



בר'אשית

723

Vol. VI, No. 2

Bereshith: "In The Beginning"

5744 Kislev/Dec. 1983

FROM SCHNORRER TO NEAR-MENSCH -- IN JUST TWO SHORT YEARS

by Shlomo Rosen

Bachelors are always hungry. Because I'm a good cook (I come from a restaurant family) my friends usually enjoy good food in my home. I have pleasant memories of many fine meals at their homes whenever they reciprocated. But now it's all different.

I work on the Hospitality Committee at Lincoln Square Synagogue. Why the change? Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald. A couple of years ago when I first started at the Beginners' Minyan, Effie invited me to his home for Shabbat. I've never told him this, but that was the first experience in the home of an Orthodox rabbi. My early Jewish education consisted of learning enough Hebrew for Bar Mitzvah and going to shul twice a year. I was forced to attend Hebrew and Sunday school, thus guaranteeing that I would dislike it the rest of my life. However, the rest is history.

Because of Lincoln Square Synagogue hospitality, one invitation led to another. And another. And so on. The food was fantastic... the hospitality magnificent. I learned more about the practice of Judaism, Shabbat, Jewish family life, Jewish generosity--and Jewish food--than I ever thought was possible. This was how I began my second--and authentic --Jewish education.

Here are some examples. The LSS families shall be nameless only because they might be flooded with requests for hospitality they might not be able to honor. But if you work with us on the Hospitality Committee-- we need volunteers!--you'll quickly discover who they are.

One family has "adopted" me. I'm a regular guest at their Shabbat table. We eat together. The kosher meals are wonderful. The

conversations are always exciting because we talk Torah, we talk Midrash, we talk Israel, we talk politics, we talk family. We've become friends and more. These are people I care about, people I wouldn't have met had it not been for LSS and our tradition of hospitality. By the way, I did not meet them by requesting hospitality-- but by working on the Hospitality Committee, arranging meals for others seeking hospitality.

Another family, rather large, has a table that overflows with the mitzvot of Jewish hospitality. Those gourmet meals of my earlier life cannot compare with their cholent, noodle pudding, gefilte fish, and more. The guests are very special and fascinating. Table talk includes discussions of Jewish law, Jewish practices, working Judasim. Experiencing this family, their guests, and their conversations is a truly Jewish education--a total immersion in the Jewishness I imagine Rabbi Riskin has in mind when he questions assimilation.

Even though I find Jewishness is most fulfilling in a family setting, singles (who are people too) have Shabbat meals, Shabbat hospitality, and memorable Jewish experiences to share. Fortunately, bachelors and bachelorettes at LSS open their homes to hospitality seekers as well.

(Continued on page 2)

ATTENTION JEWISH MEN ! ! ! !

Do you know where you were when you were circumcized? See page 3

Yet requesting hospitality is difficult for most people. It seems to call for a high order of chutzpah--especially to those who are new to LSS or the Beginners' Minyan. Nobody wants to be a schnorrer. But look at it this way. The center of Jewish life is the home. Synagogue life is only a part. I had no central Jewish focus at the start and had to find or make one. Until I know enough to create one, I have to rely on the examples of others as I grope my way toward becoming a Baal Tshuvah.

I know members of the Beginners' Minyan attending for years without knowing about the LSS Hospitality Program or using it. So let me reveal how I learned to participate in hospitality --without the guilt, without the chutzpah, without feeling like a schnorrer. I had to realize that if I was to recover my Jewishness, it's going to be a gradual process that takes patience, persistence, and the help of those who know more than I do. So I had to learn, am still learning, from their examples. I had to see Judaism in practice, in the home where it works and lives. To get into those homes without guilt, I found that my work on the Hospitality Committee makes me feel that by placing hospitality seekers with hospitality donors I am doing mitzvah; and this allows me to accept the hospitality of LSS families with less guilt than before and with more mentschlichkeit. I've come to understand that for those who offer me hospitality, it's a mitzvah for them in that it also brings me further along in my quest for true Jewish feeling and behavior. I know that when I have learned enough from what's been so generously shared with me, I will be redistributing that with you.

* * * * *

WHAT DOES A GOOD GUEST SAY?

"How much trouble my host has gone to for me. How much meat (or veggies -- ed.) he has set before me. How much wine he has given me. How many cakes he has served me! And all this trouble he has gone to has been only for me sake!"

BUT WHAT DOES A BAD GUEST SAY?

"What kind of effort did this host make for me? I have eaten only one slice of bread. I have eaten only one piece of meat, and I have drunk only one cup of wine! Whatever trouble this host went to was done only for the sake of his wife and his children."

-- Simeon ben Zoma, in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berakhot, page 58a

* * * * *

--- Beginners' Schmooze ---

Last year's rap groups were so successful, we're going to continue them again this year. Ariella Sofia will be the group facilitator. Expect no stock answers, just creative suggestions and a supportive atmosphere if you're undergoing the fun/trauma of becoming observant.

Monday nights: 12/12, 1/9, 2/6 (more later) 8 p.m. at LSS Refreshments are served. Direct questions to Arlene at 874-6105

MAZAL TOV MAZAL TOV

ENGAGEMENTS

BATYA RISKIN TO
EDDIE JACOBS

SUSAN WAINER TO
GARY SCHEER

MARRIAGES

LAURA PENN TO
YOSSI ECKMAN

IRIS ROSOFSKY TO
SHELDON YATROFSKY

RABBI ELY ROSENZWEIG
(LED THE BEGINNERS'
SERVICE SUMMER
OF 1982) TO
CHANI GROSS

SHARI RUBIN TO
TOM STEINBERG

BIRTHS

MICHELLE AND
BENJAMIN COHEN
ON THE BIRTH OF
A SON,
RAPHAEL YEHOASHUA

MIRIAM AND RON LANE
ON THE BIRTH OF
A SON,
ELIYAHU SIMCHA

ELLEN AND RABBI
ALLAN SHRANZ
ON THE BIRTH OF
A DAUGHTER,
MICHAL SHIMONA

SUSAN AND DR. TOM
SNYDER
ON THE BIRTH OF
A DAUGHTER,
ELISHEVA AIDEL

CIRCUMCISION.....CIRCUMCISION.....CIRCUMCISION.....

Ah, you men are thinking, what kind of a crazy question is that to shout out at us from the front page of Bereshith? Well, we're dedicated to helping all Jews become more aware of and more active in meeting Hashem's commandments. The mitzvah of circumcision -- Brit Milah -- is very specific and the first mitzvah fulfilled by every Jewish male. It's common practice in America for almost all male children to be circumcized a few days after birth. For it to be a kosher brit milah, however, it is best performed by a qualified "mohel," a pious, observant Jew carefully trained to perform the circumcision. If yours took place in the hospital before you were eight days old or you're not sure if there was a qualified mohel present, don't worry. It's still possible to make things kosher by having a mohel perform a symbolic brit called "Hatafat dam brit."

Call Rabbi Buchwald with any question. 874-6105

ירושלים



Happy Hanukkah
to all of you
from all of us
at Bereshith!

The first candle
should be lit
the evening of
Wednesday, 11/30

© Munksgaard



MIRIAM WEISS AND
SAM GLUCK
ON THE BIRTH OF A
A DAUGHTER,
PEREL P'NINA RIFKA
* * * * *
TZETCHEM L'SHALOM TO

OLGA GRUN AND
ELIEZER DIAMOND
WHO HAVE RECENTLY
MADE ALIYAH.
* * * * *
SPECIAL THANKS TO
THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE
FOR TEACHING A CRASH
COURSE IN HEBREW
READING:

BENNETT BERGMAN
SHIRA DOLLAR
CHAVI WILLIG-LEVY
YOSSI SHIEN
* * * * *

- *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!

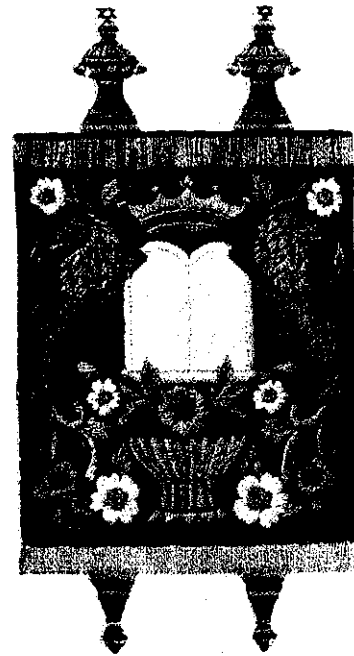
CALL: Arlene Porath
LSS, after 3:00 P.M.
(Mon.-Thurs.)
874-6105

you are born in America
 the son of Polish Jews,
 and Yiddish,
 the earliest sounds,
 the earliest words,
 is quickly removed, as though
 it were a yellow arm band.

you grow up in America
 free of cossacks and rabbis,
 a bar mitzvah speech away from
 yawning indifference
 until a war recalls
 the earliest sounds,
 the earliest words
 from a people facing extinction,
 surprisingly yours.

you return from the army
 to an America bursting with dreams,
 and busy with your own,
 do not exchange a Yiddish word
 with a benchful of tattooed Jews
 huddled at the edge of baseball fields,
 skeptical and tearful
 at the relevance of the home run.

you are part of an exodus
 from Brownsvilles and Williamsburgs by wealth
 undreamed of even by ecstatic shtetl mystics,
 and Jews, like motorized nomads,
 moving from city to suburb
 from suburb to suburb
 from east to west and west to east,
 their children in ashrams,
 their aunts and uncles abandoned in stone pajamas.
 and one red white and blue Yom Kippur day
 in your 49th American Jewish year
 5,736 questions leap from your beardless throat,
 where are your homes O wanderers,
 where are your hearts to rest O wanderers?
 the questions insistent, you journey to Jerusalem.



Sephardic House of Shearith Israel
 will sponsor a Sephardic/general
 music festival at Carnegie Hall

Artists:
 Avshalom Zfira
 &
 Avraham Albrecht
 December 11 at 2

pianist:
 Elsie Levy



Tickets \$8.00 Shearith
 Israel, 8 West 70th St., N.Y.C.



BERESHITH Bereshith: "In The Beginning" is put together under the direction of
 Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, Educational Director of Lincoln Square Syna-
 gogue, 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!

I remember hearing Rabbi Riskin say that the only rationale he could see for those Jews who keep kosher homes but eat trief out, is that their dishes will go to heaven. Having eaten plenty of trief, both at home and out, the statement made good sense to me at the time. However, as I began to learn Torah and take on Mitzvot, I began to realize what a commitment to live as an observant Jew really means.

When Rabbi Buchwald came to my kitchen with his blow torch a couple of years ago, I felt as if I had made one of the biggest commitments of my life, and have kept a kosher kitchen ever since. But, when it came to restaurants, I was eager to join the "eat fish out" crowd. After a life of eating anything I wanted "out", it became tough. But, gradually, I began to realize that "eating fish out" wasn't so difficult after all--just avoid all meat and shellfish and a Jew could eat in the best restaurants in town.

A couple of years passed, and I grew more in the process of becoming a Baalat Teshuva, and I understood that truly religious people eat only kosher food wherever they go. It then became a question of climbing to a higher level. Finally, this Rosh Hashanna 5744, I resolved to "do teshuva" -- no more "fish out"!

It wasn't long after...in fact, it was Motsaei Shabbat after Simchat Torah, that Hashem put me through my first "test". My Saturday night date was a gentleman who spent his entire life among religious people and in religious institutions, describing himself as "modern Orthodox". He had planned to take me to an elegant non-kosher restaurant for dinner, saying that he "eats fish out". I was surprised to hear that, and I hold him about my New Year's resolution. We drove around the city looking for a kosher restaurant, but in vain...they were all closed that evening after three days of Yom Tov and Shabbat. We drove around the city. Finally compromising on a little Italian place "with good salads" (so he said), he lectured to me about how "the trouble with you 'Baal-teshuvaniks' is that you go too far".

As we studied the menu, I noticed a young Jewish couple sitting at the next table also out on a Saturday night date. My "froom" date pointed longingly to the foods the couple were eating--various hot pasta dishes, cheese sauces, tomato sauces, etc.--foods he ordinarily would order. I suggested that he order what he liked, but he ordered each of us the Caesar salad, assuring me that there couldn't possibly be anything in the salad that I could not eat. He ordered two Scotch-on-the-rocks. We relaxed a bit, chatting, while waiting for our salads. Both of us were hungry (though we both denied it), so he offered me a piece of bread from the basket on the table. I said, "Shouldn't we wash?" He flushed and said, "You go, and I'll go with you," escorting me to the lady's room door and going to the men's room. Silently we returned to the table together; he put a napkin on his head, and made a fast bracha. The couple at the next table were watching.

When the salad was served, the dressing looked questionable, but I ate it anyway, to avoid any further confrontation. As we munched our salads, we heard the young man at the next table tell his date that he had attended a well-known Manhattan yeshiva all the way from kindergarten through High School. We struck up a conversation with the couple (my date had many mutual acquaintances through the young man's school). The girl took the blame for taking the yeshiva graduate to this restaurant, but the young man seemed comfortable enough, eating and drinking with gusto.

My date was becoming anxious to leave, despite the fact that all he had to eat was bread and salad. I proceeded to take out a little bencher from my handbag, at which point my date simply excused himself from the table. When he returned, I told him that I had waited for him to make the Birkat Hamazon. He apologized and said that he had nothing with which to cover his head, and preferred to walk away while I said my prayers. "I have embarrassed you", I said. He quickly retorted, "On the contrary, had you not taken out the bencher, I would have questioned your sincerity!"

(continued on page 6)

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Friday, December 2		Thursday, January 5 — ROSH CHODESH SHEVAT	
Kindle 3 Chanuka Candles	4:05 P.M.	Morning Services	7:00 and 7:40 A.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:09 P.M.	Friday, January 6	
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	4:20 P.M.	Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:24 P.M.
Oneg Shabbat	8:30 P.M.	Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	4:35 P.M.
Friday, December 3 (Miketz) — SHABBAT CHANUKA		Oneg Shabbat	8:30 P.M.
Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.	Saturday, January 7 (Bo)	
Talmud and Bible Classes	3:25 P.M.	Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.
Mincha	4:10 P.M.	Talmud and Bible Classes	3:40 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv	4:25 P.M.	Mincha	4:25 P.M.
Wednesday, December 7 — ROSH CHODESH TEVET		Daily Mincha and Maariv	4:40 P.M.
Morning Services	7:00 and 7:40 A.M.	Friday, January 13	
Friday, December 9		Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:31 P.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:09 P.M.	Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	4:40 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	4:20 P.M.	Oneg Shabbat	8:30 P.M.
Oneg Shabbat	8:30 P.M.	Saturday, January 14 (Beshalach)	
Saturday, December 10 (Vayigash)		Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.
Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.	Talmud and Bible Classes	3:45 P.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes	3:25 P.M.	Mincha	4:30 P.M.
Mincha	4:10 P.M.	Daily Mincha and Maariv	4:45 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv	4:25 P.M.	Thursday, January 19 — TU B'SHEVAT	
Friday, December 16 — ASARA B'TEVET		Friday, January 20	
Morning Services	7:00 and 7:30 A.M.	Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:39 P.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:10 P.M.	Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	4:50 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	4:20 P.M.	Oneg Shabbat	8:30 P.M.
Oneg Shabbat	8:30 P.M.	Final Oneg Shabbat of this season	
Saturday, December 17 (Vayechee)		Saturday, January 21 (Yitro)	
Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.	Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes	3:25 P.M.	Talmud and Bible Classes	3:55 P.M.
Mincha	4:10 P.M.	Mincha	4:40 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv	4:25 P.M.	Daily Mincha and Maariv	4:55 P.M.
Friday, December 23		Friday, January 27	
Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:12 P.M.	Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:48 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	4:25 P.M.	Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	5:00 P.M.
Oneg Shabbat	8:30 P.M.	Saturday, January 28 (Mishpatim)	
Saturday, December 24 (Shemot)		Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.
Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.	Talmud and Bible Classes	4:05 P.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes	3:25 P.M.	Mincha	4:50 P.M.
Mincha	4:10 P.M.	Daily Mincha and Maariv	5:05 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv	4:30 P.M.	Friday, February 3 — ROSH CHODESH ADAR I	
Friday, December 30		Morning Services	7:00 and 7:40 A.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:18 P.M.	Kindle Shabbat Candles	4:56 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	4:30 P.M.	Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	5:05 P.M.
Oneg Shabbat	8:30 P.M.	Saturday, February 4 (Terumah) — SHABBAT ROSH CHODESH	
Saturday, December 31 (Vaera)		Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.
Shabbat Morning Service	8:30 A.M.	Talmud and Bible Classes	4:10 P.M.
Talmud and Bible Classes	3:35 P.M.	Mincha	4:55 P.M.
Mincha	4:20 P.M.	Daily Mincha and Maariv	5:10 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv	4:35 P.M.	Friday, February 10	
Sunday, January 1		Kindle Shabbat Candles	5:05 P.M.
Morning Services	7:15 and 8:30 A.M.	Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat	5:15 P.M.

A BAALAT TESHUVA EATS OUT WITH THE FROOMIES (continued...)

As he drove me home, I felt the anguish of my "test" from Hashem. I candidly revealed to my date that had he asked me out before Rosh Hashanna I would have "eaten fish". He told me that I was making a big mistake, and that the majority of "modern Orthodox" people (and he knows the community very, very well) "eat fish out". "You will regret having made this decision. You will shrink your world, and you will see how hard you have made your life!" And once again I heard the familiar refrain: "The trouble with you 'Baal-Teshuvaniks' is that you take this thing too far!"