

# The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

October 1997

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# The Edinburgh Star

SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS  
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ATTENTIVE READERS will detect a common theme which recurs in many of the articles in this issue of *The Edinburgh Star*. It concerns the relationship between tradition and change and is particularly evident in the interview with David Kaplan on 'Jewish Continuity' (in which he emphasises the importance of Jewish education and Jewish identity but argues that preserving traditions calls for a commitment to change); in Danny Sinclair's analysis of the Nahmani case (where traditional *halachic* arguments were brought to bear on the very modern problem of surrogate parenthood); in John Cosgrove's review of a new Masorti High Holiday 'Companion' (in which he calls for a new *Machzor* with a modern translation which members of 'mainstream' religious communities such as ours could understand and enjoy); and on the letters page (where we print letters from three readers who took up our invitation to respond to Rabbi Sedley's article in the last issue of *The Edinburgh Star* on the importance of raising the height of the *Mechitza* in the synagogue).

The relationship between tradition and change was an important theme in the two events that dominated the late summer: the death of the Princess of Wales and the referendum on devolution in Scotland. It is certainly arguable that the very genuine and, to a large extent, spontaneous expression of public grief over Princess Diana's death can, at least in part, be explained in terms of the fact that, alone among members of the Royal Family, she seemed to have grasped that the Monarchy has lost its way, and that many of its practices have become anachronistic and no longer mesh with the norms and expectations of modern society. By breaking free from many of its ossified traditions, she succeeded in making it relevant and in finding a role for herself in ways that clearly elicited huge public approval. It is likewise arguable that the extent of popular support for devolution in Scotland reflected a widespread public perception that the existing constitutional arrangements were no longer appropriate in Scotland today and that they needed to change in a direction which will give people in Scotland greater control over their own destiny.

Before readers jump to the conclusion that the editor is a radical anarchist who abhors tradition and would happily sweep it all away, I should make it clear that this is not my position. Far from it – my purpose in drawing attention to this issue is to suggest how tradition can be used to guide and inform change. When we appeal to tradition, we may either refer to specific, and time-honoured practices or to the principles which underlie and inform them. It is hard to make a convincing defence of the first approach – even those who view tradition in this way have to concede that many of the practices which our biblical ancestors adhered to are no longer followed today. Thus, for example, we no longer make sacrifices of burnt offerings or enforce the draconian penalties which used to be applied to those who broke the law or otherwise offended against religious authority or public morality. Moreover, no-one seriously suggests that we should do so. On the other hand, one can much more easily make a convincing defence of the second approach. If Judaism is seen as a set of principles, a plausible case can be made for regarding them as unchanging and universal in a sense that specific practices clearly are not. However, although the principles may be invariant, the meaning we give to them will change as society changes. Let me illustrate this with two examples.

The fourth commandment requires us to 'remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy' and continues 'Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work...'. If we take the first approach to tradition, we will attempt to follow time-honoured practice and refrain from what was, in biblical times, regarded as work. However, this ignores the fact that the meaning of work has changed out of all recognition and the fact that what constituted work in the days of our forefathers, does not necessarily constitute work today. Thus, lighting an oil lamp or yoking up oxen may well have been work in a way that turning on a light switch or driving a car are not. If we take the second approach to tradition, we recognise these changes and, while adhering to the principle of not working on *Shabbat*, we can then consider how it can most appropriately be made holy. This is undoubtedly more difficult but also, in my view, more appropriate and more honest. Most of us, after all, do turn on the light and, at least on occasion, do drive on *Shabbat*. We do so for good reason so why should we be made to feel guilty about it?

On *Yom Kippur* we seek atonement for all the sins we have committed in the previous year. Our *Machzor* contains an exhaustive list of every conceivable kind of sin which could possibly have been imagined at the time when it was written but many of these sins mean little to us today while many sins which are all too prevalent today could not have been (and were not) envisaged when the *Machzor* we use was compiled. Should we just seek atonement for the sins which are listed or should we, in effect, update the list and seek atonement for all our culpable behaviour and all our offences against God. If you take the first approach to tradition, you may give one answer, if you take the second, you may give another. Once again, the first approach is easier, the second more difficult but arguably has greater moral force and spiritual significance.

If appeals to tradition are understood as appeals to an invariant and universal set of principles, they can be a very valuable guide to action in a rapidly changing world where such guidance is more than ever needed. In all humility, I hope and pray that, during the high holidays and in the year ahead, we will not be guided by a conception of tradition which emphasises the importance of adhering to practices which have become anachronistic and have little relevance to the problems we face but rather by one which recognises that we can be true to our traditions by applying principles which have stood the test of time to entirely new situations.

This issue of *The Edinburgh Star* contains the final instalment of the Lowrie Report and, on behalf of the Editorial Board, I should like to thank Tom and Vicky for their distinctive and very popular column. I suspect that their commentary on events in the community is what many readers turned to first and enjoyed most. They were every editor's dream – their material was always submitted on time and they never, as far as I am aware, raised any objection to the 'minor stylistic changes' of an interfering and meddlesome editor. After six years they have decided that enough is enough and taken a well-earned retirement. They will be a hard act to follow but readers will be pleased to hear that we have been extremely fortunate in finding a very talented replacement for them. Our new community correspondent has been given a similar brief but will be encouraged to fulfil it in her (or his) own way. The name of the new community correspondent is still a closely-guarded secret but will, naturally, be revealed in the next issue.

Meanwhile, and also on behalf of the Editorial Board, I would like to wish all our readers a happy and worthwhile New Year.

MA.

## THE RABBI'S ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE 5758

'On *Rosh Hashanah* every creature in the world passes before God like sheep before a shepherd, as the verse says (Psalms XXXIII; 15) "He who fashions their hearts alike; who considers all their deeds".' (Mishna *Rosh Hashanah* I; 2). Every individual is judged on *Rosh Hashanah*, the Day of Judgement.

The Yerushalmi (Palestinian) Talmud states: 'Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said "God only judges a person according to the present moment" [as the verse says "Does God pervert judgement?... If you are pure and upright surely now He will rouse Himself for you" (Job VIII; 6)]. The verse does not say "If you were pure and upright", rather it says "If you are pure and upright".' According to this, God does not take into consideration one's past or future deeds when making the judgement on *Rosh Hashanah*. The only thing that matters is the present.

How can this be considered a just judgement? It would appear that a person who has spent their entire life fulfilling their own desires, and ignoring their social and spiritual responsibilities, could still end up with whatever the rewards are for good behaviour, provided that they behave themselves for the forty-eight hour period of *Rosh Hashanah*. Conversely a person who has dedicated themselves to doing what is right in the eyes of their fellow person and of God, but who makes one small mistake on *Rosh Hashanah* will miss out on that favourable judgement. Furthermore, the goal of the Ten Days of Repentance, the days from *Rosh Hashanah* to *Yom Kippur*, is *teshuvah*. Two of the main components of *teshuvah* are regret over past misdemeanours and an undertaking to improve oneself in the future. Yet why should we bother with these if God is only looking at the present moment?

The answer is that, in the deepest sense, the present contains within it both the past and the future. Our present actions are influenced by our past, and they pave the way for our future behaviour. The Talmud (Yoma 96b) summarises this phenomenon 'Rav Huna said "Once a person transgresses, then repeats that sin, it becomes permitted to them". Could it really become permissible? Rather it appears to that person as if that action is permissible'. The first time that someone knowingly does something which is wrong, they feel guilty about it, and are embarrassed. But after the second time they have already justified that action to themselves, and are no longer as bothered by it as they were before they had ever done it. The converse is also true for any positive action. The first time we perform some *Mitzvot* or good deeds we find it strange and difficult, but through continued repetition this become easier and more natural for us.

Therefore when we approach *Rosh Hashanah*, and the judgement that it brings with it, although we are only judged as we appear at that time, our psychological *make-up* betrays all of our past actions, and indicates how we are likely to behave in the future. If so, what can we do to prepare for this judgement? Is our fate not already sealed, written into our brain waves? No – the power of repentance is that it can break our connection with our own past, and therefore also change our future. Through sincere regret for past mistakes, accompanied by a genuine desire to change our future actions we can change our fate. We are able to alter who we are right now, to the extent that our past no longer has any influence over our actions. This is what the Talmud means when it says (ibid.) 'Reish Lakish says "How great is *teshuvah* that a person's intentional sins become as if they were accidental transgressions" as the verse states (Hosea XIV; 2) "Return Israel to the Lord your God for you have stumbled in your iniquity"'. The word 'iniquity' implies intentional sin, and yet the verse calls it 'stumbling'.

It has now been a little more than a year that I have been the Rabbi of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. During this time I have seen how warm and caring the community can be, and consider myself fortunate to be a part of it. So many people have shown genuine concern both for the physical as well as the spiritual well-being of others. There is a great desire to learn more about our Jewish heritage, and to become more involved in communal activities. It may mean regular attendance at weekday and *Shabbat* services, or coming to classes, or participation in the lunch club and the friendship club. Some take part in various communal groups, such as the Synagogue Council, the Burial Society, the Communal Hall or the Ladies Committee. Others show their commitment through involvement in the Parents and Toddlers group, the Cheder, WIZO, the Lit, or the CCJ. Each time we are involved with one or other of these organisations or events, that involvement and the associated sense of commitment becomes a part of us. The concern for others and for being a part of the community prepares us, so that we will not be afraid or embarrassed to stand before God on *Rosh Hashanah*.

May the coming year be one of even stronger commitment to and involvement with the Jewish community, and in this merit may we all be judged favourably before God, and be inscribed and sealed at once in the Book of Life.

*Shana Tova.*

Rabbi David Sedley  
Minister of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

## CONGRATULATIONS

The Editorial Board offers its congratulations to:

**Benjamin Adler** on graduating in Medicine from the University of Glasgow; **Yvonne Berger** in Hispanic Studies from the University of Liverpool, **Elliot Cowan** in Retail Marketing from Manchester Metropolitan University, and **Debbie Sischy** in Psychology from the University of Manchester. *Mazal Tov* to all of them and their families.

**Hazel Cosgrove (Lady Cosgrove)** on the award of the honorary degree of Doctor of Law from Napier University.

**Bernard Jackson**, currently Queen Victoria Professor of Law at Liverpool University on his appointment to the Alliance Chair in Modern Jewish Studies at Manchester University.

**Sir Malcolm Rifkind** on being awarded the KCMG in the Dissolution Honours list.

**Alan Rubenstein**, son of Alex and Pearl Rubenstein who was recently featured in a profile in 'The Guardian', for his success as a fund manager in reshaping Lucas Pension Funds.

**Ellen and Jonathan Bard**, on the occasion of Benjie's *Bar Mitzvah* in the Synagogue on 28 June 1997.

**Clarice and Joe Bean** on the occasion of their golden wedding on 7 August 1997.

**Gillian Berger**, older daughter of **Marcia and Lennie Berger**, on the occasion of her engagement to Gary Rudin (Jerusalem).

**Lieselotte and Georg Kastner** on the forthcoming marriage of their son Peter.

**Michael Levitt**, son of the late Manny Levitt and **Edna Levitt** and nephew of **Anita and David Mendelssohn**, on the occasion of his recent wedding to Barbie Benjamin in Toronto.

**Pearl and Ian Shein**, on the recent marriage of Pearl's son, Jan Levinson, to Jayne Flacks in Manchester.

## COMING EVENTS

### October 1997

2 Thursday	First Day Rosh Hashanah	
3 Friday	Second Day Rosh Hashanah	
10 Friday	Kol Nidre	
11 Saturday	Yom Kippur	
16 Thursday	First Day Succot	
17 Friday	Second Day Succot	
19 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
20 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
23 Thursday	Shemini Atzeret	
24 Friday	Simchat Torah	
26 Sunday	Community Centre Function: Line Dancing	7.30 p.m.
30 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews: Sister Margaret Shepherd, Deputy Director, CCJ	7.30 p.m.

### November 1997

1 Saturday	Lodge Solomon Dance	7.30 p.m.
2 Sunday	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
	Sir Malcolm Rifkind, PC, QC on 'Israel and the Middle East'	
9 Sunday	Remembrance Day Service	3.00 p.m.
16 Sunday	Community Centre Quiz Supper	7.30 p.m.
17 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
23 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
23 Sunday	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
	David Capitanchik (Aberdeen)	
	'An Update on Current Israeli Politics'	
27 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews: Mr and Mrs Macaulay CCJ Young Adults Tour of Israel, 1997	7.30 p.m.

### December 1997

6 Saturday	Community Centre Chanukah Dinner and Entertainment	7.30 p.m.
7 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
7 Sunday	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
	Rabbi Pete Tobias (Glasgow New Synagogue) on Jewish Education	
15 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
21 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
21 Sunday	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
	David Rosenberg and Majer Bogdanski on the Jewish Labour Movement in Poland	

### January 1998

15 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews: Rt. Rev. Alexander McDonald, Moderator of the Church of Scotland	7.30 p.m.
19 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
25 Sunday	Community Centre Burns Supper	7.30 p.m.

Junior Maccabi meets on alternate Sundays from 1.00 to 3.00 p.m. For further information, contact Judy Fransman (447 5861).

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact Jacqueline Bowman (339 7557) or Howard Nicholsby (317 7563).

The Jewish Philosophical Society meets every month on a Sunday in members' homes.

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12.30 p.m.

The Mother and Baby Group meets on alternate Sunday mornings at 10.00 a.m.

All meetings are subject to alteration.

All the above events, unless otherwise stated, take place in the Community Centre at 4, Salisbury Road.

## THE LOWRIE REPORT

### CAPLAN'S COMMANDO – FORCE 16 FROM THE EDINBURGH SHUL

Would the weather hold, asked the Tattoo-hardened veterans as they formed up under the command of ex-Desert Rat, Willie Caplan, for the assault up the Lawnmarket battlefield; it was hard going taking the high ground of the Esplanade, but it had been agreed that only the minimum of armament and equipment be carried: waterproofs, blankets, chopped and fried, chicken soup and a case of the best Malt! Decorations were not worn as the sheer weight of so many gallantry and campaign medals would have slowed the Commandos down.

Objective taken, and seated as comfortably as being perched several hundred feet up on the Castle Rock will allow, the troop settled down to enjoy a programme of Massed Pipes and Drums, Highland Dancers who showed the travelling players currently at the Playhouse how Irish 'Riverdance' should be done!

They also enjoyed the New Zealand Dancing Girls (must ask the Rabbi about these!), the Steel Band from Trinidad and Tobago and the superb Pakistan Pipe Band and Dancers. There was also a woman who dedicated a special song to the Queen – it is perfectly apposite that she should have been discovered in a Karaoke bar.

The weather held almost until the end of the operation when our battle-hardened veterans managed to retreat in good order. The Roll of Honour of those taking part in this gallant action:

Joint COs.:	Willie and Betty Caplan
Squaddies:	Norman Dorfman
	David and Millie Harris and Millie's sister, Ann, from Canada
	Andrew Kaye and, from Singapore, his daughter and her two children
	Ian and Pearl Shein
	Bill and Susie Sinclair
Chaplain and Chaplainess:	Rabbi and Rebbetzen Sedley

At the coming down of the rain we, sitting comfortably at home, remembered them!

### KEEP THE HEAD – BALANCED!

WIZO Ladies night on 9th April saw an attendance of 42 consume a supper of salmon, salads, cake and coffee to afford a sufficiently broad base to practise the Alexander Technique of ensuring that the head is properly balanced.

Self-demonstrating, Mrs Pat Morais – Alexander Technique Practitioner and Yoga expert – instructed those present in the essentials of correct head balancing, which would lead to better whole body function, thus avoiding the common strains and damage done by bad posture. Voted a fascinating evening and a most interesting speaker, £213 was raised.

### YOM HA'ATZMAUT – 11TH MAY

After the special service when the Choir, under Choir Master David Mendelssohn performed, there was a celebration in the Communal Hall when refreshments were taken and Bill Simpson entertained us playing Clarinet and Saxophone in a programme which included Yiddish and Kletzmer music.

### CONCERT IN AID OF THE ALYN HOSPITAL, JERUSALEM

Daniel Kazez, renowned international cellist on tour, accompanied by his wife, son and daughter, had offered his services free – an offer most gratefully accepted by the Scottish Friends of Alyn.

He began playing cello at the age of five under the tutelage of Leonard Feldman, cellist of the Alard String Quartet, has music degrees from Oberlin Conservatory, John Hopkins University and a doctorate from the University of Michigan and is now Associate Professor of Music at Wittenberg University. He has published several



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books on different aspects of music, studied the music of several other cultures and performed in most of the capitals of Europe and most of the major metropolitan areas of the United States. His first performance in Eastern Europe was at the 1995 Prague International Festival of Jewish Culture. He is extremely well known in the US – his performance of JS Bach's First Cello Suite reached an audience of 20 million on the ABC television programme 20/20.

On the evening of Sunday, 25th May 1997, Professor Kazez's concert in the Community Centre consisted of five Israeli Melodies by Stutschewsky, a Yigdal from Yemen by Gaul, pieces by Popper, Bloch, Denburg and Steinberg. There were Traditional Songs set by Shemer, Goldfaden, Hadar and Goldfarb; there was also Meditation by Sargon and Prayer by Richman. The finale was Frejlachts by Stutschewsky.

It was a superb performance by a world class musician, more than ably accompanied by Fiona MacColl.

Home bakes in vast quantity and variety were served after the concert when the audience of over 100 had the opportunity to meet this wonderful musician who had so kindly given of his talent and time for such a good cause. Over £600 was raised for the Alyn Hospital.

### WALL OF DEATH A HAIR AND MONEY RAISER!

Ben Goodwin added to the WIZO Coffers at the Annual Luncheon on the 1st June, when the children and a few of the less cowardly adults queued for the motor bike whizz around.

Tennis was another attraction the younger element found irresistible, watched by the overflow of their elders from the house, who were strenuously exercising the really serious sport of the afternoon – that of demolishing the mouth-watering *haute cuisine* supplied by Katie's incredibly hard-working committee. Everybody could say that they had not so much their 'just' desserts but their 'death by desserts'!

£1,000 plus was raised with an

attendance of 120, which was a record for this their 23rd annual WIZO Luncheon.

### TO EDEN AT THE QUEEN OF THE SOUTH

There was a *haar* in Edinburgh on the 2nd June when the Friendship Club left by coach for Dumfries, but by Moffat it was a lot clearer. Came Dumfries and into the Eden Bank Hotel for an excellent High Tea and, just in case starvation should set in on the way back, there was a table laden with extra food for those willing to do a little self service.

The journey back went very fast indeed, with vocals by our 'Mann' – Henry and a tape supplied by Sam Latter of Comedian Hal Roach telling Yiddisher jokes. A great time was had by all.

### RONNIE GOODWIN'S ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW

Supper taken, Ronnie, Katie and Ben viewed the various articles brought by those present at this most informative and interesting evening, organised by the Ladies' Committee on 15th June. There were two outstanding items – a

large silver teapot made in Ireland and dating from the 19th Century, highly decorative and quite valuable, as was the gold locket set with diamonds, rubies and sapphires in a floral spray motif. This piece had been made in Germany and was a family heirloom.

Ronnie showed the following pieces of solid Silver: Four *entrée* dishes made in London in 1810; a soup tureen made in Glasgow in 1844; a set of candlesticks made in London in 1769 together with a very fine emerald and diamond brooch made in 1850.

The audience was invited to value these items and the prize for knowledge (or good guesswork!) was a £50 voucher valid for purchases at Goodwin Antiques – there were six lucky recipients.

There was considerable enthusiasm for Ronnie's very kind offer of his expertise at a future Antiques Road Show. Sixty-eight antique enthusiasts (or rather enthusiasts for antiques!) attended and £540 was raised.

How about an evening on how to spot the fakes and forgeries, Ronnie?

### BENJAMIN BARD'S BARMITZVAH

On the 28th June after a most confident reading from the *Torah* and *Haftarah*, Benjamin went on to give an excellent Sermon, based on his Torah portion of the twelve spies sent into the land of Israel. A rare occurrence at a Barmitzvah, but on this occasion with all the expertise to be expected from such a 'Man o' Pairs', whose interests range from Judo to Music (piano and saxophone). *Mazeltov*.



## HERE YOUSE WHOSE MUSE?

It was in the year of nineteen eighty four  
A year of which you will hear much more  
For that was when Yael Littauer  
Who has from Israel cam ower  
To Auld Scotia after her degree taken  
In Creative Arts and Comparative Literature  
A very great event you may be sure  
It was when she started writing poetry  
Soon to be almost as good as McGonagall and Me!  
Winning the Liz Miller Poetry prize you see.  
Now in the year of 1997 a Poetry Today prize she has won  
So we will all say *Mazel tov!* of that it is certain  
To Yael Littauer our Poetess of great renown.

You may judge our comparative merits after reading the  
prize poem printed below.

I think  
I  
saw  
a  
flock  
of  
herons  
I  
think  
I  
could  
dive  
into  
feathery white  
clouds  
without  
a  
trace of  
your smile  
I  
think  
I  
mean  
I'm  
sure  
your blue eyes  
were  
My  
resting waters.

Yael Littauer

## SOUNDS OF JOY

by Maria Barrett

'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18) is one of the most simple commandments in the Torah – it brooks no argument. Few, however, would dispute the difficulty in attempting to observe this rule at all times, especially when your neighbour is a small vocal one and has chosen your best suit to start chewing on in *Shul*.

Who is welcome in *Shul*? Everyone, you nod vigorously – children; the elderly; those with learning or physical disabilities, all join in a community at prayer. There is, however, a voice at the back of most people's heads – the one that wants to ban the irritators – the shufflers, screamers, mutterers and fidgeters that bring an all too-worldly slant to a contemplative time.

As we glare at the offenders, however, perhaps we should ponder on our own righteousness (or should that be self-righteousness?) in this matter. Who are we to judge what is appropriate behaviour? Communities include the elderly with dementia; people with learning disabilities; children with behavioural problems. These groups of people may express themselves in ways we find disturbing or alarming – but as God's people, do we frown and exclude or welcome and learn from each other?

Jewish worship has never been wholly silent – indeed many revel in the gutsy outward expression of their faith. As we move forward together as a community, let us ensure that all are welcome at our gatherings and that *Shul* is not a place of fear and restraint but of inclusion and joy.

*Jane Ansell writes:* This short but rather inspiring piece by Maria Barrett of Cosgrove Care was written at my request following discussion within the Future Generations Committee about how prepared and equipped we are as a community to embrace all our members, including those with physical or mental disabilities.

The subject may strike a chord with two groups of people and we would be interested to hear from either. First from members of the congregation with, for example, a special needs child who could use a little extra support or help in getting to *Shul* services or events and then in coping when they do get there, or whose child would just enjoy a 'befriender' to take them out. The second group may well be students.

*Maria Barrett works for Cosgrove Care in Glasgow.*

# RACHELLE AND MONTY BRAVERMAN

by Ian Shein

In 1880, after a series of pogroms in Latvia when atrocities were committed against the Jewish population, including the desecration of *Sefer Torahs* in Synagogues, events which have subsequently featured in plays and film scripts written by a relative, Jack Ronder, Solomon Braverman left that country with two brothers for America. They disembarked at Dundee after being told by the ship's captain that they had arrived at New York. Looking in vain for *Mezuzahs* in doorways (the Dundee Jewish community being rather minuscule) they were advised to go to Glasgow. Mr Braverman opened up a business as a ships' chandler in Ayr before moving to Methil and thence to Leven. He supplied ships, mostly fishing trawlers, with victuals and necessary requirements. One of Solomon's children, Jacob, joined him in the business and Jacob had seven children, one of whom was Monty.

Monty was born in Glasgow. He was eighteen months old when his father died. The family thereafter moved to the grandparents' home in Leven. He was brought up by his uncle, Louis Braverman, and at the age of eight entered George Heriot's school. He then became a pupil at a boarding school in England until the age of sixteen when he returned to Edinburgh to join his uncle in the latter's leather goods business. Monty later met a lovely Latvian girl at a WIZO dance at a then-popular venue for Edinburgh Jewish youth, McVitie's dance rooms. He and Rachelle Berman were married in Glasgow in June 1935. She was affectionately known as 'Monty's Latvian princess'.

During the war he

volunteered for the Armed Forces but was turned down as his father had not been naturalised and the Forces did not 'require aliens'. Monty advised the Recruiting Officer that his cousin, Jack White, was allowed to serve his country as a World War One soldier and had won the Victoria Cross. Monty, however, remained a civilian.

Rachelle was one of four children. She was born in Latvia where her father had a sawmill. All the family excelled as athletes and she herself was an all rounder and gymnast for Maccabi. Her brother, Max, represented Latvia in Palestine in 1930 at the Maccabi Games, where he won the 100 metres. Anti-semitism was rife in Eastern Europe and Rachelle, a keen Zionist, intended to emigrate to Palestine. She had planned to go to Switzerland to study French as a prerequisite to going to the Holy Land, but was persuaded by an aunt, Mrs Teitelbaum, the daughter-in-law of Edinburgh's Minister, to come to this city. She did so and lodged with Mrs Nathan, mother of a family which included Celia Leigh and

Fanny Levinson. She went to Skerry's College to study English before going to Edinburgh University, where she graduated MA in Hebrew and General Arts.

During the 1930s, Rachelle became actively involved with Jewish organisations in attempts to extricate Jews from Nazi-controlled Europe. Her mother and three brothers and sisters had remained in Latvia after her father died in 1933. In 1938, with her daughter Aviva, she travelled to Europe but the Munich crisis and the threat of war caused Monty to send a telegram asking them to return home. She later learned that her mother had been arrested with her brother Joseph, aged 15, by the Nazis for not wearing the 'Star of David'. As the day had been oppressive, she had removed her coat on which the badge had been pinned. She was not seen again. Joseph was later found by a British Member of Parliament, Tom Driberg, in Buchenwald Concentration Camp in 1945. His condition, both mentally and physically, was tragic. He was brought to Edinburgh where he lived with Rachelle and Monty for some time before moving to London. His deep scars from the Nazi regime led to parts in films depicting the horrors of that era.

In the early 1950s Rachelle became ill and was hospitalised in Dumfries for several months. The family was advised that her illness required a warmer climate. They moved to South Africa and settled in Johannesburg where Monty opened a garage, remaining there until 1962 when South Africa became a republic. Concerned that they would be classified as aliens, they decided to return to Edinburgh.



Rachelle and Monty.

Monty took over his own leather-goods business on South Bridge which had been looked after by his brother-in-law Claude Wayne.

In Latvia, now a member state of the USSR, Russian troops began rounding up Jewish business men and women. Rachele's brother Max, in attempting to help the latter, was himself arrested and sent to the salt mines in Siberia. In 1966, Rachele travelled to Russia and after a series of difficult and often dangerous journeys, made contact with Max in Leningrad. Such meetings were clandestine and had to take place in parks, on the underground and at carefully vetted venues as Max was not allowed to leave the country and forbidden to talk to foreigners. Rachele was warned about her activities by the authorities. Ultimately, Max secured permission to leave and he emigrated to Israel. The Bravermans met him there and also had a reunion with Rachele's sister Harriet who had made contact with the family when they resided in South Africa.

Rachele and Monty have two daughters, Jackie and Shirley. Tragically another daughter, Aviva, died in 1990 at an early age after a prolonged illness. She was the widow of Canadian Sam Segal, and they have a daughter Rhonda, currently a final-year medical student at Manchester University.

Shirley lives in America with her husband Michael Kurnoff and three children, Lee, Janine and Bryan. She has won trophies as a tennis champion and has competed in the Maccabi Games in London. Jackie, also a tennis champion, married Cliff Lyons in South Africa. They have two sons, Russell and Craig. Rachele's prowess as an athlete has been mirrored in her daughters and grandchildren. In 1993, Russell represented South Africa at hockey in the Maccabi Games in Israel, while Craig was chosen to represent his country at cricket. Russell, now resident in Australia, played hockey for his adopted country in the 1997 Mac-

cabi Games and won a bronze medal. Craig represented South Africa at cricket in the same year, winning a silver medal. Rachele experienced a great thrill at being present at these Games and witnessing her grandsons' triumphs.

Rachele is a life-long Zionist and in her youth was an active member of the Young Edinburgh Zionists. When in South Africa, she served on the committee of *Magen David Adom* (Red Cross in Israel). In the past, Monty was a member of the Young Lit. They are most popular members of the community,

regular Synagogue attenders, exceedingly charitable and supporters of numerous functions and good causes. Monty's ready smile and dry quips are so much part of this genial man's personality, which even many years as a Hearts supporter have been unable to erode. Rachele's warmth and sincerity are ever present. To be in their company is a delightful experience. Their close, loving relationship was recently marked by sixty-two years of married bliss. We trust that they will have many years more to continue to enrich the Edinburgh Jewish community.

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## STAR TREK INTO THE PAST

The top picture in the last issue of the magazine is of members of Edinburgh Synagogue Choir. They were invited to sing at the Centenary of the Great Synagogue at Belgrave Street in Leeds on 19th June 1977. In the picture, from left to right at top, are Norman Dorfman, Ian Leifer, Charlie Simonoff, Selwyn Dorfman, Philip Mason, George Bindman, Mark Sischy, Jeffrey Sofaer, David Mendelssohn (choir master) and Rev. Sam Knopp.

The bottom photograph is of a happy group of guests at the wedding of Sandra and Sydney Caplan in Manchester in 1965.

*Once again, there are two photographs in our competition in the current issue. In Issue No 22, we carried a photograph taken in 1953 of the Edinburgh Maccabi Football team. Can any readers with long memories identify the members of this cricket team and the occasion on which it was taken? And can anyone identify the drummer in the band? Top marks for anyone who can not only name the drummer but also name the band. Answers in the next Issue.*



*To ensure that Star Trek does not become an all male preserve, we intend to publish photographs in which women feature prominently in our next issue. Ladies, there is no Mechitza here! Readers who possess snapshots which may be suitable for publication are invited to contact Ian Shein (332 2324).*

# STEVEN SPIELBERG, SHINDLER'S LIST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SURVIVERS OF THE SHOAH VISUAL HISTORY FOUNDATION

by Bernice Krantz

After filming 'Shindler's List', the award-winning film maker Steven Spielberg established the *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation* to videotape and archive interviews with Holocaust survivors all over the world. The Shoah Foundation is gathering as many eye-witness testimonies as possible to create the largest multi-media archive of survivor testimony ever assembled. To date, the Shoah Foundation has collected testimonies in 45 countries around the world, with interviews conducted in 29 languages, and it is the Foundation's goal that the archive should be made available to museums, Holocaust education and resource centres and educational institutions world-wide.

Testimonies cover a survivor's experience before, during and after the Holocaust. Interviews are conducted in the language of the survivor's choice and are usually taped in the survivor's home or another convenient location. All participants receive a VHS copy of their testimony for their personal use.

To date, more than 34,000 survivors around the world have shared their testimonies with the Shoah Foundation. Rather surprisingly, only four have these were from Scotland and, although a number of other survivors have made contact and are waiting to be interviewed, there must be many more survivors in Scotland who have not yet come forward. If so, the Shoah Foundation would very much like to hear from them. Every testimony recorded not only preserves the survivor's life before, during and after the Holocaust, but also helps the world to understand

the challenges survivors faced when rebuilding their lives.

The Shoah Foundation is currently seeking to document the experiences of Holocaust survivors, including those who were in concentration or labour camps, were in hiding, lived under a false identity, were in ghettos, survived mass killings, or who participated in resistance movements. The Foundation's primary focus is on the camp survivors, those in hiding and those who had to adopt a false identity, but it is also interested in documenting experiences including those of refugees, rescuers and liberators, those who were rescued by *Kinder transport*, and those who were involved with war crimes trials.

Each testimony is a personal legacy for the survivor's children and grandchildren, as well as a historical legacy for generations to come. Visual history is unique because it documents a personal perspective on historical events. The Shoah Foundation archive will allow viewers to learn from the people who survived the Shoah. This form of documentation should have the power to transform Holocaust education to ensure that present and future generations never forget what so few lived to tell.

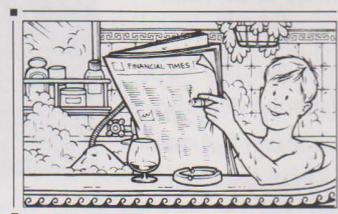
The interview procedure begins with a telephone call to the London Office where I explain the interview procedure and take some details. I then book a date for the actual interview directly with the survivor. The next step is for me to match up an interviewer with the survivor depending on the survivor's experience and taking into account

whether the survivor is secular or religious. Every effort is taken to ensure that the survivor is completely comfortable with their interviewer as revisiting this part of their past is often difficult

Readers of *The Edinburgh Star* who would like to record their experiences for the archive are encouraged to call the Shoah Foundation on 0171-483-3981.

*Bernice Krantz is UK Co-ordinator of the Shoah Foundation.*

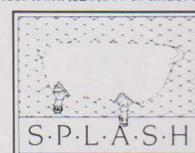
## BATHTIME TALES NO 1



### Nigel stags a bull

It had been a long day. The money market was up but Nigel's mood was anything but. He closed the bathroom door and turned the tap, noticing the satisfying touch of antique gold plated fittings. He lay back, the water gently lapping round the beautiful porcelain bath. It felt like a very expensive haven, designed with utmost style and taste. Life looked better already. And to think Nirvana could be gained just by visiting Scotland's premier bathroom specialist. Upwardly mobile? Right now Nigel felt wonderfully horizontal – and with his complete suite costing a mere trifle who could question his watertight business position?

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# WHITHER JEWISH CONTINUITY IN SCOTLAND

*John Cosgrove interviews David Kaplan, Executive Officer of Jewish Continuity in Glasgow.*

JAC *What is Jewish Continuity?*

DVK Do you mean 'Continuity' the concept or 'Continuity' the organisation?

JAC *Let's start with the organisation*

DVK **Glasgow Jewish Continuity** was set up as a result of a wide-ranging Communal Report, to provide as wide a Jewish educational programme for the Glasgow Jewish community as possible. It was to have a twin-track approach. One track would involve running 'core' activities such as *Shabbatonim*, a community-wide magazine, an extensive speaker and seminar programme and Jewish assemblies in non-Jewish schools. The other track was to be a cross-communal allocations procedure, under which groups or individuals could submit new educational initiatives to be assessed and, hopefully, financed. This was *Continuity Mark 1*. We are now developing these ideas further and in *Continuity Mark 2*, we will be focusing our attention more closely on four key spheres under the banner of JIA Renewal. These areas are:

- Young people
- An Israel Experience for all
- Educational leadership (professional and lay)
- Community strategy and analysis.

JAC *But why is the concept of 'continuity' important?*

DVK Can I put it this way – the two questions concerning the idea of 'Continuity' which I am asked most often are 'Why bother with Continuity at all?' and 'Why be Jewish?'. Strangely enough I do not believe in continuity!! After all to continue is to carry on as we have done before. As far as this relates to British Jewry, it would mean continuing the high rate of intermarriage and with our many communal divisions. What we need is Jewish Change!

JAC *So is it an organisation which promotes change?*

DVK Yes, this is exactly why Jewish Continuity was created – to try and change the community's agenda. I think most people would agree that our strategy has proven successful and that the merger of National JIA and Jewish Continuity is an indication of how seriously we are being taken.

JAC *How do you measure if you have been successful?*

DVK How does one quantify success? Numbers attending events? Members attending follow-up events? General increase in communal awareness? Types of people attending? I can play the numbers game – over 300 Jewish children catered for weekly by our 'Assemblies' programme, over 100 youth movement members to an 'Anti-Racism' evening, 'Generations Day' sold out, over 250 people to the Shmuley Boteach

evening, all our *Shabbatonim* sold out, over £25,000 allocated to external groups and individuals for new educational initiatives over the past 18 months. Our profile within the community is very high and I believe 'continuity' and 'education' are being discussed around many dinner and coffee tables. This is success. After all, Judaism does not fear questions being asked, but is afraid of nobody being around to ask the questions!

JAC *How is your organisation financed?*

DVK Currently we are funded in part by the Glasgow Jewish Community Trust and in the main from donations collected by the JIA from their various fund-raising events and activities.

JAC *Is it a democratically elected organisation?*

DVK Yes the GJC Board currently has a majority of democratically-elected people on it as well as several other members who represent the Community Trust, the JIA and the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council.

JAC *Obviously Edinburgh is too small to have an organisation like Jewish Continuity. Is there any way that you can help us?*

DVK We already have helped Edinburgh! 'The Future Generations Committee' applied to GJC for funds towards *Shabbatonim* and speakers which proved to be successful. As a result an excellent *Shabbat* meal and programme occurred in April this year, with guest speaker Andrew Shaw a former UJS Education Officer. I understand the FGC have not spent all of their GJC allocation and I am looking forward to attending another successful FGC *Shabbaton* or speaker evening. I also understand that several parents in the Edinburgh community approached GJC to enquire as to how to run and organise Jewish assemblies. Hopefully this co-operation will continue to grow and develop.

JAC *What do you think of our Future Generations Committee?*

DVK To be truthful I do not know very much about the FGC. Nevertheless, GJC has had contact with them on several occasions and we have agreed to fund their *Shabbat* and, speaker programme. I look forward to maybe coming through and speaking to them, but to coin a good 'Edinburgh community' phrase, 'I'm available if selected'!

JAC *We are impressed that a local lad has devoted his work to helping the Jewish Community. Did your Edinburgh background play any part?*

DVK Edinburgh has definitely played a huge role in my life and development, both in seeing the positive and negative aspects of growing up Jewish in Scotland. After

all half of my *cheder* contemporaries have an extremely strong Jewish identity and the other half have either married out and/or totally assimilated. Edinburgh can be extremely proud of what it has achieved. However, we should not be complacent as regards those we have lost and Edinburgh's communal leaders should be asking themselves why this happened? Did we and are we doing as much as we can to try to deal with this problem? On a more personal note I have no doubt that close family bonds played a crucial role in the development of my sense of being Jewish. In addition, the children and families I mixed with while I was growing up all had the same bottom line – 'Enjoy being Jewish'.

JAC *Do you see any future for young people in Edinburgh?*  
 DVK Yes there is a future for young people in Edinburgh, as long as there are vibrant leaders who can relate to them and show them how enjoyable living a complete Jewish life can be. If this element is not there, then what has happened to half my Edinburgh contemporaries could soon lead to the end of the Jewish community. It is in the lay leaders of the community's hands to ensure that this does not happen.

JAC *So what ought we to be doing that we are not already doing?*  
 DVK The other great question! So what can we do anyway? There is no easy fix for the problems of assimilation and lack of Jewish understanding and knowledge. All we can do is try and provide the opportunities and experiences for our younger people in order that they should not reject Judaism through

ignorance. One concrete idea would be for the Shul Council to set aside say £300-£500 per annum to be invested in people attending national educational seminars such as 'Encounters', 'Limmud', 'CAJE' and 'Moked'. One idea could be that all *Cheder* teachers must attend at least one or two of these conferences each year. After all we do not live in a communal vacuum, we have to expose our teachers as well as our youth to the national and international educational developments as well as improve their own personal awareness and knowledge. Without trained and Jewishly knowledgeable/observant teachers who are able to relate to today's youth we could do more harm than good. This I believe was a significant factor in many of my Edinburgh contemporaries opting out of Jewish life.

JAC *How do you see your own career progressing?*  
 DVK My own career? A good question! My mother would like to know the answer to this question! Seriously though, I see myself working within the Jewish community as not only do I believe in the work but I also enjoy it. For too long now, working for the Jewish community has been regarded as an almost voluntary or amateur occupation. This approach is changing and working for the Jewish community is becoming an almost respectable profession!!

JAC *Thank you very much. We wish you every success!*

*David Kaplan, son of Myrna and Morris Kaplan, was educated at Edinburgh Academy and Glasgow University where he graduated M.A., LL.B. He is a former Chairman of UJS and was appointed to his present post in 1996.*



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# BIRTH OF A NATION: OUR RECOLLECTIONS

by Sinora and Sas Judah

[The Edinburgh Indian community celebrated the Golden Jubilee with speeches and a display of traditional dancing at the Ross Bandstand in Prince's Street Gardens in the presence of The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Chisholm, M.P., Minister of State in the Scottish Office, The Rt. Hon. Eric Milligan, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Mr Parveen Gopal, Consul General of India for Scotland and a large and enthusiastic audience of weel-wishers. In order to mark this important event, **The Edinburgh Star** invited two Indian-born members of the Jewish community to reflect on the Independence Day celebrations 50 years ago in Bombay.]

India celebrated her 50th independence day on 15th August 1997 with great pomp and stunning pageantry, just as she did 50 years ago when the great destiny took shape, albeit with much travail and suffering. Against the background of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and the *satyagraha* (non-violent and peaceful) movement, Viceroy Louis Mountbatten announced with great emotion on 3rd June 1947 from the Delhi studio of All-India Radio that the final transfer of power would take place on 15th August 1947. Britain had agreed to ring down the curtain on her Indian adventure down somewhat precipitously with the partitioning of the country into two entities – India and Pakistan.

The *vyotishes* (astrologers) who are invariably consulted by the Hindu community, and who provide occult guidance for every occasion, were unanimous that Friday, 15th August 1947 was a very inauspicious day and pronounced that if floods, drought, famine and massacres followed, it would be because free India was to be born on a day cursed by stars. A congerie of astrologers finally advised India's politicians that, although 15th August was a wholly inauspicious day on which to begin the nation's modern history, there would a much more favourable conjunction of the stars on 14th August and therefore proposed that, in order to propitiate the celestial bodies, India (and for that matter Pakistan), should become independent dominions on the stroke of midnight, 14th August 1947.

Britain was involved in the most complex divorce action in history,

the break-up of a nation with a population of 400 million human beings. The Indian people are an amalgam of races and religions, languages and cultures, with a diversity and contrast unmatched on the globe. A land with 305 million Hindus, 82 million Moslems, seven million Christians, six million Sikhs, 100,000 Parsees and a microscopic minority of 24,000 Jews whose forebears had fled the destruction of Solomon's Temple during the Babylonian exile. She took on the responsibility for preparing the gigantic, unimaginably complicated property settlement accompanying the partition plan – 80% to India and 20% to Pakistan. The writing was on the wall – the misery that followed partition, if recounted, would take an entire issue of **The Edinburgh Star** to recount and we shall therefore refrain from this task. Suffice it to say that Britain's departure as an imperial power did not ease the

terrible burdens under which so many Indians had long suffered.

'Many years ago we made a tryst with destiny' declared Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, 'and now the time has come when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom'. And, he continued, 'A moment comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation long suppressed finds utterance. We have to build the noble mansions of free India where all her children may dwell'.

At the stroke of midnight, on 14th August 1947 every Indian stood up and pledged his or her services to mother India. That grand and guilty edifice, the British *Raj* had come to an end. The momentous changes portended by the conche shell's call

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found their echo in jubilant cheers and a thousand gestures.

Bombay celebrated with lights and a fine display of pyrotechnics. All public buildings – the Gateway of India, the Reserve Bank of India, the (Royal) Mint, Railway Terminuses, Municipal Offices to mention just a few – were lit up in saffron, white and green bulbs, the tricolour of the Indian National Flag. The frontages of several less prestigious buildings were floodlit. Temples, Mosques, Churches and Synagogues were outlined with garlands of multi-coloured light bulbs. People put oil lamps along their balconies and windows. Not to be outsmarted, Jews lit up their *Chanukia*.

On bicycles, tonga carts, cars, trucks, even on an elephant draped in rich velvet tapestry, crowds swept towards the town centre to sing, cheer and walk in a buoyant mood of self-congratulation. And more came. There were caravans of tongas, their beels jingling gaily. There were bullocks, harnesses and hooves painted with orange, white and green stripes, tugging wooden-wheeled platforms crowded with people. There were trucks overflowing with men, women and children, all admiring the show of pomp and glory. People with turbans of every shape and colour imaginable, the women in bright,

festive *saris*, every bauble they owned glittering on their arms, from their ears, fingers and noses. For a brief moment, in that fraternal cohort, rank, religion and caste dissolved. Everyone laughed, cheered and occasionally wept with emotion. The Jewish community's contribution was in the form of special services held in their synagogues which included blessings for the welfare of the Indian nation and the expression of hope that she would deal kindly and truly with those of the Jewish faith.

The restaurants and cafes were thronged. Everyone seemed to have gravitated to its pavements. People. From the palatial apartment houses of Marine Drive to the distant slums of Worli, from the villas of Malabar Hill to the clutter of Chor Bazaar (the 'thieves' market), Bombay was awash with lights. Midnight became midday. It was a new *Diwali*. *Chanukah* come early, a premature New Year's Eve – it was as if all the festivals in a land of festivals had been rolled into one – for this was the Festival of Freedom.

Dusk, and the dust raised by a million feet, settled over the city. Thousands continued to throng its streets, singing, cheering and embracing. People swarmed through a gigantic outdoor carnival of snake charmers, jugglers, fortune-

tellers, dancing bears, wrestlers, sword swallows, *fakirs* piercing their cheeks with silver spikes, and flautists. Others slowly trudged out of city towards the homes from which they had come. The tonga driver who had asked four annas (less than half a penny) to bring passengers into the city now demanded two rupees (four pence) to take them back home. That was indeed a high price to pay for freedom!

The famished hordes of a continent in prayer had claimed their freedom from architects of the greatest empire those centuries had produced, a realm that dwarfed in dimension, population and importance the domains of Rome, Babylon, Carthage and Greece. With the Crown Jewels of the British Empire prised away by the brown Indian hands to which it belonged, no other colonial empire could long endure. To check history's onrushing tide was futile and condemned to certain failure.

P.S. On a personal note, although Sas was preparing for his *Bar-Mitzva*, he claims that the memories of these momentous events are indelibly carved in his mind. Sinora had just been successful in securing a place at the St. Ignatius Nursery and recalls thinking that the celebrations were for her benefit!

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# FROZEN EMBRYOS IN ISRAELI AND JEWISH LAW: THE NAHMANI CASE

by Daniel Sinclair

*Tension between secular and religious law in Israel has recently reached crisis level, with mutual recriminations on both sides. In the following case, which was handled by an extended panel of the Israeli Supreme Court, Rabbi Dr Daniel Sinclair, until recently Principal of Jews' College and former Minister of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, shows how some of the judges took account of rulings of the Supreme Rabbinic Court in arriving at their decision, and how a strong feeling for halachic principles is deeply rooted within the Israeli legal system.*

Ruthy and Danny Nahmani were married in Haifa in 1984. Three years later, Ruthy lost her womb as a result of surgery for the treatment of her cancer. Prior to the operation, a number of her eggs were removed and fertilised with Danny's sperm. The embryos were then frozen and, since it was not permitted under Israeli law in 1987 to implant an embryo in a woman other than the egg donor, the Nahmanis applied to the High Court for permission to send them to California for implantation into a surrogate mother. Eventually the High Court gave its permission to proceed but by that time, the Nahmanis had split up and Danny was living with another woman who had given birth naturally to a baby girl. Divorce proceedings had also been initiated by Danny Nahmani in the rabbinical courts. Upon Danny's formal withdrawal of consent to the dispatch of the embryos to the United States, Ruthy petitioned the Haifa District Court to recognise her right to have the embryos implanted in a surrogate mother, notwithstanding her husband's withdrawal of consent.

In the District Court, Justice Ariel found in favour of Ruthy Nahmani. This finding was based upon the view that Danny Nahmani's consent covered the entire reproductive process, including implantation in a surrogate. Although the relationship between the Nahmanis had changed drastically since the original agreement, it was Danny who was responsible for the change. He was therefore estopped from arguing the fact of changed circumstances as a justification for with-

drawing his permission to implant the embryos.

The Supreme Court decision in *Nahmani v. Nahmani*, however, went in favour of Danny Nahmani. The majority opinion was written by Justice Strassberg-Cohen who began by pointing out that parenthood was a right and not an obligation and hence, no individual could be forced to become a parent against his or her will. Even under Jewish law, a woman who refuses to have sexual relations with her husband is not compelled to do so in order to help him fulfil the commandment of procreation although, of course, she may be divorced as a result of her conduct. Justice Strassberg-Cohen also accepted the view that a father enjoys the same rights in relation to an artificially fertilised embryo as does a mother to the fetus she carries in her womb. In the same way, therefore, that the father may not veto his wife's decision to abort her fetus in legally justifiable circumstances, so a mother cannot proceed in defiance of the father of the embryo in an *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) situation.

A survey of different legislative and judicial approaches to artificial reproduction also strengthens Danny's case. The general principle in English, American, Australian and Canadian law is that consent may be revoked by either party to a surrogacy arrangement at any time prior to implantation. Moreover, there is a provision in some legislatures for the destruction of the embryos in such circumstances. In Israel, the 1987 Public Health Ordinance makes no reference to revocation of consent prior to

implantation and it would clearly be inappropriate to derive a principle of non-revocation on the basis of the absence of any such reference. In any case, the 1991 Aloni Committee on surrogacy clearly recommended that the principle of revocability of consent be adopted right up until implantation.

In a detailed discussion of the applicability of the principles of contract law to IVF agreements, Justice Strassberg-Cohen tended to the view that doctrines such as frustration of contract, specific performance, incomplete contracts and estoppel were not suitable for application in the area of personal status. Agreements or promises to marry are probably the closest type of contract to the agreement between the Nahmanis and it is abundantly clear that even in jurisdictions in which such promises still have legal force, their breach entails the payment of damages for injuries caused but certainly not a decree for specific performance.

On the issue of the status of the fertilised eggs, the court preferred the term pre-embryo used in the American case of *Davis v. Davis* and followed the general approach of a number of modern Common Law jurisdictions according to which no independent status is granted to any such pre-embryo. Under Jewish law, there is a basic distinction between biological status and legal personality and the general consensus among contemporary halachic authorities is that no fetus is fully alive for legal purposes until a much later stage of pregnancy than the one at which the freezing of fertilised eggs take place.

Justice Strassberg-Cohen concluded her judgement with a remark on the issue of the welfare of the child. In her view, the widespread phenomenon of single-parent families together with the eminent suitability of Ruthy Nahmani for motherhood meant that the welfare of the child was not a major issue in the present case. Ruthy Nahmani's petition was, however, rejected for the reasons outlined above.

### The Halachic Position

It is noteworthy that in the course of her decision, Justice Strassberg-Cohen referred to a halachic decision on this matter by R. Saul Yisraeli, a member of the Supreme Rabbinical Court in Jerusalem. According to R. Yisraeli, the major issues in this case are the ownership of the fetus, the rules governing a partnership in Jewish law and the halachic position with regard to IVF and surrogacy. Under biblical law, it is evident that a husband possesses ownership rights to his fetus since the person who causes his wife to miscarry is obliged to pay him monetary compensation. Now, although there is a dispute among the medieval authorities as to whether or not the compensation is paid to the husband because he owns the fetus or in his role as receiver of his wife's income, it is generally agreed that the husband's consent is necessary in order to decide the fate of a fetus and, indeed, this requirement is cited in the responsa literature in relation to situations which do not fall squarely within the rubric of abortion performed for the sake of saving maternal life. It would therefore appear that the father rather than the mother owns the fetus in Jewish law.

R. Yisraeli's primary argument is drawn from the rules governing partnerships in the halachah. Under talmudic law, a valid partnership exists if two parties agree to enter into a common enterprise and both donate material to it. Unilateral dissolution of a partnership is, *prima facie*, illegal. Nevertheless, there is

provision for withdrawing as a result of duress e.g. sickness or death, and in general, any reasonable and objective factor may be taken into account when defining duress in this context. R. Yisraeli concludes that the surrogacy agreement between the Nahmanis did, indeed, constitute a valid partnership in Jewish law. However, the separation between Ruthy and Danny was such a significant change in the circumstances of the original agreement that it amounted to the required level of duress necessary for the dissolution of the partnership.

The circumstances of the Nahmani case constitute duress under the halachah governing partnership and hence the husband who is, in effect, a partner with ownership rights in the assets of the partnership may not be forced to accede to the wishes of his wife. The proper course is either to destroy the material in question or, if the wife objects, to preserve it in its present frozen form.

R. Yisraeli also raises the question of the halachic propriety of surrogacy arrangements in the first instance and expressed strong reservations with regard to their halachic status. In the present case, however, the fertilisation of the eggs is a *fait accompli* and the question only arises with regard to their implantation into a surrogate. In such a case, the major issue is whether or not the original agreement is still a binding one and according to R. Yisraeli, the answer is an entirely negative one. R. Yisraeli's conclusion, and a similar conclusion by the President of the Haifa District Rabbinical Court, were cited with approval in the majority decision.

In his minority decision in *Nahmani v. Nahmani*, Justice Tal reaches a different conclusion and ruled in favour of Ruthy Nahmani. According to Justice Tal, justice requires that Ruthy and not only Danny be given a chance to build up a family. Danny Nahmani left his wife and now wishes to extinguish her last hope of becoming a genetic

mother while he is enjoying his new family. In these circumstances, the just solution is the one which also gives Ruthy the chance to have her own child.

Justice Tal argued that Ruthy Nahmani had borne the brunt – both physical and emotional – of the IVF procedure and her autonomy was therefore to be preferred to that of Danny. In this context, he cited the talmudic rule that 'the side which changes the situation is always at a disadvantage'. It would also appear that the balance is not between enforced parenthood and a neutral state but between coercive fatherhood and coercive childlessness. In such a situation, enforced fatherhood would appear to be the lesser of the two evils.

In Justice Tal's view, the doctrine of promissory estoppel is perfectly applicable to the present case and since Danny Nahmani himself produced the changed circumstances, he must 'always be at a disadvantage'.

Justice Tal's most innovative argument was derived from the sources of Jewish Law according to which Danny was under an obligation to provide his wife with a child, even if their ways were to part and their relationship was to come to an end. Under talmudic law, a woman is entitled to a divorce if, after ten years, her husband is not able to provide her with a child. Indeed, according to R. Nahman, the husband is to be compelled to divorce his wife in such a case, in order that she may marry another man and receive the support of children in her old age. The halachah recognizes and legitimates compelling a husband to fulfil certain marital obligations such as maintenance. In a similar fashion, he may be compelled to carry out a promise made by virtue of his conduct, to provide his wife with an heir.

Rachel's cry to Jacob to 'give me children or else I am dead' ought to be the overriding principle in cases such as this one, and represents, in Justice Tal's view, the only just method for resolving it.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

# A GORBALS YONTEF IN APSLEY PLACE

by Rocky Levey

The street was very posh when my father moved into a three-bedroom apartment three floors up on Apsley Place. It was towards the end of World War I, and we had been living in London, but my father sent us up to Glasgow to be in a safe place while he stayed behind with two of my elder sisters to clear up the business.

The rest of us children were distributed between aunts and cousins on Apsley Place, and we were so happy to be back amongst our family on a street which was 95% Jewish. When a *yontef* came along, all the curtains in the street were taken down and everyone was busy washing windows, putting up clean curtains and cleaning their homes. The *Shul* was in the next street and on *yontef* we used to hang out of the window to see what everyone was wearing before we got ready ourselves. In the next building to ours was a family with a number of daughters and I remember one of them shrieking down the street at her sister, 'Come back with my dress and shoes right now – I have nothing else to wear' – but there was no turning back.

When we would finally get dressed, we all looked so smart, though my parents had quite a job with eleven children. I remember the time I first wore a new skirt and jacket. It was made from a piece of cloth, a remnant, which my mother had bought for a bargain. I was so proud of my outfit because, up until then, I had only ever worn 'hand-me downs' from my older sisters.

Lovely memories linger on. When my sister Lily and I got engaged, how we loved showing off our engagement rings in *Shul* on *yontef*. Another girl had become engaged at the same time and we outdid her of course – or so we then thought. They were happy times, with each one helping the other, and making *yom tovim* really special days. Now that I am 92 years old, I can still remember that long gone street – and *yontef* has never been quite the same since.

[Any reader with childhood memories of Edinburgh comparable to Rocky Levey's childhood memories of Glasgow is invited to contact the Editor.]

ב'ה

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## FOR JENNY

Yael Sinclair

For seven years you waged  
your war  
Against an enemy unseen  
Your shield was courage your  
sword determination  
Your white horse the loved  
ones around you.

The prize you sought was a  
life of normality  
Each year of illness was to be  
the last  
Every day of progress was  
chalked in shining colours  
Every setback overcome and  
put behind.

'I will not be beaten' was the  
motto on your banner  
You flew it high for all to see  
Your battle cry rang out true  
and strong  
'Don't look at the outside –  
inside it's still me!'

## GRANDMA

Rocky Levey

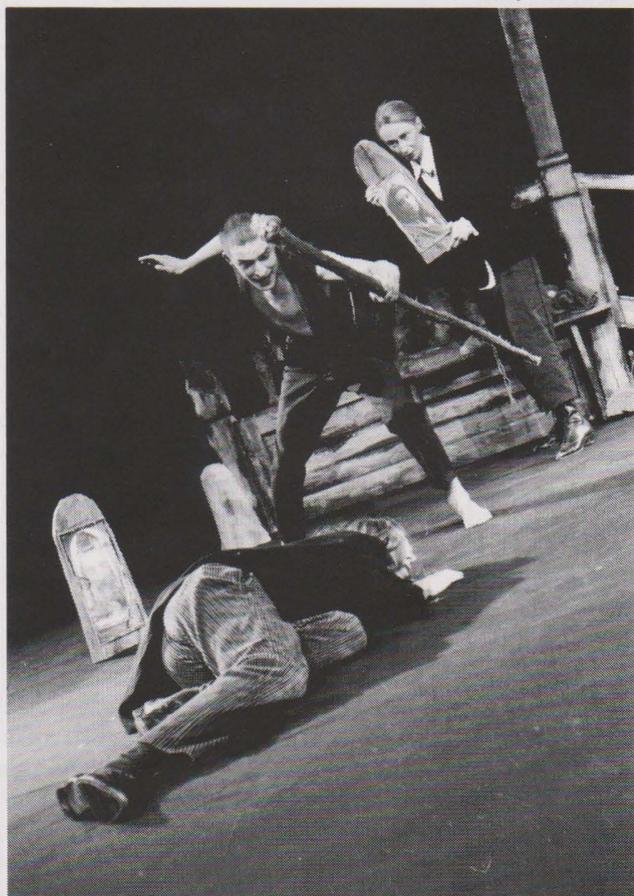
In the dim and distant past,  
When Life's tempo wasn't fast,  
Grandma used to rock and  
knit,  
Crochet and tat, and baby-sit.  
When the kids were in a jam,  
You could always count on  
Gran.  
In the age of gracious living,  
Grandma was the girl for  
giving.  
Now Grandma's at the gym  
Exercising to keep slim,  
She's out collecting with the  
bunch  
Taking clients out to lunch,  
Going north to ski and curl,  
All her days are in a whirl.  
Nothing seems to stop or block  
her,  
Now that Grandma's 'off her  
rockers'.

## A POLISH FOLK TALE AND TWO MODERN DRAMAS

A review of the Wierszalin Theatre Company's production of 'Dybbuk' at Theatre Workshop, Kerry Shale in 'The Prince of West End Avenue' at the Assembly Rooms, and 'Hellcab' at the Traverse Theatre.

by Sara Sheridan

With nearly 900 shows listed in the theatre section of the Fringe programme this year (not counting comedy, revue, dance or music), the whole city was spoilt for choice when it came to great nights out at the theatre. Two shows of particular interest to the Jewish community were the Wierszalin Theatre Company's production of 'Dybbuk' at the Theatre Workshop and 'The Prince of West End Avenue', Kerry Shale's, one man show at the Assembly Rooms. Also playing, and certainly one of the hotter tickets for the Festival was the European premiere of 'Hellcab', the highly acclaimed play written in 1992 by Will Kern, which has been so successful in the USA that it is still running five years later and has just been adapted for film.



A scene from 'Dybbuk'.

The Wierszalin Theatre Company are well known at the Festival, having scooped two 'Fringe Firsts', one in 1993 and one in 1994, for their shows 'Roll-a-Pea' and 'Merlin'. This year 'Dybbuk', their presentation of the classic Jewish folk tale, had already received great critical acclaim by the time it opened at the Theatre Workshop for its Festival Fringe run. Visually the production was stunning, with a dark, stark set, dimly lit by the candles of a *menorah* and peppered with stones and wood blocks which stood like sculptures, often fronted by old photographs of Polish Jews. Here the cast, dressed in sombre, black clothes, wove the story of a pact between two young men, best friends studying at the *Yeshiva*, who swore that if they had a son and a daughter, their children would marry. One had a son, Chanan; the other, a daughter, Leah. Many years later the families had drifted apart – they had both moved far away and one of the young men had died. But when Chanan and Leah met they fell in love, even though Leah was already betrothed to someone else. Chanan died and haunted his true love until she, too, took her own life and their souls were joined together.

Michael Griggs, the director, and Mikolaj Malesza, the scenographer worked together to produce an en-

grossing production woven together by traditional songs and music. This accompanying music, played on the clarinet and the trombone, was genuinely moving especially when set against the excellent performances turned in by the whole of the cast and the complex visual nature of the production. The action often took place in two or three different places on the set at the same time, with, for example, the Rabbi quietly intoning prayers on one side of the set, the lovers canoodling in another corner and the main action taking place centre stage. Using a prop as simple as a wedding veil, the scenographer drew all the light on the stage towards the young, dead lovers, dancing like shadows for eternity. It was touches like this that gave the production the timeless atmosphere of a classic. The strong themes of old fables, the traditional mixture of revenge, loss, betrayal and passion, make any myth difficult to stage. The slightly abstract nature of this production worked extremely well with the themes that it portrayed. The Wierszalin Theatrical Association operate in the town of Bialystok in the eastern borderlands of Poland where the borderlines of many cultures and religions meet and sometimes merge. The artistic policy of the company and a main theme in many of its productions, is the preservation of the traditional folk tales of converging cultures. It was a real treat to see the Wierszalin in action – you should certainly try to catch them the next time that they are in town.

Meantime, in the Wildman Room at the Assembly Rooms, Kerry Shale was packing them in to his own adaptation of Adam Isler's Booker-shortlisted novel, 'The Prince of West End Avenue'. Shale played some 18 characters during the course of the show. The whole story

was told by Otto Korner, an 83-year-old resident at the Emma Lazarus Jewish Retirement Home in New York. Set in the last months of 1978 Otto told the story of a production of 'Hamlet' which the residents of the Old People's Home were staging, this story providing a backdrop to Otto's reminiscences of his life in Europe where he lived through both world wars. The show was beautifully paced, the antics of the elderly residents providing a comic

foil to the more harrowing and emotional experiences of Otto's early life in Berlin and Zurich, culminating in his incarceration in a concentration camp for most of World War II. Shale is a wonderful actor, his voice and mannerisms changing with each character that he mimicked perfectly from a comfortable armchair in Otto Korner's bedroom at the retirement home. At the end of what was both a funny and poignant performance he received a standing ovation from the audience – and that is a rare thing to see at an afternoon performance of a Fringe show. Shale, already well known on the screen for his roles in 'Jude', 'Yentl', 'Cracker' and 'Sherlock Holmes' and on the stage in for his work at the Royal Court Theatre and the Lyric Hammersmith, is a truly gifted man and a great pleasure to watch in action. The show was due to transfer for a long run, after the Festival, to the Hampstead Theatre.

On to the Traverse where 'Hellcab' was playing to full houses despite its late morning slot in the programme. Will Kern, the playwright, has added a modern addendum to Dostoyevsky's maxim that to know a society one must look



*Kerry Shale.*

inside its prisons and hospitals – in the late twentieth century it would also be helpful in any examination of society to drive a cab for a while. The show was very accomplished and has already won many awards in the States including Best Comedy Writing Award 1996. Jennifer Markowitz, the director, was nominated for Best Director Award for her production of the play.

'Hellcab' is the story of an unnamed taxi driver who comes to Chicago from a small town, to earn his living on the freezing winter streets of the 'Windy City'. The driver often, and futilely, intervenes in the affairs of his passengers. He tries to dissuade an angry man from wreaking violence against a used car salesman; he attempts to warn a young receptionist that her new beau dismisses her as a sex toy behind her back; he argues with a Pakistani taxi driver about the merits of reckless driving; and so on. In just under an hour, Kern covers a huge spectrum of characters, played in turn by the five-strong cast. Both a black comedy and riveting drama, the script was tight and the performances flawless – particularly Loren Lazerine, who played the driver struggling to retain his

humanity against the broad spectrum of grim urban reality. The production was seamless, an outstanding achievement given that the actors play over a dozen weird, wild and wonderful passengers in the back of Lazerine's taxi. The film of 'Hellcab', featuring most of the cast from this production in addition to John Cusack, Jillian Andersen and Michael Ironside, will be on general release at the end of the year.

*Sara Sheridan's first novel, 'Truth or Dare', published by Random House, will be launched in the UK in January.*

*With Compliments*

*from*

**JOHN AND HAZEL**

**COSGROVE**

## REVIEWING THE SITUATION

### A review of Jewish Comedy on the Fringe!

by Julian Goodman

'Never mind the quality, feel the quantity'. I don't think so, not these days at any rate!

Where's it all gone? There used to be a cornucopia of Jewish Comedy at the Festival, involving home-grown talent and performers from overseas but this year one had to look pretty hard and in the most unlikely of places to find any! Having found it, the quality was pretty much hit and miss, but with a couple of gems sparkling away!

The first port of call set the standard. Lenny Beige's 'One Man And His Talent' at the Pleasance Cabaret Bar, was a delightful way to spend the first hour of the Fringe. The character, excellently portrayed by Steve Furst, was a clever pastiche of a middle aged Jewish 'Las Vegas style' lounge singer from London's East End. The cabaret suit with velvet waistcoat and embroidered 'LB' motif, the Liberace jewelled rings and the Sammy Davis Jr. pendants were *nearly* eclipsed by the crowning glory of his nylon wig!

Bursting onto the stage with high kicks, and crooning, Lenny took the audience on a journey to look at the heady world of 'showbiz' through 'beige coloured spectacles' while telling the story of his life, which let's face it, were really one and the same! We were introduced to various members of his family – Sadie (his mother), the 'Kosher Chicken Giblet Queen' of White-chapel, his beautiful daughter (despite her IQ and lazy eye) Naomi, his no-good son Nathan, his late father Hymie, a purveyor of *unterheizen* and *gatkas* at the Brick Lane Market – all with typical Jewish humour. At one point Lenny revealed the gold ring on his finger (that his father had sold him from his deathbed) and then, bursting into a rendition of 'Goldfinger' only to resume his life story interspersed with celebrity anecdotes and yet

more song and dance. The audience left feeling thoroughly entertained, which is no mean feat in today's Festival!

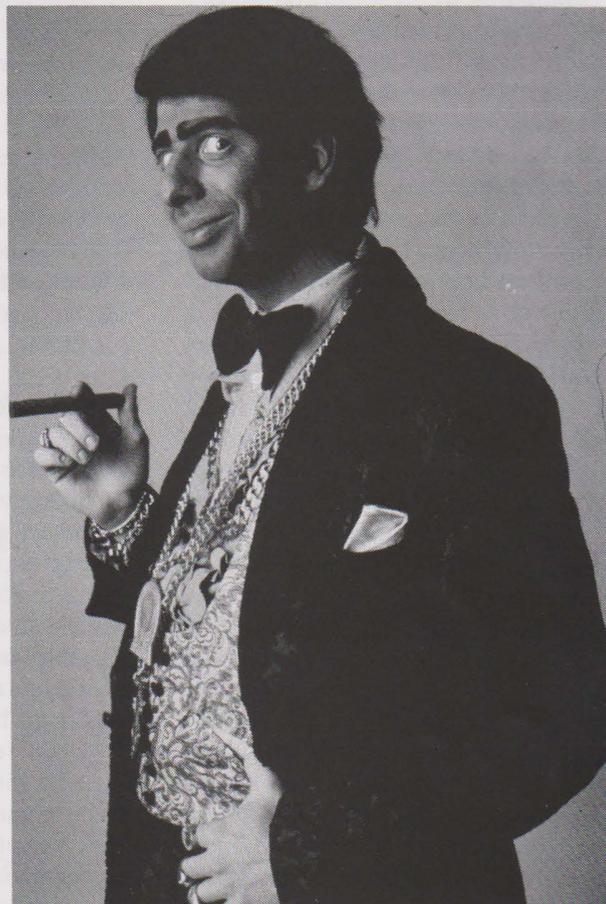
I then went in search of the next slice of *Yiddishkeit*, but alas it was not the easy task I had hoped for. I lowered my sights somewhat and went to find comedians who, even if I was not sure of their heritage, at least either looked or sounded Jewish!

Armed only with a notebook and a mental handshake I went to see Adam Bloom at the Pleasance. Well at least I was half lucky – he turned out to be half-Jewish! Having established a rapport with Jewish members of the audience, he told his one Jewish joke, predictably an anatomical one, but well told, saying 'I haven't much Jewish material, but feel the quality!' which I think a few of the audience did, *metaphorically* speaking. That aside, the rest of his act was *r e l a t i v e l y* entertaining. Having got off to a rather slow start in an oppressively hot venue, he quickly warmed the audience to him with sharp and observational humour, though relying somewhat heavily on audience repartee. I left impressed but feeling as if I had worked harder than he had at times, and wondered if I was entitled to a share of the takings!

I then tried a different tack and went to see some theatre at the

Assembly Rooms. Kerry Shale in 'The Prince of West End Avenue'. This one-man show is reviewed at greater length by Sara Sheridan (see above) I thought it was excellently performed. Despite the drama and seriousness of the content, this play was full of gentle and charming Jewish humour. Shale's characterization of all the *dramatis personae* was impressive to say the least, and extremely funny at times and, despite the intensity of the second half, it was a more than satisfying example of Jewish humour.

It was back to the Pleasance and some more stand-up, this time from Jason Freeman. The only concession to the possibility of being Jewish comedy was his mention of Chanukah! The whole of his



Lenny Beige

performance was *nothing* if not brilliant – and it *wasn't* brilliant, believe you me! Although playing to a packed house of eight isn't terribly easy, his delivery was painful despite the occasionally amusing material. I was extremely grateful once the door had been unlocked and I was once again granted my freedom!

I decided to cheer myself up by going to see some mainstream comedy, so abandoning my quest, I crossed the courtyard and went to see 'Sir Bernard Chumley's Grand Tour'. I spent the next hour or so watching a performance of juvenile humour mostly concerned with jokes about the characters' sexual proclivities! The audience was mostly made up of students who all seemed to be enjoying themselves. Well, 'for those who like that sort of thing, that is the sort of thing they like'! At any rate, I was somewhat surprised, having given up my quest for the evening, when halfway through the show I was treated to a little nugget of comedy to add to my collection. On to the stage burst Frankie Tan, another pastiche of a Jewish Comedian, this one an outrageously bad comic. So bad he was hilarious! Wonderfully portrayed by the extremely talented Paul Putner, Tan stood there delighting the audience with his

ineptitude, highlighted by his slobbish appearance, endearing Golders Green Jewish accent, bad jokes and impressions and his wonderfully tacky catchphrase when things were a bit shaky – 'Can I be Frank with you?!?!'. The evening had been saved!

The next comedian I visited made no bones about it! Plastering his publicity with his Jewishness gave the game away, and so I headed to the Gilded Balloon II to sample the talent of Ian Stone in 'Bit of Didley Squat'. His performance harkened back to traditional comedy while still being modern in his material. His Jewish material made up a large proportion of his show with excellent material and delivery. He gave discourses on various aspects of religion with the *Yiden* coming out on top, naturally! His description of God having to be Jewish just because Mannah was such Big Catering while Jesus just did a one off buffet, brought the house down, mainly through his finely honed delivery, as did his description of Jews for Jesus and why Jews are quite rightly disgruntled. He likened the debate to waiting for a bus for 2000 years, then being told that the bus that came 2000 years ago was in fact the one and only bus; and not only did you not even acknowledge its existence, you put nails in the tyres! His show was not only funny but was full of wit, which is a rarity on the whole these days!

Having finally decided that the best I had seen were the characterizations of Lenny Beige and Frankie Tan, imagine my delight to find that there was a connection, and that the two of them were appearing together in 'The Regency Rooms with Lenny Beige' at the *Spiegeltent*. This was an extravaganza imported from the Regency Rooms in London, with Lenny Beige as the host of a sumptuous cabaret. We were introduced to Lenny's brother (manager and occasional co-star), Sammy Beige, his nephew (with a voice like an angel) Alfonse, his minder/ chauffeur and various other characters. All ably accompanied by the

wonderfully talented band – 'Tony Gladsmuir and The Fickle Hand of Fate!

This abridged version of the show which has a cult following in London, was crammed full with Jewish humour, including a multiple choice Quiz Show called 'Jew Who?', a selection of big musical numbers and an array of guest stars. To Lenny's disgust but to the delight of the audience, due to contractual obligations, he was forced to introduce on stage his ex double-act (Beige and Tan) co-star, Frankie Tan.

Despite having seen several of the characters before, I was bent double with laughter, tears streaming down my face, *platzing* over the exceptional talent on display. The show, occasionally *risqué* but not gratuitously offensive, charmed the whole audience, with people dancing to the excellent music at the end of show culminating in Lenny's signature tune, 'The Spinning Wheel' to tumultuous applause. Definitely the best show I saw at the Fringe. I don't know what the broadsheets awarded it, but it got five *Magen Davids* from me!

*Julian Goodman is an Edinburgh-based comedian. Making a guest appearance as Lennie Beige's Rabbi in the Spiegeltent, he was an instant success and almost stole the show with his 'Minnie the Moocher' [Ed.].*

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## AMOS OZ AT THE BOOK FESTIVAL

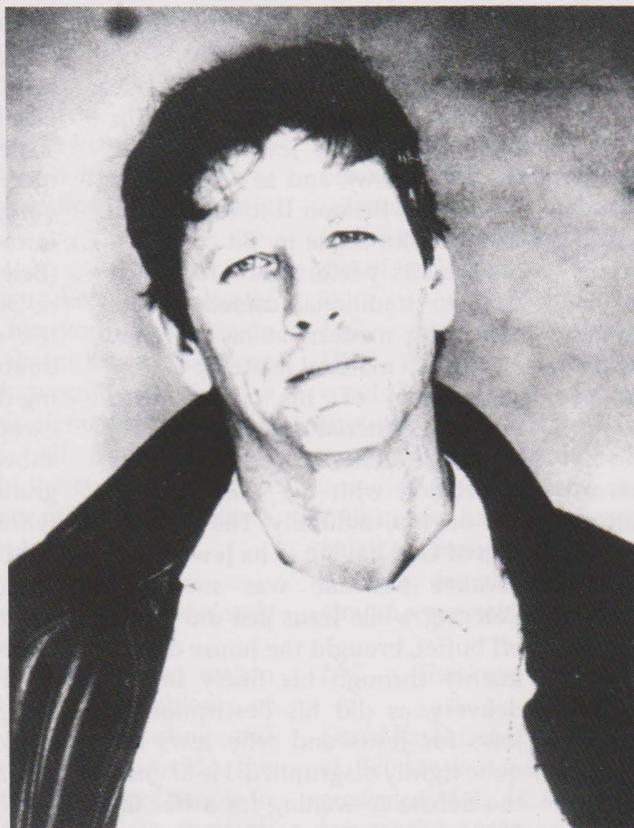
Amos Oz was in conversation with writer and TV critic Sarah Dunant

by Elaine Samuel

So how do you review a conversation? I suppose you can ask whether the questions and responses were appropriate and incisive or you can review the conversationalists for their powers of engagement, both between themselves and their audience. There is no doubt that, by such standards, this was a five-star conversation. 'Who do you prefer to be amongst?' Oz was asked, 'Arab liberals or Jewish fundamentalists?' Dunant had clearly done her homework.

Yet to review a conversation by these standards is somewhat contrived. We do not ordinarily listen in to conversations, and private conversations are not ordinarily conducted to promote sales to a larger public. Yet Oz was ostensibly in conversation with Sarah Dunant at the Edinburgh Book Festival to promote his most recently translated book, 'Panther in the Basement'. Indeed, the conversation opened with a powerful reading of the introductory paragraph of the novel in Hebrew by Oz, and this was followed by some discussion of the themes of the novel and their relationship to Oz's biography.

The novel is set at the time of the British Mandate in Palestine, and traces the relationship between a young boy who befriends and is befriended by a British soldier. This is no ordinary Tommy, however, but a soldier who is a son of the manse and speaks to the boy in Biblical Hebrew. It is, as Oz explains, a book about language for, in part, language is its substantive topic – the boy teaches the soldier Modern Hebrew and, in return, is taught English. It is also a novel which was provoked by



Amos Oz

PHOTO: SALLY SOAMES

language, particularly by the many occasions on which Oz has found himself described in newspapers as a traitor, as a *boged*. This, he explained, took him back to his youth and to the first occasion on which he was called a traitor and, in his latest novel, he sets out to explore concepts of commitment and betrayal, openness and rigidity.

Yet though we were introduced to Oz's new novel at the Book Festival, Dunant's conversation with Oz was clearly not about any particular book. Rather, it was a view of Israel to which the audience was introduced – a view of Israel from Oz's particular perspective which was new to many in the audience but familiar to a few. It was a view which, in the eyes of many not present that night in Charlotte Square, had branded him a traitor. He was prophetic, but not in that he

claimed to know the future. Indeed, he laughed at those questions which required him to foretell the future. Rather, he was prophetic like Hosea and his namesake Amos who, to my mind, were the social and political analysts of their time. Israel, so Oz argued, had recently undergone a passionate conversion to Thatcherite hedonistic materialism. And he warned us what was likely to happen if this continued – the country would turn into a conglomerate of shopping malls. For no less were our Biblical prophets reviled. And on *Shabbat Nachamu*, the Shabbat when Isaiah brings the Jewish people words of comfort, Oz also comforted. Yes, he believed the next generation could turn back to the ideologies of their grandfathers and grandmothers. Yes, he believed

peace was possible. To some of us in the audience who once wore blue shirts with red threads, it was comfort indeed.

Oz as traitor? Definitely no! As Prophet? Definitely yes. As moral force or as moral dinosaur? Well, only time will tell.

*With Compliments*

*from*

*Jess Franklin*

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# THE POLITICS OF HOPE

by Jonathan Sacks

published by Jonathan Cape, 1997  
xvi + 288 pp. £15.99 hb. (ISBN 0-224-04329-3)

reviewed by Charles Raab

You don't have to be a rabbi, much less a Chief Rabbi, to have written a book of this kind, and you don't have to be an academic social scientist to read it. Jonathan Sacks has produced a highly readable and telling account of the current malaise in post-industrial countries, and has pointed the way out of this predicament. And you don't even have to be Jewish to see the point of both the analysis and the remedy.

According to Jonathan Sacks, the problem of the last half-century is that societies and governments have exaggerated two important parts of the inheritance of the 18th century Enlightenment: they have placed undue emphasis on state control and on individual liberty. He believes that we have abdicated a sense of moral responsibility, and that liberalism has become libertarianism. Because we have overdone everything, societies as well as individuals have suffered the consequences. Socialist state welfare as well as a Thatcherite sense of self-enrichment have left a gaping hole in the middle – a place where communities and 'civil society' should be, founded on families, neighbourhoods, voluntary organisations, religious institutions and a whole array of social organisations that stand between the individual and the state, and are the ultimate protectors of our morality and our liberty.

Jonathan Sacks explains this unhappy condition with great feeling and with an accurate sense of the importance of his analysis. It is, in fact, so important that he says it again and again. But each time he comes at it from a slightly different angle, and with a slightly different set of references and quotations from a philosophical and sociological hall of fame: de Tocqueville, Mill, Hobbes, Isaiah Berlin, Hayek,

Burke, Fukuyama, Etzioni, Sandel and others. Sacks' interpretations of some of these writers, and of historical trends, are debatable, and much is overlooked. Although he seems at times to tend towards a philosophical stance of organic conservatism (with a small 'c'), he is surely right, in general, to diagnose the social condition in the way that he does, and to avoid both pinning blame on easy culprits and seizing upon facile solutions.

If there is a large emphasis on the family in Sacks' field of vision, it is not only because it is at the centre of Jewish cultural and spiritual life, but because, as a social institution, it is the carrier and transmitter of moral values and human character, without which we are only consumers and abstract 'citizens'. Sacks has not only Jewish life in mind when he writes: 'The family and its concentric circles of community are where we learn to speak, to share, to love, to trust, where we discover where we came from and of what history we are a part. They are where we acquire the arts of relationship without which we cannot survive for long.' (pp.263-4)

In re-invigorating family and community life, we keep both politics and the market at arm's length, re-establish true liberty, and bring about the re-moralisation of society. And it is only we who can do this through individual acts that affirm the worth of these values. Instead of the hollowness of 'consumer choice', the important choice is to act in ways that affirm the values of morality, self-restraint and community that offer our only hope. Neither the market itself, nor the political state, can survive without this. 'Civil society rests on moral relationships.... They are brought about not by governments

but by us, as husbands and wives, parents, friends and citizens, and by the knowledge that what we do and what we are makes a difference to those around us. We can change the world if we can change ourselves.' (p.269)

Jonathan Sacks does not claim to offer anything wholly new in his analysis and in his civil-society remedy. Communitarianism and the revival of civil society are at the heart of much contemporary social and political writing, not least in the countries formerly under communist control. This review is too short to do justice to his argument, but so too is his book which is, at times, too superficial to make an entirely convincing case. Yet he writes with great eloquence and conviction. The fact of his Jewishness, not to mention his position of rabbinical leadership, does, in the final analysis, make a difference of emphasis not only in terms of the particular evils from which he recoils, but of the particular characteristics of community and morality that he affirms.

This book, then, cannot be ignored or dismissed. Nor, however, should it go undebated and undisputed, in the best tradition of both rabbinics and secular scholarship.

## YAMIM NORAIM - A HIGH HOLIDAY COMPANION

edited by Jonathan Wittenberg

published by Masorti Publications  
London 1996  
80 pp. £5.95 pb  
(ISBN 0 9518002 21)

Reviewed by John Cosgrove

The Synagogue Services on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* tend to be long and boring and any attempt to make them alive and interesting is always welcome. I always come to the services armed with a selection of 'commentaries' on the services. These include two small books by Louis Jacobs 'A Guide to *Rosh Hashanah*' and 'A Guide to *Yom*

*Kippur* published by Jewish Chronicle Publications. An American publication by Max Artz called 'Justice and Mercy' published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston and more recently Jeffrey Cohen's upgraded commentary called 'Prayer and Penitence' published by Jason Aronson. There are others but these four are among my most treasured books and in the non-lending section of my library. A few years ago Jewish Continuity arranged for our Synagogue to have copies of an American paperback called '*Rosh Hashanah Yom Kippur Survival Kit*' by Shimon Apisdorf. This had a rather unconventional cover – a colour cartoon of three young men sitting in *Schul*. One lad is sound asleep, another is impatiently looking at his watch and the third is reading his prayer book upside down!

Jonathan Wittenberg's 'Companion' is just what it says it is. It does not attempt a systematic study of the prayers and concepts of the services as is done in my four favourite 'commentaries'. Rather it chooses a theme or a prayer or just a sentence from the Festival Prayer Book and within the confines of a double page expands upon it using traditional and modern sources. The book is divided into three sections: Laws and Customs, Prayers and Reflections and no theme is allowed more than a double page which must have concentrated Rabbi Wittenberg's mind in producing only the essential message. There is no flannel and the book is uncluttered and nicely laid out.

His modern sources are essentially Masorti and the 'Companion' is a tribute to the scholarship of the British Masorti movement which corresponds to the Conservative Movement in the USA. Its spiritual mentor is Louis Jacobs and his writings are well represented. The beauty of Masorti scholarship is that it is intellectually honest and appealing to the modern mind without discarding the essential tradition which is our heritage. The puzzle is why it is not the leading religious movement in British Jewry.

One problem with the 'Companion' is that there is no cross-referencing with the pages in the *Machzor*. This makes it difficult for the average reader to consult the original text and study it further. I suppose the problem is which *Machzor* to use and here lies a problem that ought to be a challenge for Jonathan Wittenberg and the Masorti Movement. The Routledge that we use in Edinburgh is archaic and deadly dull and the Art Scroll series, although beautifully produced, is very American and has an orthodox religious agenda that is difficult to swallow. What is needed is a *Machzor* with a modern translation and commentary fit for traditional British Synagogues nominally Orthodox and conservative. In the meantime, this slim volume will help to make the services alive and interesting.

### THE GOLEM OF OLD PRAGUE – A CHILDREN'S CLASSIC

by Michael Rosen

published by Five Leaves Publications, Nottingham

104 pp., £5.99 pb,  
(ISBN 0-907-123-96-1)

reviewed by Micheline Brannan

If you want to give your children a break from Goosebumps Monster Blood I, II and III, you should encourage them to read this book which has the same blend of horror and humour but much more besides.

Michael Rosen, the celebrated children's author and broadcaster on children's books, has turned his hand to a children's biography of the *Maharal* of Prague. The *Maharal* – an acronym of Moreinu Harav Rabbi Lowe – was a genuine historical figure whose grave can be seen in Prague today. It is, however, very difficult to find out much genuine historical fact about him. The book is based on the many legends that grew up around the life of the *Maharal*, and, I suspect, some

embroidery of these by Michael Rosen.

The book starts with interruption of Rabbi Bezalel's *Seder* by his wife's going into labour. By lucky coincidence, the old women who leave the *Seder* table to rush out for the midwife happen to disturb an anti-semitic who is about to dump the dead body of a Christian baby in Rabbi Bezalel's cellar. So, even by his birth, the *Maharal* (Rabbi Bezalel's son) succeeds in unmasking the blood libel and saving his community.

The next chapter tells how the *Maharal* saved a fellow Jew from being unjustly condemned for stealing the takings of the neighbouring shopkeeper, a pork butcher. Spying on his Jewish neighbour, the pork butcher had discovered the exact amount of his takings and denounced him to the authorities, claiming that these had been stolen from the pork butcher himself. The municipal judge can make little of the case, but the *Maharal*, having been called in, produces a wonderful defence. He asks for two pans of hot water and in one he puts the takings of the pork butcher, in the other the takings of the innocent Jew which had allegedly been stolen. The butcher's takings form a fatty scum on the surface but the Jewish shopkeeper's takings form no scum. It follows that they could not have been stolen from the butcher and the innocent man is saved.

After this the story tells how the *Maharal* triumphs in disputations with 300 Christian clerics and wins the acclaim of the Cardinal who sends out messages that there should be peace between Jews and Christians. This leads to an interview with King Rudolph II which was, apparently, a historical event. No-one knows what was discussed at the interview, so Michael Rosen fills the gap with a legend of his own in which the *Maharal* reveals to the King that it is a wise son who knows his own father, in this case the secret of the king's paternity being such as to make him particularly positive

towards his Jewish subjects.

The result of the *Maharal's* encounter with the King would have been a generally good climate for Jews in Prague were it not for the efforts of the monk Thaddeus who thunders anti-semitism from his pulpit every Sunday. Thaddeus makes several attempts to wrong-foot the *Maharal* but is outwitted by the *Maharal* who uses supernatural powers and the help of the Almighty to win the day. This finally leads to the creation of the *Golem*.

The *Golem* is the most famous legend associated with the *Maharal* of Prague. The *Golem* is a large figure formed out of clay which is given life by the addition of certain mystical words either put in its mouth or marked on its forehead. At first the *Golem* was just a faithful servant that lived to do its master's bidding, but later it acquired the characteristic of protecting the Jewish people. The *Maharal* makes his *Golem* for protection and engraves the word *Emet* (truth) on its head. The *Maharal* instructs that the *Golem*, whom he calls Joseph, must not be given any orders except in the service of the Jewish religion.

It is not surprising therefore that the first hint that the *Golem* might get out of hand comes when the *Maharal's* wife sends him to get extra fish and apples for a wedding feast. First the fish ends up back in the river, and as for the apples, Joseph brings not only the apples but the whole stall and the stall-holder with them. In a later incident when he is asked to fetch water we have shades of the sorcerer's apprentice until the *Maharal* comes and puts a stop to the second Flood. The *Golem* nevertheless proves his value in unmasking further attempts by the monk Thaddeus to frame the Jews for the blood libel and saving the people from pogroms – so much so that the Rabbi almost comes to take him for granted and thereby the *Golem* is eventually undone.

The biography does not end there, however, but continues to tell how others try unsuccessfully to resurrect the *Golem* and how the *Maharal* himself eventually dies in a further act of salvation – he wrests a scroll of names of his friends from the hands of the Angel of Death himself leaving only one shred in the Angel's hands – containing the

name of the *Maharal* himself.

The story is richly told with much detail of everyday life as it must have been in the ghetto of Prague. It is unsparing in its use of Hebrew and Yiddish phrases, but they are all explained for the general reader, for whom a short introduction to the idea of Jews and rabbis is also provided. There are also delightful illustrations in pen and ink by Brian Simons (*alias* Boruch ben Yitzchak). The book would certainly entertain children with reasonable reading ability from, say, 10 and upwards. Some material might be thought unsuitable for very young children. Children with a bit of Jewish education might get more out of it than those with none, but any child with an imagination should be able to appreciate the story.

I certainly learned a lot from reading the book and went away to try to find out more about the *Maharal* of Prague. I will continue my search and my attempts to match the Rosen version to the traditional legends – if any reader of the *Star* can suggest suitable sources, they should please let the reviewer know.

THE NAHMANI CASE – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

### The Further Hearing

The story does not, however, end here. In very special circumstances, i.e. cases involving major social significance, the President of the Supreme Court may hold a further hearing of an already decided case before an expanded panel of Supreme Court justices. Ruthy Nahmani requested such a hearing and the President agreed to hold it in the light of the novelty of *in vitro* fertilisation methods and the important issues they raise for society at large.

On 12th September, 1996, the expanded bench ruled seven to four in favour of Ruthy Nahmani. The lengthy decision is as yet unpublished but it would appear that the opinions of the majority were based, for the most part, upon the considerations of humanity and justice rather than legal doctrine.

Much store was set by the difficult and invasive procedures undergone by Ruthy in order to obtain her eggs for *in vitro* fertilisation. It was also pointed out that Ruthy's only chance of becoming a genetic mother lay in the implantation of her embryos into a surrogate and that Danny had already fathered two daughters with his new partner. A principled point was made by one of the majority justices, Justice Dorner, who held that the right of a woman to be a mother is to be preferred over her husband's right not to be a father. The Jewish tradition of sympathy for the infertile woman also surfaced in a number of the majority opinions.

The minority, which included the President of the Supreme Court, Justice Barak, argued in favour of Danny Nahmani on the basis of the doctrine of consent which is

applicable to all *in vitro* proceedings and the generally accepted legal principle that it may be withdrawn by either party at any time prior to implantation.

It would appear that halachic opinion on the issue remains divided with the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel upholding Ruthy's right to be a mother and the Sephardi Chief Rabbi maintaining that it is the father's right to determine the fate of embryos fertilised with his sperm.

Notwithstanding this decision, the Nahmani saga may not quite be over. As already observed the Knesset passed a *Surrogacy Law* in 1996 according to which consent is required by both parties to the *in vitro* fertilisation and may be withdrawn at any time prior to implantation. It remains to be seen whether or not Danny Nahmani

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



**PHILIP COHEN**  
14.3.1930 – 24.7.1997

Philip Cohen was born in London 67 years ago and received his initial education in that city before the outbreak of war occasioned a move to the Midlands. Attending Birmingham University, he graduated with a BSc in Physics. He married Myra Boston, whom he had met in Glasgow, and he and Myra settled in Surrey when Philip worked at the Mullard Research Laboratories.

Philip subsequently worked as a physicist with Ferranti and moved to Edinburgh in 1964, working for Ferranti until he discovered his true vocation as a teacher. In 1976, he obtained a teaching qualification from Moray House College of Education, and then taught maths and physics at various schools in Edinburgh before joining the staff at Edinburgh Academy, where he taught for 18 years until he retired in 1995. He was held in very high esteem by his colleagues at the Academy and elsewhere and was a most popular and adept teacher, entering his pupils for the 'Young Scientist of the Year' award and involving them in a number of other scientific and electronic projects. Shortly after he retired, he was invited back to Edinburgh Academy to continue with some of these projects and help out in other ways.

Philip's hobbies were wide. He enjoyed cooking and gardening, and was an extremely keen and knowledgeable cricket enthusiast. He loved company. It was a joy to be in his and Myra's presence, to enjoy

their warm hospitality, and to be regaled with his evocative and colourful tales. He was a born raconteur. He was involved in communal affairs in the past as a member and subsequently president of *B'nei Brith*. His keen sense of humour resulted in many invitations to participate in and to chair functions in the communal hall.

Philip was a sincere man with great charm and integrity. But, perhaps first and foremost, he was a family man, a devoted husband to Myra and a loving father to Ruth and Braham. He will be sadly missed by his family and by all those who had the privilege of knowing him.

*Ian Shein.*



**ISAAC G COWEN**  
11.6.1903 – 24.7.1997

Isaac Cowen was Honorary Life President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and his passing at the age of 94 brought many members of the community together at Piershill to pay their last respects to his memory, and to bid farewell to someone who exemplified the highest traditions of the EHC.

I G Cowen (as he was fondly known) was born in 1903, the elder son of Philip and Dora Cowen, a well known and highly respected couple who brought up their children in the age-old tenets of traditional Judaism. He received his education in the city and, after working with his father, a master tailor, for a while, went on to found his own business, the Cowen Tailoring Company. Over many

years, he gave his meticulous attention to his business, displaying an incisive habit of mind, which was the hallmark of his character and personality. He was much respected by suppliers and customers alike, and still attended his shop until he was well into his eighties.

In 1929 he married my aunt, Rose Oppenheim, with whom he shared a happy married life. They celebrated, in turn, their Silver, Golden and Diamond weddings and he was totally dependent on her, particularly in the latter years of his life. To their joy, they had a son, Myer Solomon (Mickey) in 1939 and he, in turn, joined his father in the family firm.

I, as his nephew, had the pleasure and privilege of knowing him for virtually my entire life, and he was to me both a mentor and a friend. His sage words of advice have stood me in good stead over these many years. I well remember many happy times when, as a child, I went daily to his house in Marchmont from school for lunch, and later, as I grew up, finding much pleasure in his company.

Uncle Isaac was a man of many attributes. He served during the last war as an ARP warden, patrolling the darkened streets, with his fellow citizens. He brought to everything that he did a passion for perfection – he was a photographer of high quality and his cars always had to be showroom standard. No one who saw him can forget his immaculate appearance nor, in earlier years, his trademark bowler hat.

This was typical of the man, but his overwhelming interest outside his family was the congregation. He served for over 45 years on the Synagogue Council, becoming Secretary, Treasurer and President. He led by example, occupying each of these executive offices with flair, panache and high mien. To attend a Council meeting during his presidency was to be shown a model of crisp, decisive leadership – he had well defined principles and an integrity which forbade deviation.

The standing of the congregation

and the dignity of the services were of paramount importance to him. He was quietly generous to the officials of the community, ensuring that they did not want. Their welfare, and that of many charitable organisations, were always his concern. This concern for other people even extended to painting the edges of the steps in the synagogue white, so that people would see them and not fall.

When his son, Mickey, followed in his footsteps he took enormous and merited pride in his achievements – but it was he who had led the way for all of those who followed him. The community showed its appreciation of his work and worth by appointing him Honorary Life President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, a position which, sadly, now falls vacant, and which we will find hard to fill with a man of equal worth, dignity and devotion.

When he spoke we all listened, and now that his voice has been stilled he will be sorely missed – though remembered by those of us privileged to have known and worked with him in all his many interests, which spanned the gamut of congregational life. He was the chairman of the Edinburgh JPA. (forerunner of the JIA) during the six-day war, and a trustee of the Board of Guardians, the *Chevra Kadisha* and the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

He delighted in his grandchildren, Mark, Gary and Sally, who brought him enormous pleasure. He could not do enough for them, and in later years their academic successes enriched his life. As President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and as his nephew, I wish my Aunt Rosa, their son Mickey, their loving daughter-in-law Carole, their grandchildren Mark, Gary and Sally, along with his two sisters, Clara and Anne and their children, and all the other members of this family, our heartfelt condolences and most deeply felt sympathy on their loss. We wish them all a long life.

N A Oppenheim



JENNY SISCHY

20.12.1976 – 5.7.1997

*Danny Sinclair writes:* The whole community will grieve for Jenny, a good, sweet, wise, gentle person whose life was cut short by anorexia, a terrible disease, the origins of which are a complete mystery. Jenny was unable to fulfil herself or to realise her great potential and we are all filled with deep sadness at her loss. We grieve with Judy and Mark, who have gone through the worst nightmare any parent can imagine – standing by and having to watch their child die. We grieve with Debbie who has lost a dear sister and with Jenny's grandparents, relatives and friends.

Jenny possessed real strength of character and commendable fortitude in face of adversity. She was able to maintain friendships and warm relations with those who were close to her, even during the years when disease and despair took their toll. On our return to the United Kingdom three years ago, we came up to Edinburgh to see Jenny and, after the initial shock of seeing her in her anorexic condition, the conversation quickly became wonderfully normal and the sweet smile and gentle voice were the same as always. We enjoyed her company in London in the spring and her strength and character shone through her disease together with her smile.

On hearing of Jenny's death, our daughter Yael, who is studying in Israel but was one of Jenny's closest friends, wrote the following letter.

Yael's letter is a fitting epitaph for Jenny, whose memory is an inspiration and a blessing for us all.

Jenny, do you remember when we first met? Two little girls who got so excited on discovering that our birthdays were only one day apart – deciding to be twins. Remember timing my father's sermons, *cheder*, choir, 'sleepovers' and all the other things little girls do? Leaving Edinburgh and promising to write once a month – a promise we kept for exactly ten years? Even though it was pen and paper over so many miles, the feeling of closeness and understanding was always there. There was always so much joy, humour, wisdom, and support in your letters – just seeing your handwriting in my mailbox put a smile on my face for the rest of the day. Remember when I finally came back to Edinburgh? My first afternoon was spent with you – watching your courage shine through. Feeling the togetherness again, sharing, talking and listening to the silence that said so much more than words.

I was lucky to spend the last year in the same country as you. Through our weekly calls and the few but special days we spent together, I felt the truth of what you said so often "I know that on the outside I don't look good but, on the inside, I'm still the same old Jenny". It was true – as always, you were there, to share experiences, to laugh with, to listen and to advise.

Our last day together was in London during *Pesach*. It was such a wonderful day and one I will never forget. But now I have lost my special friend, who taught me so much about courage and endurance. I watched you face your life with determination and patience. I know it wasn't easy but you kept a cheerful attitude which everyone around you felt. You were a gentle, sensitive and caring person who meant so much to so many people. Jenny, you and your friendship will forever be in my heart. *Shalom.*

Yael Sinclair  
Tel Aviv.

Dear Sir,

In the last issue of **The Edinburgh Star**, you invited discussion of Rabbi Sedley's article explaining the reasons for raising the height of the *Mechitza*. As someone who is on the very outer fringe of the Edinburgh Jewish community in every sense, including geographically, I have to say that I am rather disappointed by the article.

The article sets out the reasons for requiring the *Mechitza* to be raised in accordance with *Halachah*. I am particularly disappointed that this should be the topic on which Rabbi Sedley has chosen to address the wider membership of the community through **The Edinburgh Star**. I am equally disappointed with the justification he gives in terms of modern society. I would have felt far happier had he written about his hopes and aspirations for the Edinburgh community. In an indirect way, he may, of course, be signalling these in his article.

The first reason he gives for raising the *Mechitza* is to enable orthodox Jewish visitors to come to the *Shul*. I believe it is more important to unite the existing community than to worry about orthodox visitors and feel this step is likely to have the effect of deterring present members of the wider Edinburgh community who are not regular *Shul* attenders. I wonder whether there is any evidence of Jewish people living in the environs of Edinburgh either not coming to *Shul* or feeling uncomfortable in *Shul* while it did not conform to the strict requirements of *Halachah*.

The second reason he gives refers to 'moral values and ethical considerations'. I regard these as very important issues and would very much have welcomed a discussion of these by Rabbi Sedley since I regard them as more central to Judaism than the *Mechitza*. Rabbi Sedley then speaks of not wanting young members to perceive Judaism as merely a collection of rituals. However, it seems to me that this is precisely what raising the *Mechitza* may suggest.

When I was a boy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, I regularly attended *cheder* in Birmingham although, at the time, we lived 15 miles away and the journey involved two buses and a tram. After my *Bar Mitzvah*, I stopped going, although I did go to *Shul* occasionally. What really put me off *cheder* was that I learned to read Hebrew but not to translate it, unlike French, German and Latin which I learned at school and enjoyed. Although I learned prayers and rituals for every occasion, no time was spent discussing fundamental ethics and beliefs. I am sure *cheder* is not like this today. I understand the need to maintain traditions but worry that, if these are given too much emphasis, what I regard as more important issues may get lost.

Yours faithfully,

Lewis Stevens,  
The Linns, Sheriffmuir,  
Dunblane, FK15 0LP.

P.S. I wondered about Rabbi Sedley's statement 'A synagogue is not to be an extension of one's home, but purely a place of worship.....'. I understood that a synagogue was both a place for prayer and for study, and that the atmosphere could be informal. But, here perhaps, I am being pedantic.

Dear Sir,

In response to your request for views on the subject of the *Mechitza*, I would like to say that I think the argument is irrelevant. You say in your editorial that it is by no means clear that all members of the community have the same destination in mind as the one to which you say the Rabbi aspires, and that **The Edinburgh Star** has no wish to undermine the Rabbi. I find this rather odd as I think that that the tone in your editorial column does just that.

I was led to believe that Rabbi Sedley was approved as Minister to this community by a vote of an overwhelming majority, and that in a separate vote, the *Mechitza* was also approved by a vote of an overwhelming majority. If a rabbi

gives advice on matters of *halachah*, that is his job. I do understand that in the Edinburgh Jewish Community there is a huge and varied spectrum of religious observance, and I have no problem with that. As Jewish individuals our only obligation is to do our personal best, hence the different levels of observance. However, as a community, and an orthodox one at that, we all have a duty irrespective of our own observance, to set an example of *halachah* set at the highest standards, thus allowing worshippers of all standards to take part in *Shul* services. Thankfully, this is what the honorary officers and council of the *Shul* do with great effect, setting an example to us all.

I am dismayed when I hear of people complaining that the *Shul* is too orthodox – this is a contradiction in terms. The *Mechitza* needed raising because it did not conform to *halachah* according to both our Rabbi and the Chief Rabbi. It is about time some members of the community pulled their heads out of the sand and accepted responsibility for the community as a whole. If the community had only wanted someone to take the services, then they should have employed a *chazzan*. However, since the community chose to employ a rabbi, they must accept his authority.

Yours in bewilderment,

Julian D Goodman,  
38(PF) Kirk Street, Foot o' the Walk,  
Edinburgh, EH6 5EZ.

Dear Sir

In your editorial in the last issue of **The Edinburgh Star**, you asked for comments on the issue of the *Mechitza* in the Edinburgh Synagogue. Let me say at once that Rabbi Sedley has acted with courage, honour and dignity upon a matter which is obviously of great importance to him. Likewise, our President, Executive and Council have reacted correctly and responsibly, with the interest of the Community uppermost in their hearts and minds, to one of the most

controversial issues that the Congregation has ever had to face. Nevertheless there are some women who feel offended by the idea of standing in Synagogue, in prayer, at the most spiritual times in the Jewish Calendar facing a barrier which may be aesthetic and match the surroundings but which is quite obviously intended to separate them from the conduct of the service.

When the Synagogue was reconstructed in 1980/81, the original *Mechitza* was 46 inches high. Officiating at the opening ceremony on 29th March 1981, the then Chief Rabbi, Dr Jakobovits, preaching from the pulpit, praised the reconstruction which he described as 'remarkable, original and imaginative' and suggested that it 'can serve as a model to many a congregation faced with similar problems'. Not one of our ministers at that time or appointed subsequently, voiced any disapproval of the 46 inch *Mechitza*. Mr. M S Cowen, who masterminded the reconstruction, has told me that Rabbi Dr. Jacob Weinberg was consulted and made some modifications to the architect's original plans, all of which were duly implemented. I don't need to remind you that one of the subsequent ministers, Rabbi Dr Daniel Sinclair is regarded internationally as an expert in Jewish Law. Rabbi Sedley is correct in saying that the current height of *mechitzot* in

Orthodox Synagogues is 60 inches. It has been said that 14 inches is not a great amount 'to keep the Rabbi happy' but when those 14 inches of the metalworker's art are right in front of your face, it does become important.

Rabbi Sedley, in his article refers to the separation of men and women in Biblical and Talmudic sources. In his book "The Jewish Religion - a Companion" (reviewed by Ian Leifer in Issue No. 23 of *The Edinburgh Star*), Rabbi Dr. Louis Jacobs writes on page 514 'The evidence from archaeology seems to point to the absence of such separate seating arrangements in ancient synagogues, since no traces have been found of ... a separate compartment for women in any of the ancient synagogues that have been uncovered. From one or two passages in the Talmud it also appears that men and women were seated together in the synagogue in Talmudic times. It has consequently been argued that separate seating in the synagogue came into medieval Jewish life under the influence of Islam. Nevertheless, separate seating is the norm in orthodox synagogues'.

There is no doubt that the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation is, at least in name, orthodox and ought to conform to those standards that are currently applied to other orthodox congregations. But there is

the matter of degree and the matter of priorities. We cannot possibly keep all the rules that apply to orthodox congregations in the big wide world firth of Edinburgh. In areas where there are large Jewish communities, congregations vie with one another to outdo each other in degree of orthodoxy. We must not even think about this sort of religious competition in Edinburgh because we are a small, single, united community which has to accommodate the widest range of religious observance amongst its members and we do not wish to alienate any section.

As for priorities, the message given by the spending of around £5,000, which represents one sixth of the annual income generated by members, is that the raising of the *Mechitza* by 14 inches is important. I could write a long list of more important items which the Congregation could do with, most of which would be related to improved educational facilities. The only argument in favour of the *Mechitza* which I find in any way convincing is that its presence keeps our young Rabbi here in Edinburgh because without a such a Rabbi, we would decline quite rapidly.

Yours sincerely,

John A Cosgrove,  
14 Gordon Terrace,  
Edinburgh, EH16 5QR.

THE NAHMANI CASE - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

will seek to block the implantation of the embryos into an Israeli surrogate under this law. It must, of course, be borne in mind that under the 1996 *Surrogacy Law*, any withdrawal of consent must also be authorised by the supervisory committee and it is unlikely that any such committee would deviate from a decision of the Supreme Court in what is clearly a landmark ruling in this area.

One of the major themes in the comparative law aspect of the

Nahmani legal saga is the clear difference between the rights-driven approach of Anglo-American jurisprudence and the obligations-based ethos of Jewish law. Under the former, there is no legal mechanism to force a husband in Danny Nahmani's situation to become a father. The latter system does allow for such a course of action which, on the particular facts of the Nahmanis' situation, may very well be the only just solution to the case. The incor-

poration of an obligation-based approach into this area of the law may turn out to be a welcome development in Israeli jurisprudence, in educational as well as purely legal terms.

*A fuller version of this article with footnotes, appeared in Le'Elia (published jointly by Jews College and the Office of the Chief Rabbi) earlier this year. Danny Sinclair is now teaching in the Department of Law at the University of Tel Aviv.*

# לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

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Edinburgh

Mrs S. Abrahams and family  
10 Lochend Avenue  
Edinburgh

Michael, Jonathan and  
Benjamin Adler  
9 Warriston Crescent  
Edinburgh

John and Jane Ansell Forsyth  
Robbie, Andrew and Isaac  
52 Granby Road, Edinburgh

Joe and Margaret Aronson  
15 Arden Street  
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Eli Atad-Ettedgui  
Tiina Leppänen, Boaz  
Hannah and Leo

Clarice and Joe Been  
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Martin and Debbie Bennett

Avril and Norman Berger  
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Gillian and Yvonne  
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Jacqueline and Michelle  
24 Cammo Grove, Edinburgh

Micheline, Michael, David  
and Duncan Brannan  
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Edinburgh

Rachelle and Monty  
Braverman  
and Rhonda Segal  
29/1 Cameron March, Edinburgh

Norma and Ian Brodie  
and family  
60 Telford Road  
Edinburgh

Andrew and Kathy Caplan  
and Benjamin  
43 Woodside Avenue  
London

Nana Caplan  
Oaklands  
Canaan Lane, Edinburgh

Sandra, Sidney and Ian  
Caplan  
30 Duddingston Road West  
Edinburgh

Willie and Betty Caplan  
25 Watertoun Road  
Edinburgh

Flora Ciprut,  
Moris Ciprut and family

Bella Cohen and Charles  
7 St. Catherine's Place  
Edinburgh

Myra Cohen,  
Braham and Ruth  
40 Ladysmith Road, Edinburgh

Dr Martin and Dr Shari  
Cohn-Simmen

Kenneth and Irene Collins  
3 Glenburn Road, Giffnock  
Glasgow

John and Hazel Cosgrove  
Nick and Caroline

Andrea, Malcolm and  
Elliot Cowan  
Blackford Gate,  
49/5 Mortonhall Road, Edinburgh

Evelyn and Jack Cowan  
8 Sunningdale Avenue,  
Glasgow

Carole and Mickey Cowen  
and Sally  
58 Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh

Rosa Cowen

Joyce and Norman Cram

Lesley, John, Samuel,  
Benjamin and Jonathan Danzig  
7 East Castle Road, Edinburgh

*Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and well over the Fast*

Fiona and Nigel Davies Robbie and Matthew <i>c/o Ross Road, Edinburgh</i>	Sylvia and John Donne and family <i>11/4 The Steils Glenlockhart Road, Edinburgh</i>	Betsy Dorfman <i>San Francisco, California, USA</i>
Dr Bertie and Elizabeth Dorfman <i>2 Bar Nissam, Jerusalem</i>	Fay, Max and Rodney Dorfman <i>72 Pentland View Edinburgh</i>	Maurice Dorfman <i>Israel</i>
Norman Dorfman	Rachel and Bernard Dorfman and family	Executive and Committee Edinburgh Jewish Friendship Club
Sev S. Fluss and family <i>5 Chemin Taverney 1218 Grand-Saconnex Geneva, Switzerland</i>	Betty Franklin <i>1/2 New John's Place Holyrood View, Edinburgh</i>	Caroline and Lennie Freedman
Adam, Marla, Joel, Daniel and Naomi Gamoran <i>317 Cheyenne Trail Madison WI 53705, USA</i>	Mr and Mrs G. F. Gilbert	Judy and Anthony Gilbert Mark, Daniel and Paul
Arnold and June Glass	Mrs Bessie Glass <i>17/1 Wyvern Park Dick Place, Edinburgh</i>	Miss Karen Glass <i>70 Belford Road Edinburgh</i>
Sylvia, Gerald and David Glass <i>1/14 Kinellan Road Edinburgh</i>	Betty and Michael Gold and family <i>19 Marchmont Road, Edinburgh</i>	David and Philip Goldberg <i>22 Mid Liberton Edinburgh</i>
Leila, Jonathan, Wendy, Paul and Anthony Goldberg <i>8 Buckstone Avenue, Edinburgh</i>	Kate and Ronny Goodwin Ben and Joe Sara and Molly <i>2 Ettrick Road, Edinburgh</i>	Vicky Gruneberg and family <i>2 Orchard Brae Gardens Edinburgh</i>
Leon and Joyce Harris (née Hoffenberg) <i>Ontario, Canada</i>	Millie and David Harris, Paul, Stephen and Daniel <i>20 Buckstone Drive, Edinburgh</i>	Sheelagh and Phillip Harris
Martha Herzfeld and Friedl Wollmerstedt	Ron and Rose Ann Hoffenberg	Hana Hornung
Irene, David and Gary Hyams	Susan and Steven Hyams James and Amanda	Bernard, Rosalyn, Iain and Judith Jackson <i>173 Mather Avenue, Liverpool</i>

# לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

Howard and Valerie Kahn and Jacqueline <i>27 Blinkbonny Road, Edinburgh</i>	Myrna, Morris and David Kaplan <i>20 Barntongate Terrace, Edinburgh</i>	Sylvia and André Kaye and family <i>63 Arden Street, Edinburgh</i>
Arthur and Alex Kleinberg	Abby, Joel and Deborah Korn <i>13 Glover Road, Pinner Harrow, HA5 1LQ</i>	Mr Sam Latter <i>46 Liberton Gardens Edinburgh</i>
Ian and Joan Leifer Andrew, Dina and Roby	Kleile (née Fluss) and Moshe Lerner <i>Ramat Gan, Israel</i>	Harold and Alison Levey <i>St Margaret's Guest House 18 Craigmillar Park, Edinburgh</i>
Anita Levinson and David <i>3 Ross Road, Edinburgh</i>	Fanny and Simon Levinson <i>Netanya, Israel</i>	Carol, Tom, Maurice and Benjamin <i>Penicuik</i>
Emma and Bert Levy	Hilda and Sam Levy and family <i>2 Beauchamp Grove, Edinburgh</i>	Lionel Levy
Ron Lewis and Esti Sheinberg <i>2/2 Gladstone Terrace, Edinburgh</i>	Miriam Lichtenstein (née Meechie Pinkinsky) <i>San Francisco</i>	Vanda Lipetz <i>Flat 11, Brooklawn 131 Palatine Road, Manchester</i>
David and Elaine Litman Daniel and Michael <i>23 Beestonfields Drive Nottingham</i>	Vicky and Tom Lowrie <i>11 Greenhill Place Edinburgh</i>	Philip Lurie and family <i>7/2 South Oswald Road Edinburgh</i>
Rena Lurie and family	Sharon and Mike Lurie Kate and Debra <i>82 Belstead Road, Ipswich</i>	Sheva, Joe and Ann Lurie <i>26 South Lauder Road Edinburgh</i>
Henry Mann	Nettie Marks (née Benjamin) and family <i>Leeds</i>	Irene and Philip Mason David and Jonathan <i>3 Oxfangs Road, Edinburgh</i>
Joe, Rosa and Clara Massie	David and Anita Mendelssohn <i>23 Braid Hills Road, Edinburgh</i>	Harold and Esther Mendelssohn Cassie and Roy
Gershon Mendick	Rose and Hannah Newman <i>1 Bellevue Gardens Edinburgh</i>	Eve and Nathan Oppenheim <i>10 Ravelston Dykes Edinburgh</i>

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם 

“This month shall be the head  
month to you” Exodus 12;2

### Women's Rosh Chodesh Group

A chance for the women of the community to  
get together once a month to socialise and  
discuss various topics of interest.

Our first meeting will be on  
**Monday November 3rd at 8:00 PM**  
at the **Sedleys - 67 Newington Road.**

This first meeting will be primarily to set the  
agenda for future meetings -  
i.e., places, dates and topics for discussion.

Please feel free to phone Alit Sedley for more  
information - 0131-667-9360.

Have a happy, healthy and sweet new year.

# Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Founded 1888(5648)

Please reply to:

41, Main Street,  
Thornhill,  
Stirling,  
FK8 3PJ

16 September 1997

Dear Members and Friends of the "Lit",

The 1997-1998 season is about to start, and the programme promises to be very varied and stimulating. As usual the talks will start at 8 pm on Sundays in the Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre, 4, Salisbury Road, Edinburgh.

Our opening speaker on 2 **November** will be **Sir Malcolm Rifkind**, who will speak on Middle Eastern Politics; his very special experience of this field will make this a unique talk.

The second speaker complements our opening topic: **David Capitanchik** of the University of Aberdeen will speak on "Israeli politics - 50 years on" (23 **November**). This will be followed on 7 **December** by **Rabbi Pete Tobias** from Glasgow New Synagogue on the topic "Rebuilding Jerusalem; Jewish Education".

The centenary of the foundation of the Jewish Labour Bund of Poland, Russia and Lithuania is being celebrated by Jewish organisations worldwide, and we are delighted to welcome **David Rosenberg** of the Jewish Socialist Group, to speak of the history and ideas of the Bund, and **Majer Bogdanski**, who was an active member of the Bund in Poland, to share with us his experiences of life in this historic organisation (21 **December**).

In the New Year **Michael Whine**, Director of the Defence and Group Relations Division of the Board of Deputies of British Jews will speak on disturbing new developments in racist propaganda: "Antisemitism on the electronic frontier" (15 **February**). On 15 **March**, "Lit" members will entertain each other with "**Purim Party Pieces**": we are sure that, like other "Lit" informal evenings this will be an extremely sociable and humorous.

Finally, in response to suggestions made at the AGM, we are holding a meeting after Pesach, when spring will - we hope - be in the air: this will be a talk by **Brian Cheyette**, Reader in English and Judaic Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, on the writer Muriel Spark (April 26).

Three further dates, 11 January, 1 February and 1 March are not yet finalised, but we still have a couple of possibilities up our sleeves and hope to be able to provide you with the fullest "Lit" programme yet! We hope that the membership will also be the biggest yet, and in case people would like to join now, in order to ease the pressure on the treasurer at the

first meeting, we have included a tear-off slip at the end of this letter. We would be delighted if you decide to join now, and avoid the queue, but there is obligation to do so - Laurence Bowman will be sitting at the entrance as usual on Sunday 2 November.

Looking forward to seeing you at the new session.

Best wishes on behalf of the whole committee,

*Heather Valencia*

Heather Valencia, Secretary.

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Please enrol me/us\* as a member/members\* of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society for session 1997-1998. I/We\* enclose membership fees of

£14 - couple\*/£8 - single\*

Concessions: unwaged or pensioners:

£8 - couple\*/£5 - single\*

\*delete as appropriate.

(Forms and cheques made out to Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society to be sent to Laurence Bowman, 24 Cammo Grove, Edinburgh. EH4 8EX).

Name and address:

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-----  
-----

telephone number:.....

# Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and well over the Fast

Mrs Rose Orgel

Clarice and Berl Osborne  
*Ettrick Manor, 56/2 Spylaw Road  
Edinburgh*

Maurice, Dinah  
and Samantha Penn  
*47 Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh*

Charles, Gillian  
Anna and Jonathan Raab

Stanley, Elaine, Aaron  
and Joel Raffel  
*31 Leamington Terrace, Edinburgh*

Dr Rachel R. Razbeau

Freda Riffkin  
*'Redcroft'  
16 Cammo Gardens, Edinburgh*

Hilary and Arnold Rifkind  
Richard and Michael

Malcolm, Edith, Caroline  
and Hugo Rifkind

Alec and Pearl Rubenstein  
*16 Hillpark Crescent  
Edinburgh*

Ena and Nat Rubenstein  
*Manchester*

Brenda and Julius Rubin  
*16a/27 Nitza Boulevard  
Netanya, Israel*

Professor J. R. Seckl  
and Mrs M. Seckl

Rabbi and Mrs D. Sedley  
and Avi

Ian and Pearl Shein  
*37/4 Orchard Brae Avenue  
Edinburgh*

Valerie and Bill Simpson  
*3 Hallhead Road  
Edinburgh*

Bill and Susie Sinclair  
*9 Blackwood Crescent  
Edinburgh*

Rabbi Dr and Mrs D. Sinclair  
Yael, Yonatan and Naom  
*3 Ben Tabai Street, Jerusalem*

Mark, Judith and  
Debbie Sischy

Sam and Rachel Skop  
*2 Greenbank Gardens  
Edinburgh*

Carolyn and Mervyn Smith  
*43 Shirley Avenue  
Cheam, Surrey*

Gladys and Laurence Smith  
*20 Cammo Road  
Edinburgh*

Jonny, Joyce  
and Avigal Sperber

Lawrence Spurling  
*Edinburgh*

Harold, June and  
Simon Sterne  
*Israel*

Cis and Henryk Szpera  
*Kinghorn  
Fife*

Jackie, Raymond, Laurence  
and Michael Taylor  
*Falkirk*

Mrs R. Weinberg  
and Carole  
*Manchester*

Hilary and Graham West  
Martin and Laura  
*14 Leighton Avenue  
Pinner, Harrow*

Jean, Richard and Michelle  
Winetrobe  
*24/11 Craighouse Terrace  
Edinburgh*

Michael Wittenberg and  
Manny and Nicole Wittenberg  
and family

Miss Ruzena Wood  
*50 Spottiswoode Street  
Edinburgh*

Sheila and Alfred Yarrow  
*9/4 Nof Harim  
Jerusalem*

Miss Zack and Mrs Klayman  
and family  
*24 Roseneath Place, Edinburgh*

Syd and Paula Zoltie

Executives and Committees  
of the Ladies' Guild  
and Community Centre

# We are one family



*Hebrew Classes - Kiev*



*Rescue Operations - Azerbaijan*



*A New Life - Israel*



*Absorption - Israel*

**Take your  
place  
among us**

**Please identify by making a donation to the**

**KOL NIDRE  
1997 APPEAL**