



בראשית

70

Vol. V, No. 5

Bereshith: "In The Beginning"

August 1983/5743 Elul

THE FIRST OF TISHREI -- by Shlomo Dov

Ever spent Rosh Hashanah in Pottstown, PA? There's no Orthodox synagogue there, but I wasn't Orthodox then, so Congregation Mercy and Truth was just fine.

Although I had spent a few months in the Beginners' Minyan and a summer of study at J.S.I., making commitments to anything was still out of the question. It was great to be "free." Nobody was beating me over the head to turn off the stereo on Shabbos, and that was the way I wanted it. Everybody at L.S.S. was low-key and cool.

It was in Pottstown that I had a problem. After all, Ephraim did tell us to keep our feet together while davening the Amidah, so what was I to do when the yellow-feathered-hat lady making her way down the row from the right said, "Excuse me." Sure, I saw there were seats on the left, but how could I move? How could I do anything until I had finished the prayers and performed--you know--those final calisthenics?

"Excuse me, sir," she said again, thinking, obviously, that I hadn't heard her.

Well, not only had I heard every single syllable, but I was suddenly possessed with an overwhelming determination to pronounce every word of the Amidah without skipping a single syllable of my own.

"Excuse me, PLEASE," she said, stressing PLEASE, I think, to establish to the score of worshippers immediately surrounding us that what was about to happen would be my fault, not hers.

I was now up to "Modim Anachriu Lach" and was nearing the finish line, but the people on my right were past the point of being edgy. The yellow-feathered-hat lady was not only blocking their view, but worse, creating a stir. By the time I got to the end of "Modim," the eyes of the synagogue were upon us.

In all fairness to the lady, though, she

had been coming to Mercy and Truth without ever having encountered Rigidity and Stubbornness. What right did I have trying to make her see the light? Me, who ushered in Friday night to the sounds of Fleetwood Mac--who was I to block her way?

She stepped on seven toes altogether. Seven, I am sure. She dug her heels into my shoes as she brushed her way past. Because I had anticipated her move, my toes were ready, but my nose wasn't prepared for the assault of the yellow feather.

"Guard my lips from speaking evil and my tongue..." I had just about finished. The Cantor was beginning the traditional repetition and now that the confrontation was over I could sense that people had a glimmer as to what happened:

A froomie was loose in Pottstown and I was it.

And so, after services, at lunch, I suppose it was inevitable that someone at the table would say something to me about synagogues.

"Where do you daven in New York?"

"Lincoln Square."

"I hear that people there don't actually join the shul."

"What?"

"I mean as dues-paying members. I hear that everybody just floats around the fringes."

"Not true," I argued. "Of course people join. How else could it exist?"

He paused. "Are you a member?"

"Sure!"



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MAZAL TOV MAZAL TOV

ENGAGEMENTS

LIDIA DENGELI TO
RICHARD STORCH

MARRIAGES

LISA RANDLETT TO
BENNETT BERGMAN

OHRA RUBIN TO
MANDRED HAHN

RONNIE ZIPPER TO
BARUCH KRAMER

BIRTHS

JOEL & BETTY BAILEY
ON THE BIRTH OF A
DAUGHTER,
RIVKAH

J.J. & SHIRA GROSS
ON THE BIRTH OF A
DAUGHTER,
NORA DANIELLE

MOSHE & ZIPORAH
ROTHKOFF
ON THE BIRTH OF A
DAUGHTER,
SHIRA YEHUDIT

Dear Friends,

We were profoundly moved by the outpouring of good wishes of generosity by the members of the Beginners' Minyan. We thank you for enabling Lincoln Square Synagogue to continue its vital work and we hope to continue to live up to the confidence you have placed in us.

Sincerely,

Ephraim and Aidel
Buchwald

HIGH SPIRITS AND GOLDEN CALVES

by George Delury

A frequently heard comment among the returning and converting beginners is that the spirit of long-term committed Jews is disappointing. "There isn't the kavanah downstairs that there is in the Beginners' Minyan." "People rush through the Birkat Hamazon so fast it's impossible to get in the spirit of it." "People say they observe this or that mitzvah because they have to, not because they want to."

There's no doubt that we beginners bring a fine, high spirit to our prayers. We probably wouldn't be beginners if some spark hadn't lit a fire under us. But let's face it, hot fires burn out quickly. The high spirits of beginners are like those of sprinters at the start of a marathon. They move out fast, take the lead quickly, and burn out before the race has even really begun for the carefully-paced spirits that are committed to go the distance.

When the Torah was given at Sinai on Shavuot, all Israel had the high spirits of beginners. Forty days later, many of those high-spirited beginners, in a desperate attempt to keep their spirits high, were dancing around a golden calf. Seventeen years ago, in the hippies' "Summer of Love," thousands of young people experienced a surge of exuberant fellow feeling, innocence, and timelessness. The high spirits of those few weeks became, for them, the whole meaning of life. Forty weeks later, it had all turned to horror when continuous high spirits were sought in amphetamines, barbiturates, heroin and other golden calves. High spirits have to be a bit suspect.

According to the tradition there were several factions at Sinai, each with a different attitude toward the golden calf. A few, devoted to high spirits at any price, were the real promoters and enthusiasts of the calf. Many others, disappointed by their fading high spirits and fearful because Moses hadn't come back, joined in the calf worship as the next best thing to the original Sinai experience. A small group was completely confused and disillusioned by the sudden shift of the enthusiastic high-spirited. They said "Count me out. You're all crazy. All high spirits are bunkum." The largest faction of all remembered the substance of the original experience and would accept no substitutes. They condemned the high spirits of the calf worshippers and gave the idolators up for utterly lost, beyond redemption, even by the Holy One. That denial of the possibility of repentance and forgiveness made their spirits cramped and cold. Nevertheless, I'd guess that this group became the broad base on which Judaism's history has been built. Davening by habit, without intention, with spirits barely glimmering, but davening, davening, davening over the long, long run.

There was still another faction at Sinai that neither joined in the high spirits around the golden calf nor condemned them absolutely. Believing, disciplined and humble, they withheld judgement and waited patiently for Moses to return. These were the Levites, and I imagine them quietly

(Continued on page 3)

and unobtrusively davening with deeply focused intention while high spirits and consternation ran wild throughout the Israelite camp. The calf was nothing to them, so neither

high spirits nor condemnation were justified. They were completely and simply focused on the Holy One. They had no interest in judging others' davanah. Deep in their own prayer, they were uninterested in the manner or intensity of others' prayers. They made no distinction between "have to" and "want to." The doing was the point.

We beginners are like Israel at Sinai on Shavuot. Zapped by the Divine Presence. Wow! Bang! Gee Whiz! (Born again?!) But forty days down the road, or forty week or months, or forty years from now, when that terrible moment comes-- and it will come--when the high spirits threaten to flicker out, and it looks like Moses will never come down again and the Messiah never come at all, will we make a golden calf to revive our fine old high spirits?

The message at Shavuot was "Obey My commandments and live;" it wasn't "Feel great; bliss out and burn out." That is to say, that for most of us, once we've been set on fire, it is necessary to dampen that flame, to become a long-lasting coal, an ember, not a blazing twig. Generally, the only useful fire is a dampened fire; anything else is a potential conflagration or even a holocaust.

So, in the beginning, it seems right that a mitzvah should not be taken on until one wants to and feels comfortable with it. But once the mitzvah fire has caught and is burning steadily, it seems to me one ought to take on a mitzvah

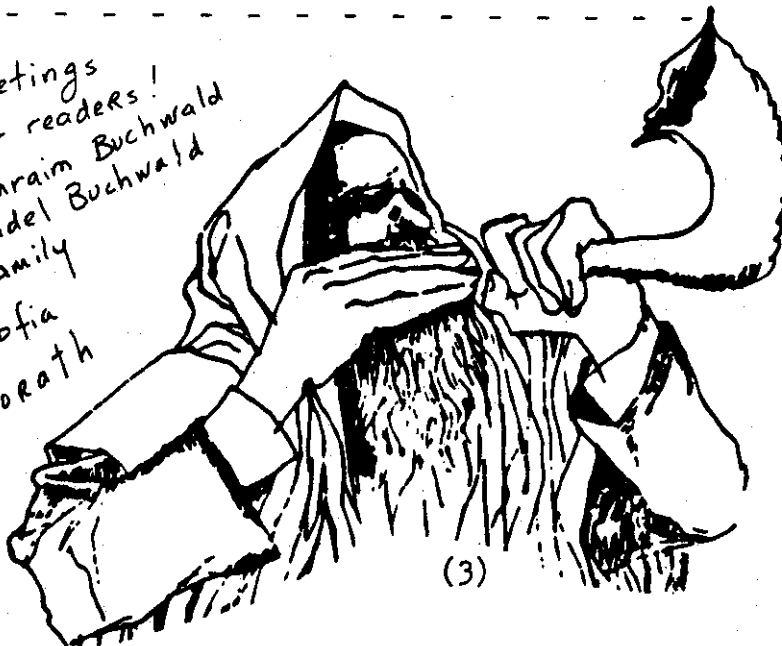
because it has been commanded. That way the flame may be dampened and the embers kept hot for a long time: high spirits tamed, focused and put to use for the long run.

THE FIRST OF TISHREI -- continued from page 1

A couple of days before Yom Kippur, I sent an emergency letter: "Rabbi Riskin," I wrote, "could you arrange to enroll me as a member of your congregation retroactive to the first of Tishrei so that I don't start out the New Year with a lie?"

The truth was, it was time. All I had needed was an excuse.

Holiday Greetings
to all our readers!
from Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald
and Aidel Buchwald
- Ariella Sofia
- Arlene Porath



MAZAL TOV MAZAL TOV

NESTA FELDMAN ON HER
GRANDDAUGHTER EMILY
WHITE, WHO GRADUATED
WITH HONORS FROM
UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND AND
HER GRANDSON DANIEL
FELDMAN WHO WAS
RECENTLY BAR MITZVAH

* * * * *

*FREE HEBREW LESSONS

*KOSHERING YOUR HOME

*GIVING A D'VAR TORAH
ON SHABBAT

*HELPING WITH THE
NEWSLETTER

*AN APPOINTMENT WITH
RABBI BUCHWALD

*TAKING COURSES AT THE
JOSEPH SHAPIRO
INSTITUTE

*ANYTHING ELSE!

CALL: Arlene Porath

ISS, after 2:15 p.m.
(Mon.-Thurs.)
874-6105

LETTER TO THE EDITOR...LETTER TO THE EDITOR...LETTER TO THE EDITOR...LETTER TO THE

Aloha from Paradise

THE EDITOR...LETTER TO THE EDITOR...LETTER TO THE EDITOR...LETTER TO THE EDITOR...

(Editor's note: Moshe and Ziporah Rothkoff, who moved to Honolulu in August 1982, have just celebrated the birth of their first daughter, Shira Yehudit, on June 2, 1983.)

We would like to inform people that Yiddishkeit is alive and strong, if not that numerous, in Hawaii. On Oahu, there are three minyanim on Shabbat. The Aloha Jewish Chapel (military) is headed by Rabbi Mitchell Schransy (Y.U.) and has services Friday night and Saturday mornings. Rabbi Schransy can also be helpful in procuring kosher food.

Temple Emanuel (reform) has a traditional minyan every Shabbat morning. This is a full Hebrew service, headed by Jacob Tzur and Tooki Baryilay. There is mixed seating and kiddush is served afterwards.

The only true Orthodox minyan is at the home of Harvey and Claire Dratt on Shabbat morning; there is separate seating and guests are welcome to stay for meals on Shabbat.

Kosher food is available in most supermarkets although expensive. During Passover, the Hyatt Kuilima Resort is kosher under the direction of Atlas tours and Rabbi Yale Butler (L.A.).

So don't let your fears that "Paradise" is a Jewish wasteland keep you away. For local information contact:

Moshe & Ziporah Rothkoff:	(808) 531-1878
Harvey & Claire Dratt:	377-5545
Rabbi Mitchel Schransy:	471-0050

Mahalo,

Moshe & Ziporah

CONGRATULATIONS to

Fisher Bros. & Leslie
230 West 72nd Street

who are now back under the supervision of the Midtown Board of Kashrut.

It's nice to have you back!

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO APPROACH A BANANA?

You will with "A Guide To Blessings" published by the National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY), a very handy reference guide that fits in your pocket and teaches you things like just because a banana grows on a tree, don't think you say "ha-aetz."

ברשית 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. Editor...Ariella Sofia Staff Assistant... Arlene Porath. 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!

AMERICANIZED

many of us have become tennis players. white sneakers and socks. white shorts and shirt. white hat on white...

how far we have traveled from black gabardine.
how far we have traveled from Red Sea waters,
from red plumed Roman legions
from Spanish Cardinals autos-da-fe
from red faced cossack fires
burning us black as bibles.

and the newest red
our color too
our cousins too, drowned
at red
railroad stations.

a peculiar dye this red.
not quite bleeding us out.
not quite reducing black to white.
not quite, ever, removing the lion's spots.

rah anyone?

--Isidore Century

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Friday, August 12

*Kindle Shabbat Candles 7:38 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 6:45 and 7:50 P.M.

Saturday, August 13 (Shofetim)

Shabbat Morning Service 8:30 A.M.
Daf Yomi and Talmud Class 6:10 P.M.
Bible Class 6:40 P.M.
Mincha 7:40 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv 7:45 P.M.

Friday, August 19

*Kindle Shabbat Candles 7:29 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 6:45 and 7:40 P.M.

Saturday, August 20 (Kee Tetzai)

Shabbat Morning Service 8:30 A.M.
Daf Yomi and Talmud Class 6:00 P.M.
Bible Class 6:30 P.M.
Mincha 7:30 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv 7:35 P.M.

Friday, August 26

*Kindle Shabbat Candles 7:18 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 6:45 and 7:30 P.M.

Saturday, August 27 (Kee Tavo)

Shabbat Morning Service 8:30 A.M.
Daf Yomi and Talmud Class 5:50 P.M.
Bible Class 6:20 P.M.
Mincha 7:20 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv 7:25 P.M.

Friday, September 2

*Kindle Shabbat Candles 7:07 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 6:45 P.M.

Saturday, September 3 (Nitzavim-Vayelech)

Shabbat Morning Service 8:30 A.M.
Daf Yomi and Talmud Class 5:35 P.M.
Bible Class 6:05 P.M.
Mincha 7:05 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv 7:15 P.M.

MIDNIGHT SELICHOS SERVICES

Monday, September 5 — LABOR DAY

Morning Services 7:15 and 8:30 A.M.

Wednesday, September 7

Eve of Rosh Hashana

*A great shofar
is sounded, a
gentle whisper
heard.*

**Rosh Hashana
Prayer Book**



HOME HOSPITALITY

The LSS Home Hospitality Program is desperately in need of volunteers to work on the Hospitality Committee, as well as to be hosts and hostesses.

If you can be either or both, please check below and return it to the shul.

I am willing to work on the
_____ Hospitality Committee.

I am willing to host for Shabbat
_____ and/or Yom Tov.

NAME _____

DAY & EVENING PHONE _____