



בראשית

תש"ז

Vol. IX No.3

Bereshith: "In the Beginning"

5747 Nisan/April 1987

THE LADY AND THE MECHITZA

Several months ago I first began looking into Judaism at the request of a friend. I had attended one or two of the Beginners' Services before I went to spend a Shabbos, and subsequently, Yom Kippur in an extremely Orthodox community. As a typical 1980's ardent feminist I disliked the idea of separating men and women during a service with a "mechitza" (divider). I had tolerated the mechitza at the Beginners' Service because it was not very high and the men and women could see each other from the different sides of the room.



Much to my initial dismay, the mechitza at the synagogue where I went for Yom Kippur was a solid wall, with the men in one room and the women basically in an entirely separate room. Oh boy, I thought, this is not going to be easy for me!

As the day wore on, I realized that the mechitza did not at all bother me and, in fact, I was actually enjoying a certain amount of freedom because of it. With no men in sight I was able to totally concentrate on my prayers and my relationship with G-d, without worrying about how I looked, or whether someone was staring at me. What a revelation!

(cont. p. 4)

The following speech was delivered by Alan Magill at Lincoln Square Synagogue on March 7, 1987, at the Seudah Shlishit sponsored by the members of the Beginners' Service.

Hello. I'm Alan Magill and I'm here today on behalf of the entire Beginners' Service. We are sponsoring this third Shabbos meal because we'd like to thank Rabbi Buchwald for encouraging us to go to people's homes for eating and/or sleeping, which enables us to have a fuller Shabbos experience. We'd also like to thank Miriam Axelrod and the Hospitality Committee for setting us up with people in the Lincoln Square community. And we want to thank all of you who have welcomed us into your homes.

To give some background, I'd like to share
(cont. p. 2)

MAKING IT AS A BAAL TESHUVAH

We've had people at the Beginners' Service who've made it as "successful" Baalei Teshuvah. But never before has anyone risen so rapidly and dramatically to the heights of Jewish life--to become one of Uncle Moishy's Mitzvah Men.

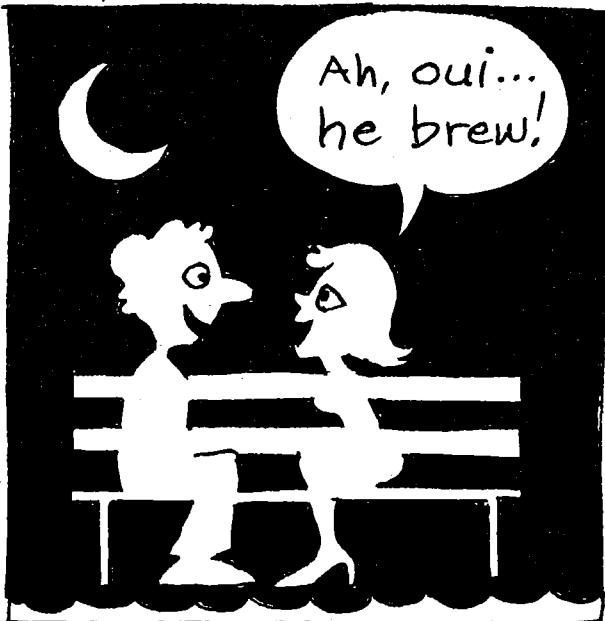
"While I'm singing, I think to myself, 'I'm singing about Hashem.' I'm combining two loves," says Mordechai Antebi, a former LSS congregant who recently became one of the "Mitzvah Men" on the popular Uncle Moishy children's records. Anyone who knows anything about Jewish children knows that the Uncle Moishy records are the rage in Orthodox homes.

(cont. p. 3)

with you a brief story on how I came to Lincoln Square:

Many years ago I was in Atlantic City and I met a woman who was from a small French-speaking village in Quebec. She told me her name was Joanne, and she said, "I know, He knows, He knew. . . You knew her." "I bought her flowers," I said. She responded, "I buy, he buys, he bought." And that's the way the whole evening went, with her conjugating verbs into a form that she understood. Late at night, we were sitting out on a bench facing the ocean, there was a full moon, the waves were cracking. Somehow the subject of religion came up. I told her I was Jewish. "Ooish?" she said. "No, Jewish," and the more I tried to explain what being Jewish meant, the more confused she got. I was about to give up, but I thought I'd give it one more try, so I said, "You know, the Hebrew people." And her face lit up. "Hebrew!" she said, and I said "Yes," glad that I had finally communicated to her. "Hebrew," she said again. "He bring, He brung, He brew."

The fact of the matter is, at the time, my understanding of Judaism wasn't all that more advanced than this woman's knowledge of English.



In subsequent years, I did some exploring on my own, uncovered a lot of facts, read a lot of books. But it wasn't until this fall, when I started to attend Lincoln Square Synagogue, that I really started to experience what Judaism is. And helping a great deal in that experience has been the opportunity to share Shabbos meals with you in your homes.

It's one thing to hear what something is in the form of an explanation, but to actually have the chance to be there--to be in your homes, and at your tables--to experience the warmth of a community, is really quite wonderful.

From my point of view, the real beauty of hospitality is that you don't have to do anything, you don't have to impress anyone to get the invitation. So it's much easier to just be yourself when you get to meet the people, because you've been accepted and welcomed from the word go.

I have asked some of the other beginners to share with me their reaction to the Lincoln Square hospitality experience. One man said, "I don't have to go to Woolworth's anymore on Saturday to eat lunch." He also said that after having a Shabbos meal, all during the week, he can still smell the cholent, the kugel and the brownies when he's in his apartment.

Another man, new to the Beginners' Service, attended a few times, but said he didn't really feel a part of the service until he was welcomed into someone's home for Shabbos lunch.

A woman, also in the Beginners' Service, commuted from Queens and enjoyed the Shabbos meals so much that now she's moved near Lincoln Square and she's looking forward to the challenge of soon hosting others in her home.

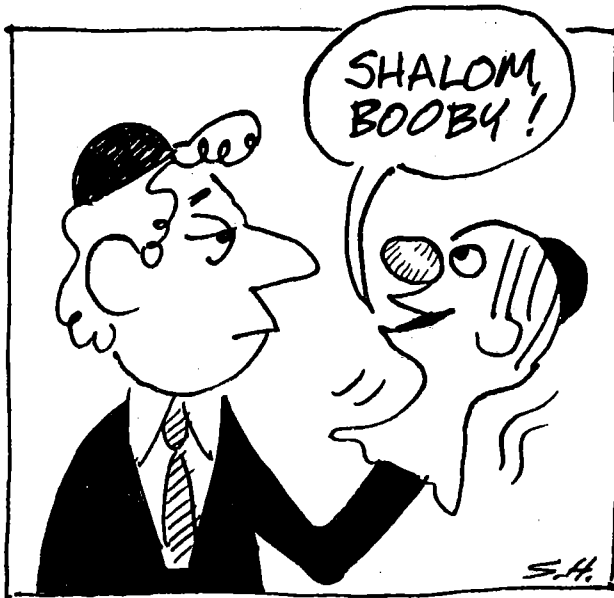
One man in the Beginners' Service had been attending a reform synagogue and decided to come to Lincoln Square for, as he puts it, "a service that started when the Sabbath started." After the Friday night service, he was about to go to his temple, when Herb Weiss approached him and asked if he needed a place for dinner. Touched by the gesture, he went to Herb's, and ever since has been greeting the Sabbath when it starts at Lincoln Square.

There are lots of other stories I can tell, all unique to the individuals who are telling them. Since time won't permit telling of all of them, I'd like to close with a response that was common to all:

We all just wanted to say. . . Thank you.



A former nightclub performer and puppeteer, 39-year-old Mordechai (formerly Cary) started becoming more observant about 18 months ago, when he began attending Lincoln Square Synagogue. Although he had a religious education growing up in Brighton Beach, Mordechai said he didn't start exploring Orthodoxy until he decided that it was time "to come to terms with the fact that I really believed in G-d."



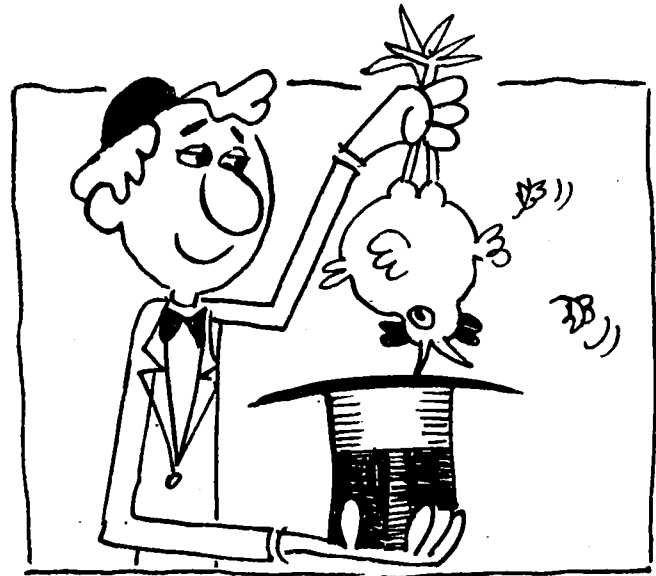
One attraction of LSS was the availability of home hospitality and Mordechai was a frequent guest of Nan and Bob Ehrlich. "By setting me up for meals, LSS made me realize what Shabbos is all about." Another draw was the accepting atmosphere. "I like the philosophy of not pushing you. There's a total acceptance of who you are." Being befriended by Rabbi Buchwald also smoothed his return to traditional Judaism. "If you don't have someone to turn to, it's hard," he says. "One thing that makes Judaism most alive is a kind, gentle soul, and that's what he is."

At first, Mordechai thought his newfound religiosity might spell the end of his entertainment career, which had started when he was a theater major at Brooklyn College. "I had no plans to continue as a performer--the structure of my life was totally changed," he says. But he still found time to entertain at a party for an LSS member's child, and that member had a connection that led to Uncle Moishe. "Nothing happens by chance," says Mordechai. "This was Hashem's plan for me."

In fact, his background as a performer helps him, as he puts it "to pray with all my heart and soul."

"As a performer, there's a professional button you push and you can do the same play over and over again and not let it get blase. Even if I had a cold or flu, I have to push the same button." Sometimes as a nightclub performer, he adds, people were drinking and talking, some not paying attention at all. And yet he still gave his all. Now when he prays, he asks himself, "Who is my audience? Who am I standing before? If I can get myself up for people I don't know, I can certainly get up for Hashem--and Hashem cares about me on and off-stage," he says.

Mordechai is still challenged to put on a good show, but now it's within a Jewish context. In one magic show he performed at a synagogue, he pretended to be baking a cake and then pulled a rabbit out of the pan. Afterwards, Mordechai said, the rabbi came up to him and asked if he would consider using a kosher animal in his next show. "He offered me his rubber chicken," Mordechai says.



Another night, he was spending Shabbos at the home of a rabbi whose children were asking for story after story until, as Mordechai puts it, "I was storied out." Then inspiration struck. "Once upon a time there were two friends, one very fat and one very thin," he began, and proceeded to change a favorite "Honeymooners" episode. Instead of Ralph and Norton going bowling, though, it was Yussie and Mushie going to shul. "The kids loved it and wanted me to tell another one," he says. "All of a sudden I realized I had 39 extra stories."

But as much as he loves LSS, Mordechai recently moved to Boro Park to be near a synagogue that davens the morning service in an hour and a half. "I can finally finish the Amidah," he says happily. -Alan Magill-

(cont. from p. 1) MECHITZA

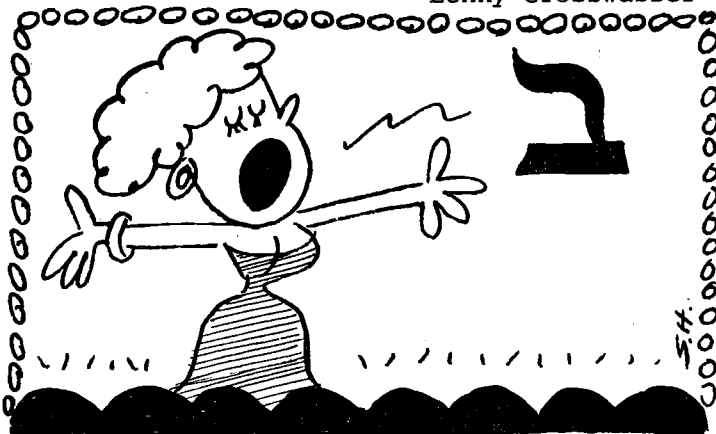
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The next week I returned to the Beginners' Service. Although I had arrived rather early and taken a seat on the far side of the room, by the middle of the service, because of the late arrivals, I found myself next to the mechitza. I was very surprised at the effect of my Yom Kippur experience and how intensely I now disliked the idea of sitting so close to a man while praying.

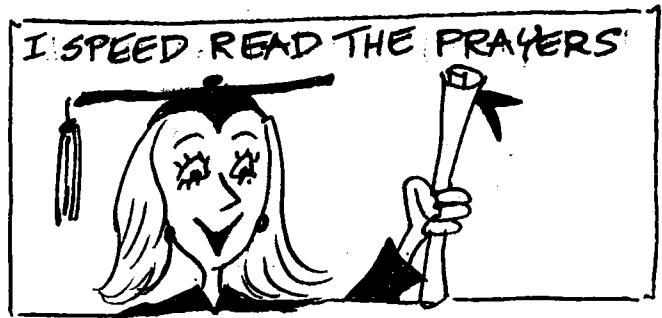
Is this the same person who enjoys flirting at parties, I wondered. Yes it was. But I have concluded that there is a time and place for everything. So, when you see me at the Beginners' Service on the far side of the room, don't be surprised. But, remember, I'll be mingling at Kiddush!

-Lenny Grosswasser-



BEGINNERS' TALENT SHOW

Fellow Beginners, lend us your ears and your talents. We are planning a variety show and need to know if you would like to sing, dance or play your way into Lincoln Square's hall of musical fame. Call me, Warren Rich, at 212/799-5282 (answering machine) for further information. You can become a star--at the Beginners' Talent Show!



WHY I NO LONGER ATTEND
THE BEGINNERS' SERVICE

Rabbi, what are P'sukei D'zimra, what's a priest, an angel, a Baal Teshuva, the Sh'ma, the Amidah? When do you bow during prayer, and why? These are just a few of the questions I asked and had answered at the Beginners' Service last year.

I also learned that the prayer service has an order that starts with the Psalms of Praise, includes Sh'ma, Amida, Torah Reading, Musaf, Aleinu and the Psalm of the Day. Amidah means to stand, Musaf means additional, Kaddish means holy, and Kiddush is what you "make" over wine. The Chumash is the five books of Moses, Moses was a great prophet, his parents were Amram and Yocheved, his brother was Aaron the high priest, his sister was Miriam. I learned that Lashon Hara means evil speech, and that Miriam spoke it of Moses and was stricken with leprosy. I learned about Shabbos hospitality, and that I have a lot more to learn; more than I realized when I walked through the doors of that tiny classroom on the second floor.

I'll have to study more, maybe alone, maybe find a chavruta (partner), take a class, call the Rabbi to ask him the questions I forgot to ask on Shabbos.

Come to think of it, I'm not a beginner anymore. I guess I'll move to a more advanced minyan, maybe even the main sanctuary! I hope my seat in the Beginners' Service won't stay empty too long.

-Kenneth Siegel-

why
is this
night
different



CONGRATULATIONS

AND MAZEL TOV

WITHIN OUR FAMILY

ENGAGEMENTS

Elaine Berg to Gerald Sacks
 June Gross to Mark Baum
 additional Mazel Tov to parents Carol and Joseph Gross
 Claire Mendelson to Julius Ciss
 Gina Milano to Dr. David Garbowit
 Emily Perkel to Donald Kresge
 Barbara Ribakove to Philip Gordon
 Margret Robinson to Michael Klapper
 Marsha Seretan to Dr. Mitchell Shear
 Carice Witte to Yoram Shoshtari

MARRIAGES

Greta Cohen to Michael Goldstein
 Michelle Comen to Ruven Helfgot
 Sue Ellen Eckstein to Howard Stotsky
 Yehudit Kaufman to Moshe Ashin
 Sylvia Miller to Glenn Michel
 Joan Schlissel to Meir Hillel
 Mona Schweizer to Tzion Peretz
 Rosine Wolecki to Ed Morgenstern

BIRTHS

Meira and Tom Fleisch on the birth of a son, MICHAEL CURTIS
 Fanny and Allan Forman on the birth of a daughter, RACHEL ZEHAVA
 Debbie and Dr. Allan Frederick on the birth of a daughter, ESTHER TOVA
 Ohra and Dr. Manfred Hahn on the birth of a son, SHMUEL YOSEF
 Marilyn and John Kosecoff on the birth of a son, DAVID BENJAMIN
 Emma and Jeff Lebowitz on the birth of a daughter, SARA CHANA
 Mona and Tzion Peretz on the birth of a daughter, MERAV
 Vivian and David Relkin on the birth of a son, AVRAHAM MOSHE ELIMELECH
 Miranda and Ken Sacharin on the birth of a daughter, EMILY ARIEL
 Pam and Dr. Alan Shanker on the birth of a daughter, REBECCA NAOMI
 Marsha and Jonathan Weisman on the birth of a son, AVRAHAM ABBA
 additional Mazel Tov to the grandmother, Leiba Simcha Jacobs

TZETCHEM L'SHALOM (to live or study in Israel)

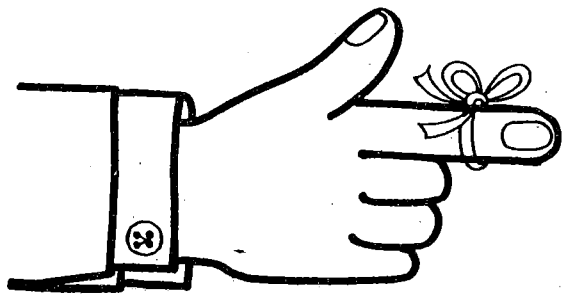
Gertrude Berkowitz
 Ed Freidman
 Jay Hayman
 Mona Schweizer

CONDOLENCES

Nan Ehrlich on the passing of her mother, MILDRED ZWEBEN
 Dr. William Koch on the passing of his brother, DR. HARVEY BERT KOCH
 Bert Kramer on the passing of his father, JACK KRAMER
 Barbara Oka on the passing of her father, KENNETH OKA



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 * Beginners Luncheon Schedule *
 * May 16, cost \$10 *
 *
 * Beginners Schmooze Schedule *
 * May 18 *
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FLASH
 Saturday, April 18
 PASSOVER BEGINNERS' SERVICES
 WILL BE CONDUCTED
 BY
 JOSEPH SCHWARZ

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Friday, April 3
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....6:05 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....6:15 P.M.

Saturday, April 4 (VAIKRA)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....9:20 P.M.
Mincha.....6:05 P.M.
SATURDAY NIGHT MOVE CLOCK FORWARD ONE HOUR FOR
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Daily Mincha and Maariv.....(D.S.T.) 7:20 P.M.
Friday, April 10
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....7:12 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....7:25 P.M.

Saturday, April 11 (TSAV)
SHABBAT HAGADOL
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Mincha followed by
SHABBAT HAGADOL DISCOURSE.....6:20 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....7:25 P.M.

Sunday Evening, April 12
SEARCH FOR THE CHAMETS.....8:00 P.M.

Monday, April 13
Siyum B'Chokim.....6:45 and 7:45 A.M.
The first born are invited to complete a
tractate after each service so that they may
be able to eat on what would normally be a
fast day for them.

The latest time to eat Chamets.....10:20 A.M.
The latest time to burn Chamets.....11:40 A.M.
Kindle Yom Tov Candles.....7:15 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....7:25 P.M.
Followed By: FIRST SEDER

Tuesday, April 14
Yom Tov Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....6:25 P.M.
Mincha.....7:25 P.M.
KINDLE YOM TOV CANDLES NOT BEFORE.....8:15 P.M.
Followed By: SECOND EVENING COMMUNITY SEDER

Wednesday, April 15
Yom Tov Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....6:25 P.M.
Mincha.....7:25 P.M.
DAILY CHOL HAMOD SERVICES.....7:00 and 7:40 A.M.

Friday, April 17
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....7:20 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....7:30 P.M.

Saturday, April 18
SHABBAT CHOL HAMOD PESACH
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....8:20 P.M.
Mincha.....7:20 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....7:35 P.M.

Sunday, April 19
MORNING CHOL HAMOD SERVICES 7:00 and 8:30 A.M.
Kindle Yom Tov Candles.....7:21 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Yom Tov.....7:30 P.M.

Monday, April 20
YOM TOV MORNING SERVICE.....8:45 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....6:30 P.M.
Mincha.....7:30 P.M.
KINDLE YOM TOV CANDLES NOT BEFORE.....8:22 P.M.

Tuesday, April 21
YOM TOV MORNING SERVICES.....8:00 and 8:45 A.M.
INCLUDING YISROK MEMORIAL SERVICE
Daf Yomi.....6:00 P.M.
Mincha.....7:00 P.M.
FOLLOWED BY SEUDA SHLESHET NEILAT HACHAO

Friday, April 24
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....7:27 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....7:40 P.M.

Saturday, April 25 (SHEMINI)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....6:25 P.M.
Mincha.....7:25 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....7:40 P.M.
SATURDAY NIGHT, APRIL 25 AND SUNDAY, APRIL 26
YOM HASROA

Wednesday, April 29 and Thursday, April 30
ROSH CHODESH IYAR
Morning Services.....7:00 and 7:40 A.M.

Friday, May 1
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....7:34 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....7:45 P.M.

Saturday, May 2 (TZARIS-METSORA)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....6:35 P.M.

Daily Mincha and Maariv.....7:50 P.M.
SUNDAY EVENING MAY 3rd AND MONDAY MAY 4th YOM
YOM HA'ATZMAUT (ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY)

Friday, May 8
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....7:42 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....7:55 P.M.

Saturday, May 9 (ACHAREI-KEDOSHIM)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....6:40 P.M.
Mincha.....7:40 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....7:55 P.M.

Friday, May 15
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....7:49 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....8:00 P.M.

Saturday, May 16 (EIKV)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....6:50 P.M.
Mincha.....7:50 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....8:00 P.M.

Friday, May 22
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....7:55 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....8:05 P.M.

Saturday, May 23 (Behar-Bechukotai)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....6:55 P.M.
Mincha.....7:55 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....8:05 P.M.

Monday, May 25
MEMORIAL DAY
Morning Services.....7:10 and 8:30 A.M.

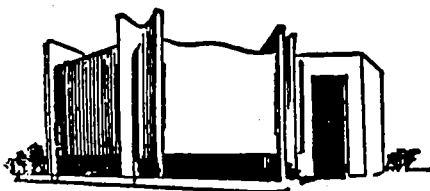
TUESDAY EVENING MAY 26th AND WEDNESDAY, MAY 27th
YOM YERUSHALAYIM

Friday, May 29
ROSH CHODESH SIVAN
Morning Services.....7:00 and 7:40 A.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....8:01 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....8:10 P.M.

Saturday, May 30 (Sanidbar)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....7:00 P.M.
Mincha.....8:00 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....8:15 P.M.

בראשית Bereshith: "In the Beginning" is put together under the direction of Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, Educational Director of Lincoln Square Synagogue 200 Amsterdam Avenue, New York. A special Beginners' Minyan is held each Shabbat morning at 9:15 A.M. at the synagogue. Through its Joseph Shapiro Institute, Lincoln Square offers a number of adult education courses in Judaica.

Readers: This is your newsletter and we would like to hear from you. Article contributions are most welcome!



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