



בראשית

תש"ז

Vol. X No.1

Bereshith: "In the Beginning"

5748 Tishrei/Sept. 1987

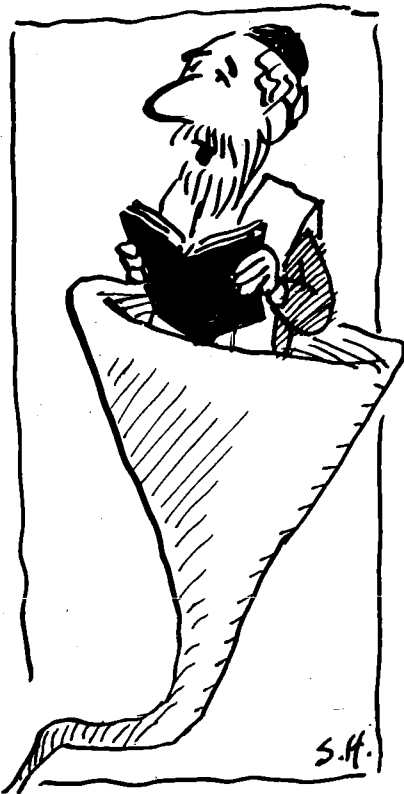
THE HIGH HOLIDAYS--MINCHA IN DISGUISE

It wasn't so very long ago that I thought a building would fall on me if I walked down the street wearing a yarmulka on my head. Now I daven in airports -- and on planes, in offices, and once or twice my schedule has required me to pull over to the side of the road and daven in the street. My embarrassment at being Jewish and religious is at a lifetime low, thank G-d, but I have become very much aware of the embarrassment I may cause others.

The others I embarrass are mostly relatives, friends and associates -- all Jews, many of whom are finding out for the first time that a Jew is expected to pray three times a day-- morning, afternoon and evening.

Morning is no problem. You get up early, either go to a minyan at a synagogue or put on tallis and t'fillin at home, and you're in kindred company, or in private. And evening is no problem, either. It's the end of the day. The tricky one is Mincha-- the afternoon prayer, which must be completed before nightfall. During most of the year Mincha falls somewhere during the business day.

(cont. p. 2)



ON THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF G-D

It was the end of the Beginner's Service, and the shmoozing was going on, when I noticed a woman (who will remain nameless for this article) standing in the corner at her customary spot. I walked over, and we started talking, and I invited her to a reading of my play for the following night. She said she'd try to make it. I had two previous readings, and for the last one, had invited 21 people, and 14 people showed up, a good turnout. For this reading, I had invited 42 people, and figured if only half showed up, I'd have a good group of people to get feedback from after the reading.

(cont. p. 4)

A TELEGRAM TO EFFIE

DEAR RABBI BUCHWALD. STOP. HOPE YOU HAD A NICE SUMMER. STOP. THANKS SO MUCH FOR ALLOWING ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BEGINNERS MINYAN. STOP. WAS INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING AND RELIGIOUSLY ENRICHING. STOP.

MADE MANY FRIENDS. STOP. ENJOYED THE KIDDUSHES. STOP. HEARD EYE-OPENING DIVREI TORAH. STOP. TOLD A FEW JOKES. STOP. ATE SOME NICE SHABBOS LUNCHES. STOP. WAS INSPIRED BY THE DAVENING. STOP. SANG SOME OF YOUR SONGS. STOP. SOME EVEN ON KEY. STOP.

LEARNED MUCH BIBLE NAVI MISHNA TALMUD AND SIDDUR. STOP. MET MANY PROPHETS

(cont. p. 4)

(cont. from p. 1) MINCHA

It is for this reason that I believe that if one single davening will preserve the Jewish people, it will not be the Kol Nidre of Yom Kippur, or the Shabbos davening, or even the Kaddish that Jewish men recite on behalf of a close relative who has died. I believe the simple, short, daily mincha will be the prayer that will take us from here to eternity.

It is not only that Mincha is the most inconvenient piece of the Jewish praying day. And it is not because it's the one that is most easily forgotten. (I have often felt an emptiness in the pit of my stomach when I realize after a busy day that night has come and Mincha has slipped my mind -- like a missed appointment with a friend.)

No, the reason that Mincha will preserve us is because it can be the most embarrassing prayer of all. At first, when one finds the courage to daven mincha in a public place it is one's own embarrassment that must be overcome. But, like that public yarmulka, the building doesn't fall on you. In fact, nothing much at all happens in the outside world. When you look around after davening, life is going on very much as before. Nobody is pointing and giggling, nobody tied your shoelaces together, nobody stole your luggage. And so it becomes easier and easier to daven almost anywhere even something of a pleasure. And it has become so for me, unless I'm with a Jew who doesn't daven mincha. Then Mincha can be difficult.



For example, I took a late afternoon flight from Los Angeles with a business friend not long ago. I had not yet had the chance for mincha until we were on the plane. Once airborne, I excused myself, went to the back of the aircraft and davened. The cabin crew is used to this. I'm sure they see it all the time. And not just on El Al. And those non-Jewish passengers passing by couldn't have cared less. But when I returned to my seat, I realized that I had caused my friend great embarrassment. He had become a noticeable Jew by association with me.

We didn't talk much about it, but I felt very sorry to have made him so self-conscious. And I understood for the first time the power of a Mincha -- of how one Jew who finds solitude in public, can thrust another Jew into a harsh spotlight, singled out as being different. Here my friend had worked all his life to be the same, the same as the society around him, and along comes this secret weapon, this Mincha, to remind a planeload of people that Jews are different. And as long as there are some Jews who daven Mincha, all Jews will feel conspicuous.

I was very sympathetic towards my friend because I knew exactly what he was going through. I had gone through those same anxieties myself, trying to disassociate myself from the Jews who advertised their Jewishness, not with jokes, but with Judaism. I also had gone through most of my life looking away from the Jewish Jews.

Recently, for the first time, I took a bus to Monsey, a very religious Jewish suburban enclave serviced by this very Jewish bus. We davened Mincha on the bus, rocking over the potholes, hanging to the luggage rack so as not to wind up in the laps of the women seated on the other side of the mechitza draped down the middle aisle. It was some trip. And probably it's halachically preferable to daven on the bus than on the street, but I couldn't help feeling that while the bus is better for the davening, the street would be better for the Jews.

(cont. p. 3)

What does all this have to do with Rosh Hashanna? Well, it is at this time of year when all kinds of Jews are apt to announce themselves as different from everyone else. Even the most non-observant take off from work, because on the High Holidays it is more embarrassing to be seen at the office, even if they don't go to synagogue. These holidays are Jewish holidays, they don't "coincide" with any other holidays. There's no hiding behind a "season". And yet it is on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur that almost any Jew will feel uncomfortable with any other Jew who does not observe even a tiny bit. (How proud all Jews were to know that Sandy Koufax wouldn't pitch in the World Series on the holidays.)

You could say that these Days of Awe, these Yomin No'raim, are to Jewish year what Mincha is to the Jewish day: a public statement of Jewishness, of differentness. And I believe it is no accident that, according to tradition, mincha was introduced into our daily ritual by Isaac. On Rosh Hashana we read the Akeida, the Torah portion recounting the binding of Isaac, who was the son of a man who dared to be boldly, publicly, conspicuously different. Abraham passed this differentness down through Isaac to us.



No wonder then that it was Isaac who davened the first Mincha -- not in his tent, not in a shul, but out in broad daylight in the field.

-Allan Leicht-

Rabbi Buchwald has been asking us to write a piece for Bereshit and no topic comes to mind. Then, 3/4 through our 4th or 5th year of autumn holiday season it hits me: "Beginner's Remorse."

It's Hoshana Rabbah. We've prayed, done Tshuvah, given Tzedakah to each and every cause -- and then some. We've eaten in the Sukkah, rain or shine; prepared meals, invited guests, herded the children to shul and groups, shopped, cleaned, and suddenly the anxiety attack. He wants to go to shul for Hoshanot (G-d knows we need his mercy more than most) leaving me with our three little ones, house to clean, more cooking to do and tonight is Yom Tov. "Hashem says the men should go to synagogue!"



Wait a minute -- no way, Jose! I quit. Finished. That's it for me! I throw in the towel! Who said I was the Aishes Chayil (woman of valor)? I can't handle the pressure of trying to do it all right. I read the Chofetz Chaim and try to reach even higher, but I'm not on that level. Not nearly. Not ever. Not me.

Remember me? I'm just a regular person. Plain old me. And that's all I can be. Somewhat more observant and aware than five years ago. That's all.

No, I won't have a cheeseburger -- not this time, and I will light the candles. But as for the rest of perfection. It will have to wait.

-Anonymous-

(cont. from p. 1) G-D

The next night, nine people showed up, and only two of the five actors. It was a big disappointment. One late arrival had thirty seconds notice and was cast in the important role of Christie. Another took on the role of the Waitress, and the woman from the corner of the beginner's service--yes, she showed up--agreed to play Lilly, "anything to help." The reading went well, and the comments were helpful, but I was still disappointed with the turnout.



The next week at the Beginner's Service we got into a long discussion on the existence and nature of G-d. One person said (and I paraphrase here), "I work hard all week, and I'm honest, and I try to help people...and nothing good ever comes of it."

I digressed to thinking about my experience with the play...thinking about how I had worked so hard (getting up at 4 a.m. five straight days to write the play; spending \$18 on copies for the reading) for seemingly so little.

Rabbi Buchwald responded to that person something to the effect that "You can never know the impact of what you do has on others...We only see the small picture...We can be doing a lot of good but missing it, because things don't turn out the way we want it."

Questions followed upon questions, and answers followed upon answers, and somehow we got to the Musaf service before noon. After we folded up the chairs, and had the Kiddish, I spotted the woman in the corner and went over to talk with her.

"How are you?" I asked.

"Fine," she said. "I enjoyed your play."

"Thank you. How'd you like acting in it?"

"It was great," she said. "I really enjoyed it."

"Had you ever done anything like that before?" I asked.

"No...never," she said. "I'm glad there were so few people there," she added, "or else I would never have been able to do it."

I smiled, and for the first time was glad for the nine people who showed up. True, I didn't have the audience I had wanted last week, but this week's picture was bigger-- it now included a person who had done "anything to help" and had derived something meaningful from it.

-Alan Magill-

Western Union

(cont. from p. 1) T E L E G R A M

JUDGES KINGS AND SAGES. STOP. INCLUDING SAMUEL NATHAN YIPHTACH DAVID CHIZKIAH (AND HIS TUNNEL) CYRUS AKIVA AND MAIMONIDIES. STOP. HEARD STORIES OF SOLOVEITCHIK RISKIN THE CHOFETZ CHAIM AND MARK TWAIN. STOP. MET MANY INTERESTING PEOPLE. STOP.

ASKED MANY QUESTIONS. STOP. WHAT DOES "HOLY" MEAN. STOP. HOW DOES ONE "LOVE" GOD. STOP. HOW COULD JUDAH THE PRINCE WRITE DOWN THE ORAL TORAH. STOP. WHO DESTROYED THE TWO TEMPLES. STOP. WHEN. STOP. HOW MANY TYPES OF BLESSINGS ARE THERE. STOP. WHY ARE THERE TWO BLESSINGS BEFORE THE "SHEMA" STOP. WHY DO THE SAGES LEARN OUT A MINYAN FROM THE STORY OF THE SPIES. STOP. WHATS IT LIKE IN THE WORLD TO COME. STOP. WHY IS THE ROOM FACING A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. STOP. WHEN IS EFFIE COMING BACK. STOP.

WAS A LOT OF FUN. STOP. LEARNED A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT. STOP. SEE MANY THINGS MUCH MORE CLEARLY. STOP. WITH A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE. STOP. LETS DO IT AGAIN REAL SOON. STOP. THANKS AGAIN. STOP. JOSEPH SCHWARZ.



CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZEL TOV

WITHIN OUR FAMILY

ENGAGEMENTS

Naomi Ben-Attar and Larry Yablong
Jennifer Blakey and Richard Mortner
Adriane Shishko and Mark Masling

RUTH BELKIN

If you'd meet Ruth on the street, you'd say this low-keyed grandmother with the warm smile was a pleasant enough woman. In class or at the Beginner's Service she'd suddenly transform into a fearsome tiger, shooting off challenging questions and making provocative statements with a passion that would surprise everyone. She possessed an unusual thirst for knowledge and truth and enriched all her classmates, friends, and teachers with her candor and wisdom. Even in her illness she spared no effort to learn, and labored to obtain the tapes of the classes she missed. She leaves us with wonderful memories of the model she was for real commitment to Torah learning.

-EZB-

MARRIAGES

Elaine Berg and Gerald Sacks
Sheryl Epstein and Martin Beck
Miriam Cohen and Yochanan Kreizel
Lisa Green and Jerry Marcus
June Gross and Mark Baum
 additional Mazel Tov to parents Carol and Joseph Gross
Toby Lazar and Bruce Simon
Claire Mendelson and Julius Ciss
Gina Milano and Dr. David Garbowit
Emily Perkel and Donald Kresge
Barbara Ribakove and Philip Gordon
Margret Robinson and Michael Klapper
Marsha Seretan and Dr. Mitchell Shear
Judy Silberman and Uri Aqua
Carice Witte and Yoram Shoshtari

BIRTHS

Dina and Ed Alper on the birth of a son, Netanel Yair
Lisa and Bennet Bergman on the arrival of a daughter, Hannah Sarah
Fayge and Yisroel Cohen upon the birth of a daughter, Davida Yaffa
Nan and Bob Ehrlich on the birth of a son, Moshe Yehuda Leib
Juith Weil and Lloyd Epstein on the birth of a son, Binyamin Joshua
Sharon and Steve Goodman on the birth of a daughter, Rachel Raskas
Gloria and Richard Kestenbaum on the birth of a daughter, Miriam Alexandra
Batya and Meyer Perline on the birth of a daughter, Shana Leah
Naomi and Barry Stern on the birth of a daughter, Rivkah Aliza

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

Tod Jacobs
Shari and Tom Steinberg

BAR MITZVAH

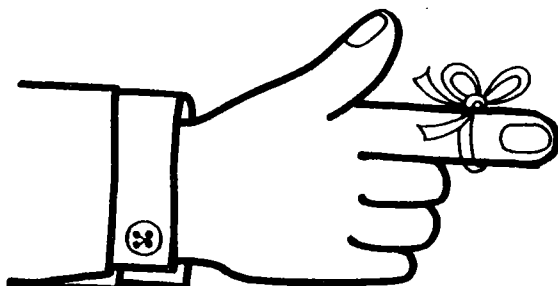
Azriel Zvi Blumberg, grandson of Marion Friedman
Michael Stark son of Joan and Arnold Stark

CONDOLENCES

The family of Ruth Belkin
Miriam Lane on the passing of her beloved mother, Ceil Weiss

THANK YOU

To "Rabbi" Joseph Schwarz for his inspiring leadership of the Beginners Services during the summer.



* Beginners Luncheon Schedule *
* cost \$10 *
* Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 9 *
* *
* Beginners Schmooze Schedule *
* Oct. 26, Nov. 30, Dec. 28 *

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Friday, September 11
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....6:54 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....7:05 P.M.

Saturday, September 12 (KEE-TAVO)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Class.....5:55 P.M.
Mincha.....6:55 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....6:55 P.M.

Friday, September 18
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....6:43 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....6:55 P.M.

Saturday, September 19 (NITZAVIN-VAYELECH)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Class.....5:45 P.M.
Mincha.....6:45 P.M.
Selichot Service.....12:30 A.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....6:45 P.M.
Daily Selichot and Morning Services.....6:45 and 7:30 A.M.

Wednesday, September 23
EVE OF ROSH HASHANA
Selichot and Morning Services..6:00 and 6:45 A.M.
Eruv Tavshilin
Kindle Rosh Hashana Candles.....6:34 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Rosh Hashana.....6:45 P.M.

Thursday, September 24
Rosh Hashana Services.....7:45 A.M.
Tashlich Walk.....5:45 P.M.
Mincha.....6:45 P.M.
KINDLE ROSH HASHANA CANDLES NOT BEFORE..7:32 P.M.

Friday, September 25
Rosh Hashana Services.....7:45 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....5:40 P.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....6:31 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....6:40 P.M.

Saturday, September 26 (HAAZINU)
SHABBAT SHUVA
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
MINCHA FOLLOWED BY
SHABBAT SHUVA DISCOURSE.....5:40 P.M.

Sunday, September 27
FAST OF GEDALIA
Selichot and Morning Services..6:45 and 8:00 A.M.
Mincha.....6:25 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....6:35 P.M.
Daily Selichot and Morning Service.....6:45 and 7:30 A.M.

Friday, October 2
EVE OF YOM KIPPUR
Selichot and Morning Service...7:00 and 7:30 A.M.
Mincha.....3:00 P.M.
Kindle Memorial and Shabbat
Yom Kippur Candles.....6:19 P.M.
Shabbat Rol Nidra Services.....6:25 P.M.

Saturday, October 3
SHABBAT YOM KIPPUR
Main Sanctuary.....8:00 A.M.
Auditorium.....9:00 A.M.
Final Shofar Blast.....7:19 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....6:25 P.M.

Wednesday, October 7
EVE OF SUKKOT
ERUV TAVSHILIN
Kindle Yom Tov Candles.....6:11 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Yom Tov.....6:20 P.M.

Thursday, October 8
Morning Sukkot Services.....8:45 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....5:20 P.M.
Mincha.....6:20 P.M.
KINDLE YOM TOV CANDLES NOT BEFORE ..7:09 P.M.

Friday, October 9
Sukkot Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....5:20 P.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....6:08 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....6:20 P.M.

Saturday, October 10
Shabbat Chol Hamoad Sukkot Services.....8:45 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....5:10 P.M.
Mincha.....6:10 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....6:10 P.M.

Sunday, October 11
Chol Hamoad Services.....7:00 and 8:30 A.M.
Daily Chol Hamoad Services.....7:00 and 7:40 A.M.

Wednesday, October 14
Hoshana Rabba Morning Services.6:30 and 8:00 A.M.
ERUV TAVSHILIN
Kindle Yom Tov Candles.....6:00 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Yom Tov.....6:10 P.M.

Thursday, October 15
Shemina Atzeret Morning Services including Yizkor
Memorial Services.....8:00,8:45 and 9:30 A.M.
Mincha.....6:10 P.M.
KINDLE YOM TOV CANDLES NOT BEFORE.....6:58 P.M.

Friday, October 16
SIMCHAT TORAH
Yom Tov Morning Service.....7:30 A.M.
Family Service (Bat Mirash).....9:00 A.M.
Women's Service.....9:00 A.M.
Daf Yomi.....5:05 P.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:57 P.M.
Mincha.....6:05 P.M.

Saturday, October 17 (BERESHEET)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Class.....4:55 P.M.
Mincha.....5:55 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....6:05 P.M.

Friday, October 23
ROSH CHODESH CHESHVAN
Rosh Chodesh Morning Services..7:00 and 7:40 A.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:47 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:55 P.M.

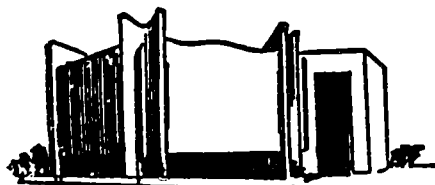
Saturday, October 24 (NOACH)
SHABBAT ROSH CHODESH Morning Services...8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Class.....4:45 P.M.
Mincha.....5:45 P.M.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....5:50 P.M.

Friday, October 30
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:37 P.M.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:45 P.M.

Saturday, October 31 (LECH-LECHA)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 A.M.
Talmud and Bible Class.....4:35 P.M.
Mincha.....3:35 P.M.
Please remember to turn your clocks ahead one hour for Eastern Standard Time.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:40 PM (EST)

ברשית Bereshith: "In the Beginning" is put together under the direction of Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald and Janet Posner of Lincoln Square Synagogue 200 Amsterdam Avenue, New York. A special Beginner's Service is held each Shabbat morning at 9:15 A.M. at the synagogue. Through its Joseph Shapiro Institute, Lincoln Square offers an extensive program of adult Jewish education courses. Call or write for free educational brochure, 212-874-6105.

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



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