

WESTMINSTER **Q**ARTERLY

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Detail from the Arch of Titus

The Arch of Titus

Artur Rubinstein

The Library of Alexandria

The Countess of Waldegrave



An old Rabbi of mine used to tell this story so often that my mother began to get frustrated by it. So far, I've only told it once - in a sermon - so (mum) please allow me this one more time.

A woman who has lived her life in many ways well, finds herself in a boat in a storm and in serious danger. She had studied much Torah, observed many commandments, and was responsible towards her family. So now, she figures, is the time for Divine recompense. 'God, I pray save me, lift me from this boat to dry land!'. Soon enough, a rescue helicopter comes, but she swats it away, shouting, 'God will save me, I want God to save me'. Soon after that a rescue boat motors close, but again, 'God will save me, I want God to save me'.

But there is no hand from the sky, no miraculous flight. There is though, a life jacket that she suddenly sees in the boat, and figures it could save her - she could swim most of the way to shore, maybe all of it. But, having begun to stretch out her hand she withdraws it, saying to herself, 'I've lived piously, I want God to save me, I deserve it'.

After her death, she comes face to face with God. 'Why didn't you save me, she demands?' The Divine replies: 'I sent a helicopter, and a rescue boat, and made sure you had a life jacket. What more could I do?!! Why didn't you save yourself?'

There is a word in our *Torah* that recurs in key moments and could seem unnecessary: it is *Lecha*, 'for yourself'.

Moses, in Deuteronomy, says that he was told by the Divine, '*Psal lecha*, carve for yourself tablets, and *Aseh Lecha Aron*'. Why are these tablets and this Ark emphatically *lecha*, 'for yourself'? What can we learn from this? Also, there is a discrepancy between the instructions to build this Ark - for yourself in the

singular - and the instructions in Exodus that an Ark be made by the master craftsman Betzalel and all the people. What do we do with this? What meaning can we take for ourselves?

The *Or Ha'Chaim*, the eighteenth century Moroccan commentator, explains that there were two different Arks, just as there were two sets of tablets, the first set having been smashed. One was for the first set of tablets, which were not carved by a human apparently. These tablets hovered between heaven and earth, just out of reach, and for a while they needed no Ark, until they came crashing down. But, now you must 'make for yourself an Ark' for these second tablets, for they were carved by humans too. These tablets are ones that we must be able to relate to, so that each person can continue to approach and own the *Torah*.

We learn from the *Or Ha'Chaim* that we must make our Judaism accessible. We must each own it for ourselves. We are also reminded by the emphatic *Lecha*, 'for yourself', of the first major *Lecha* in the *Torah*. God said to Avram, *Lech Lecha*. You go. God in that moment insists that there is no Divine plan, no better world, without your agency. Rashi on that verse tells us that 'for yourself' means 'for your benefit'. Jewish mission begins with addressing what you care about.

Let us see, in those prominent *Lechas*, the invitation to make our Judaism our own, accessible, in part self-made; to bring our agency to our lives and to identify our own self-interest, paying attention to what we care about, building our life around it, and teasing out in conversation what others care about too.

Our *Torah*, our God, our Judaism, keep calling out to you, insisting that you, your life, and your benefit matter. We are not to be passive, but to be partners in Creation. The Divine once made the world, *v'ayaase chen* - and it was made so - and now each of us is to make for ourself, *Aseh Lecha*. We are not to surrender our Judaism or our lives to God, or even to community; for God demands our action, and community requires our activeness and needs deeply felt personal meaning.

Aseh Lecha. Make your Judaism for yourself. Own it. Judaism is not a

spectator sport. Learn and do something within it. Learn to bless the *Torah*, or to read the *Torah*, or to lead a Service, or to interrogate our texts to make them your own. Make it for yourself with your hands, learning to dress and undress the Scroll, or to lift it, or to open the Ark - or to light candles at home. Make any teaching here your own by taking the time to think, what it could mean to you, what it could lead you to do.

Lech Lecha, go for yourself. Make your life your own. Know what you care about, reflect on this, and then make sure either to remind yourself why you're doing what you're doing, or do something different.

Hillel taught us, *If I am not for myself who will be for me, and if I'm only for myself who am I?* Both parts of that epigram are important.

Westminster Synagogue was founded more than sixty-five years ago as something of a 'do it yourself' community, with Rabbi Reinhart prizing active membership. I suppose I am now contributing to this tradition by taking a three months' Sabbatical! I genuinely believe that October-December will provide a wonderful opportunity for more people in our community to step up and lead than ever before. I am also proud that after my first four years as Rabbi of our community - time flies - we have more people reaching out to others, as part of our *Chesed* work, and more empowering learning happening in the community than ever before. I look forward to returning, having been inspired by learning in Jerusalem for three months, and you having been inspired in my absence, by the lay leadership.

Do it for yourself. Take a story too and make it your own, and I won't repeat that story of the storm too often, but I hope that you and I will hear the call frequently, to save yourself, to do this for yourself, to live a life that matters and is ultimately your own.

L'Shana Tovah.

Rabbi Benji Stanley

Artur Rubinstein (1887-1982)



By the time Artur Rubinstein was two years old he showed such a fascination for the piano, watching his sister at her lessons, that it was clear to his family that music was to be his love and his life. He was a child prodigy by the age of four, and is today recognised as one of the world's greatest pianists.

The Rubinstein family lived in the large Jewish community of Lodz, in Poland, and Artur was born there in 1887. His parents wished him to be called Leo, but his little brother, aged eight, insisted that his name should be Artur, as their neighbour's son Artur was a fine violinist and perhaps this new baby too would be a musician. In English-speaking countries he is often known as Arthur but he himself preferred the original Polish Artur.

The great Hungarian violinist, Joachim, was very impressed with the young boy's talent, and told his family, 'This boy may become a very great musician – he certainly has the talent for it. When the time comes for serious study, bring him to me, and I shall be glad to supervise his artistic education.' By the age of seven young Artur had performed in his first concert, playing pieces by Mozart, Schubert and Mendelssohn. Three years later he went to Berlin to take up his musical studies in earnest and Joachim saw to it that he was taken under the wing of the best of teachers, Karl Barth (a pupil of Liszt) for the piano, Max Bruch for harmony and Robert Kahn for composition.

Rubinstein made his European debut in Berlin at the age of thirteen. Europe at

that time was still considered to be the true home of most artistic endeavour and in 1904 Rubinstein moved to Paris, meeting some of the greatest musicians and composers of the time, including Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Jacques Thibaud and Paul Kochanski. At about this time he began to acquire his reputation as the foremost interpreter of the music of Chopin, which he attributed largely to the influence of Juliusz Wertheim, the Polish-Jewish pianist, conductor and composer.

In 1906 he went to America where he played (still only nineteen) with the Philadelphia Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. He received a cool reception because of his youth, and afterwards in Germany experienced a time of poverty and disillusionment, leading to an attempted suicide. Recovering his equilibrium, he went to London, where he found in Chelsea a circle of musical friends including Casals, Stravinsky, Monteux and others. He stayed in London during the first World War, and - a brilliant linguist, fluent in eight languages - served as a military interpreter, as well as playing for the British troops. From 1916 to 1918 he visited Spain and South America and created a sensation by introducing works by Manuel de Falla, Isaac Albéniz, and Enrique Granados, composers whose work was hardly known in Europe.



Rubinstein, though not a practising Jew, was proud of his race and his lineage, and upset by Germany's part in the war, refused to return or to play there again. During the twenties and thirties he led a somewhat dissolute life; he once said that he was reported to divide his time equally between wine, women and song. 'I deny

this categorically; ninety per cent of my interests were women!'. He did not let those interests interfere with his marriage. In 1932 he married Nela Mlynarska, a Polish ballerina. They had five children, and were famous for their extravagant entertaining; Nela published *Nela's Cookbook*, detailing the recipes used at her parties.

When Hitler came to power in the thirties, Rubinstein - an agnostic - was greatly troubled by the Jewish situation. He cancelled a tour in Italy, where he had been a great favourite of Mussolini, because of the anti-Jewish laws, and returned to Il Duce the Cross of Commander of the Crown of Italy with which he had been decorated. He announced that he would no longer appear with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra if it was conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler, who remained in Germany throughout the war and conducted a symphony for Hitler's birthday. Rubinstein lost several members of his family during the Holocaust.

He and his wife, a Catholic, were very proud of Israel, which they visited many times, giving concerts with the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra; he refused to take any payment for his performances there. Touring the State in 1952, he crushed his right hand in a bureau drawer, incapacitating his fourth finger, but he still continued with the exacting programme which had been arranged, refingering the pieces as he went along.

When the Frederick Mann Auditorium, Tel Aviv's splendid concert hall, was opened in 1957, he was one of the concert soloists and received the warmest ovation of any of the participating artists. With the proceeds of his concerts in Israel the Artur Rubinstein Chair of Musicology was established in 1963, with a foundation fund of over £10,000, at the Hebrew University, and in 1974 the Hebrew University conferred on him an honorary doctorate of philosophy.

In spite of making his home in America – he became an American citizen in 1946 – Rubinstein never lost his love for his native country. He gave a concert for the United Nations upon its inauguration, expressing his disappointment that

Poland was not a member. During that performance he seemed overcome by emotion, stopped playing, told the audience to stand, and played the Polish national anthem loudly and slowly, repeating the final part *fortissimo*. The audience gave him a great ovation.

Rubinstein came to London's Royal Festival Hall almost every year and his brilliance of execution was greatly admired by the concert-going public. In 1961 the Royal Philharmonic Society bestowed on him its Gold Medal, its highest honour. But by the age of eighty his eyesight was deteriorating and he was forced to retire. His last concert performance was at the Wigmore Hall in 1976, the venue of his first London concert nearly seventy years before.



Rubinstein died in his sleep at his home in Geneva on 20 December 1982, at the age of ninety-five. His remains were cremated. On the first anniversary of his death, an urn holding his ashes was buried in Jerusalem - as specified in his will - in a dedicated plot now known as 'Rubinstein Forest' overlooking the Jerusalem Forest. His enormous zest for life was part and parcel of his flamboyant character. He loved good food, expensive cigars and travel. His roving eye for the fair sex was part of his character. Although he remained married to Nela until she died, at the age of ninety he left her for Annabelle Whitestone, then just thirty-three.

Part of his genius was due to his remarkable memory, holding most of his vast repertoire in his mind, describing it as photographic. His ear for music was

also extraordinary, experiencing whole scores in his mind. 'At breakfast', he said, 'I might pass a Brahms symphony in my head. Then I am called to the phone and half an hour later I find it's been going on all the time and I'm in the third movement.' His friends liked to test him, asking him to play extracts from memory. Speaking of music he once explained that 'it is simply my life, music. I live it, breathe it, talk with it. It is like an arm, a leg, a part of me.'

He loved to tell stories about himself. One of his stories concerned the time he and Albert Einstein played a violin and piano sonata. The physicist missed a cue in one passage and came in four beats late. They started again, and once more Einstein missed the cue. Rubinstein turned to his partner in mock exasperation and exclaimed 'For God's sakes, professor, can't you even count up to four?'

Rubinstein was the author of two autobiographies which revealed much of his attitudes to life and to music. In his early years he seems to have practised little, but this changed when he married and had children, not wishing them to see him as anything but the greatest pianist. He decided to change his way of working, restudying his whole repertoire. 'At every concert,' he said, 'I leave a lot to the moment. I must have the unexpected, the



Nela Mlynarska



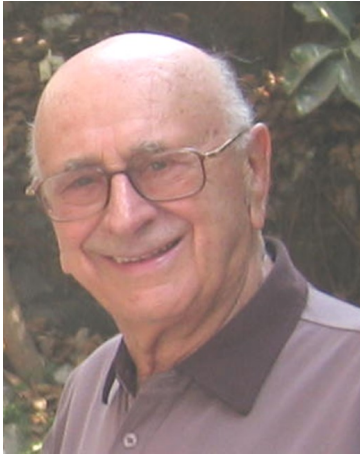
Cartoon by Hirschfeld

unforeseen. I want to risk, to dare. I want to be surprised by what comes out. I want to enjoy it more than the audience. That way the music can bloom anew. It's like making love. The act is always the same, but each time it's different.'

While he was in America, Rubinstein provided the piano soundtrack for several films, made many recordings and was the subject of a documentary *Artur Rubinstein - the Love of Life*. He will always be remembered for his interpretation of Chopin, possibly because of their common Polish origins and their love of life.

Philippa Bernard

A Message for All Time



In 1997, the late Ivor Connick, founder member and past chairman of the congregation gave this talk. Looking at the situations in the world today – particularly in Israel and in China – his words were strangely prescient.

We have recently returned from a trip abroad which encompassed Israel and Hong Kong; two countries currently in the news. We have visited Israel on innumerable occasions but this time we were there for a meeting of the leaders of the ORT Organisation from all over the World.

Perhaps I should explain that ORT provides technical and vocational training to enable disadvantaged people, mainly Jewish, both young and adult, to acquire a skill or skills which will free them from the poverty trap and the need for charitable assistance.

As we were there on business we saw comparatively little of that country, nevertheless we met many Israelis and we were saddened by what I regarded as their low morale.

In earlier times, whatever the difficulties, the Israelis have always seemed confident that what they were doing was right and also that they would succeed in overcoming any problems, whether relating to defence or the economy.

I do not for one moment wish to give the impression that all is gloom and despondency; that is not the case. It is rather that the optimistic feeling that Prime Minister Rabin would achieve a peace with Israel's neighbours has not been sustained under the new Government.

Furthermore, and we spoke with Israelis right across the religious spectrum, they are all concerned about the apparent power wielded by the bigots and the extremists. The voting system in Israel has always resulted in a minority government dependent for its existence upon small groups who have acquired an influence grossly disproportionate to their size.

We also learned for the first time of the prejudice which is resulting in immigrants from Ethiopia and elsewhere being regarded as second class citizens - creating yet another schism in the fabric of the country. Of course, part of the difficulty is that when they arrived, the Ethiopians, like all the other emergency intake, were allocated accommodation all over Israel. Whilst those placed in the central and southern regions settled in fairly quickly, those in the north suffered from the unaccustomed cold and moved, as quickly as they could, to be with their *Landsmen* - creating effective ghettos as they did so, with obvious consequences.

And then - we went to Hong Kong. We stayed there until a week before the Handover. Most people to whom we spoke believed that the Chinese would do nothing to alter their way of life. However, there was some sense of nervousness that the freedom of speech could be restricted and indeed we learned that some newspapers were already showing signs of self-censorship, although it was not suggested to us that the Chinese had directly or indirectly influenced this action.

It so happened that a few months previously, a friend of ours had invited us to a very small lunch in his home at which the then Chinese Ambassador was also present.

In answer to a direct question, he said that, to the Chinese, the question of democracy and universal suffrage was

very low on the scale of priorities. China's first and foremost task was to improve the economic situation of millions of Chinese. It would therefore be consistent with this view if the Democratic Assembly in Hong Kong featured only dimly in their plans.

Are the Chinese wrong? That there is a reasonable argument in their favour, at least on this narrow subject of priorities, is unfortunately shown in other parts of the world, too. The obvious and most direct comparison is the former Soviet Union and particularly Russia.

Their system of government was transformed almost overnight; the economic system was also changed but inadequate thought had been given to the subject, as a consequence of which, Russia now suffers substantial poverty, coupled with a growth of crime and the emergence of a small but very rich plutocracy. There must be many who wonder whether this increased democracy can be equated with the lower standard of living.

I can only be thankful that the society in which we live has been democratic for so many generations and does not have amongst its many problems the terrible dilemmas which exist in other parts of the Globe.

And so, if we look around the world, we encounter similar problems in so many places. Many of the countries in Africa which sought freedom have exchanged the yoke of colonialism for internal strife and starvation. Any of you who have been to South Africa will doubtless have shared with me an admiration for that country's beauty and a loathing of its policy of *apartheid*.

Apartheid was an abomination which had to be abolished but it seems to be the

fact that since its abolition, crime in South Africa has soared, white supremacy has been replaced by oppressive black supremacy and the economy is in turmoil. A friend of ours who is white and close to President Mandela remains very optimistic about the future of South Africa but even he recognises that it will take at least two generations before the economic benefits for which Mandela and his supporters fought can be realised. For other African countries, no such optimism is justified.

Do I have a solution? Of course, I do not. And I have not even mentioned the former Yugoslavia or Northern Ireland. I can only be thankful that the society in which we live has been democratic for so many generations and does not have amongst its many problems the terrible dilemmas which exist in other parts of the globe.

May we continue to regard as disasters, increases in taxation, the loss of a Test Match and a surfeit of rain. May we also bear in mind those less fortunate than ourselves and encourage the contribution, financial and otherwise, personally and nationally towards the betterment of the underprivileged and disenfranchised - wherever they may be.

A Personal Story

My interest in Judaism began in the winter of 2018. I find religion fascinating, interesting and intriguing. I often went to the other side of my home city Manchester, to the Orthodox area.

The long black coats of the *Chasids* contrasted with my very secular clothes. Some people may find the surroundings oppressive or too serious. I found it fascinating. Such devotion towards their religion endeared me to their quality of life. It was *Shabbat* although I probably didn't realise it.

Now, like many people, I dislike the way in which Orthodoxy and areas of Jewish life are depicted in the media. I wanted to know more. I wanted to get to know people, like the people in that area, who had such a rich culture and commitment to their faith.

When I moved to London in 2019, I lived near Stamford Hill. As a student at the time, I found the area to be of great interest. I was swept up in the excitement of this cosmopolitan city. I spent my days near Marble Arch, the locality of my university. It was close to the West London Synagogue, part of the Reform Movement.

I arranged to attend a *Shabbat* service at West London Synagogue.

This type of Judaism attracted me with its more modern approach to the Faith. However I was still distracted by the buzz of London. I did more research into Judaism; from Zionism to what Jewish people believe in and their different approaches to the religion.

I was later invited by a survivor to attend a Holocaust presentation, at my university. The speaker talked about his childhood struggles under the Nazi occupation of Hungary, how his mother was forced into a concentration camp and how it traumatised her. He discussed the

importance of life, its meaning and how we shouldn't take it for granted. That is when I knew that I wanted to convert to Judaism.

I arranged to attend a *Shabbat* service at West London Synagogue. I found the service odd; however, I felt extremely comfortable there. Soon after deciding that I wanted to convert, I had a dream. I was holding a brown book and walking in a Synagogue. The dream was powerful and it felt really spiritual. My life was changing; from one door to another, from one passage to another, from one world another.

When COVID-19 hit, everything slowed. West London Synagogue did not reply to my emails and I became lost. I then decided to contact Westminster Synagogue. It was a Synagogue that offered, and still does offer, an amazing course. I then moved to Golders Green. I experimented with occasionally wearing my *kippah*. Being a student has not been easy either. I felt uncomfortable to express myself as Jewish, or as a Jewish convert, to the other students. But I am independent and resilient. I will proudly continue with my Jewish conversion regardless of what people say.

I have temporarily moved back to Manchester and have tried as much as possible to involve myself in the community, especially the Orthodox community. I have gone to *Chabad* on some occasions. I find this type of Judaism extremely interesting. It provides me with more knowledge of the Faith. On a daily basis, I now connect with people from all walks of the community, from the secular to the ultra-religious. I cannot wait to see what else Judaism has in store for me.

George Wainwright

The Sicarii



The Jewish Sicarii, active during the Roman occupation of Israel, are considered by many to be the world's first political terrorists. The name derives from the dagger or *sica*, which they wore hidden beneath their cloaks and with which they wrought havoc on those they considered sympathetic to Rome. Most information about these murderous zealots derives from Josephus's account in *The Jewish War*. He describes them in much detail: 'their favourite trick was to mingle with festival crowds (in Jerusalem), concealing under their garments small daggers with which they stabbed their opponents. When their victims fell the assassins melted into the crowd and through their plausibility entirely defied detection.'

In addition to assassination, the Sicarii also resorted to the kidnapping of prominent Jews for purposes of political extortion. They began this practice when they seized Eleazar, secretary of the Temple captain and son of the current high priest, Ananias. They then offered his release in exchange for the freeing of their fellow Sicarii currently imprisoned by the Romans. Following Ananias' entreaties, the request was granted, but Josephus notes that 'this was the beginning of greater troubles.'

Encouraged by their success, the Sicarii continued to employ the abduction of prominent Jews as a means to secure the freedom of their associates from prison.

The tactics of the Sicarii were very violent, and calculated to stop any popular collaboration with Imperial officials through the application of terror. By targeting the Jewish social and religious elite, the Sicarii were carefully

selecting individuals who were of high symbolic and political value, in order to discourage pro-Roman cooperation from among the wider population. These actions served to further isolate Roman forces while simultaneously driving a wedge between the Jewish people and their traditional leadership, whom the Sicarii saw as generally corrupt. Perhaps most notable is the fact that these Sicarii attacks targeted only Jews.

This was the time of the first Roman-Jewish War which began in the year 66 CE, in the reign of Nero. The crisis escalated due to anti-taxation protests and attacks upon Roman citizens by the Jews. The Roman governor responded by plundering the Second Temple, claiming that the money was for the Emperor, and the next day launching a raid on the city, arresting numerous senior Jewish figures. This prompted a wider, large-scale rebellion and the Roman military garrison of Judaea was quickly overrun by the rebels.

The first victim of this tactic was the High Priest Jonathan, probably selected because he was perceived to be a high profile collaborator with the Romans; his death would serve as a stark warning against such behaviour to both the Jewish ruling elite and the common population. The pro-Roman king Herod Agrippa II, together with Roman officials, fled Jerusalem.

As it became clear the rebellion was getting out of control the Syrian army was brought in to restore order and quell the revolt. Despite initial advances and the conquest of Jaffa, the Syrian Legion was ambushed and defeated by Jewish rebels at the Battle of Beth Horon with 6,000 Romans massacred and the Legion's aquila (the eagle standard carried by Roman soldiers) lost. During the year 66, the Judaeian provisional government was formed in Jerusalem. Menahem ben Yehuda, leader of the Sicarii, attempted to take control of the city, inciting the inhabitants to rise up against their Roman conquerors, and willing to murder those who refused, but he failed. The remaining Sicarii were ejected from the city.

Menahem then took his troops to Masada where he attacked the Roman garrison and killed all 700 soldiers. He attacked some of the Hebrew villages nearby, including Ein Gedi, slaughtering many of the men and women whom he declared were sympathetic to the Romans. Forming an alliance with other Zealot parties, he returned to Jerusalem where he regained the city, only to see it fall to Rome in 70CE when the Temple was destroyed.



Masada

Menahem was succeeded as leader of the Sicarii by Eleazar ben Ya'ir. He and his men returned to Masada, where they fought the Romans' attempt to regain the hill fort. This they eventually did in 73CE, only to be confronted with the mass suicide of the Sicarii faction. According to Simon Schama's *The Story of the Jews*, Eleazar tells the besieged Jews, 'We were the very first that revolted from the Romans and we are the last that fight against them.' Schama goes on to explain that Josephus 'has scripted Eleazar to sound like a more virtuous performance of himself than the true assassin that he was. He was the last to die. Only an old woman and five children, who hid in a cave, survived to tell the story. It is a story that has passed down in Jewish folklore, but the man of the hour was not perhaps as heroic as he has been painted.'

A new group of Sicarii was founded in Alexandria, possibly from a few who had



*The Aquila -
the Eagle
standard of
the Roman
Legion*

escaped from Masada, or from those who had remained outside the fortress. Here the radical terrorists formed a similar subversive movement, murdering any who refused to rise up against their Roman masters. The Jewish elders in the city summoned a meeting of the Jewish inhabitants to urge them to counter the violence of the Sicarii by handing them over to the Roman governor. This they agreed to do, rounding up some six hundred, none of whom, including the children, agreed to acknowledge Caesar as their overlord. Most of the Sicarii were either tortured and killed outside Alexandria, or sent to Rome where they met a similar fate. The reputation of the Sicarii has varied between regarding them as patriots and saviours of their country or as violent terrorist assassins.

Many in authority refused to believe that the Sicarii existed.

In 1989 a new Jewish terrorist group sprang up in Israel, naming themselves Sicarii after the rebels of ancient times. Their aim was to instigate terrorist attacks on Palestinians and Jewish political and media figures sympathetic to Palestine. *The Jerusalem Post* called them 'the most sought-after group in Israel today'. Some identified them with the Kach party of Rabbi Meir Kahane.

A series of incidents included fires set at apartments owned by left-wing journalists, politicians and entertainers, as well as the torching of cars owned by left-wing public figures. A bomb exploded near the home of a surgeon who had transplanted the heart of an IDF soldier into an East Jerusalem Arab; and the uprooting of trees along the Avenue of Righteous Gentiles at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial. Other targets were the Hebrew University and members of the ultra-orthodox community. In a phone call to the press, the group claimed, 'We know that Peace Now is funded by Shimon Peres and functions under his direct instructions. We have information on all leftist organizations in Israel. We have the means to get to every single traitor.' Many in authority refused to believe that the Sicarii existed.

In spite of several arrests and police investigation, the group seem to have faded out, more concerned with defending Israel from attacks by outside forces, rather than targeting Jewish sources who disagreed with them.

In recent times the term 'Sicario', meaning a hired gunman or assassin, especially in Latin America, has been used as the name of an American television hero in a series of violent action films. An idealistic FBI agent, Sicario, is enlisted by a government task force to aid in the escalating war against drugs at the border area between the US and Mexico. Sicario is played by Josh Brolin.

Philippa Bernard

Two More Festivals

Coming at the conclusion of *Sukkot* are the two holidays of *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*.

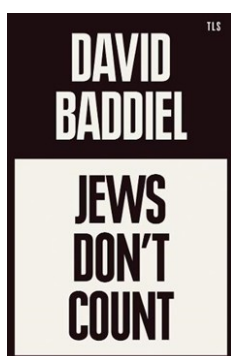
In Reform and Liberal Judaism, and in Israel, they are combined into one holiday, on the day after the conclusion of *Sukkot*. Among more traditional Jews they are observed separately on two consecutive days. *Shemini Atzeret* means the Eighth Day of Assembly, while *Simchat Torah* means Rejoicing in the *Torah*, or rejoicing in the Law.

Shemini Atzeret is mentioned in the Bible, but its exact function is unclear. In Second Temple times, it appears to have been a day devoted to the ritual cleansing of the altar in the Temple. With the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, this function became obsolete. Although it marks the beginning of the rainy season in Israel and, therefore includes the year's first prayer for rain, its lack of clear definition may have provided the impetus to celebrate it in conjunction with *Simchat Torah*, the Festival when we read the final portion of the Book of Deuteronomy, followed immediately by the beginning of the Book of Genesis. In this manner, the annual cycle of *Torah* readings continues unbroken. It is characterized by joyful dancing with the *Torah*.

Unlike many other holidays, the observance of *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* are centred in the Synagogue and the community. On *Shemini Atzeret*, some people still eat in the *Sukkah*. Beginning on *Simchat Torah* and lasting until *Pesach*, in some congregations a short prayer for rain is inserted into the second blessing of the *Amidah*.

While *Shemini Atzeret's* significance is somewhat unclear, *Simchat Torah* conveys a positive message about the centrality of the *Torah* in Jewish life. It is both a source of Jewish identity and a precious gift from God. *Simchat Torah* is the day on which the community gathers to come into direct contact with the *Torah* - and to express our joy in having received it.

Claire Connick



Jews Don't Count
by

David Baddiel

TLS/Harper
Collins

David Baddiel's 2020 book, *Jews Don't Count*, is an examination of why some minorities are deemed, by political activists on both the right and left, as less worthy of notice than others. He highlights what appears to be a racism hierarchy. For instance, offensive racist remarks contained in a book or play would not be broadcast by the BBC if such comments were derogatory to people of colour; but it seems to be acceptable for the media to permit such works as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Oliver Twist*, and the poetry of T S Eliot, even though they contain anti-Semitic tropes.

Most of us would accept anti-Semitism is racist, so why should Jews who are targeted by anti-Semites receive less media coverage than people of colour?

Baddiel suggests part of the answer is that Jews are perceived as white and privileged. That in itself is nonsense, since not all Jews are white; consider the Sephardim of North Africa and the Jews of Ethiopia (Beta Israel), for example. And the notion that Jews are predominantly privileged does not stand up to scrutiny; many Jews, living in the former Soviet Union, are among the poorest. Many of the ancestors of Anglo-Jewry came to Britain without a bean, ending up in sweat shops in run-down areas of our cities. They were far from privileged!

Another valid observation Baddiel makes concerns casting for acting roles. Non-Jews are more often cast to play the part of a Jew rather than someone who is Jewish; and that is not because there are too few able Jewish actors. Other

minorities are given an opportunity to play themselves, usually reflecting a disproportionate representation of the general population. Would it be acceptable for a white actor to play the role of a black personality? It would be regarded at best as mockery; at worst as racist. The issue of positive discrimination is touched on in Baddiel's essay. This has been used in the USA to improve the life chances of disadvantaged African Americans. There are critics of social intervention, but where it is employed it should recognise all under-privileged groups, and that includes poor whites whose children underperform academically compared with Britons of colour.

Baddiel's main thrust is that Jews are not treated the same as other minority groups. Their concerns are not taken seriously, and this is evidenced by the media playing down attacks on Jews. He gives, as an example of this dismissive attitude, the treatment of Luciana Berger who was subject to racial abuse during Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party. The confusion as to what counts as anti-Semitism and what is anti-Zionist is something Baddiel addresses. Defenders of those who viciously maligned Berger because of her support for Israel would argue it is perfectly acceptable to criticise Israel and its policies.

Adolf Hitler attacked the Jews as capitalist, but also because they were communists: what a strange combination!

Baddiel, who by his own admission, is not a Zionist, shows this is a convenient cover for those who are anti-Semitic. The role of the hard left in promoting both anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism should be viewed against the backdrop of Marxist dogma. The main driver of these extreme politics is to destroy Capitalism, an aim that the BLM also supports. Jews are seen

as capitalists, and are therefore the enemy of these revolutionary movements. The fact that many Jews have tended to ally themselves with socialism, including David Baddiel, doesn't seem to challenge the perverse logic of the hard left. Adolf Hitler attacked the Jews as capitalist, but also because they were communists: what a strange combination!

Finally, Baddiel comments on the grievance that Jews have not done enough to support the aspirations of people of colour. This is palpably untrue. Have these critics not read about the involvement of many Jews in the Civil Rights Movement in the USA? And by way of counter-argument, how many other minorities have spoken out against anti-Semitism. *Jews Don't Count* is a well-argued polemic, and should alert us to the danger of competing for top rank in being a victim of racial discrimination. Anti-Semitism should be regarded as any other form of racism, and the spurious arguments that Jews are less entitled to be heard when subject to abuse should be confronted.

Peter Beyfus

The Arch of Titus



Many historical accounts of the Jews under the Roman Empire are illustrated with extracts from the carvings on the great stone arch known as the Arch of Titus, standing proud on the *Summa Sacra Via*, the highest point of the *Sacra Via*, Rome's 'Sacred Way' that served as its main processional street.

The Jewish-Roman wars were a series of large-scale revolts by the Jews against the Roman Empire between 66 and 135 CE. Fought in Roman-controlled Judaea, the revolts resulted in the destruction of Jewish towns, the displacement of its people and the appropriation of land for Roman military use. Titus managed to breach Jerusalem, when the city's walls began to fall, ransacking and burning the entire city, including, in 70CE the Second Temple, remembered ever since by the Festival of *Tisha B'Av*.

The Roman leader, Titus, was commemorated for his famous victory by a vast arch showing in relief the triumph of his soldiers and the Jewish spoils they had torn from the Temple. The arch was built on the instructions of Titus's brother, Domitian, in 81CE, to celebrate the *consecratio*, or official deification of his deceased brother. It was constructed of marble and travertine, a type of limestone. It contained many attached columns, designed in Corinthian style, and above the main cornice is a central tablet inscribed *SENATUS POPULUSQUE ROMANUS DIVO TITO DIVI VESPASIANI FILIO VESPASIANO AUGUSTO* (*The Roman Senate and People, to Deified Titus, Vespasian Augustus, son of Deified Vespasian*).

The inside of the arch consists of two panels with reliefs, one showing the raid on the Second Temple in Jerusalem by the Roman army, with a grand procession bearing the Jewish treasures: the seven-branched *Menorah*, the silver trumpets and the table of the *shewbread*. The Roman attendants, wearing short tunics, carry a gold table, a lamp stand and a *Sefer Torah*. The two plaques they carry have the names of the cities they have conquered engraved upon them.

The second relief shows Titus in triumph riding in a chariot, beside the figures of the goddesses Victoria and Roma. Titus as *triumphator* is attended by various *genii* and lictors. The lictors, the emperor's attendants, can be seen holding a bundle of sticks called the *fascies*. The *fascies* were a symbol of the emperor's presence and power. At the top of the inside of the arch is a sculpted bust of Titus being elevated to heaven on the wings of an eagle, which carry *fascies*. A helmeted Amazonian, Valour, leads the *quadriga* or four-horsed chariot, which carries Titus.



Winged Victory crowns him with a laurel wreath. The juxtaposition is significant in that it is one of the first examples of divinities and humans being present in one scene together. Titus carries Jupiter's sceptre and a palm branch, while being crowned. The figures are designed to walk in the direction of the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill.

The arch represents the glory of the Roman Empire, with Titus being viewed as a god, worshipped for his successes. After the triumph, the treasures were placed in the Temple of Peace in the Forum of Vespasian.

Philippa Bernard

Amusement Arcade

Moshe was driving around in a panic because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, 'Lord, take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to *shul* every Shabbat and I will eat only Kosher food'.

Miraculously, a parking place appeared. Moshe looked up again and said, 'Never mind, I found one!'



Morris and his wife Esther went to the State fair every year, and every year Morris would say, 'Esther, I'd like to ride in that helicopter'. Esther always replied, 'I know Morris, but that helicopter ride is fifty dollars, and fifty dollars is fifty dollars'. One year, Esther and Morris went to the fair, and Morris said, 'Esther, I'm eighty-five years old. If I don't ride that helicopter today, I might never get another chance'. To this, Esther replied, 'Morris that helicopter ride is fifty dollars, and fifty dollars is fifty dollars'. The pilot overheard the couple and said, 'Folks, I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don't say a word I won't charge you a penny! But if you say one word it's fifty dollars'. Morris and Esther agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy manoeuvres, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word. When they landed, the pilot turned to Morris and said, 'By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed!' Morris replied, 'Well, to tell you the truth, I almost said something when Esther fell out, but you know, fifty dollars is fifty dollars!'



Some Jewish Chefs



Most of our Festivals centre on food; Friday night has always been a reason for the family to eat together. The image of the Jewish mother insisting that her family eat is universal. Small wonder then, that many famous cooks have been - and still are - Jewish.

Possibly the most well-known of these was Florence Greenberg, whose cookery book was in almost every Ashkenazi home in England, and many others followed her; Claudia Roden, Evelyn Rose, Nigella Lawson to name just three. However, it now appears that there are many *male* Jewish chefs whose names are becoming well-known and whose recipes we are enjoying.



Early on, of course, there was **Clement Freud** (1924- 2009). One of Britain's first 'celebrity chefs', he worked at the Dorchester Hotel, and went on to run his own restaurant in Sloane Square at a relatively young age. He was born Clemens Rafael Freud in Berlin, the son of architect Ernst L. Freud and Lucie *née* Brasch. He was the grandson of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and the brother of artist Lucian Freud. His family fled to Britain from Nazi Germany and his forenames were anglicised to Clement Raphael. Clement left school at the age of sixteen and was apprenticed as a cook at the Dorchester Hotel. He was naturalised as a British subject on 4 September 1939, one day after the outbreak of World War II. Towards the end of the War he was

called up, serving in the Royal Ulster Rifles and finishing up, thanks to his fluency in German, as a liaison officer at the Nuremberg trials. After the war he returned to catering, opening the Royal Court Theatre Club, above the Chelsea Theatre. A lugubrious man of many parts, he soon gave up cooking and turned to restaurant criticism. He then became much more well-known as a Liberal Member of Parliament, which he was from 1973 to 1987. He died on April 15, 2009, aged eighty-four.



Today, a chef worth mentioning is **Heston Blumenthal**. Heston Marc Blumenthal was born in Shepherd's Bush, London, on 27 May 1966, to a Jewish father born in Southern Rhodesia and an English mother who converted to Judaism. Blumenthal has always said that he considers himself to be Jewish. His surname comes from a great-grandfather from Latvia and means 'flowered valley' (or 'bloom-dale'), in German.

His interest in cooking began at the age of sixteen on a family holiday in Provence, France, when he was taken to the three-Michelin-starred restaurant *L'Oustau de Baumannière*. He was inspired by the quality of the food and 'the whole multi-sensory experience: the sound of fountains and cicadas, the heady smell of lavender, the sight of the waiters carving lamb at the table'. When he left school at eighteen, Blumenthal began an apprenticeship at Raymond Blanc's *Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons* - but left after a week's probation.

Over the next ten years he worked in a series of jobs during the day, teaching himself the French classical repertoire in the evenings. A pivotal moment came when reading *On Food and Cooking: the Science and Lore of the Kitchen* by Harold McGee in the mid-1980s. This challenged

kitchen practices such as searing meat to seal in the juices, and it encouraged Heston to adopt a totally different attitude towards cuisine that at its most basic boiled down to: question everything. He became famous for producing extremely unusual dishes at his restaurant in Bray, some of which require courage to consider eating! In 1995, Blumenthal bought a run-down pub there, called *The Ringers* and re-opened it as *The Fat Duck*. He later acquired *The Hinds Head*, also in Bray, in 2004. In January 2011, Blumenthal opened his first restaurant outside Bray, *Dinner by Heston Blumenthal*, at the *Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park* in London.

There has also been an explosion of Middle Eastern restaurants, many of them introduced by Israelis. The food is much lighter than Ashkenazi recipes - or indeed the sort of meals served at a typical English Sunday lunch.



The Israeli chef **Yotam Ottolenghi** has achieved rapid fame. He specialises in Israeli dishes and the abundant use of fresh vegetables. He is the co-owner of six delis and restaurants in London, as well as being the author of several bestselling cookbooks, including *Ottolenghi*, *Plenty*, *Jerusalem* and *SIMPLY*. Ottolenghi's father, who died recently, was a chemistry professor at Hebrew University, and his mother is a high school principal. He is of Italian-Jewish and German-Jewish descent, and often spent his childhood summers in Italy, which no doubt influenced many of his recipes. Ottolenghi is an Italian name, an Italianised form of Ettlingen, a town in Baden-Württemberg from where Jews were expelled in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; many of them settled in Northern Italy. Ottolenghi was conscripted into the Israel

Defence Forces in 1989, serving three years in IDF intelligence headquarters. A bright and extremely gifted man, he then studied at the Adi Lautman Interdisciplinary Programme for Outstanding Students at Tel Aviv University, where in 1997, he gained a combined Bachelor's and Master's degree in comparative literature. While working on his thesis, Ottolenghi served as a night copy editor for *Haaretz*.

In 1997, as a total change of career, he served as a pastry chef at three London restaurants: the *Capital Restaurant*, *Kensington Place*, and *Launceston Place* in Kensington New Town. In 1999, he became head pastry chef at the *Baker and Spice* pastry shop, where he met the Palestinian chef **Sami Tamimi**, who grew up in Jerusalem's Old City. Ottolenghi and Tamimi bonded, as they said, over a joint 'incomprehension of traditional English food'.

In 2002, the duo (in collaboration with Noam Bar) founded the delicatessen *Ottolenghi* in Notting Hill. This quickly gained a cult following, due to its inventive dishes, characterised by the accent on fresh vegetables, on unorthodox flavour combinations, and on the abundance of Middle Eastern ingredients such as rose water, za'atar, and pomegranate molasses. When asked to explain his cooking philosophy, Ottolenghi said, 'I want drama in the mouth'. The Ottolenghi brand has since expanded to include two more delis (in Kensington and Belgravia), a formal restaurant in Islington, a brasserie named *NOPI* in Soho, and a vegetable-centred restaurant, *Rovi*, which opened in Fitzrovia in June 2018. In 2014, the *London Evening Standard* remarked that Ottolenghi had 'radically rewritten the way Londoners cook and eat', and *Bon Appétit* wrote that he had 'made the world love vegetables'.

Two of Ottolenghi's disciples are **Itamar Srulovich and Eran Tibi**. **Itamar Srulovich** was born in Jerusalem, His earliest memories are of time spent around his grandmother's kitchen table with his family, feasting on home-cooked Egyptian and Yemeni cuisine. Itamar moved to Tel Aviv in 1999 and joined an Israeli bistro, working his way up from kitchen porter to Chef. In



2002, Itamar went on to an Italian restaurant in Herzliya, where he spent a year as a chef on the pasta team, and where he also met Sarit Packer (pictured above) whom he married. Itamar came to London in 2005 with Sarit and became Chef de Partie at the *OXO Tower*. In 2006 he became Head Chef at *Ottolenghi Notting Hill*, and two years later he went to *Ottolenghi Belgravia*. After another two years as Head Chef there, Itamar left to fulfil his dream of opening a restaurant. He and his wife opened *Honey & Co* in June 2012 in Warren Street, Fitzrovia. They have since added a deli, and a grill house to their collection and have written several cookbooks – one of which won the Sunday Times Food Book of the Year. They also write a weekly recipe column for *FT Weekend Magazine*.



Israeli-born Eran Tibi is another of today's exciting new Chefs. Eran's earliest memories revolve around food – trimming okra tips with his mother, and helping his father in the family bakery. When his father's bakery closed after eighteen years he went to university and studied engineering. However, when he turned thirty, he made the decision to take a year out to pursue what he realised had been his dream career all along. Eran decided to undertake formal training at *Le Cordon Bleu* London. Having gained his diploma Eran secured work under Sami Tamimi at *Ottolenghi* where he spent four years enriching his knowledge of Middle Eastern cuisine. From there he went to work at another of

Ottolenghi's restaurants, *NOPI*, and then helped to set up *Made in Camden* at the Roundhouse.

Aviv Lavi was born and raised on a kibbutz in the Hefer Valley, near Netanya. His food career began, aged fourteen, when he was working as a kitchen porter in what he describes as a 'local gas station'. He worked there during the school holidays as well as in the kibbutz dining room. He is a keen drummer and could possibly have had a career in the music industry - but cooking won the day.



He spent some time training in classical French cuisine at a French school in Israel, but he said 'I was cooking for my family from the age of ten. I learned from my Libyan grandfather, as well as a few of the old ladies on the kibbutz.' Another influence was the time spent training in classical French cuisine. But, he says, 'It's really boring to learn how to make six sauces with flour. I'm not interested in that and it's not sexy, so I went to work in another restaurant, which gave me more experience and more technique.'

Aviv says that Heston Blumenthal, Marco Pierre White and Gordon Ramsay are some of the biggest inspirations for chefs in Israel.

Now that he is in London, he states that he wants to put Middle Eastern food on the map. He likes to acknowledge that his dishes are influenced by Arab countries and Arab neighbours. 'I think it is only fair that the local Jewish community should be able to do that, as well. I'm not trying to create any kind of political statement in any way, but I am acknowledging that most of the cuisine in Israel is from Arabic countries', he explains.

Claire Connick

The Countess of Waldegrave (1821-1879)



Frances Elizabeth Anne Braham was born on 4th January 1821. Her father was the Jewish tenor, John Braham, who performed in all the main theatres and opera houses of Europe and America. Born in London in 1771, his long career led him to become one of Europe's leading opera stars. He also wrote several songs, among which *The Death of Nelson* stands out.

One summer evening in 1838, Frances and her parents were invited to a dinner party at Strawberry Hill House, the home of the 6th Earl Waldegrave, John James Henry, and his family. In 1747, Horace Walpole had discovered and purchased 'Chopp'd Straw Hall', one of the last remaining sites available on the banks of the Thames in fashionable Twickenham. He set about transforming what was then a couple of cottages into his vision of a 'little Gothic castle' with pinnacles, battlements and a round tower. He renamed it Strawberry Hill House and he filled it with a collection of treasures.

Frances was a strikingly beautiful seventeen-year-old and as this was her first visit to Strawberry Hill, she set out to explore the house. She was seen by the Earl's two sons, John James and George both of whom were very much attracted to her. By the end of the evening, John had declared his love for her. Despite her mother's objections Frances and John were married on 25th May 1839.

When the 6th Earl died, George inherited

the title and the house. At George's insistence, the young couple stayed for long periods at Strawberry Hill and were told to treat the house as their own. Both brothers were thoroughly dissolute but Frances was a very caring wife and sister-in-law. However, John was an epileptic and his fits grew progressively worse. He died within a year of being married and Frances returned to her family in London.

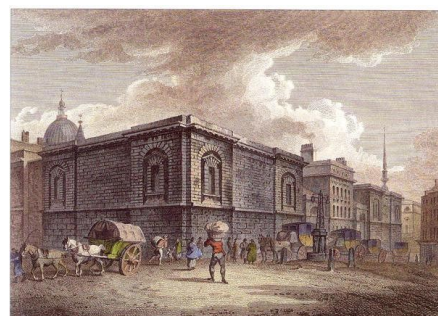
During Derby week 1840, George, the 7th Earl, together with an equally dissolute friend - one Captain Duff - was arrested for being drunk and disorderly and for assaulting a policeman. Out on bail, George went to see Frances and express his profound love for her. He declared that he had found a way around the Marriage Act of 1835 which prevented a man from marrying the spouse of his deceased brother and he proposed to her immediately. Taken completely by surprise, Frances accepted and they were married in Edinburgh on 28th September 1840. The infamous Captain Duff was best man at the wedding – and as might have been expected, was totally inebriated!



George, 7th Earl Waldegrave, 1842 Artist unknown

George and Captain Duff appeared at the Queen's Bench on 3rd May 1841 and pleaded guilty to the charges. They were sentenced to six months' imprisonment in Newgate and fined £200 and £20 respectively. Showing an amazing degree of loyalty, Frances insisted on joining her husband in jail for the period of his sentence. Despite being imprisoned, they

led a very social life and surprisingly, they hosted many dinner parties. However, all through this period their financial problems were mounting; the estates were not being properly managed and some were not even paying for themselves. This growing stress caused Frances to miscarry and thereafter she was never able to have children.



Newgate Prison in the 1800s. It was on the site of the present Old Bailey

When they left Newgate, Waldegrave, who had been drinking excessively, was given to bouts of bad temper. He decided to sell Walpole's lifelong collection of treasures in order to pay off his enormous debts. So, the Great Sale of 1842 commenced and it lasted for thirty-two days. Walpole's works were disposed of to the far corners of the United Kingdom. Whilst the sale was on, Frances and George slipped away to the Continent and for some strange reason, they took out Prussian citizenship and went through another marriage service on 4th June 1844.

On returning to England, they went to their Somerset home because Strawberry Hill where Frances had wanted to live quietly with her husband, had been stripped of its furniture and furnishings. George however wanted to show off his Countess to the London Season and began a round of socialising which enabled his excessive drinking. He was taken ill in February 1845 and Frances insisted on nursing him herself. George died of cirrhosis of the liver on 28th September 1846.

Frances, now Countess Waldegrave, twice widowed and only twenty-five years of age, found herself extremely

wealthy but entirely alone. Then she re-met an old friend of her father's, George Granville Harcourt, a widower of sixty-one and son of the Archbishop of York. Harcourt fell in love with her and, despite the thirty-six-year age gap, he begged her to marry him. Frances had wanted to spend a year of widowhood deciding on her future plans, but she agreed to his request and they were married by special licence on 30th September 1847.

Under Harcourt's careful guidance, Frances was introduced to the British political scene. She blossomed as a hostess in Harcourt's home in Nuneham and caught the eye of Liberal hopeful, Chichester Fortescue, an old friend of Harcourt's. As Harcourt's influence waned, Frances set about restoring Strawberry Hill which had remained empty since the Great Sale. She spent a huge amount of money on the project and by the time Harcourt died in 1861, Strawberry Hill was the epicentre of Liberal politics in the country.



Strawberry Hill House

Lord John Russell, Gladstone and Disraeli were all regular visitors to Strawberry Hill and an invitation to visit there was the most coveted prize of the season. Fortescue wasted no time in proposing to Frances in a thirteen-page letter! He had a rival in the Duke of Newcastle and was anxious to win Frances for himself. She wanted to allow a respectable year of mourning to pass and so she became secretly engaged to Fortescue whom she eventually married on 20th January 1863.

The social and political whirl of 1863 – 1866 culminated with Fortescue, now a Privy Councillor, being appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland and moving out to



Chichester Fortescue

Dublin with Frances. On the occasion of a visit to the theatre, a wag from the audience shouted 'And would your ladyship be after informing us, which of your four husbands do ye like the best?' With an exquisite and inimitable turn of her head, she looked at the questioner and, without a moment's hesitation, her clear, lovely voice flashed back: 'The Irishman, of course'. This brought the house down and overnight Frances was the Queen of Dublin.

Famous for marrying four times and saving Strawberry Hill House from ruin, Lady Waldegrave was as empowered as she was eccentric - a worthy successor to Horace Walpole's legacy.

At last, with a husband of her own age, Frances enjoyed many happy years with Fortescue until she was struck down 'with rheumatic pains in my chest, arms and back' and she died in the arms of Fortescue on 5th July 1879.

Claire Connick



Sayings of the Rabbis

A bird that you set free may be caught again, but a word that escapes your lips will not return.

A mother understands what a child does not say.

A pessimist, confronted with two bad choices, chooses both.

As he thinks in his heart, so he is.

As you teach, you learn.

Do not be wise in words - be wise in deeds.

Don't look for more honour than your learning merits.

First mend yourself, and then mend others.

If charity cost nothing, the world would be full of philanthropists.

Make sure to be in with your equals if you're going to fall out with your superiors.

Not to have felt pain is not to have been human.

What you don't see with your eyes, don't invent with your mouth.

Rejoice not at thine enemy's fall - but don't rush to pick him up either.



Jewish Women Refugees



Bloomsbury House, London

In July 1938 the following advertisement appeared in the Situations Vacant columns of *The Times*: ‘Infant nurse and kindergarten teacher, knowledge of medicine, diet cook, Jewish, excellent references, seeks position...’ It was not the only one. Many were heart-breaking and desperate. Thousands of Jews, mostly from Germany and Austria, were hoping to get to England by taking on work in domestic service, one of the few possible ways of obtaining a visa. Many were young, often women, some were highly qualified lawyers or academics or wealthy entrepreneurs. But they had one thing in common, the need to escape from Nazi control.

Britain was doing its best to offer sanctuary to these desperate refugees, and the employment situation in this country meant that domestic service was almost the only source where workers were needed. Shop workers were invariably denied admission to Britain as their work was considered in direct competition with native British labour. Merchants were actively discouraged from trading in Britain unless it could be proved that their business would benefit British trade. The Home Office was determined not to allow the British labour market to be jeopardised, even for a deserving cause. So opportunities for the immigration of refugees during the early to mid-thirties were limited. Menial work was not to the taste of English men and women. Many were being called up and prosperous

households were not used to looking after themselves and their children. By the end of the first year of the war the government had issued more than 20,000 visas for domestic workers, mostly women. Not all identified themselves as Jewish, fearing they might receive similar treatment to that they had found in their own country. But the Jewish community here quickly understood how they could help and set up a network of assistance, run by the Central British Fund - the Refugee Committee - based originally at Woburn House in Bloomsbury, the headquarters of the Board of Deputies.

After the terrible events of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, the applications to come to England enormously increased. By December Woburn House was receiving around 1,500 letters and 1,000 people calling in person at the offices each day. By the end of March this had risen to 17,000 letters and around 6,000 personal interviews per week. By July 1939, over 400 staff were receiving 21,000 letters a week and the organisation had to move to larger premises at nearby Bloomsbury House.

The Home Office was determined not to allow the British labour market to be jeopardised

The young women who applied for domestic service jobs often suffered terribly from the cold, the unaccustomed labour and sometimes from the way they were treated. A pamphlet was issued called *Maid and Mistress* to try to explain how they might acclimatise themselves to their new surroundings. It advised, ‘English houses are often colder than continental ones and you must expect to guard against the cold by wearing thick underclothes and woollen indoor coats.’ To would-be employers it warned, ‘Many of these girls are trying to forget their terrible experiences before they found shelter in this country.’ It

was not always successful in offering the girls comfort or kindness or a happy home.

Some of the young women were mothers of children sent to England on the *Kindertransport*. But although they were now in the same free country they could seldom live together. The mothers were here only because they had agreed to domestic work, while the children were taken off to strange families and sent to schools where they attended incomprehensible lessons.

One young Viennese girl wrote later of her experiences, ‘My first job in England was very, very hard. I had to work from 8 am to 11 pm with an hour’s break, cleaning and scrubbing and looking after the house, with half a day off a week. After a few weeks I complained, saying it’s a bit too hard. The lady of the house said, “If it’s too much for you, I’ll send you back to Hitler.”’

Edith Argy, whose memories of that time have been placed on record, felt so unhappy that she tried to gas herself. ‘I couldn’t take being on my own there as a domestic. I honestly don’t know if I was trying to do it, or if I was hoping I’d be found. I was really desperate.’ She did eventually marry in Australia and finally settled back in London. Another girl from Leipzig, remembered, ‘I cursed these rich people who didn’t seem to have a shred of feeling or understanding for a single and unhappy woman.’ However, many girls were treated kindly and with sympathy, taken into families and offered the warmth and affection they so desperately needed.

One of those who found such domestic work was Cecilia Cassell, the wife of Rabbi Curtis Cassell, later the second minister of the West London Synagogue and a member of Westminster Synagogue.

The Cassells had left Germany hoping to join some of their family in Australia, but once in Britain they were refused a passage and decided to remain in England. An elegant woman, Cecilia was not afraid to get her hands dirty and with a small baby at her side took a post as a maid-of-all work, until, with the help of Rabbi Harold Reinhart, Curtis

was offered a post as Minister of a synagogue in Scotland, later moving to London.



Cecilia Cassell

Some of the refugees were married couples, willing to take on anything from butlers/cooks to nannies/gardeners, often far below their previous places in the social scale. One advertisement read, 'Young married couple (Jewish) stock farmer, landed proprietor, driver. Wife good cook. Seeking position as servants...'. The immigrants had to prove they would not be a burden on the state, not easy when they had often fled leaving all their possessions, papers and valuables behind. Unaware perhaps that Britain had no racial definitions like those of the Reich, some emphasized that one parent was Christian, or that they were 'Aryan', avoiding the word 'Jewish'.

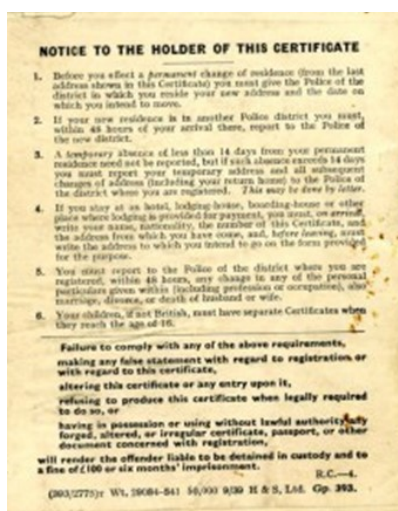
Some of the women arriving in England offered themselves as nurses, another profession who could obtain visas. Even qualified nurses were sometimes in difficulties over language problems and some of their patients refused to be treated by 'the enemy'. However those



Refugees receiving help at the Central British Fund Offices

who did succeed in obtaining posts were of the greatest help in British hospitals, particularly once the war was under way and wounded soldiers began returning here for treatment. Again those young women who were billeted out often found themselves cold and hungry; they were better off lodged in hospital buildings where they could be warmer and better cared for.

The more fortunate arrivals were taken under the wing of the Society of Friends, the Quakers, who, while unwilling to fight, were kind and helpful to those coming here, alone and frightened. They would meet them off the trains, encouraging them to find homes and jobs and befriending them wherever they could.



Certificate of Enemy Alien Registration

Not all British commentators were so generous. The *Daily Express* on March 23rd, 1938, wrote, 'Once it was known that Britain offered sanctuary to all who cared to come, the floodgates would be opened and we should be inundated by thousands seeking a home.'

Another source of help for refugees from Europe was the Kitchener Camp Rescue, a British-run operation designed to offer temporary refuge to Jewish men arrested and sent to concentration camps after *Kristallnacht*. The plan was for the men in Kitchener Camp to travel on to other countries once they had obtained visas, with priority given to those expected to

leave within a year. The camp was established at a former Army camp in Richborough, on the outskirts of Sandwich in Kent. The Central British Fund for German Jewry, now known as World Jewish Relief, oversaw the transport, maintenance and general care of the men along with, for some, their wives and children. Altogether, the lives of some 4,000 refugees were saved by the Kitchener Camp rescue. Others were interned as enemy aliens, and some endured unwanted sexual advances, or suffered physical and emotional breakdowns.

Their reflections on their lives as servants in Jewish and non-Jewish homes, their adaptation to a new language, their adjustments to the hierarchies of class and labour, their experiences during the war and their relationships with the British people and their fellow refugees, offer important insights into the economic, social and cultural changes taking place in Britain in the mid-twentieth century.

Philippa Bernard

The Library of Alexandria



Ruins of the Library of Alexandria

Who is the mightiest of them all? was the question put to three of the King's guard, the winner to receive riches and sit at the King's side. *Wine*, said one, *because it reduces the mind of both king and fatherless child to the same states of mirth, ire and forgetfulness.* The king, said another. *Do not men rule over sea and land and all things in them? Yet the king has dominion over them.* Women, said Zerubbabel, *for women bear kings and men and nourish them. Do not all love a woman which is comely in favour and beauty? Do they not gape, and even with open mouth fix their eyes fast on her; and have not all men more desire unto her than unto silver or gold, or any goodly thing whatsoever?* He even spoke of how the king gazed at his favourite concubine, laughing when she laughed.

Esdras Book 1 chapter 4 tells us that the King and the princes looked at one another. Awarded anything he desired, Zerubbabel called upon the King to honour his promise, to restore the Jews to Jerusalem, to rebuild the temple and to return its artefacts - which he did..

The book is not in the Jewish canon. It was probably composed in Greek by an Egyptian Jew in the city of Alexandria, in the first or second century BCE, a century after the Septuagint - the Greek version of the Old Testament. The location is no surprise: whether by forced resettlement or migration to the burgeoning Greek port exporting Nile grain to the Empire, with its banking system and monetarised economy, the Alexandrian community rapidly became the largest centre of Hellenic Jewry in the known world.

Under the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (281-246 BCE), when the use of locks finally permitted the Canal of the Pharaohs to link the Nile and the Red Sea, even more East-West commerce poured through the city and Jewry is estimated to have reached forty percent of the 300,000 population, occupying two of the five city quarters, according to Josephus. The Library, founded in about 306 BCE, became the place of transcription of works of all cultures, the Septuagint at the Jewish forefront.

Philadelphus financed this Greek translation of the Old Testament as part of his project to collect all the knowledge of the world. The story of *Torah* translation by six scholars from each Hebrew tribe, living and working for seventy days in separate rooms in the Library but miraculously producing identical versions, comes to us from the letter of Aristaeus, a court official, to his brother Philocrates. In any case, the Septuagint must have been a response to the needs of a Jewish population numbering millions in Alexandria, Cyrenia, Antioch and Tiberias, some of the largest communities, but no longer speaking Hebrew or Aramaic, augmented by fellow travellers respecting moral monotheism but not the rigours of Mosaic law.

Hellenic Jews were more integrated into imperial life than temple-centred Jews of Judaea, and many sought Greek citizenship which was rarely granted. Notwithstanding their slaughter in the Jewish-Roman Wars, they provided fertile ground for the spread of Christianity based on the Septuagint.

The pantheon lent itself to amalgamation by the union of foreign gods with a Greek equivalent. The same universalism is apparent in the putative letter-writer, Aristaeus of Marmara. He and the letter are fake, created by a Jewish apologist perhaps a century after its date, to marry Judaism and Greek civilisation. The fanciful account includes the interesting description of the Library and the Mouseion with its ten halls, marble double colonnades, scriptorium, dining room and lodgings for scholars in residence. The library 'borrowed' works for copying, especially from visiting ships,

even returning copies in place of the originals, a trick played on the Lyceum for its classic plays, forfeiting an immense collateral of silver. The older the manuscript, the more likely it was authentic, and the Library was devoted to establishing original texts by acquisition and scholarship. Some scrolls were housed in the physically separate Serapeion, possibly duplicates for lending, others on the dockside before cataloguing; estimates of the total, range from 40,000 to over 700,000.

Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh, which we featured in the January 2019 issue of the *Quarterly*, is said to have inspired Alexander the Great to collect works from all his conquests under one roof - an ambition which passed on his death in 323 BCE to Ptolemy I. By that time, Alexander had carried classical Greek precepts, hitherto ideologically limited to their own city-states, across the Middle East and Central Asia as far as the Indus. Subsequently, scholarly debate flourished between universities throughout the empires which followed. Leading examples were the Royal Library in Seleucid Antioch commissioned in about 221 BCE; and the Pergamum Library in Asia Minor set up in the second century BCE, which rivalled Alexandria for acquisitions to such an extent that the latter banned export of papyrus to them, indirectly promoting parchment.



Scroll from the Library

Despite the scholars, internal tensions grew in Alexandria, a Greek city in Egypt - the citizens were Greeks, Jews lobbied for full citizenship without success, while the Egyptians held little wealth or sway.

Upper Egypt began to slip out of Ptolemaic control, while drawn-out conflict with the Seleucids over Judea and Syria destabilised the regime.

In 145 BCE, Ptolemy VIII expelled all foreign scholars including Aristarchus, who set up schools elsewhere or joined rivals, and appointed a palace guard as chief librarian. Library fortunes further diminished when Rome's victory over Cleopatra in 31 BCE put an end to the Ptolemaic dynasty. Rome did not finance the Library. It brought in a new level of anti-Semitism, culminating in 38 CE with the Alexandrian Pogrom led by the governor Flaccus. Many Jews fled the country.

With little Hebrew but an excellent Greek education, he was yet a committed Jew

Philo Judaeus (Jedediah Hacoheh) was the dominant Alexandrian intellectual from the turn of the millennium to his death in about 50 CE. His allegorical interpretations of Jewish scriptures sought to show correspondence with such Greek concepts as the Stoics' *eudaimonia* (happiness or blessedness as rational social beings). With little Hebrew but an excellent Greek education, he was yet a committed Jew. The rabbis, about whom he was not flattering 'full of Sybaritic profligacy and licentiousness to their everlasting shame' rejected his exegesis, but his influence on the Christian world was profound.

Philo's father was made a citizen of Rome, one of his brothers was Alexander the Alabarch (tax collector) but the Alabarch's son was apostate Tiberius, who became Governor of Judaea. When in 66 CE, the Alexandrian Jews revolted, he led or advised on their suppression which cost 50,000 Jewish lives. Josephus estimates all Egyptian Jewry at one million by then, but this was the start of the Jewish Wars which continued into the next century and caused massive depopulation of Judaea, Cyrenaica and other Middle Eastern centres of Jewry.



Significant Jewish involvement with the Library came to an end with Philo, and the attempts to integrate Jewish and Hellenic thought transferred to the Christian world.

The Library was not destroyed by Caesar in 48 BCE. Rather it suffered set-backs but continued in one form or other until the city was destroyed in the seventh century. Caesar found himself embroiled in the civil war between Egyptians and the Greeks under Ptolemy XIII, and set fire to the ships in the harbour as a successful escape tactic. Caesar and many others wrote of the fire spreading to the dockside (Livy, his contemporary, claimed that 40,000 scrolls were burnt). However, the Serapeion was unaffected, and Strabo, while regretting the loss, was able to describe the Mouseion during his years in the city some decades later. Plutarch reports that Mark Anthony gave 200,000 scrolls from Pergamum to Cleopatra to re-stock the Library, some returned by Augustus.

Claudius built an extension in the middle of the first century CE. The whole area of the Brucheion where the Mouseion and Library were located, was destroyed by Aurelian in 271 CE trying to recapture the city from the Palmyrenes, finished off by Diocletian's destruction in 297 CE, but the Serapeion was not damaged and may have continued as the site of the Library. We have descriptions of its book store-rooms from 391 CE, but in the same year, Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria caused conflict with pagan Egyptians by organising public mockery of ancient disinterred symbols, which led to the destruction of the Serapeion and construction of a church.

libraries proliferated in Alexandria, most notable being that of Neoplatonist Hypatia in the fourth and fifth centuries CE, and rescued scrolls may have been held in many places. These ended definitively with the Muslim destruction of the city in 642 CE. Calif Omar is accredited with the comment, on hearing of a great library, that books contradicting the Koran were to be destroyed, and those agreeing were superfluous. This suggests that the library's treasure of scrolls still existed somewhere until then.

Jonathan Footerman

However, other schools and public

Emanuel (Manny) Shinwell (1884-1986)



An article in the Parliamentary Archives on Manny Shinwell (as he was always known) makes the point that ‘You know you’ve made it when you are asked to appear on *Desert Island Discs*’. Shinwell did exactly that in 1978 and presenter Roy Plomley couldn’t get a word in edgeways as Shinwell, with his trademark *chutzpah*, told the story of a Parliamentary career that began fifty years earlier.

Manny was born in Spitalfields in 1884, one of thirteen children. His father, Samuel, a tailor, had come over from Poland with his wife Rosetta and set up a small tailoring business in the East End. Rosetta was a cook, and a few years later the family moved to Glasgow. Here Manny spent much of his time in the Public Library and at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, leaving school at the age of eleven to be apprenticed as a tailor. In his spare time he took up boxing, and helped to manage a local football team.

Shinwell’s political career started when he was a very young man. In 1903, still only nineteen, he became active in the Amalgamated Union of Clothiers’ Operatives, and joined the Glasgow Trades Council in 1906 as a delegate of that Union. In the same year he married Fay (Fanny) Freeman with whom he had two sons and a daughter. In May 1911, he was seconded to help organise the seamen of Glasgow at the request of Havelock

Wilson of the National Sailors’ and Firemen’s Union (NSFU). He played a prominent role in the six-week Glasgow seamen’s strike which began on 14th June and which was part of a nationwide strike. He subsequently became the secretary of the Glasgow branch of the NSFU. In August 1912, he participated in a revolt against the Union, which resulted in the Glasgow branch becoming part of the Southampton-based British Seafarers’ Union (BSU). He was the local secretary of the BSU until it became part of the Amalgamated Marine Workers’ Union (AMWU) in 1922.

During the First World War the people of Glasgow were faced with many difficulties, not least the raising of rents and the subsequent oppression of those who could not pay. Manny was closely involved with workers’ rights, and Red Clydeside – as the press called it – was the centre of political radicalism in Glasgow and areas around the city. He attended a conference in Leeds in 1917 where most left-wing leaders were present. Manny spoke at the meeting as did Ernest Bevin and the conference congratulated the Russians on their revolution.

After the war Shinwell was involved in the struggle for a forty-hour week. At the December 1918 ‘Coupon Election’ he stood for the Linlithgow seat and attained a respectable number of votes despite the local paper calling him a Bolshevik. The police broke up an open-air trade union meeting at George Square on 31st January, 1919. The leaders of the union were then arrested and charged with ‘instigating and inciting large crowds of persons to form part of a riotous mob’. Shinwell was sentenced to five months in prison. Denied political prisoner status he spent most of his incarceration sewing horses’ nosebags.

At the General Election of 1922 he was elected as an Independent Labour Party candidate for Linlithgow, and his Parliamentary political career began. He was the first Scottish Jewish MP to sit in the House of Commons. In 1924, with Liberal support, James Ramsay MacDonald formed the first Labour government, though his minority administration was brought down after nine months over questions of its

sympathy for the new Soviet state and over alleged communist influence within the party. Macdonald made Shinwell Minister for Mines – not a Cabinet post. He lost his seat in 1924, but was re-elected for Linlithgowshire at a by-election in 1928.

In the second Labour Government of 1929–31 Ramsay MacDonald appointed him Financial Secretary to the War Office (1929–30). He then served again as Secretary for Mines from 1930–1. At the time, Shinwell was an admirer of MacDonald and tried to dissuade him from forming a National Government in 1931. He again lost his seat at the general election that year. As the situation in Germany began to worsen Manny and his fellow Jewish MP Sidney Silverman found themselves at odds with several of their fellow Labour supporters. One was Oswald Mosley, then a member of the party. Manny said of him, ‘the fellow stinks of money and insincerity’.



Fay Shinwell

The Jewish question brought him into direct conflict with others. A Conservative Member shouted at him: ‘Jew!’ and some years later Commander Robert Bower and – still later – Lady Astor, told him to ‘go back to Poland.’ In Commander Bower’s case Shinwell crossed the floor and slapped his face. Shinwell’s action was the more audacious in that Commander Bower was a former heavyweight boxing champion of the Navy, though Shinwell himself knew a

thing or two about fisticuffs!

When war broke out in 1939, Shinwell was a well-established member of the Labour Party, and extremely concerned, as were most Parliamentarians, about who could lead the nation against Hitler and his allies. Manny wrote in his book *I've Lived Through It All*, 'Hindsight insists that Neville Chamberlain was a disastrous choice, though even with all the evidence now available it is impossible to identify an alternative, given a Tory administration with a huge majority.' When the Munich Agreement was signed, Manny called it a disgrace. He remarked later, 'The disgrace was papered over with a banal document recording the desire of the peoples of Britain and Germany never to go to war with one another. It was perhaps symbolic of Hitler's confidence in this gesture that when Chamberlain took up a pen to sign it the inkwell was empty.'

When Churchill came to power with a coalition government he offered Shinwell a post in the Ministry of Food under Lord Woolton. He refused it. He became Chairman of the Labour Party in 1942, and when Churchill lost the 1945 election to Clement Attlee he was appointed as Minister of Fuel & Power, and presided over the nationalisation of the mining industry. 1947 was a particularly hard winter, with an acute shortage of fuel. Manny was fighting hard to get the government to accept his suggestions as to how the country might come through what promised to be a real crisis. He wrote, 'Dumps were frozen solid, coal wharves isolated, power lines down and movement by rail or road impossible for some weeks . . . the absenteeism in the pits was excessive. Many miners were too old for the work they were given when the coming shortage of coal was obvious. Equipment was outdated.'

The nation cried out for Manny's resignation, but he was supported by the miners and many of his colleagues. Eventually he agreed to accept the post of Secretary of State for War.

At the February 1950 election, he won the seat for Easington in Durham, after which he was promoted to Minister of Defence and became a full member of the Cabinet once more. Hugh Gaitskell, a lifelong enemy of Shinwell, was promoted

to Chancellor of the Exchequer later in the year, and recorded in his diary that Shinwell 'never loses an opportunity of picking a quarrel with me, sometimes on the most ridiculous grounds'.



Manny was by now seen as being on the right of the Labour Party. At the Party Conference at Scarborough that autumn, he lost his place as an elected constituency representative on the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC), the members of which were increasingly elected by Bevanites in the constituency parties. Labour lost the general election a month later. After Labour's defeat in 1951, Shinwell continued to serve in the Shadow Cabinet in Opposition until he stepped down in 1955.

Manny Shinwell was never officially associated with Jewish or Zionist organisations, but always prided himself on his Jewish origins. In later years he enthusiastically supported Israel's cause and took pride in her ability to defend herself. He said, 'I never was associated with the Zionist movement. I am not a practising Jew but I'm associated with the Jewish race. When I find people of the Jewish persuasion or the Jewish race ready to fight in their own defence I glory in the fact. So when I found the State of Israel ready to fight in its own defence against the threats, the confrontation by the Arab countries (and not because I despise the people of the Arab countries), I wished them well.'

Manny was appointed to the Order of the Companions of Honour in the 1965 Birthday Honours and was created a life peer as Baron Shinwell, of Easington in the County of Durham, on 19th June 1970. He continued to be active in the House of Lords until shortly before his death.

After Fay died in 1954 he married twice more, from 1956 to 1971 to Dinah Meyer, who was Danish, and from 1972 to 1977 to Sarah Sturgo. He outlived all three of his wives. His great-niece is the former MP for Liverpool Wavertree, Luciana Berger. He died in May 1986, aged 101, holding the record for the second longest-lived British MP (after Theodore Cooke Taylor) until overtaken by Bert Hazell in November 2008. He became the longest lived peer on 26th March 1986, dying little over a month later on 8th May.

His political career was marked tempestuously by an aggressiveness bred in his early Glasgow days of tough trade unionism. But in time he gained the great respect of all parties and - particularly in his mellowed years as an elder statesman - their deep affection.



Philippa Bernard

At Kent House we have a marvellous library ,stocked with over 2,000 books and named the Reinhart Library after our founding Rabbi.

The Synagogue is looking for dedicated volunteers to help to keep the library in good order.

The role would include choosing which books to remove to make space for new ones, covering and labelling new volumes, ensuring that they are in their correct categories, changing those on display, ensuring borrowed books are returned and promoting the Library to the community.

Would you have a few hours a month to give to the Reinhart Library? If so, please do get in touch with events@westminstersynagogue.org

We hope that you will help us to maintain and develop this great asset. To know more about the Library, in the first instance you could contact the editors of the *Quarterly*.



Robert Sandler & Niklas von Mehren write:

In Nik's address on *Shabbat* morning of the 14th August he said that 'the modern-day fulfilment of the *Mitzvah* that every Jew write a *Sefer Torah* can be achieved by simply writing one letter in a *Torah* scroll.'

Of course, one hopes that every Jew will participate to a greater degree than writing just one letter. We believe that there is a deep learning that can be applied to all Jewish practice; that the sincerity of the practice outweighs its subjective quality. Judaism is not a spectator sport. Active Judaism feels pre-pandemic. Every time we make the decision to involve ourselves a little more, to take the first step, to write our first letter, and never to be afraid to ask for help along the way, we find ourselves contributing to something greater and more timeless than us, as it says in *Pirkei Avot*; 'Study is not the most important thing, but actions'.

Our dear Rabbi Benji departs on his well-deserved sabbatical later this year to reconnect to his own Jewish learning and many of us will be taking on roles in Services that we would never have imagined we could fulfil. Robert will be co-leading a Friday night Service, despite fairly shaky Hebrew skills and never imagining he would be allowed anywhere near a *bimah*, after a *Bar Mitzvah* many years ago that he only just managed to deliver. But our *Shul* is a place of participation. There are many learned and talented *Torah* scholars and there are equally many members who are new to or rediscovering their acquaintance with Judaism. All are equally welcome, and encouraged to participate in services, in classes, in working groups. The sincerity of the contribution is what counts, not the professionalism. Participation is so much more than Perfection. How else to 'improve' one's practice than by practising?

One note, played or sung with intensity and true concentration can carry more feeling than a symphony performed without heart, as can a prayer delivered to friends and family in our community, or the non-traditional delivery of a *Bar Mitzvah* portion by a person with a learning difficulty. This is the true fabric of our community, the wonderful experiences that tie us together.

We have many wonderful opportunities, from longer learning sessions on reading from the *Torah*, to shorter sessions to learn the basics of the roles in Services that we'd love you to step up and take part in.

We hope you won't be shy. Take your first step in participation. Write the first letter in your personal *Torah*.

**Shalom Aleichem/ Salaam Alaikum
(Peace be with you)**

I dreamed angels of peace finally came,
as we stood side by side on the high places
of the land. On Tabor and on Hermon
on Masada, on Belvoir and even Moriah.
You Naomi and you Yehuda, you Mourid,
you Rivka and all you poets, prophets
and teachers of Israel and Palestine.
Then from the Kotel, Al Aqsa, and Machpelah,
from Safed, and Tiberius, Bethlehem,
and Jericho, and all the houses of prayer
in the land, everyone prayed for peace.
Somehow we learned to love each other,
to be good neighbours, to share all
that is given to us, and to forgive
all the wrongs we had done to each other.
Slowly our wounds healed, our tumours
went into remission, and we became
a whole body with a beating heart,
and then, joyfully, the angels of peace
went from Jerusalem into the world.

Jeremy Solnick





Westminster Quarterly

Planning Your Diary

Erev Simchat Torah

Monday 27th September

Simchat Torah

Tuesday 28th September

Hanukkah first Night

Sunday 28th November

Hanukkah last Night

Monday 6th December

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Please send letters, articles, photographs or other items of interest for publication in the Westminster Synagogue Quarterly directly to the Synagogue office or e-mail to editor@westminstersynagogue.org

