

ברשת

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BERESHITH: "In the Beginning"

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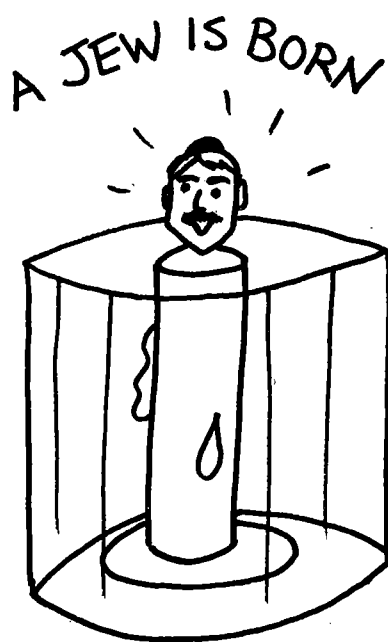
A TENTH MAN

by Mark Seth Lender

I light a yahrtzeit candle for my grandfather every year. He would not approve. Although he is the root of my Jewishness, he was an atheist, and although he always made a Seder, took great and approving pride in my Bar Mitzvah, and helped put me through college on Israel Bonds, he steadfastly did not believe in G-d. A few months ago, out of candles, I went to the White Street Synagogue, an Orthodox shul around the corner from where I live in the Tribeca area of New York City. The rabbi, young and new to the shul and to the job, was alone in the building and together we rummaged through the storage room. It took a while and we had a chance to talk. He was having trouble rebuilding a Friday night minyan, he said. There had been no rabbi for two years, the community was changing, people were out of the habit. I took my candles, made a contribution and left.

The next night I went to daven Maariv for the first time in my life. I was the "tenth" that night. My Hebrew was rusty and I did not know the service, but when the rabbi saw me, he greeted me with some enthusiasm, tried to explain everything. "Good Shabbos," people said as they shook my hand. I was in this foreign place, this strange and ancient place and yet I felt so *welcome*. And at the end they shook my hand again. They did not know me but they were glad to see me. There was no judgment, no preconditions, no interrogation of belief or the lack of it. I was a Jew coming home. That was enough.

(cont. p.2)



TRANSFORMATIONS

by Sharon Ann Baratt

Before my daughter, Jackie, started kindergarten at the Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington, I had never given much thought to what being an "observant" Jew entailed. In fact, she was the catalyst for me to become more observant.

As she progressed through kindergarten and started asking some very pertinent questions, I became more and more aware of the depth of my lack of knowledge of Judaism. I confided with a very close friend of mine, Ellen, and told her how embarrassed and ignorant I was when I couldn't answer my daughter's questions. Ellen directed me to Beth Sholom Congregation in Potomac, Maryland, and Rabbi Tessler's Monday night "Mitzvot" (cont. p.4)

SHAVUOT: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

by Rabbi Yaakov Mayer

Shavuot commemorates the awesome event experienced by the children of Israel seven weeks after their Exodus from Egypt when they camped at the foot of Mt. Sinai somewhere in the Sinai Peninsula. This event was the Revelation, when G-d's will was revealed to Israel. It marked the declaration of the Ten Commandments. Though these commandments do not constitute the entire Torah, which consists of 613 commandments, they were its foundation. The Ten Commandments also became the moral bedrock for much of Western civilization.

The Revelation was an event of awesome proportions and a unique spiritual experience that indelibly stamped (cont. p. 2)

(cont. from p. 1) (MISSION ACCOMPLISHED)
the Israelites with their unique character, their faith,
and their destiny.

In the prayer book, the festival of Shavuot is referred to as *Zman matan Torateinu*, "the season of the giving of our Torah," for this is the dominant theme of the festival. The everlasting significance of this theme is emphasized by the answer to the question of why this festival is not instead called "the season of the receiving of our Torah." The answer lies in the fact that while the receiving may have taken place at a particular time, or on a particular date, the giving of the Torah continues to take place every day and everywhere to each individual Jew.



While the Jews who were present at Sinai affirmed their Covenant with G-d, declaring, "We will do and we will listen" (*Naaseh V'nishma*), the Torah emphasizes that "Neither with you only [do I make this Covenant], but with him that stands here with us, and also with him that is not here with us this day" (Deut.29:13-14). The Talmud interprets the latter part of this verse as a clear reference also to future generations of Jews, and to the future proselytes who would later accept the faith (Talmud, *Shavuot* 39a).

The festival of Shavuot emphasizes the spiritually significant lesson that the release from bondage and the winning of political freedom which we experienced on Passover does not constitute complete freedom, unless it culminates in the spiritual restraints, disciplines and duties inherent in the Revelation to Israel and in Israel's acceptance of the Torah.

This is perhaps why the Talmud refers to the holiday of Shavuot by the name "*Atzeret*," which implies a concluding festival. This indicates that the Shavuot festival is regarded as a continuation of, and conclusion to, the holiday of Passover. Without Shavuot and the receiving/acceptance of the Torah, the miracles

of Passover would not have served as great a purpose, and would not have culminated in our Jewish nationhood. Without the Torah, there are no Jews. Without the Jews, there is no Jewish nation. On Shavuot we finally claim "mission Exodus accomplished."

The name "Shavuot," as the Torah calls the festival, means simply "weeks," and is derived from the fact that it is observed after seven full weeks of counting from the second day of Passover.

Shavuot's significance as an agricultural festival in the land of Israel is also reflected in the two other names by which this festival is known: *Chag Hakatzir*, "the Festival of the Harvest," for it marks the harvesting of the wheat, the last grain harvest of the season, and *Yom HaBikkurim*, the "Day of the First Fruits," for it also marks the beginning of the fruit harvest, and was the occasion for the bringing of the first ripe fruits to the Temple as an offering of thanksgiving.

As we celebrate, it is important that we remember the multitude of profound meanings and insights represented in the wonderful festival of Shavuot.

Rabbi Yaakov Meyer is Director of the Division of Community Activities, Yeshiva Toras Chaim, and leads the Beginners Service at the East Denver Orthodox Synagogue.

(cont. from p. 1) (A TENTH MAN)

I have made friends at shul. In order to be able to feed them at my house, with my wife's consent I koshered our kitchen. This Passover we were invited to our first Orthodox Seder. We met for Maariv, then walked to the building where our host lives and climbed twelve flights of steps. (I was in the company of friends, so the ascent went quickly.) The Seder lasted from 8:30 p.m. till 2:30 in the morning and did not feel like it went so quickly. But I learned a lot, and I'll do it again next year.

I do not yet feel comfortable with everything in Orthodox practice. We have our arguments about the role of women, for instance, about certain constraints I find untenable. These days I am no longer tenth man -- the congregation has begun to grow again. Although I still feel needed, I am not essential, and yet I am. So I go, for myself, for those of blessed memory who proceeded me, for those who are here, and for those who are not, the great lost generation of our people and the million Jewish children who did not live to hear the words or learn the tune and on whose behalf I also sing: "*Hashem Echod*," "The Lord is One!"

Mark Seth Lender is a writer and sculptor living in Manhattan, who attends the White Street Synagogue.

S U M M E R

P R O G R A M S ' 9 0

Ascent Institute

Shaul Leiter, Director / P.O. Box 296, Tzefat, Israel / 06-971-407 or c/o Horowitz / 1436 President Street, Brooklyn, NY 11225
Daily walking tours of Sefad, lectures and discussions, weekly day hikes and two and one half day hiking seminars. Shabbat seminars and meals. Beginners through advanced. Youth hostels available.

Bais Chana Institute for Women

Rabbi Manis Friedman / 15 Montclair Court, St. Paul, MN 55116 / 612-698-3858
Women: Relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for women to discover the essence of Judaism with world renowned lecturer, Rabbi Manis Friedman. Classes include Chassidic Philosophy, Bible, Prophets and Jewish Law.

Camp Nageela

Rabbi David Shenker, Director / Jewish Education Program of Long Island / 8 Spruce Street, Cedarhurst, NY 11516 / 516-374-1528
Girls: Ages 9-13, July 1-July 23 in Woodbridge, NY. Full recreational camping, (sleep-away), integrated with the experience of traditional Jewish living. For girls with minimal background. Program includes all sports, indoor and outdoor swimming, specialties, nature trips and informal Jewish learning. Experienced counselors may apply.

Drisha Institute for Jewish Education

Rabbi David Silber, Director / 122 West 76th Street, New York, NY 10023 / 212-595-0307
Women: Summer Institute from June 25-August 3. Monday-Thursday, 9 AM - 5 PM. For women of college age or older. Intensive textual study. Full day program in New York City. Courses in Bible, Talmud, Codes and Philosophy.
Summer High School Program from June 25-July 27. Monday-Thursday 9 AM - 5 PM. Friday 9 AM to 2 PM. For high school women, intensive textual study.

Etz Chaim Center for Jewish Studies

Rabbi Shlomo Porter, Director / 3702 Fords Lane, Baltimore, MD 21215 / 301-764-1553
Camp Louise Shabbaton - held late Spring - call now! Drop-in Center with library. Summer classes and special programs. Russian Outreach. Mifgush Yisraeli - for Israelis. Women's Institute for Torah - Advanced and Beginner's programs.

Isralight

Rabbi David Aaron, Director
3 Ararat Street, Old City, Jerusalem, Israel 97601
02-285-785 or 175 East Olive, Suite 206, Burbank, CA 91502
Men and Women: Six weeks in the Old City of Jerusalem, Tours and Jewish Studies.

The Ivy League Torah Study Program

Mrs. Susa Alperowitz, Director
824 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213
718-735-0237, 1-800-33-NCJEE
Men and Women: June 18-July 29. Offering college and graduate students the opportunity to live and learn authentic Torah Judaism in the Catskill Mountain Region of upstate New York. For all levels of learning in Bible, Jewish Law and Philosophy, Hebrew Language, electives and tutorials, etc. Fellowship includes room and board plus \$1,200 to students who complete the program.

The Jerusalem Fellowships

Ms. Eve Chernoff / 1220 Broadway, #610, New York, NY 10001 / 212-643-8800 or Rabbi David Green / 296 Wilson Avenue, P.O. Box 936, Thornhill, Ontario L3T 4A5 / 416-881-2001
Men and women: 6 weeks leadership/study/politics in Israel. Age 18 and over. Seminars and workshops on Judaism and Israel.

Jewish Heritage Center of Queens/Long Island

Rabbi Moshe Turk, Rabbi Naftali Portnoy / 68-54 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11367 / 718-575-3100
Summer in Israel - 1990. For Men and Women. Singles and Young Couples. 2 and 4 week programs of study (with touring) run in conjunction with major kiruv organizations in Jerusalem. Group will be accompanied and personally supervised by rabbis of the Jewish Heritage Center. Substantial subsidies available for beginners. Summer Institute of Evening classes throughout Queens and Long Island for adult men and women.

The Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach

Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett / 39 Broadway, Suite 3004, New York, NY 10006 / 212-785-1550; 800-431-2272 (Outside NY State)
Study and touring program in Israel from June 3-August 1 for only \$399. (Round trip air fare included). Partial programs also available. The program is designed for men ages 18-30 with minimal backgrounds in Jewish learning.

The Jewish Learning Network of Michigan Machon L'Torah

Rabbi Avraham Jacobovitz, Director
15221 W. Ten Mile, Oak Park, MI 48237
Israel program open to all intellectually motivated young Jewish men and women ages 18-25. From June 25-July 22 (some flexibility on dates). 20 full and partial scholarships available. Classes in Current Jewish Events, Jewish Philosophy and the Oral Law in a Contemporary Society. Tours throughout the country, combining educational significance and a sense of history.

The Jewish Renaissance Center

Rabbi Yitzchok Kirzner, Rabbi Chaim Kohn, Mrs. Leah Kohn, Directors / 210 West 91 Street, New York, NY 10024 / 212-580-9666

Women: Special Week of Learning for Women, July 8-16. One week intensive Torah study on the Upper West Side of Manhattan with full range of classes; housing, meals and Shabbaton in beautiful Moussey included in tuition.

Summer Semester July 16-August 15. Full and part-time learning program; day and evening classes available. Dormitory available for full-time students.

Men and Women: Class in Brooklyn and Manhattan Monday through Thursday evenings. Sunday morning class in Great Neck.

Kol Yaakov Yeshiva

Rabbi Aaron Parry, Coordinator / 29 West Maple Avenue, Monsey, NY 10952 / 914-425-3871; 914-425-2863

Men: Full day yeshiva learning for beginners through advanced levels. Individual programs arranged.

Lincoln Square Summer Torah Institute

Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Director / Lincoln Square Synagogue / 200 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10023 / 212-874-6105

Men and Women Ages: 18-60: 6 weeks, evening courses. Beginner, intermediate, advanced levels, Chavrusah Program. Start May 21-Mid July.

Livnot U'Lehlanot: The Tzefat Program

Mrs. Julie Dombrow / 515 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022 / 212-752-2390
Men and Women (co-ed): 20-30 years old. Three month program of work/study in Tzefat. Sessions begin in March, June and September.

Machon Alta Women's Institute

Rabbi J. Rosenfeld / Rehov Yerushalayim 33, Tzefat, Israel / 06-974306, 06-974307, 06-931507
Women: Learn Torah in the holy city of Tzefat. Courses for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels in Bible, Jewish Law, Prayer, Chassidus and Ulpan. Private Tutors, One-year Teacher Training Seminar, Diploma from Israeli government to teach Jewish Studies in the Diaspora; Community outreach working with children; Shabbat and Yom Tov with families in warm Chassidic environment. Summer, winter and spring terms; students accepted throughout the year.

Machon Meir Institute for Jewish Studies

2 Hameiri Blvd., Kiryat Moshe, Jerusalem, Israel 02-525-997, 531-906
Men: Machon Meir; Women: Machon Ora. Complete yeshiva program with structured Hebrew Ulpan, includes dorm, tours and college credits.

Neve Yerushalayim College for Women

Ms. Patricia Papock; Ms. Lise Zolot / 25 Broadway, #403, New York, NY 10004 / 212-422-1110
Summer Study Program in Israel: Women 18-30. June 6-August 6. A full-time program of classes in Jewish studies offered on levels from beginning to advanced. Includes one-on-one sessions: Hebrew Ulpan; some tours, Shabbat and special programs. Contact Ms. Lise Zolot.

Two Week Summer Study Mission in Israel: Mature individuals; July 11-26. Single professional women and married couples unable to take extended time off for learning but wishing to benefit from the Neve experience. Includes one-on-one and small-group sessions, Shabbat and special programs. Option of supplementing with some tours. Contact Ms. Patricia Papock.

Ohr HaTorah Institute of Judaic Studies

Rabbi Dov Hillel Klein / 2014 Orrington, Evanston, IL 60201 / 708-869-8060

Men: July 8-July 29. In the relaxed setting of suburban Illinois, students will have the opportunity to examine the contemporary relevance of Torah study and Jewish observance. Beginning and intermediate levels in Talmud, Bible, Hebrew, Jewish Mysticism, as well as Jewish Business and Medical Ethics. Rabbi Schneur Gafni, Rosh Yeshiva of Kfar Chabad, Israel is the resident Rosh Yeshiva.

Ohr Somayach Summer Series

Rabbi Avraham Braun / P.O. Box 334, Monsey, NY 10952 / 914-425-370

Men: Ages 18-35; Levels: Beginner through advanced. Subjects: Talmud, Mishna, Bible, Jewish Philosophy, Laws and Customs. Cost: \$50 per week, scholarships available. Nestled at the foot of the Catskill Mountains, series offers young Jewish men the opportunity to learn about Judaism at a variety of levels. Our rustic, wooded campus is located in a community where students can directly experience the lifestyle which they are learning. The communal atmosphere and relaxed environment will provide a meaningful opportunity for informal contact among students and the teaching staff. Participants will enjoy the privacy of modern, spacious rooms in our beautiful, newly-completed student residence facility. Ongoing sessions from May through July allow students to come anytime and stay for one week or three months.

Ohr Torah Institutions

Mrs. Rivka Demsky / POB 1037, Efrat, Israel 90962 / 02-931-911

Women: Midreshet Lindenbaum (formerly Bruria) June 24-July 31, Rechnvia, Jerusalem. Beginner through advanced levels. Class room shiurim and chevruta learning. Lunch plan, dormitory accommodation, study trips.

Men: Yeshivat HaMivtar (Brovender's) June 17-July 31. Efrat, Gush Etzion. Beginner through advanced levels - Yeshiva program. Classes in Chumash, Talmud, Nach, Jewish philosophy. Chevruta study, dormitory and meals provided.

Parties Institute of Jewish Studies

American Pades Foundation / Ms. Linda Beltz PO Box 58, Roseland, NJ 07068 / (703) 527-9246
Men and Women, from July 9-July 19. A non-denominational organization based in Israel. Featuring classes for men and women in English, using traditional yeshiva methods of textual study. Classes in Chumash, Mishnah and 1 week mini-courses in Morality, Modernity and the Jewish Tradition.

Rabbinical College of America

Rabbi Baruch Klor / 226 Sussex Avenue, Morris-town, NJ 07960 / 201-267-3774

Enthusiastic Jewish studies on beautiful 15 acre country setting. Beginners through advanced levels. Classes in Talmud, Jewish Philosophy, Bible and Code of Jewish Law. Experienced and caring staff to assist in studies. Summer and year round programs.

Women's Institute for Torah Study

17 Ben Yehudah St. Baka, Jerusalem, Israel 93623
02-717-745, 288-127

Classes in Chumash, Talmud, Nach, Jewish Philosophy. Knowledge of Hebrew advisable as texts are studied in the original. Classes, chevruta, study tours.

Yeshiva Torat Chaim

Shaulson 8/2, Har Nof, Jerusalem, Israel 02-535-426, 531-914

Men: A busy academic atmosphere with caring personal attention which creates an ideal learning environment in Talmud, Code of Jewish Law, Bible, Prophets, Rambam, Ulpan and Chassidic Philosophy. Beginner through advanced levels.

Yosef Gutnick Summer Scholarship Program

Rabbi Tuvia Bolton / C/O Yeshiva Tomchei T'minim / Kfar Chabad, Israel 011-972-39-606-583 / Fax: 011-972-39-606-826

In U.S. call, Rabbi Chaim Binyomin Burstyn 718-493-3822; Yitzchok Hurwitz 212-577-3464

Program runs from July 1-30 for beginners to advanced learners. Classes in Jewish Philosophy, Gemorrah, Jewish Law, Classic and Contemporary Chassidic Thought, Chumash with Rashi; Practical Workshops in Tefillin, Tsitsis, and Mezuzaos; tours of Israel. Travel and tuition subsidies are available.

Yeshiva Midgal Torah

The Jewish Learning Center of Illinois
Rabbi Ahron Levinsky; Rabbi Avrohom M. Alter / 2726-28 West Pratt St., Chicago, IL 60645
312-465-7600

Classes are open to men and women of all ages affording Jewish adults, regardless of previous Jewish education or background, the opportunity to become better acquainted with our rich heritage. Ongoing weekly classes, and special summer seminars, are offered in a warm, educational and non-threatening atmosphere where participants explore, experience and achieve a greater awareness of their Judaism.

The Summer Outreach Program Guide is produced as a service to the Jewish community by the
AJOP Task Force on Effective Programming, 500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3104, New York, NY 10110; Tel.: (212) 221-2567

(cont. from p. 1) (TRANSFORMATIONS)

classes." Jackie and I began attending Beth Sholom regularly. The Monday night classes led to more classes for me, such as the Women's *Pirke Avos* ("Ethics of the Fathers") class conducted by Rabbi Tessler every other Shabbos.

In recent months, Beth Sholom Congregation has launched a series of classes on davening for Beginners, led by Rabbi Cooperman every other Shabbos after the Torah and Haftarah readings. Rabbi Cooperman teaches the group of men and women about the concepts of the prayers, how they were developed, what the variations of the weekly versus Shabbos prayers are all about, what we actually say to G-d when we daven the prescribed prayers, and how to formulate our own personal requests as the need arises. He encourages questions, and details his answers with his own

experiences as well as with Midrashic stories.

In the early stages, I always prayed in English in my Siddur, and was easily distracted by conversation. Now I am able to read the actual Hebrew text, albeit with difficulty, but I can really concentrate. You can say that because of my daughter I've been transformed.

Jackie continues to teach me Hebrew, and, with time and study with Rabbis Tessler and Cooperman, I know I'll be reading more fluently, and praying with more *Kavannah* (awareness and meaning).

Sharon Ann Baratt is a staff assistant for the Treasury Department of the Marriott Corporation and attends the Beginners Service at Beth Sholom Congregation, Potomac, MD.

*Cartoons by Lynne Doynow
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בראשית

Bereshith: "In the Beginning" is edited under the direction of Beryl Levenson and Ariella Sofia of the National Jewish Outreach Program, Inc. Special Beginners Services are conducted at synagogues throughout the United States to introduce those with limited backgrounds to the beauty of the traditional Hebrew service. For more information regarding the Beginners Service closest to your home, to establish a local Beginners Service, or to learn more about programs of the NJOP, please write or call: 485 Fifth Avenue, Suite 212, New York, NY 10017, (212) 986-7450.

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



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DATED MATTER