ANSWERING THE QUESTIONER

By Samantha Maya Finch

is is "The Rain Hat Story." And it happened in the late Fall of '94, just before the High Holy Days.

When you need one, you soon discover that every single rain hat in the City of New York is black, and they all make you look like the logo on a box of frozen fish. (Batten down the hatches! Secure the jib!). Yet, on rainy weekends, I couldn't bring myself to risk offending someone at synagogue by showing up for the Beginners Service carrying an umbrella. It was hard enough to show up at all. And there were so many ways to be wrong in this Jewish business that I figured I had better at least follow what few rules I knew.

Aidel Buchwald had kindly agreed to meet me in the hallway outside the service and physically lead me into the room the first time I went, but she apparently had a

life, so I had been braving it alone for almost two months. Much of that time felt like floating perfectly balanced - between intellectual fascination and emotional terror. Not realizing that such becalmed times are probably the most creative, I had he search for the definitive ram hat become a symbol of taking control again, as though it were my job to be in control of everything.

And then Friday was upon me once again. As I got ready for work, the radio announcer was dutifully transmitting a weather forecast that called for severe

thunderstorms by nightfall that would continue all the next day. Remembering from a U.S. History class that the turkey had been rejected as our national bird because a majority of congressmen felt an animal too dumb to come in out of the rain was an inappropriate choice, I had pretty much decided to skip services the next morning.

Then it was time to pet the cat, grab the purse and keys, lock the door, and walk out of the building. And into a rain hat. Lying directly in my path - all by itself was a colorful, classy, new rain hat. The label read "Liberty's of London" no less. Ironically for a not-yet convert, my reaction was stereotypically Jewish: head, arms, and palms floated up toward the sky in unison, as

rugged, "Alright already! I'll go!" Hashem can be such a noodge!

Whenever I look back on the seemingly harmless

decision to skip Shabbos that Friday, I am struck by several things. The first, of course, is that Shabbos cannot be "skipped;" it's going to be Shabbos with or without my recognition. The second is how close I had been to giving up on connecting to Judaism out of intimidation by the sheer enormity of what there was to learn and the cumulative discomfort of years of feeling like the outsider I indeed was. My rain hat "sigh" hardly rivaled the parting of the Sea of Reeds, but as Rabbi Herschel Cohen is fond of saying, it undeniably and quite personally "answered the questioner, not the question," and it was just what I needed to get back on track and into the process of going to services and studying until I had enough courage to claim my share of the Torah.

Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur of '94 wasn't even a blip

on my screen, I was so far away from attempting that level of how to read Hebrew. stakes couldn't have been higher,

As I write this, it is time to start studying and preparing for the upcoming Days of Repentance and Yom Kippur, but this year I

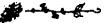
observance. But by the following Holidays, the kitchen had been made kosher and I had learned among other wondrous things -The Beginners services at Lincoln Square Synagogue that year were incredible - like a spiritual workshop where, even though the the overriding reality was one of personal and communal hope.

will be experiencing them as a Jew. During the questioning period before the immersion that would change everything, one of the rabbis on the conversion Bet Din had asked whether I fully realized how different the next Shabbos would be from the previous one. The question was largely rhetorical, for the honest answer had to be "No" - not any more than I can fully realize now how this Rosh Hashanah will be different than the last one. Six hundred and thirteen commandments is a lot to take on, but I am comforted and exhilarated by the company of a people whose G-d has taught us to be suspicious of "miracles" and to wean ourselves away from our need of them, but who might nevertheless, out of His mercy, drop the occasional rain hat.

Samantha Finch, an Art Historian with a specialty in master drawings, works for the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution.



ALRIGHT ALREADY! I'LL GO TO SHUL! I'LL GO!



CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

MARRIAGES

Michelle Friedler and Alan Bankhalter Judith Goldkrand and Barry Cheskin Beth Osiason and Daryl Gray Yael Vurgan and J.J. Gross Julia Sorkina and Max Karjakin Anne Rose Lieberman-Alfasi and Prof. Moris Lehner Nancy Pillet and Naphtali Lichtenstein Rabia Page and Oliver Mitchell Lois Friedman and Martin Roman Barbara Reich and Jeffrey Siegel Allison Spear and David Ullendorff

BIRTHS

Monica and Daniel Barach, on the birth of a boy, Jacob Preston Lea and Frank Dickstein, on the birth of twin boys, Nathaniel and Ethan Masami and Marko Issever, on the birth of a girl, Esther Malkeh

Maryam and Tod Jacobs, on the birth of a boy, Dovid

Judith Garmaise and Boris Schlossberg, on the birth of a boy, Elan Reuven

Leah (Nelson) and Heshey Steinacher, on the birth of a boy, Benjamin

Sheindel and Yaakov (Tom) Steinberg on the birth of a boy. Dovid Yekusiel

Deborah DeWinter and Philip Sussman on the birth of a girl, Rebecca Rose

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Eliyahu Simcha, son of Miriam and Akiva Lane Eitan, son of Jeannette and Dr. Ross Pinsky Bella Rosa, daughter of Ohra and Dr. Manfred Hahn

CONDOLENCES

Dena Robsen on the tragic death of her son Binvamin The family of Marion Friedman The family of Margot Zitter

CONGRATULATIONS

To the "graduates" of the Beginners Service recently elected to leadership positions of LSS; Ari Bousbib- Treasurer, Lloyd Epstein -Recording sec'y, Carol Spanbock -Corresponding Sec'y, and to Richard Kestenbaum - President, substitute Beginners Rabbi

Helene and Ari Bousbib honored with the Chovevei Yerushalayim (Lovers of Jeri' award at Jeruslaem Reclamation Proje Ateret Cohanim

MARION FRIEDMAN

Marion Friedman had an angelic face and a heart to match. Always "proper" and sedate, Marion possessed a keen mind, aggressively pursuing religious issues that bothered her. A truly giving person, Marion was one of the leaders of LSS's Shabbat Bikur Cholim (visiting the sick), persuading many Beginners to join her in this important mitzvah.

MARGOT ZITTER

A fiesty woman, who on numerous occasions defeated the Angel of Death, Margot became an endeared figure to many Beginners. Despite her chronic illness, Margot made superhuman efforts to attend the Beginners Service on a regular basis. Her recent 90th birthday reflected an outpouring of love for her from all who knew her.

May their memories be blessed

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

| Saturday Night Sept. 7 SELICHOT SERVICES Early Selichol |
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| Sunday, September 8th Morning Services 7:10 and 8:30 a.m. |
| Monday, September 9th through Thursday, September 12th Selichot and Morning Services 6:40 & 7:30 a.m. |
| Friday, September 13th EREV ROSH HASHANA Selichot and Morning Services 5:45 & 7:00 a.m. Kindle Rosh Hashana Candles 6:50 p.m. Muncha and Kabbalat Rosh Hashana 6:55 p.m. |
| Shabbat, September 14th ROSH HASHANA 7:45 a.m. Rosh Hashana Services (Main Sanc. and Audit) 7:45 a.m. Beginners Service 9:00 a.m. Daf Yomi 6:00 p.m. Mincha 6:45 p.m. KINDLE ROSH HASHANA CANDLES AFTER 7:49 p.m. |
| Sunday, September 15th ROSH HASHANA 7:45 a.m. Rosh Hashana Services (Main Sanc. and Audit) 7:45 a.m. Beginners Service 9:00 a.m. Daf Yomi after Maariv Tashlich 5:45 p.m. Mincha 6:50 p.m. Yom Tov ends 7:49 p.m. Daily Mincha and Maariv 6:40 p.m. |
| Monday, September 16th Fast of Gedalia 5:25 a.m. Fast begins 5:25 a.m. Selichof & Morning Services 6:30 & 7:15 a.m. Mincha 6:30 p.m. Fast Concludes 7:49 p.m. |
| Tuesday, September 17th through Thursday, September 19th Selichot and Morning Services 6:35 & 7:15 a.m. |
| Friday, September 20th Selichot and Morning Services Kindle Shabbat Candles Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 6:40 p.m. |
| Shabbat, September 21st (HA'AZINU) Shabbat Shuva Daf Yomi 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Morning Services 8:45 a.m. MinGn45 p.m. followed by Rabbi Mintz's Shabbat Shuva Discourse Shabbat ends 7:38 p.m. Daily Mincha and Maariv 6:35 p.m. |
| Sunday, September 22nd EREV YOM KIPPUR Selichot and Morning Services |
| Monday, September 23th YOM KIPPUR Morning Services: Main Sanctuary 8:00 a.m. Auditorium 9:00 a.m. Beginners 9:00 a.m. |
| Final Shofar Blast 7:34 p.m. Friday, September 27th EREV SUKKOT Kindle Shabbat Candles 6:26 p.m. Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat & Yom Tov 6:30 p.m. |
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| Shabbat, September 28th SUKKOT 8:45 a. Morning Services 8:20 p. Daf Yomi 5:20 p. Chumash Class 5:30 p. Mircha 5:30 p. | Telmud class |
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| Morning Services 8-45 a | Talmud class |
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| Mincha 6:20 p. Kindle Yom Tov candles after 7:26 p. | m Friday October 25th |
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| Sunday, September 29th SUKKOT 8:45 a. Morning Services 8:20 p. Daf Yomi 5:20 p. Chumash Class 5:20 p. Mincha 6:30 p. Yom Tov ends 7:26 p. Daily Mincha and Maariv 6:25 p. | Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat |
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| Mincha | m. Shabbat, October 26th (LECH m. Morning Services m. Daf Yomi m. Bible Class |
| Yom Tov ends | m. Bible Class |
| Daily Mincha and Maariv | m. Talmud Class |
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| Monday, September 30th through Thursday, October 3rd | Shabbat ends |
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| REMEMBER TO MOVE YOUR CLOCKS BACK ONE HOUR |
| Friday, November 1st Kindle Shabbat Candles . 4:34 p.m., Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat . 4:40 p.m. |
| Saturday, November 2nd (VAYERA) 8:45 a.m. Morning Services 8:00 a.m. Daf Yomi 8:00 a.m. Talmud and Bible Classes 3:45 p.m. Mincha 4:30 p.m. Daily Mincha and Maariv 4:35 p.m. Maariv only Monday - Thursday 6:20 p.m. |
| Tuesday, November 5th ELECTION DAY Morning Services 7:05 & 7:50 a.m. |
| Friday, November 8th Kindle Shabbat Candles . 4:26 p.m. Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat . 4:30 p.m. |
| Shabbat, November 9th (CHAYEI-SARA) 8:45 a.m. Morning Service 8:00 p.m. Daf Yomi 8:00 p.m. Talmud & Bible Classes 3:35 p.m. Mincha 4:20 p.m. Daily Mincha and Maariv 4:30 p.m. Maariv only Monday-Thursday 6:20 p.m. |
| Monday, November 11th VETERAN'S DAY Morning Services 7:05 & 7:50 a.m. |
| Tuesday, November 12th Rosh Chodesh Kisley Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 a.m. |
| Friday, November 15th Kindle Shabbat candles |
| Shabbat, November 16th (TOLDOT) Daf Yom: 8:00 f Shabbat Morning Services 8:45 |
| Shabbat Morning Services 8:45 Talmud and Bible Classes 4:30 p. Mincha 4:15 p.m. |

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