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Vol. VI No. 3

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BERESHITH "IN THE BEGINNING"

Adar 5753/March 1993

JAN TISHREI Z

PASSOVER, THE REAL JEWISH NEW YEAR

by Rabbi Moshe Frank

We have always known Rosh Hashana as the Jewish New Year. But, is Rosh Hashana, the birthday of the world, actually, the *Jewish* New Year? There is no question that certain observances on Rosh Hashana are strictly Jewish in nature, such as Shofar blowing and *Tashlich*; however, the universality of the Rosh Hashana days, as expressed in our liturgy, seems to indicate that Rosh Hashana is not the *Jewish* New Year. It is true that only Jews recognize these days as High Holidays, and come to the synagogue to pray to G-d for forgiveness. However, in reality, the days of Rosh Hashana are days on which the *entire* world stands in judgement before G-d Almighty -- not only the Jewish nation.

If so, then what is the real Jewish New Year? The Torah tells us (Exodus 12:2) "This month [Nisan] is for you the first month." Yes, Nisan, the month in which Passover is observed, is the first month of the Jewish calendar. And Tishrei, the month in which Rosh Hashana is observed, is referred to by the Torah as the seventh month, not the first, as we would have thought.

(cont. p.4)

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY -- BUT WHEN?

NISAN 1 IS REAL

by Steve C. Goodman

I had been feeling uncharacteristically fatigued. Probably not getting enough sleep, I thought. When it persisted, I figured I'd play it safe and see a doctor. The doctor ordered some tests. No big deal. Hardly alarming.

Several days later, and two days before our family was to leave to spend Pesach in Florida, I received a call during dinner. It was the doctor. He suggested I call off my trip. A biopsy was needed -- immediately!

Somehow, Sharon, my wife, and I, managed not to become preoccupied with fear of the unknown. The next day she and some friends koshered our home for Pesach, while I had the surgery. The following night we celebrated at our Passover Seder.

(cont. p. 2)

SECOND ANNIVERSARY KEDUSHA WALTZ

by Moshe Sorscher

We're celebrating the second anniversary
Of our minyan and the outreach program,
This is so unique in the history,
Of Young Israel of Flatbush, it's a real grand slam!

It started just over two years ago, With a service held on Friday eve, It expanded without very much ado Into a fabulous program, would you believe!

At this time, let me tell you about Our program and what we are trying to do, I'll start with the minyan, our favorite, no doubt And then I'll get into the other stuff too.

(cont. p. 3)

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY (cont. from p. 1)

It took four days and nights to get the biopsy results.

On the day of our seventh wedding anniversary, in my thirty-sixth year, I was informed I had Hodgkin's disease, a cancer of the lymph system.

Eight years earlier, I was leading a life which could only be described as charmed.

I had finally met my "beshert," the woman whom G-d had intended for me. Jewish lore states that finding one's "beshert" is a miracle equivalent to the parting of the Red Sea. No argument here.

The unifying theme of our marriage was and is our commitment to Judaism. Neither of us were raised in a religious home, but we had both come to believe that we were part of a people with a mission, a mission defined through the 613 Commandments of the Torah. The first of these "mitzvot" is: "Be fruitful and multiply."

Whether it was this knowledge or something more intuitive, after our first year of marriage it seemed only natural to begin raising a family.

Money was not a concern. The eighties were bestowing its bounty upon us. I owned ten stores when Sharon and I met, twenty when our first child Rachael was born, twenty-five a year-and-half later when we were blessed with our second, Akivah, and a year after that, the number was up to forty (stores, not children).

But ultimately the most fulfilling aspect came as a result of having learned the first mitzvah.

On September 23, 1990, after a two year, ultimately futile, struggle to hold together my business, our third child, Aryeh David, was born.

And there I was, one year later, sitting with Sharon in the clinic having just heard the word cancer. The doctor put his hand on my leg, a gesture of compassion, looked at both of us and asked "Do you have children?" "Yes," we said, "three of them, and one on the way." The doctor seemed relieved. "Why?" "Because chemotherapy can destroy sperm production. It will likely cause you to be infertile."

Shalom Yitzchak was born this past November 1st. Sharon and I had chosen to attempt to have this fourth child, despite our adverse financial circumstances, because we believed in G-d.

Unexpectedly -- and miraculously -- my current financial position is as strong as ever. Furthermore, thanks to G-d and my doctors, the cancer seems to have been licked. My life is back on track, just as it was. Except, of course, that I may not be able to have more children. Now, every time I hug Aryeh's precious body, I thank G-d who commanded us to be "fruitful and multiply," even when business is off. And when I see our gorgeous new boy, Shalom, I think of what it meant for us to do G-d's will over our own.

BE FRUITFUL
AND MULTIPLY
(GEN: 1:28)

My dream of 100+ stores and centi-millionairehood seemed all but inevitable. But as the boom days of the eighties came to a close, so, due to adverse conditions, did several of my stores. Competition had grown overwhelming, and the strategy that had served our family business for twenty-five years was no longer viable. My business dreams, net worth, and to great extent my own self worth came crashing down around me.

Thank G-d I was anchored in something beyond my career. Four years earlier I had became a serious Jew, observing Shabbat, kashrut and family purity. I was learning Torah on a regular basis, and was even President of a wonderful synagogue.

I will always be grateful that I learned in time to trust in G-d, and resist the temptation to overestimate my ability to plan the future.

Be fruitful and multiply. When? Now!

Dedicated to my close friends who have unfailingly been with me; the neatest wife and family ever granted anyone; and Rabbi Bertram of Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem who challenged me to put these thoughts in writing. I love you all.

Steve Goodman is a businessman living in St. Louis, Missouri. He and his wife Sharon are graduates of the Lincoln Square Synagogue Beginners Service.

KIDUSHA WALTZ (cont. from p. 1)

We meet each and every Saturday
To the Lord up above, we sing and we pray
With wonderful people, who care for each other
Who always take pleasure in helping one another.

We start every Shabbat at ten, Well, sometimes we're a bit late, now and then For *Brachot*, *Yishtabach* and *Barchu* we rise And then comes the *Shma*, when we cover our eyes.

Softly we daven the *Shmoneh Esray*Feet together and we don't even speak
Three steps backwards and forward, we bow and we sway
And then learn about, the Torah portion of the week.

Just before *Mussaf*, it's been our custom To say a prayer for Israel and one for the sick The *Amida*, *Kedushah*, *Aleinu*, *Adon Olam* Then off to the kiddush, "hurry up and be quick!"

Our other activities, we will not ignore, The courses and workshops, high quality galore, Bible classes and Talmud and history, Hebrew reading, the Psalms and Ethnicity.

Holiday workshops are very well attended. We learn what's allowed and what's not recommended We study the laws and observe by example And to show what I mean, I'll give a little sample.

We had sessions on Tisha B'av and Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, don't forget Sukkot! We held the Lulav and Etrog and learned about the Succah And had a great time celebrating Chanukah.

On Purim we all enjoyed lots of fun Dressed up in costumes, some were so well done, Made noise with the graggers, at Haman, we jeered, And Mordechai our hero, and Queen Esther were cheered.

SATURDAY IS THE BEST NO DEMANDS AT ALL!
PERFECT
FREEDOM!

For Pesach we learned, that you cannot eat pasta, Must drink the four cups, with *Maror* and *Matza* We asked *Mah Nishtana* and read the *Haggadah* And sang the *Dayenu* and also *Chad Gadyah*.

My message to you, if you've just only begun You may find it hard, but it's a whole lotta fun! Don't give up, hang in there and keep up the spirit And soon you will find, that the sky is the limit.

And so many of you, who've been with us a while Thanks for your patience, your grace and your smile You don't get upset, you're really sweet and very nice When I repeat all those things, that you've heard once or twice.

For Rabbi Auman and Barry our president, Thanks for your kind words of encouragement, The support and inspiration of your administration Has given our congregation a great reputation.

I also want to thank our committee
They're friendly and helpful and gracious and witty
With Yechiel and Dennis, David, Gerry and Joel
Tziporah, Sarita, Elayne, Joyce, Judy and Yael.

Finally to you, our extended *mishpacha*, We wish you all, both *mazal* and *bracha*, May you continue to grow, in Torah and *Midot*, And do lots of *chesed*, good deeds and *mitzvot*.

You're all so terrific and wonderful too, May good health and wealth be yours and come true Now let's sing together, cause this day's for you, Happy second anniversary to you!

Moshe Sorscher is a pension consultant. He is the outreach coordinator at the Young Israel of Flatbush where he leads its Beginners Service.





THE REAL JEWISH NEW YEAR (cont. from p. 1)

What is it that makes Passover so special, that the month in which it falls is the first month of the Jewish Year?

The genesis of our independence took place on Passover. With the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, G-d told us that he wanted us as His nation -- His people. That fateful night, as we prepared to leave Egypt, we started on our way to becoming G-d's chosen people, making Passover a uniquely Jewish holiday.

The Exodus forged us into a people ready for "nationhood" -- a nation ready to accept G-d's Torah a mere seven weeks later. Once we received the Torah, the bond between us and G-d was solidified, never to be severed.

Since the Torah was given at Sinai we've become known as the People of the Book. Not because we read novels, newspapers and the <u>Wall Street Journal</u>, but because we are the *Am Ha Torah*, the nation which accepted the Torah to read it again and again, to constantly examine it, to grow old and grey over it and swerve not from it, for there is nothing more excellent than it (Ethics of the Fathers 5:25). The Exodus prepared us for our *raison d'etre*, to study the eternal truths of the Torah, and to live our lives according to the instructions in this manual of manuals.

On Rosh Hashana, the entire world recognizes G-d as the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Passover focuses on the special relationship between G-d and His nation, Israel. Let us try this Yom Tov to renew that relationship with our Creator. *Chag Sameach*!

Rabbi Moshe Frank is the rabbi of Congregation Ezrath Israel in Ellenville, NY and leads its Beginners program.

A POEM

by Lynn Tobin

G-d_i Are you calling me? I can't see – I've a blind spot in my mind:

G-d — Are you calling me? I can't bear Above the ring of my fear.

All I've got is a buman heart
All I've got is imperfection
All I've got is the will to start
Walking closer in your direction

G-d – Are you calling me? Is it true? Or just me calling you.

Lynn Tobin is an ESL teacher and a member of the West Side Institutional Synagogue Beginners Program.

Illustrations by Lynne Doynow Telephone (212) 873-3389

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Readers: This is your newsletter, and we'd like to hear from you. Article contributions are always welcome.



CELEBRATING THE SEDER WITH ABBA

by Ephraim Buchwald

American Jews who have some traditional background usually speak of "conducting" a Seder. My friend, RL, once told me that most assimilated Jews who attend a Seder use a different expression: They "sweat it out!"

My father of blessed memory, never "conducted" a Seder, and certainly never "sweated it out". Abba (father) always "prah'vidt" (celebrated) a Seder, as he said in Yiddish. William Safire would probably say he exulted, jubilated or reveled in the Seder.

Abba was the type of Jew who feverishly anticipated Pessach's arrival, and began

preparations for his beloved festival long before the customary days. Born in Poland, and arriving at these shores in at age 16, vividly recalled (and made certain his "Yankee" wife and 3 children recalled) what it was like preparing Biala Pessach in shtetel of Podolska, a and 7,000 Jews 6,500 Poland's gentiles near northeastern border with Russia. The house literally taken apart piece The straw piece. changed mattresses were with great fanfare. The shtetel Jews were so poor,

that it was usually only at Pessach time that the Hebrew greeting "Tischadesh" ("wear it in good health") was heard, for those lucky enough to have new clothes especially tailored for Pessach.

Abba's vivid memories of Europe never seemed to leave him for even a moment of the 72 years he subsequently dwelt in the USA. My big sister, 12 years my elder, and my little sister, 2 years my elder, and I, watched with eyes aglow, as Abba, unusually late in February or early March, started taking down the special corrugated boxes marked "Pessach" in Hebrew, filled with the dishes and utensils. By then, Abba had already prepared his special "Kosher for Passover sink" -- a new wooden fruit box obtained from the local market. He built it to fit perfectly in the bathtub, where he washed each Pessach plate,

glass, spoon, fork, knife and silver utensil with special care and devotion.

Abba loved his Pessach dishware with a passion. Each year he would, on numerous occasions, excitedly call in his wife and children into his Passover "kitchen" to kvell with him over the beautiful long stemmed exoticly colored glass which he had just polished to a high sparkle. (Being one of America's all time great bargain hunters, Abba had probably bought the glass for less than a nickel at Gimbel's or Macy's "double close-out basement remnant sale," long before the cellar

had become the fashionable boutique it is today.)

Mother prepared the Seder meal with great care, of course, according to Abba's abundant and tastes instructions. There was a palpable sense excitement when the Seder began, which is probably not uncommon in many homes. But Abba's enthusiasm was so contagious, that each our family of member approached the Seder in an emotional state approaching ecstacy. We truly felt the Divine Presence.

The Buchwald family did not "read" the Haggadah, we "chanted" the Haggadah text

with the special chanting melody Abba had learned in Biala. All of us were expected to master that chant, and Abba would often repeat a portion of the Haggadah if one of the missed the designated readers intonation while leading the chanting. Many songs were sung, often in harmony, and amazingly Abba joyfully allowed his younger children to intrude on his Biala traditions by singing the Passover songs we had learned in the Soloveitchik Yeshiva choir. Everyone was expected to lead a portion of the Haggadah reading -- even poor mother, whom my father often described as having the "dearest" (most expensive) Hebrew, having taken countless Ulpan Hebrew classes with limited success. Inevitably, we would convulse with laughter to tears when mother really savaged a particular Hebrew word in her assigned reading.



Each year Abba would tell the same stories — about the old widow who opened the door for Elijah the Prophet. The sudden light scared the bearded goat, who jumped into the old lady's hut, and made shambles of the table. The little old lady, who had already imbibed three cups of wine, begs the "guest": "Reb Elya (Elijah), eat, drink — but please don't break the dishes!" Or the limerick about Pharoah losing his pants. It was more than fon, it was more than spiritual. It was fentasyland come true — something Disney could never match.

When we received a "slinky" or a climbing-ladder-man as a reward for returning the Afikoman -- we children were ecstatic. (Much more excited by that gift, than the walkman or CL disc player kids receive today!)

We danced with great fervor at Leshana Haba'a Bi'rushalayim (Next Year in Jerusalem), and sang Adir Hu and Chad Gadyah until the wee hours of the morning. In his traditional cheadfastness, Abba would announce each year that if he moved to Israel (which was his lifelong dream), he would insist on cele-

brating $\underline{\text{two}}$ Seders, because you can't fully appreciate the first one, being too exhausted from the preparations.

Last year, Abba celebrated his Pessach Seder for the first time without his beloved wife of 59 years. He refused to join me or my sisters in Israel, the hotel or at our homes. He wanted to be with his beloved Passover utensils. Sure enough, more than a month before Passover, he began his regular ritual of preparation — letting us know at each step how beautiful things looked. And so at age 88 1/2 years, he celebrated together with an elderly gentleman friend of his, whom he had invited over for the holiday, and regaled him with his customs, melodies, witticisms, Torah, and the delicious food he had cooked — the traditional Buchwald fare.

Pessach without Abba will never be the same -- despite the wonderful traditions which he bequeathed to us as our legacy. When Moshiach comes, I have a sneaky suspicion that it will be Abba who is called upon to lead the intercelestial Seder.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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Talmud and Bible Classes	
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Daily Mincha and Maariv7:30 p.m.	•
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Wednesday, May 5th Pesach Shaini
Friday, May 7th
Kindle Shabbat Candles
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat
Saturday, May 8th (EMOR)
Shabbat Morning Services8:45 a.m.
Daf Yomi
Talmud Class
Winchs7:35 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv7:50 p.m.
Sunday, May 9th Lag B'Omer
Friday, May 14th
Kindle Shabbat Candles
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat6:45 & 7:50 p.m
Saturday, May 15th (BEHAR-BECHUKKATAI)
Shabbat Morning Services8:45 a.m.
Daf Yomi
Talmud Class7:00 p.m.
Mincha7:45 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv8:00 p.m.
Wednesday, May 19th Yom Yerushalayim
Horning Services 7 & 7:40 a.m.
Friday, May 21st Rosh Chodesh Sivan
Morning Services 7 & 7:40 a.m.
Kindle Shabbat Candles
Mincha and Manhatat Shabbat
Saturday, May 22nd (BEMIDBAR)
Shabbat Morning Services
Rible Class
Talmud Class7:05 p.m.
Mincha7:50 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv8:05 p.m.
Tuesday May 25th Shavuot Eve
Tuesday May 25th Shavuot Eve Kindle Yom Tov Candles
Mincha and Kabbalat Yom Tov
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Wednesday, May 26th Shavuot-1st day
Hamhkama Minyan4:50 a.m. Main Minyan
Daf Yomi & Bible class7:00 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Yom Tov8:00 p.m.
Kindle You Tov candles not before8:58 p.m.
Thursday, May 27th Shavuot-2nd day
Yom Tov Morning Services including Yizkor8:00 & 8:45 a m
Daf Yomi & Bible class
Mincha followed by Seudah Shlisheet Neilat Hachag7:45 p.m.
Friday, May 18th
Kindle Shabbat candles
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