

## SINGING THE SONG OF SHABBAT

Dr. Richard Seaman

Dear Rabbi Buchwald,

As I read in your recent NJOP fund-raising letter the most moving story of the young man searching for the right "fit" to bolster the flame of Yiddishkeit deep in his soul, I couldn't help but feel the similarities to my own spiritual awakening.

Some 18 or so years ago, I found my way to Lincoln Square Synagogue on a Saturday morning. It was a few weeks after I had read an article in *New York Magazine* about the friendly, engaging and dynamic rabbi and his Beginners program there.

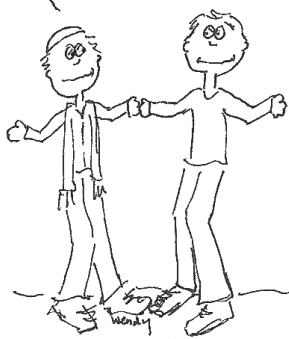
Due to the fact that an American holiday happened to fall on this particular Saturday, my dental office was closed. Instead of going to the beach or just sleeping in, I decided (or, more likely, was Divinely guided) to check out this service. As I made my way up the stairs to the second floor, I could hear singing and sense a feeling of joy that enveloped me. As I sheepishly entered the room where the festivities were taking place, a very animated and exuberant rabbi with a huge smile immediately greeted me. He welcomed me as if I were his closest family member. This was so different from my previous sporadic experiences of going to "Temple," where it was business-as-usual, and there was little, if any, indication that my presence mattered. Here I was, a complete stranger, and yet I was being invited to personally join in the singing and dancing by this charismatic, dynamic, sweet and affable rabbi.

As the singing and dancing calmed down, the service resumed. I was asked to introduce myself and was warmly welcomed. Gone was the difficult-to-understand and, quite frankly, boring service to which I was accustomed. I began to let go of my preconceived notions of what services entailed. Suddenly I was not only "attending" services, I was actively involved and participating in the singing and asking questions that the rabbi encouraged. There was a chart posted that clearly informed me about the structure of the Shabbat service and the focus of each part. This was something I had never expected and never experienced before.

I learned that Shabbat actually had a "soul" and that my own soul had a direct connection to it. I was finally tapping into a part of myself that I had previously ignored. It was like a beautiful song waiting to be played, but I had not found the rhyme and reason for letting it be heard. In that room, I finally found my song, at least for the few hours that I spent there that morning, and its tune resonated in my heart.

While it took a year or so until another American holiday was on a Saturday (as Saturdays were my busiest work days as a young dentist trying to establish myself), I felt secure knowing that there was a place to which I could return when I was ready--a place where I would not be judged or left to fend for myself, but rather a place with a genuinely interested rabbi, and a congregation of people from all religious backgrounds ready and willing to welcome me into their midst.

"Leibedic. Lively! Come on, be happy! Let it out!"



"IN THAT ROOM, I FINALLY FOUND MY SONG!"

regular basis.

I guess the best way to express it is in a song...perhaps:

Hello Shabbat my old friend,  
we celebrate you once again,  
six days of labor now it's time to rest,  
our time together is the very best.  
In the glow of Friday night my soul begins to take flight  
and touch the sounds of Shabbat.  
We are a nation proud and few,  
we must reach out to every Jew.  
Reform, Conservative or Orthodox,  
we stand together, there are no roadblocks.  
For when we sing as one  
we will always sing in tune,  
may it be soon,  
we'll sing the song of Shabbat - listen to the song of Shabbat."

(Thanks to Mr. Paul Simon whose beautiful melody to his song "The Sound of Silence" inspired me to write these words.)

As for you, my dear Rabbi Buchwald, may you be blessed with strength, good health and the amazing energy that is your trademark--to continue igniting the "pintele yid" (that spark of connection to Torah that exists inside every Jew whether we realize it or not) of every Jewish *neshama* (soul) that longs to sing and soar. Thanks for starting me off on a great flight.

With much love,  
Richard

*Dr. Richard Seaman resides in Manhattan and is a general dentist practicing in Cambria Heights, Queens. He is also a singer/songwriter who has written for film, television, cabaret and musical theater. Dr. Seaman has written numerous song parodies and original songs relating to Shabbat, Jewish holidays and Jewish life, and is half of the singing duo, "Jewbilation."*

## CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

## MARRIAGES

Ilana Fishof and Noam Muhlstein  
Mazal Tov to parents  
Karen and David Fishof,  
and Monica and Dr. Jonathan Gordon



## BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Hannah Leah Hudes  
Mazal Tov to parents Dr. Golda and Dana Hudes  
Juliann Taylor (D'vorah Malka) Mandel  
Mazal Tov to grandfather Irwin Mandel  
Sam Schwartzben  
Mazal Tov to parents Jill and Dov Schwartzben

## CONDOLENCES

Richard Dukas, on the loss of his father, Max Dukas  
Eliana Gutin, on the loss of her mother, Marina Sorokina

## TZETCHEM L'SHALOM (TO LIVE OR STUDY IN ISRAEL)

Ivor Neuschotz

## CONGRATULATIONS

Oren Epstein for being selected to deliver the keynote address at Jerusalem's Mir Yeshiva Siyum on *Bava Metzia*  
Mazal Tov to parents Judith Weil and Lloyd Epstein  
Gale and James Kaufman for being selected as guests of honor at the annual LSS Dinner  
Phillip Namanworth upon his nomination for the 2011 Drama Desk Award for Best Musical Revue, for his original lyrics for "Fyush Finkel Live"

## BIRTHS

Karine and Michael Bloch, on the birth of a daughter,  
Tali Myriam  
Shuli and Rabbi Avi Bossewitch, on the birth of twin boys,  
Moshe Yosef and Avraham Simcha  
Mazal Tov to grandparents Anne and Martin Hochberg  
Basya Chaya and Yair Gutman, on the birth of a son, Yisroel  
Mazal Tov to grandparents Yehudis and Moshe Ashin

