Harris White House launched the country's first US national strategy to counter anti-Semitism in the US in May 2023, Ilhan Omar (Democrat), was sanctioned by the House of Representatives for her continued abhorrent racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-Zionistic remarks.

Over in the US Republican party, the current front-runner for the 2024 Presidential nomination and the previous President of the United States, moved the US Embassy to Jerusalem. He oversees a party of staunch supporters of Israel, and under his administration, negotiated the Abraham Accords. Yet his, and the party's, pandering to the fringe, opened the doors to rioting in Charlottesville, where protesters with torches shouted 'Jews shall not replace us,' and to the marchers on January 6, where many wore 'Camp Auschwitz' t-shirts and flew QAnon flags.

As a private citizen, and echoing Jeremy Corbyn, President Trump has said that, despite his continued negative and racist rhetoric, 'I don't have a racist bone in my body.' Like Corbyn, he recently dined with Holocaust deniers and a billionaire rapper, the latter saying publicly that 'I see good things about Hitler.' His is a particularly craven attempt to place constituency over the moral high ground.

Where do we go from here?

In the US, the recently announced US National Strategy to Counter

Antisemitism is a good first step.

So too are privately funded programs like the 'Stand Up to Jewish Hate' campaign launched earlier this year by New England Patriots owner, Robert Kraft, through his Foundation to Combat Antisemitism and Disrupt Antisemitism - a multi-pronged approach to combatting anti-Semitism sponsored by the ADL.

Closer to the Westminster community, the UJS continues to deliver anti-Semitism awareness training to Student Union and university staff, to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and call out anti-Semitism on UK campuses. Since 2021, the UJS has delivered over 140 sessions, and has opened up its training to include senior university management, university staff, and student services teams.

Similarly, the CST, in coordination with Maccabi GB, launched Streetwise, an age-appropriate development programme offering leadership training on anti-Semitism, internet safety, and self-defence. The intended purpose is to provide guidance to community organizations and young Jewish people while supporting their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Dame Margaret reports that with persistently strong voices (including hers), collective reason, and organization, anti-Semites have all but been expunged from the Labour Party. Indeed, in 2020, Jeremy Corbyn, who had downplayed a report on anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, was suspended. His successor, Keir Starmer, said that '(we) have failed Jewish people ... I am truly sorry for all the pain and grief that has been caused.' It's a solid start.

There are other glimmers of hope in the UK. As Joel Rosen reported, the UJS supports over seventy Jewish Societies and more than 9,000 Jewish students in campuses around the UK, a positive sign that Jewish student engagement - and the foundation for future Jewish leadership and community outreach - continues to be strong.

Valerie Singer

Ritual Objects

1. The Yad



Yad donated by the Dingo family.

It is not permitted in Judaism for the reader of the *Torah* to touch the Scroll. This is partly because the Scroll itself is fragile; the vellum parchment does not absorb the ink, so touching it may damage the lettering. But it is also considered that for the human hand to touch it, may render the reader impure. It is for this reason that a *Yad* (in Hebrew 'hand') is used.

The *Yad* is composed of a short shaft, about a foot long, usually made of silver or sometimes of olive wood from the Holy Land, with a miniature hand on the end, the finger pointing and directing the reader's attention to the lettering on the parchment. Thus, it indicates the place on the page without the reader needing to touch the parchment.



Yad designed by Rabbi Reinhart

Many *Yadayim* are very beautifully made, the fingers of the hand delicately traced in silver or carved in wood, with a chain attached so that they can be hung from the rollers of the scroll. The Mountain Jews (see *Westminster Quarterly*, July 2022), had particular traditions attached to the *Yad*. In fact, they used two, held in pairs forming a v-shape, which divided the text into passages. The *Yadayim* often bore an inscription, and were twisted together in a long, tight screw-like

shape, often as a broad leaf with a rounded tip. These Jews from the area of Azerbaijan would display the *Torah* to the congregation, with the *Yad* in place, as a reminder of the guiding hand of God. They sometimes called it an *etzba* (finger) or *kulmus* (quill pen).

Several traditions attach to the use of the *Yad*. In earliest times a teacher would use it rather as a modern lecturer might use a long pointer to indicate a point on a screen, and even as a weapon to stab an intruder. The *Talmud* says that anyone touching the *Torah* with a naked hand will be buried naked, for if the *Torah* is disgraced by overexposing it, the sinner too will be exposed when he dies.



Another reference to the *Yad* indicates that it may be a memorial. In the second book of Samuel, it is stated that 'Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a pillar which is in the king's valley and he called the pillar after his own name and it is called "the Yad of Absalom" to this day.' The name has been taken for the memorial of the Holocaust, *Yad Vashem*.

The *Yad* is sometimes inscribed with an appropriate Biblical verse such as the line from Psalm XIX, 'The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,' or with the name of the donor.

All the *Yadayim* shown are in current use on our sacred Scrolls. There are two more exhibited in the display cabinet in the Marble Hall of Kent House.

Philippa Bernard

History of the Jewish Refugees Committee



Janet Cohen JP

In 1933 the Jewish Refugees Committee was formed as a separate entity within the Central British Fund (CBF). It was started by Otto Schiff and Oscar Joseph with others in the Anglo-Jewish Community; Joan Stiebel undertook the organizational duties. The first Chairman was Elaine Blond.

These were the principal people who negotiated with the British Government, to allow Jews into this country. Local Committees were formed up and down the UK including Northern Ireland to raise money for future refugees and their resettlement. My father was Chairman of one such committee.

A few had some finances of their own, but others needed jobs, homes and money. Over the next years around 75,000 refugees arrived. Synagogues were helping, so were some brave individuals in Embassies in Germany.

In 1938-9 the *Kindertransports* began. This was a great undertaking to bring children, and even young babies, by train out of Europe without any family; the oldest children were only sixteen. Most never saw their families again. 10,000 children came, of whom roughly 9,000 were Jewish. The Rowntree Foundation in York brought the others. In Harrogate, where I lived, was a home for very young Orthodox children, run by the Leeds Community. My mother-in-law in Liverpool taught many of them English. Sad to say some did not fare well and were treated as servants.

After the war there were negotiations to bring youngsters (mainly boys) from the concentration camps. Joan Stiebel was

directly responsible for them. Ben Helfgott looked after their welfare for many years.

The JRC was involved in helping Russian Jews. When they applied to leave Russia. CBF was sending parcels to them in Russia, so that they could sell goods like jeans and leather jackets. Committees were set up to help them, and JRC had to sort out all their papers.

The birth of the State of Israel in 1948 caused many problems for the Jewish communities in the Arab lands. In Iran and Iraq the local people started to attack Jews, several of whom left in a hurry. Thousands of Jews came through London from Iran, some on the way to California. Many had to have new documents in London to travel on to California or to remain here. Dame Simone Prendergast, a daughter of Elaine Blond, was then Chairman. She and Joan Stiebel had a very busy time for several months. Rosemund Nissan, one of the refugees, worked with the JRC from that time. She had worked for the American Joint Palestine Appeal in Iran.

All the work done by the JRC was very confidential, in case it put anyone's life in danger. I was then asked to be on the Committee. Lola de Haan, sister of Kurt Hann, Headmaster of Gordonstoun, was also on the Committee. We had Jews arriving from other Arab countries too, such as Iraq, Egypt, and Morocco.

War then started in Bosnia, and again the JRC was extremely busy. It was at *Yom Tov* 1992 that Bosnian Jews started arriving by any means they could. We joined with Jewish Care to arrange accommodation and to provide food. The older Bosnians were Holocaust survivors - and refugees for the second time. Many were in mixed marriages and from different political backgrounds, so it was no easy task. They had no warm clothes, but M&S gave us some mustard-yellow rain jackets! The oldest refugee, aged 85, who had written the Constitution of Yugoslavia for Tito, was sent with his wife to an old age home in Zagreb until we could bring them here to join their daughters.

Many had difficult journeys to get here, and we often received a phone call to say

when and where someone was arriving. Jewish Care employed Branco Danon to help translate. Movingly, Eli Benson, an Orthodox Jew, was seen in Golders Green trying to get a pram and baby clothes - on a Saturday!

Judith Hasson OBE, from the Holocaust Survivors Centre, and I, organized two Jewish hotels together with the Jews' Temporary Shelter (see p.10) to accommodate them. We gave them all pocket money, a bus pass and English lessons. We also had to provide them with documentation, so the JRC employed a lawyer. We badly needed funds to help pay for this work, as much of it was still confidential. I contacted Madeleine Cope-Thompson and Letitia Leigh and with the help of Peter Batkin, a Director of Sotheby's. We put together a Dinner and Antiques Auction at Sotheby's.

I knew the Attenboroughs and they agreed to be our Guests of Honour. Mrs Thatcher gave us an old Chinese vase to sell. Leo de Rothschild also helped and gave us a silver cup. The event was a big success.

All the children of the Bosnian Jews have succeeded well here. In 2012 we had a party and reception at Jewish Care to celebrate that they had been in England for thirty years.

With the expansion of the EU and Israel, there were very few new refugees, so I decided it was time to close the JRC. Lord Alliance sponsored a splendid reception for us at the House of Lords. We were able to bring Joan Stiebel MBE there. Sadly, she died the following week.

One very important part of the work of the JRC was the archive of personal records. This archive contains personal files and registration slips from 1933. The JRC was aware of their historic value and their privacy under Data Protection.

Janet Cohen JP

A Cornish Sefer Torah



Jeremy Jacobson with the precious Sefer Torah

Legend has it that Jews arrived in Cornwall over a thousand years ago. Hence names such as Marazion (possibly 'Jewish Market' in Cornish) and Market Jew Street in Penzance. However, the stories are almost certainly apocryphal.

What is certain is that Jewish communities were established, mainly in Falmouth and Penzance, when they came from the Rhineland area of Germany and from Holland in the early part of the eighteenth century. A small number disembarked at Falmouth and one or two at Fowey, only to move on promptly to London and elsewhere. Others arrived in Cornwall, mainly from continental Europe.

The size of the Jewish population of the town at this time is unknown, and as the first Synagogue was not built until 1768, to begin with they probably conducted their Services in private homes. This community had died out by the end of the nineteenth century, though it was definitely not the end of the Jewish story in Cornwall.

A new community, Kehilat Kernow (Kernow is the ancient term for Cornwall), was established in 1999. It is the only Jewish community in the county. Associated with the Movement for Reform Judaism, it has 119 members, including thirty-six children, and holds fortnightly

Shabbat Services conducted by volunteers and students from Leo Baeck College.

Recently this community featured in a BBC programme, *Antiques Roadshow*, when two of its members brought a precious and historic *Sefer Torah* to the show.

The Scroll had been brought to Falmouth from Hamburg in 1740 by Alexander Moses, known as Zender Falmouth. When the community disbanded in 1880, it was offered to Hampstead Synagogue but apparently was returned because it was thought that the restoration costs would be too high.

In 1892, the Scroll was presented to the Royal Institution in Cornwall and displayed in the Royal Cornwall Museum. However, in 2014, the Museum decided to sell some of its artefacts. Kehilat Kernow offered to buy the Scroll, but the Museum refused to take the money and donated the precious item to the local community.

It was not Kosher as it was in a sad state of disrepair. The parchment was torn, and every letter needed work. Gradually, it was painstakingly restored by the *Sofer* Bernard Benarroch.

Jeremy Jacobson, the Chairman of Kehilat Kernow was thrilled to be able to show the *Sefer Torah* on television. He said that in his community's terms, the scroll is priceless. 'It's our most sacred possession since it connects us to the original Cornish Jewish community. We see it as a never-ending renewal of the past, the continuity of our community here and the positive relevance of the Torah to the future. It's one of the things that makes Judaism what it is.'

Claire Connick

Amusement Arcade

A young journalist heard about a very old Jewish man who had been going to the Western Wall to pray, twice a day, every day, for a long, long time.

So she decided to find out more. She went to the Western Wall and there he was, walking slowly up to the holy site.

She watched him pray and after about forty-five minutes, when he turned to leave, using a cane and moving very slowly, she approached him for an interview.

'Pardon me, sir, I'm Rebecca Smith from CNN. What's your name?'

'Morris Feinberg,' he replied.

'Sir, how long have you been coming to the Western Wall and praying?'

'For about sixty years.'

'Sixty years! That's amazing! What do you pray for?'

'I pray for peace between the Christians, the Jews, and the Muslims.'

'I pray for all the wars and all the hatred to stop.'

'I pray for all our children to grow up safely, as responsible adults and to love their fellow man.'

'I pray that politicians tell us the truth, and put the interests of the people ahead of their own interests.'

'And finally, I pray that everyone will be happy.'

'How do you feel after doing this for sixty years?'

'Funny you should ask; I'm starting to think I'm talking to a brick wall!'



Baron Lionel de Rothschild (1808-1979)



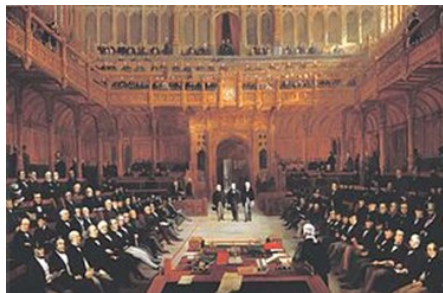
Lionel Nathan de Rothschild (not to be confused with Lionel Walter de Rothschild, the zoologist) was the eldest son of Nathan Mayer Rothschild and his wife, Hannah Barent-Cohen. Lionel is remembered for one particular reason: he was the first Jewish Member of Parliament.

Lionel was born in London in 1808, and went to the University of Göttingen, before joining the Rothschilds in the City. Like several of the Rothschilds, and indeed other Jewish families, he married his first cousin, Charlotte. She turned out to be a splendid hostess, for Lionel had inherited from his father Gunnersbury Park in Ealing, formerly the home of Princess Amalia, daughter of George II. In 1838, the year that Queen Victoria was crowned, all London was holding great balls and elaborate social entertainments. Charlotte invited five hundred guests, including members of the Royal Family, to a splendid banquet described by the *Court Gazette* as 'one of the most delightful reunions of the season'.

Like his brothers Lionel went into the family business, and when his father died he became senior partner, forming the firm of N.M. Rothschild and inheriting much of the wealth that went with it. The company prospered, with Lionel assisting the British Government with loans and insurances, including the purchase of the Suez Canal.

In the 1847 General Election Lionel stood as Liberal candidate for the City of London, but in spite of being elected with a

large majority, he was unable to take his seat. Newly elected MPs had to swear the oath as a member of the Church of England, and this of course he was unable to do. It was not only Jews who were prevented from becoming members of the House of Commons. Any candidates who did not accept the English Church as their stated religion, such as Dissenters and Atheists, were also barred. In 1829 the Catholic Relief Act was passed allowing Roman Catholics to be Members of Parliament, and this was followed by early attempts to obtain the same emancipation for Jews. The Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, introduced a Jewish Disabilities Bill to remove the problem with the oath. In 1848, the bill was approved by the House of Commons but was twice rejected by the House of Lords.



*Introduced in the House of Commons
26 July, 1858.
Painting by Henry Barraud.*

On five separate occasions Lionel was elected, but it was not until 1858 that the House of Lords agreed that each House should decide its own method of swearing in new Members. Lionel, with his head covered, used the form 'so help me Jehovah' when finally taking the oath. He was re-elected in general elections in 1859 and 1865, but defeated in 1868; he was returned unopposed in a by-election in 1869 but defeated a second time in the general election in 1874. It is recorded that in all those years that he sat in the House he never once rose to speak.

Lionel's elevation to the peerage of England was a somewhat contentious matter. In 1817 the Austrian Emperor had ennobled the five sons of Mayer Amschel Rothschild, granting them the right to armorial bearing and to use the additional 'von' to their surnames. In England,



Cartoon by Ape in Vanity Fair

Nathan, the fourth son, and 'commander' of the English Rothschilds, refused to use a foreign title. He said that 'plain Mr. Rothschild' would do for him. But his sons wished to enjoy the honour of being Barons, some sticking to 'von' while others, including Lionel, chose the French 'de'. By royal licence of Queen Victoria, he was allowed (along with other male-line descendants of his late father) to use the Austrian title of Baron in the United Kingdom.

**Prime Minister,
William Ewart
Gladstone,
suggested to
Queen Victoria
that she should
award Lionel de
Rothschild a
British peerage**

In 1969, the Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, suggested to Queen Victoria that she should award Lionel de Rothschild a British peerage. She refused, insisting that it would be inappropriate, would further the cause of anti-Semitism in England, and that it was unseemly to reward a man 'whose vast wealth was based on a species of gambling, rather than legitimate trade'. He continued to call himself de Rothschild, but his son Nathan, or Natty as he was known, was created the



Lionel's wife, Charlotte's marriage portrait by Moritz Oppenheim

first Baron Rothschild (without the 'de') and became the first Jewish member of the House of Lords.

Lionel proved to be a man of great philanthropic deeds, financing through the firm French Railways, the British Relief Association Fund, to assist victims of the famine in Ireland, and of course the purchase of the Suez Canal. Disraeli, as Prime Minister—and of Jewish heritage too - went to the Queen. 'It is settled; you have it Madam ... Four million sterling. There was only one firm who could do it – Rothschilds.'

Lionel and Charlotte had five children: Leonora, Evelina, Nathaniel, Alfred and Leopold. When the youngest was born, Mary Anne Disraeli visiting the new baby, said to Charlotte, 'My dear, that beautiful baby may be the future Messiah, whom we are led to expect. Who knows? And you will be the most favoured of women.' The Disraelis were close friends of the Rothschild families, though Lionel was wary of Disraeli's political promises and took everything he said with a large pinch of salt.

Like his brothers, Lionel greatly enjoyed country life. It was the Chiltern Hills in the Vale of Aylesbury that attracted them, and Lionel's brothers each took large homes in the rolling hills outside London.

In 1853 Lionel bought the Halton estate including the manor house, and the house and land was the scene of one of the earliest Industrial Exhibitions, organised

by his son Anthony, and opened by Disraeli. In 1872 Lionel bought Tring Park in Hertfordshire with its 3,643 acres and gave it to his son Nathaniel as a belated wedding present. The following year he bought a farm at Ascott in Buckinghamshire for his youngest son Leopold, who turned it into a fashionable country house to entertain his guests.

In spite of purchasing a large part of the Chiltern Hills on behalf of his children, Lionel's only country home was Gunnersbury Park (see *Westminster Quarterly*, July 2021). He and his family preferred to live in London for most of the year. He could reach the Rothschild offices easily and was a strong force in the city. They lived for a while in Hill Street, in Mayfair, but in 1838 moved to 148 Piccadilly, purchasing the lease of the house next door, No. 147. The two houses were merged and while the work was carried out he rented Kingston House in Kensington. Here Charlotte could continue to hold the parties and dinners she loved to organise. When Lord Macaulay dined there he said, speaking of the gardens attached to the house, 'A palace ought to be built there. It would be the most magnificent and delightful town residence existing.' Kingston House was eventually given up when the family moved back to Piccadilly and was demolished in 1937. There is now a block of flats on the same site, called by the same name.



Lady de Rothschild's boudoir at 148 Piccadilly.

The huge mansion at 148 Piccadilly was by now one of the most splendid houses in London. The domestic staff was led by a capable butler-cum-valet called Toogood. The Duke of Wellington lived

next door (now the Wellington Museum). Lionel's daughter Evelina was married at the house - again to a Rothschild - and after Lionel's death it remained in the Rothschild family until it was demolished in 1937 to ease traffic congestion at Hyde Park Corner.

Like several other Rothschilds, Lionel was very fond of horse racing. He used the name Mr. Acton to participate in the sport, and in 1879 his colt Sir Bevy won the Derby. Sadly Lionel died a short time before the race was run and Sir Bevy was entered by his son Leopold.

In the last years of his life Lionel had suffered greatly from gout. His mind and energies remained as lively as they had always been, but he was severely crippled. Even in 1875 Disraeli, dining with him, had found him very unwell. He wrote that if he passed away, 'this would be a great death, for his brains are as large as his fortune and he does everything.' He died four years later on 3rd June 1879, from rheumatoid arthritis, at his home in Piccadilly. He was buried at the Jewish Cemetery in Willesden.

Lionel's affiliation to the Jewish community was strong if never very obvious. He was elected to the Board of Deputies, standing in as President when Sir Moses Montefiore was absent abroad.

He was known, too, for his generous response to requests for financial help, particularly for those Jews in need of help. He laid the foundation stone for more than one Jewish establishment. He was not known to have visited Israel nor to have attended synagogue regularly. It is not certain which synagogue he may have belonged to, but as his son Leopold was married at the Central Synagogue after Lionel had died, it seems likely that most of the family were members there.

Philippa Bernard

David Alroy - The False Messiah



Amadiya

In the long history of the Jewish people many wise (and foolish) men have claimed to be the long-awaited Messiah. Perhaps the most notorious was Sabbatai Zevi, in the seventeenth century, of whom we wrote in January 2016. Another, much earlier, was David Alroy, or to call him by his given name, Menachem ben Solomon.

Alroy, from Kurdistan, took the name David as he claimed to be the king of the Jews, and Alroy is the Hebraized version of the Arabic al-Ruhi. The middle of the twelfth century was a time of upheaval in the Levant and the Middle East. In 1095 Pope Urban II had urged Christians to take up arms to recover Jerusalem from Islam and thus instigated the first Crusade, so during the following century three religions were at war, fighting for territory, for their beliefs and for power. Small independent states were arming themselves for independence from the Sultans, and thus the situation was ripe for a Jewish demagogue to rebel against the control of tyranny.

Little is known about Alroy's early background, but he first came to notice in about 1120, when his father, Solomon, claiming to be the prophet Elijah, started a movement in the Caucasus Jewish community to fight the control of the Seljuk Sultan Muktafi. Menahem was a young man of great charisma. He had been educated in Baghdad, acquainting himself not only with Jewish history but with the customs and background of the Muslims, and was steeped in the mysticism and sorcery of local religious

fervour. The atmosphere of the lands about him, the oppression of the ruling oligarchs and the conflict between the religions was fertile ground for an uprising, and Menachem – or David as he now called himself – took full advantage.

Letters were sent out 'to all Jews dwelling nearby or far off and in all the surrounding countries'. The content of the letters encouraged the recipients to rise up against their oppressors, to fast and pray and to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah. 'The time has come,' they were told, 'in which the Almighty will gather together his People Israel from every country to Jerusalem the holy city.'

The movement was suppressed but was soon re-established in the area of Amadiya (present day Amedi), Alroy's birthplace, which had a large Jewish community. He was declared the long-awaited Messiah, promising to lead his people to recapture Jerusalem, be their king and offer them freedom from their enemies. His familiarity with magic arts, with religious fervour and with the customs of the Jewish people, gave credence to his claims. He proposed to capture Amadiya itself, ordering his followers to assemble there with weapons hidden in their clothing. They were encouraged by rumours that he had been imprisoned by the Sultan but had escaped by magic, and they were told to say that the reason for the assembly was to study the Talmud.

his followers were to be taken to Jerusalem by air through magical means.

However, many legends have grown up about the results of the plan. One says that spies revealed it to the authorities in Baghdad by means of a letter which purported to say that Alroy and his followers were to be taken to Jerusalem by air through magical means.

Apparently, many Baghdad Jews waited in vain for supernatural flight.

What is certain is that the assault on Amadiya failed and Alroy and those who followed him were slaughtered and he himself was killed, perhaps by his father-in-law for a bribe. Much of the material we know about the false Messiah comes from the account of Benjamin of Tudela (*Westminster Quarterly*, June 2023).

He tells of the magical escape from prison, how Alroy vanished from captivity by becoming invisible, reappeared on a river-bank and crossed the water on a shawl, and made his way back to Amadiya in one day, a journey normally of ten days. An attempt by the Jews of Baghdad to persuade him to renounce his claims was useless, and after his death they were forced to pay a large sum to the Sultan. Although the revolt was over, it continued to occupy the people of the area, who formed a sect called Menahemites to revere his memory.

An interesting sidelight on the story is the novel of Benjamin Disraeli, (Lord Beaconsfield), *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy*, published in 1833. Although Disraeli converted to Christianity as a boy, he never forgot or denied his Jewish ancestry. On one occasion he was attacked in the House of Commons by Daniel O'Connell who referred to his Jewish ancestry. Disraeli replied, 'Yes I am a Jew, and while the ancestors of the Right Honourable gentleman were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon.' He visited Israel early in his career and it was on his return that he wrote about Alroy. It is the only novel he wrote that has a Jewish theme.

Philippa Bernard



L'Chaim!



Men carrying bunches of grapes

Mosaic from the Or Torah Synagogue in Acre.

We are told in Psalm 104 of 'wine that maketh glad the heart of man'. Jews from Biblical times onward have enjoyed a glass of wine, either at the time of festivals or as a necessary accompaniment to a good meal.

We are all familiar with the wine we drink while reciting the *Kiddush* on *Shabbat*, and the four glasses at the Seder table. Whenever Jews celebrate an occasion such as a *Brit Milah* or a wedding, wine is obligatory. We have special blessings to be said over the wine, and the precious liquid was poured over the altar at a time of sacrifice.

When God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people seven species were suggested as suitable for the good land. Grapes were one of them and according to the book of Numbers, when the spies were sent out to examine the land, they found grapes so large and so sweet that two men had to carry them on poles (see the mosaic above). They had to be tasted at harvest time before the Israelites could go to war.

The stipulations regarding plant-based foods means that all are inherently kosher (provided that there is no cross-contamination with non-kosher food, insects are not present, and agricultural laws are adhered to).

Wine, however, is an exception. Due to its special place in worship, there are extra restrictions on the making and handling of wine, and the production and handling of kosher wine must be done exclusively by Jews. If wine has been boiled, it is rendered unfit for worship.

For the wine to be considered Kosher, Sabbath-observant Jews must supervise the entire wine-making process and handle much of it in person, from the time the grapes are loaded into the crusher until the finished product is bottled and sealed. Wine that is described as 'Kosher for Passover' must have been kept free from contact with leavened or fermented grain products, a category that includes many industrial additives and agents.

The ancient Rabbis, though, were well aware of the dangers of over-indulgence and there are many warnings in the Bible and the Talmud against getting drunk. This does not apply to Purim when Jews are encouraged to drink heavily. One *Midrash* tells very explicitly of the stages of drunkenness: one glass makes a man act like a ewe lamb, two he becomes like a mighty lion, boasting loudly, after three or four he is a monkey, dancing, giggling and swearing, and if he ends up blind drunk he is like a pig, wallowing in mire. Jews have always had a sense of humour!

Those Jews who are particularly warned off wine in the course of their duties are Rabbis who are about to make important decisions, and Priests in the Temple who were forbidden to drink before performing their duties. Some early Hasids believed that drinking alcohol was part of the joy of worshipping God, but they were often accused by their contemporaries of drunkenness and frivolity. Talmudic Jews forbade the drinking of wine made by Gentiles, a ban which is still observed by many orthodox Jews today. At Jewish celebrations non-Jews are not permitted to open the bottles of wine on the tables.

Philip Bernard

Film Premiere at Kent House



Synagogue member, Marika Henriques is a Jungian therapist, a survivor of the Holocaust and the creator of extraordinary art.

As a young girl, Marika was hidden from the Nazis in a Budapest cellar. Separated from her own family and unsure of their safety or whereabouts, she had to pretend to be someone else's child to stay alive. The trauma and terror of that experience was buried inside Marika for decades. Now in her 80s, she tells her story for the first time.

The premiere of a documentary film on her life was unveiled at Kent House in April of this year. *Chaos, Dragon and the Light* is based on her book, *The Hidden Girl, Journey of a Soul*. The music was written by well-known film composer Alex Heffes. He is the nephew of Renee Salamon. The film was sponsored by two members of our community. It reflects the life of Marika, her journey and her survival.

Rabbi Thomas describes the film as a powerful and very different Holocaust story, because it expresses deeply buried feelings, not only in words but in extraordinary drawings, tapestries and poems. The film is also about survival, determination and optimism - all of which Marika (who celebrated her *Bat Mitzvah* at the age of 74), has in abundance.

Ethiopian Jewry



For at least 1,500 years a Jewish community has existed in Ethiopia. However, there is little written record of their history, owing to the fact that they have relied on oral traditions and also because of their nomadic lifestyles.

It is fairly certain that a Jewish community was established in Ethiopia sometime after the destruction of the first Temple in around 587 BCE. The origin of the Ethiopian Jews is unclear though most of them believe that they are the descendants of King Solomon and Queen Sheba. There are many theories though, some believing they are the lost tribe of Dan, while others believe they are the descendants of Christians who converted to Judaism.

Throughout its history, the community has been referred to by numerous names like 'Falasha' - a pejorative term which means 'stranger' - which shows how their Christian neighbours viewed them, and 'Beta Israel' - or house of Israel. This name shows the community's own deep connection to the *Torah* and their faith.

Scholars once believed that during the Middle Ages the Beta Israel were a homogeneous group living under unified, autonomous Jewish rule. Yet new discoveries have shown that the truth is far more complex. It seems the Ethiopian Jewish community was for the most part fragmented both physically and religiously, with each Beta Israel village appointing its own spiritual and secular leaders. There was little contact between Beta Israel communities, and usually no overarching leadership uniting them.

Sometimes the Beta Israel were treated well by the Ethiopian monarchy, but at

other times they suffered persecution. In 1624, the ruling king's army captured many Ethiopian Jews, forced them to be baptised, and denied them the right to own land. According to local legend, some members of the Beta Israel chose suicide rather than succumb to conversion.

Since the Beta Israel community existed in isolation from other Jewish communities around the world, they developed a unique set of religious practices - in some ways quite different from what is typically considered 'Jewish.'

For example, an order of Ethiopian Jewish monks was founded in the fifteenth century to strengthen the community's religious identity and resist Christian influence. This monastic movement introduced an organised approach to religious practice, creating new religious literature and prayers, and adopting laws of ritual purity.

Historians learned about the community's religious life in the nineteenth century from the writings of Joseph Halevy, a French Jew who visited the area in 1867. He provided the first eyewitness account of Beta Israel life from a European Jewish perspective.



Joseph Halevy

Halevy described a community that followed legal sections in the Hebrew Bible and observed laws of purity surrounding menstruation, birth, and death. They observed *Shabbat* and believed in values such as respecting elders, receiving guests, and visiting mourners. They referred to the *Torah* as *Orit* (possibly from the Aramaic term for the *Torah*, *Oraita*), and kept their sacred Scrolls covered in colourful cloths, in houses of prayer or in the homes of one

of the *kessim* (priests). At the time of Halevy's report, one of the biggest challenges facing the Ethiopian Jewish community was European missionary activity. Though the community had frequently been pressured to convert by Ethiopian authorities, missionaries from abroad - with large-scale, organised missions - presented an even stronger threat. European missionaries, well-versed in the Hebrew Bible, were educated and skilled in debate. The Beta Israel's clergy could not compete. By providing schools and Bibles written in the local language, Amharic, the missionaries challenged the community's practice and faith.

On a number of occasions, the Beta Israel's monastic clergy tried to escape the missionaries' influence by leading their communities to the Promised Land (Israel). Most of these journeys were disastrous and a particular attempt in 1862 ended in starvation and death on a large scale.

Between 1882 and 1892 the regions of Ethiopia where the Beta Israel lived suffered from a famine that killed an estimated one third to one half of the Beta Israel.

In the early 1980s, a coup in the Ethiopian government led to the death of 2500 Jews, directly followed by Ethiopia forbidding the practice of Judaism and the teaching of Hebrew. Immediately, a rescue mission began, conducted by Israel. Aliyah activists and Mossad agents operating in Sudan, called on Jews to go to Sudan, promising them that from there, via Europe, they would be taken to Israel. Posing as Christian Ethiopian refugees from the Ethiopian Civil War, Jews began to arrive in the refugee camps in Sudan and were taken to Israel. Later on, Ethiopia's fragile government forbade the immigration, and the rest of the operations had to be conducted in secret.

In 1991, Ethiopia was coming to the end of the long civil war and the government was close to toppling. The political and economic stability of Ethiopia deteriorated, with rebels mounting attacks against and eventually controlling the capital city of Addis Ababa. Worried about the fate of Beta Israel during this transition period, the Israeli government decided to launch

The Book of Jasher

The Book of Jasher does not appear in the Hebrew Bible, though it is mentioned twice. Nor is there any copy of it. I had never heard of it until I was researching the history of Leah, when the name cropped up. It is sometimes known as the Book of the Upright One, and in Joshua it is referred to: 'And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jasher?' This is in connection with the battle of Beth Horon, fought between Joshua and five kings of Canaan.

There is another reference to Jasher in the second book of Samuel, accompanied by a much more familiar phrase. David was to 'teach the sons of Judah the use of the bow. Behold it is written in the Book of Jasher. The beauty of Israel is slain among the high places. How are the mighty fallen.' This was part of the funeral ode David wrote at the time of the death of Saul and Jonathan.

Although we have no version of the original Book of Jasher there have been several attempts to reconstruct it. These are only imaginative forgeries, using the name Jasher to try to revive what might have existed in Biblical times. One written in the eighth century supposes that the English monk Alcuin translated the Biblical Jasher. There seems to be no foundation for this. Alcuin was a poet, educator and man of the church who introduced the traditions of Anglo-Saxon humanism into western Europe. Another more modern version of Jasher is a purely fictionalised science fiction story.

There is even a version of the book online, and some translations of the Bible, such as that known as the Latin Vulgate, include it, though it was once removed by the Catholic Church. It seems likely however, that no such book ever did exist. The word Jasher is an adjective, not a noun, so it cannot be the name of an author. As it means 'the Just One' or 'the Upright One', it may have been some sort of instructional or courtesy volume. Two recent versions from an American source do offer a text but they are no more than a variation on the Biblical story itself.

Philippa Bernard



their largest operation yet. On the 24th of May 1991, a Guinness world record was broken for the most passengers on an aircraft ever. The record was broken during a daring Israeli operation, the evacuation of Ethiopian Jews from Addis Ababa. This operation, called Operation Solomon, continued non-stop for thirty-six hours and included thirty-four Israeli air force jumbo jets, hundreds of soldiers and the evacuation of 14,200 Jews to their promised land.



Many of the immigrants came with nothing except their clothes and cooking implements and were met by ambulances, with 140 passengers receiving medical care on the tarmac.

Two pregnant women gave birth on the plane, and they and their babies were rushed to hospital. The new arrivals

spent between six months and two years in absorption centres learning Hebrew.

They had to bridge a century or so of different living standards. Astonishingly, they adapted fairly quickly to their new surroundings, and modern equipment and facilities.

However, even today, the situation can be described as complicated

However, even today, the situation can be described as complicated. The operation is still considered by most as a major success and the majority of the Beta Israel community has fully immersed itself in Israeli culture and life, though, despite progress, some still face discrimination. In May 2015, exactly twenty-four years after the operation was completed, some Israeli Ethiopians demonstrated in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem against racism and discrimination. But through the sharing of stories, people are starting to truly understand the immigrants' struggle, the difficulties that come from moving to a different country, not knowing the language, and the hardships created by limited employment opportunities.



Arriving in Israel in 2009

Claire Connick

We extend hearty congratulations to Charles Sebag-Montefiore on his award of an OBE.

Congratulations also to Hilary and Phil Ashleigh on the safe arrival of a new granddaughter. Erin Fern Gourarie was born on 29th June and Hilary says she's 'very cute'!

Westminster Synagogue was privileged to be represented on 5th July at a meeting, arranged by the Board of Deputies, held at Bevis Marks Synagogue, at which Simon Sebag-Montefiore and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, were in conversation. Questioned by Mr. Sebag-Montefiore on his views on anti-Semitism, the Archbishop felt that universities had much work to do to help Jewish students in that respect. He spoke too, of his excellent relationship with the Jews of this country and of his visits to Israel. He came over as a warm-hearted and open-minded Christian minister of high standing, with an excellent sense of humour, and the audience welcomed him with great appreciation. It was the first time that the leader of the Church in this country had faced a Jewish audience and the Board is to be congratulated on arranging it.



Mark Mishon writes:

I have just read your two excellent articles on the 43 Group and on CST and wish to congratulate and thank you for bringing these important groups to the attention of your members.

Jill and David Louw write:

We were so thrilled to get the *Westminster Quarterly*, which is full, as usual, with such interesting articles. Thank you for keeping us on your mailing list.

Gillian Thornhill writes:

Once again, I send you my thanks for another interesting read of the *Westminster Quarterly*. They are always stimulating and mostly historical. I particularly appreciated your article on Progressive Judaism, and learned a lot. You are a mine of industry!

Editors: **Philippa Bernard and Claire Connick**

Please submit letters and articles for the *Westminster Synagogue Quarterly* to the Synagogue office or e-mail to editor@westminstersynagogue.org

‘THERE IS A TIME...’ ECCLESIASTES

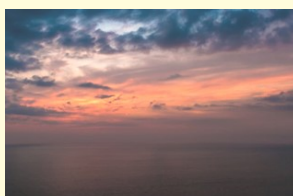
Man is born in a given age, religion, culture
A world defining reality
A reality defining his identity
A non-negotiable destiny
Experienced till the ‘Time to die’

Driven by instincts
Emotionally subjected, indoctrinated
Man is not objective
Throughout generations, everywhere
Different man yet as other men
Creates different yet same situations
Resulting in different yet similar conflicts
Under different yet same sky.

No images contain life, no words describe it
Transmitted, unsolicited life
A time of unjustifiable events
The ground for superstitions
That for religion through which mortals are immortal
Time with no beginning, no end
Time through which life evolves from beginning to end.

What binds terminal life to the wheel of Time?
Life as ephemeral as man’s dreams
Man’s dream as eternal as life
Life in-between ‘a time to be born and a time to die’
Time-life, an energy capsule transcending eternity
Meaningless dreams in eternity landscape
Outlasting time removes elsewhere ... beyond.

Colette Littman





Planning Your Diary

Contacting the Synagogue

Erev Simchat Torah

Friday 6th October

Simchat Torah

Saturday 7th October

Chanukkah 1st Night

Thursday 7th December

Chanukkah 8th Night

Friday 15th December

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