



# ALONIM

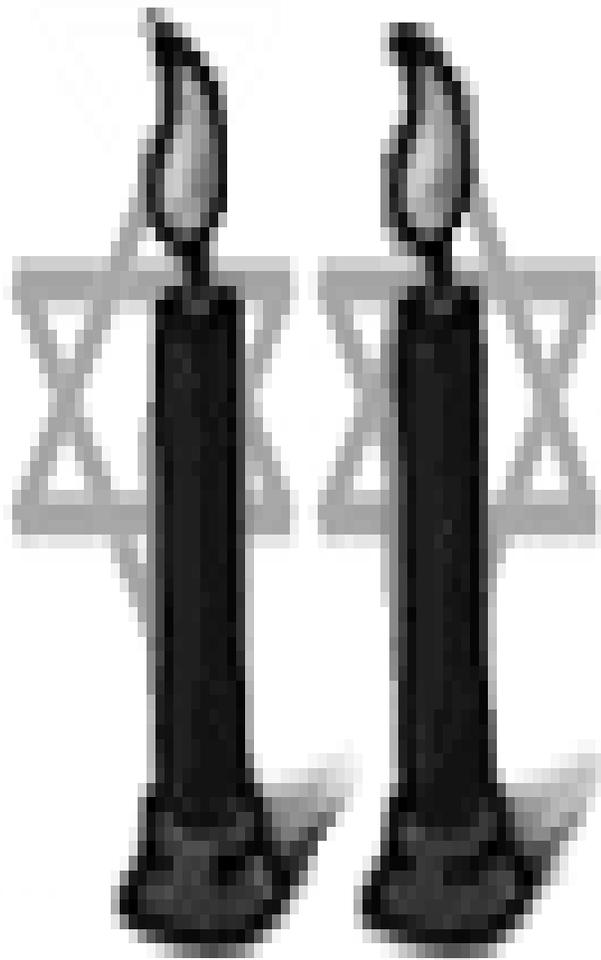
Newsletter of the Bristol & West  
Progressive Jewish Congregation

*Tammuz /Av/Elul 5766*  
*Jul/Aug 2006*

# עלונים



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liberal judaism



**D**o you have a favourite article this issue? Was there something with which you strongly disagreed? Do you like a particular contributor's style? Is there a feature that you would rather we did not run? The editorial team and contributors would welcome feedback. There is nothing worse for a contributor than a deadly silence following their article's publication. Feedback can be direct to the individual or to the editorial team.

The newsletter belongs to the congregation as a whole and we would like to reflect **your** views, as well as other people's. Please help us to ensure that you are heard by guiding us on content.

Malcolm Rawles & Judy Lazarus

### ALONIM & E-LONIM copy date deadlines

Month	Copy date	Festivals covered, notices needed
August E-lonim	Monday 24th July	
Sep/Oct Alonim	Wednesday 16th August	High Holy Days/ Sukkoth
October E-lonim	Tuesday 26th September	
Nov/ Dec Alonim	Wednesday 18th October	Channukah

Editorial and Production Team

*Judith Lazarus and Malcolm Rawles*

With special thanks to Alix Pirani for proofreading

This version of the newsletter has been prepared for use on the synagogue website.

For reasons of personal security, all contact details, dates and times have been removed.

Also all photographs, articles of a personal nature, references to children etc.

#### ALONIM Contributions & Editorial Policy.

The editorial policy is to encourage contributions from all Synagogue members and  ALONIM readers, concerning any aspects of communal and Jewish life, including advertisements of forthcoming events, cultural and communal reviews, information concerning synagogue activities, letters and feedback, and articles of Jewish cultural and religious interest.

Typically, contributions that fit on one side of A4 are preferred, and PC format submission is particularly

appreciated by e-mail.

The editor will NOT print anonymous or unattributed articles. Contributors are asked to be aware of the need to protect the copyright of others. Opinions expressed in  ALONIM do not necessarily reflect those of the synagogue Council or the Editor.

Contributions and communications can be sent directly to the Editor. The copy date deadline for submissions is notified above. Submissions after this date cannot be guaranteed to appear in the next issue. If you are



I have been writing these introductory paragraphs for Alonim now for two and a half years and I never quite know what is going to come out of my head as I sit down at the Computer. It is overcast outside after some sunny days but we had the Council Meeting last week which cheered me up as everyone is so positive and enthusiastic about the Synagogue. The forthcoming Garden Party sounds exciting with lots of you coming. See you there.

### **350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

This month's council meeting was first addressed by Sheila Yeger who has very kindly offered to facilitate, in this 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the readmission of Jews to England, something that we hope will be unique to our community. Elsewhere in this issue you will see her request for a group of members to participate in the creation of a performance that celebrates being Jewish today. Here we have a great opportunity to make public expression of our fears, our joys and hopes for the future for the benefit of not just ourselves but the wider community too. I hope this will inspire many of you to contribute.

### **Salaam, Shalom**

In both the Council and other recent Meeting, we were reassured by our members who hold executive positions on the Board of the soon-to-be Radio Station that the Limited Company soon to be formed will have complete independence from either Synagogue or any other Jewish organisation. (See Report).

### **Thelma Ruby**

It was good that so many of you came to see the Thelma Ruby Show and also that it attracted a good crowd from the Bristol Hebrew Congregation, some of whom said it

was one of the most enjoyable social events for a long time and expressed an interest in our forthcoming Garden Party, to which they have now been invited. This is all good news since I was really saddened when the monthly Western Jewish Social Club folded a few months back. Perhaps we need a joint Social Committee?

### **Synagogue Service Rota**

Sylvia Murray retired from her role as Rota Secretary recently and I wish to personally thank her for all her very considerable efforts in ensuring Services ran smoothly and Wardens were provided for them.

We welcome, her successor, Wendy Kingdom who continues to need more of you to help as Wardens and train as Service Leaders, especially during the periods when the Rabbi is away.

### **What's in a name!**

Now that the so-called "Silly season" is here when the media seem to search for anything to fill their pages because so many of the nation is at play abroad, I suppose I might be permitted my own bit of buffoonery! So here goes.....

Maybe it's just me, but I get mildly irritated when our Synagogue is called by the road in which it resides. No doubt the members of "Park Row" feel the same. But as someone also said, "The Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Congregation" is such a mouthful. Answers please on a postcard!

Have a wonderful Summer!

Shalom

**Robert Hurst**



## Squeaks of the Scribe's Quill

Kathy and I visited New Zealand last month for the first time. We had never been so far from home before. Culturally it seems very near, as the language spoken is familiar, though the accent has an unfamiliar 'twang'. The landscape seems similar too, with an ordered look brought to it by farming practices closely allied to what we see around home, derived from those exported by British settlers. Even the synagogues we visited in Wellington and Auckland seems very homely, being 'progressive', with some prayers being read in English and some in Hebrew. Though they use an American prayer book, it is similar in style to ours.

We went primarily to visit my uncle Eugene following his hundredth birthday. We had never met him before and were pleased to find him mobile and with a cheerful personality. After a day in Auckland we set off to tour both North and South Islands, to see the scenery, starting off by driving to, and then around, the Coromandel Peninsula.

There are nature reserves there where I was pleased to actually see, at a distance, a Kiwi. It is not the fruit I mean, though they are also there in plenty, but the small flightless bird, which is the symbol of the country, which struts around on the ground rather like a furry chicken. The natural vegetation was unlike anything we had ever seen before, with types of trees, flowers and plants totally unique. Clearly all of the native vegetation and associated birds and animals formed a specialized ecological system, rich and variegated, which had evolved in isolation over millenia. But as we travelled further I noticed that most of the natural bush had been cleared to make way for farmland and had been replaced by monocultures, mainly of four

types; grassland, for sheep pasture; grape vines, for viticulture; orchards, for fruit; mostly apple trees; and mixed arable farming. It also became clear that, beautiful though the countryside appeared to be, with its neat orderly fields, well tended, carefully fenced pastures and healthy domesticated animals, in reality all this was an ecological disaster area. The almost total destruction of the native New Zealand bush and its replacement by European farming monocultures, mostly in order to sell lamb, wool, apples and wine, had ruined the natural ecosystem and driven most of its species to extinction. Twenty-two species have become lost in this way over the past century. Indeed, only because of the established reserves does the Kiwi have any hope of life.

As I realised this I also realised that synagogues are similarly like reserves for Jews, which prevent us from becoming extinct. Without these self-established reserves we would all die out. The synagogue does not preserve an ecological system, of course, but a spiritual system. The trees, plants and insects which are necessary for all species to survive and maintain each other in balance, are replaced in our Jewish community by the balance of prayers and practices, precepts and personalities which all together make up a unique spiritual community. We simply cannot survive as Jews in the absence of this mixture of learning and praying, social interaction and communal organization, which is known as 'the synagogue'. Without this, we would die out, become extinct as Jews.

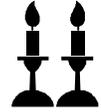
Some of us do just that. There is a Yiddish proverb; 'Ten enemies cannot do a person the harm they can do to themselves!' Just so, some Jews do leave the reserve and might appear to flourish in the secular materialism of society at large, but can only



## Shabbat Kiddush

It is six months now since the scheme began and there has been a Shabbat Kiddush every week.

Thanks to the help of so many members and I have had lots and lots of favourable comments.



Please can I particularly thank the Rose family, Joshua Levene and family, Iris Segal, the Fliegelstone family, Sally Webber and Julian Sims who have all done a Kiddush since the last edition of Alonim.

The Kiddush doesn't need to be a lot of work and fancy home cooking, shop bought food is just fine. It provides a treat for our Cheder children, some sustenance for those who live along way away and an excuse for everyone to stay around and chat.

I only need to ask each family once or twice a year. Alternatively if you have a special event and would like to make Kiddush get in touch.

**Sally Webber**



From the Rabbi ctd.

manage that by living a largely utilitarian existence. Their Jewish spirituality dies. They might become adherents of a different religion, the religion of the majority, but they will by then have lost an essential aspect of their Jewish culture; they will have transformed themselves into something else. They will have finished the job Hitler started. Yet why should we participate in our own destruction, why cooperate in the extinction of our Jewishness, which has been so severely attacked during this past century?

On the other hand it is also possible for us to do the opposite, to gradually rebuild ourselves a spiritual heritage. Little by little, piece by piece we can put together our Jewishness. Every prayer we say, every Jewish story we read or tell our children, every Jewish book we buy, every visit to the

synagogue Service we make, preserves our heritage and strengthens it within us. This is essentially a communal exercise. This is the function of the synagogue. It adds meaning to our lives as well as serving as an organisation for self-preservation. We can re-establish the resilience and integrity of our Jewish community, where all are included, appreciated and respected for the personality they have. In this way the individuality pervasive of the general culture may be challenged successfully by the sense of congregation essential for the survival of the Jewish species. We all need each other for the survival of ourselves as Jews. We can work together to avoid becoming extinct!

**Rabbi Francis Ronald Berry**



## A PEACE PROCESS

Every time the subject of Israel is raised, whether within the community, or in a more public forum, I feel the same mixture of emotions, the same sense of sorrow, guilt, loss, love, pain, frustration, confusion, embarrassment.

Even as I'm writing this, news is breaking about yet another incident in which too many innocent people have died. We are told that it was a mistake, for which apologies have been offered. In wars there are too many mistakes. And in this particular war of endless retaliation, mistakes are always costly to both sides. I feel compassion for both the victims and for the perpetrators, who must live with the results of their actions.

I know, as Robert Hurst writes, that in Israel "decent hard-working people are going about their lives," That the majority of Israelis want nothing more than peace and stability, and to live in harmony with their neighbours. I feel sure that the same is true of the majority of Palestinians.

I know that a substantial number of Israeli soldiers have refused to serve in the occupied territories. I also know that a number of initiatives exist, which aim to effect some sort of reconciliation, to facilitate dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. I am particularly moved to learn of Bereaved Families for Peace, which is a meeting point for those on both sides who have lost loved ones.

Nevertheless, I too am aware of an "enormous ignorance". I really don't know whether the news we receive is accurate or horribly biased, whether peace in the Middle East is a real possibility or a never to be fulfilled dream.

Once, many years ago, I lived in Israel. My elder son served in the Israeli army. Now I want to live in **this** society as an equal, without losing my Jewish identity, to be able to share all that is good, strong and true in our heritage with all who are interested to learn.

And yet, I must confess that my bag is always mentally packed, in case I might have to flee. But, would I flee to Israel? Once I would have answered "yes" with conviction. Now I'm almost certain that I wouldn't.

My relationship with Israel is a passionate emotion, which sometimes causes me pain and sometimes pleasure, like an intense love for someone who often embarrasses me in public. Israel is family, Israel is friends, Israel is at the very heart and soul of my beliefs, Israel is my history. Israel is a state of mind. Israel is a troubled and troublesome country in a troubled and troublesome region. As a writer, I try to examine and explore some of these conflicts in my work.

As a mediator, I tend to look inward for solutions. Which is why I feel a need to create a quiet, still place within, in which I can try to come to terms with all these powerful and conflicting emotions, and attempt to find a point of equilibrium between the polarities I experience.



I hope, in this way, to develop a more open mind and a more open heart, and thus to become more able to hear and respect the opinions of others, especially those with

which I most profoundly disagree. I think of it as a modest kind of peace process.

**Sheila Yeger**



**I**n response to the invitation in the last copy of Alonim to express one's view on the Israel/Palestine question I humbly submit my comments. I am by no means an expert.

However, the situation is that historically Jews throughout the Diaspora have been persecuted.

Israel offers a place of sanctuary to all Jews to assert their right to exist and express themselves in freedom from harassment.

Israel is currently actively trying to disengage from past strategies making way for the Palestinians to exist and establish their own state, whilst safeguarding itself from the real threat of terrorist acts.

Israel is currently under threat from both the new Palestinian Government of 'Hamas' and the Iranians who will neither recognise Israel

nor the right of its people to exist.

The subject of Zionism has traditionally been a controversial one in the history of Liberal Judaism.

In February 2002 the rabbinic conference of the ULPS tried to resolve this.

In a published statement there was an "unequivocal commitment to the state of Israel and its enduring right to exist within secure borders."

Also "that the Palestinians are also entitled to live in peace and security within internationally recognised borders"

I fully support this. However, how that aim will be achieved by non-violent means, sadly still remains to be seen.

**Bernard Price**



Omission: The first article in this section in the last issue was by Judy Lazarus, writing as an individual and not as editor.

Please note that the editorial team would welcome **all** views on this topic and will continue this for at least one more issue.

The editorial team would like to invite comments on this subject for the next issue of Alonim. If you would like the chance to consider your position on Israel, and to express your feelings, then please send your copy to the Editors. Copy welcome early.

Please note that, as per the usual editorial policy, no comments that are aggressive or abusive toward another member will be printed. This is an opportunity to discuss these issues in an open but tolerant fashion.





This excellent study offers something quite rare: an account of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, as well as that between Israel and the wider Arab and Muslim world, that is both intelligent and accessible. The author is from the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London, and this paperback edition has a preface taking brief account of Arafat's death in November 2004.

As the title implies, the book is ideal for those people, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who tend to blame Israel for everything bad that happens in the Middle East. Lochery, who is himself neither Jewish/Israeli nor Arab/Palestinian, shows that a closer look at the issues than is normally found in the Western media demonstrates that Israel, in reality, is generally more sinned against than sinning.

Having said that, this is not an easy read for anyone who thinks Israel can do no wrong. Like other democracies, it has made its share of mistakes, adopted stupid policies, and suffered many a vain politician. Perhaps the most shocking example of Israeli shortcomings provided by Lochery is the 'Lavon affair' of 1954: Pinhas Lavon, Minister of Defence, resigned after it emerged that Israeli spies had tried to plant bombs in Cairo to encourage further deterioration in Egyptian-Western relations as the Suez crisis loomed. More relevant to today, though, is the spat between Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir which seems to have scuppered the 'London Agreement' of 1987 between Israel and Jordan, according to which the West Bank captured by Israel in 1967 would have been confederated with Jordan as a way of helping to resolve the Palestinian issue. That failure eventually led to the Oslo 'peace process' of the 1990s which, with hindsight at least, almost brought Israel to the point of national suicide. In other words, Israel ended up playing into the hands of a duplicitous PLO through the adoption of what amounted to a 'concessions under fire' policy that effectively offered 'land for no peace'.

Indeed, it is Lochery's account of the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim side of things that makes this book most uncomfortable for those who generally blame Israel. While accepting that there are certainly Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims who want a compromise with Israel along the lines of the Oslo accords or more recent Road Map, he makes it clear that those who don't have long been in the ascendancy and, unfortunately, show every sign of remaining so. Such basic rejectionism has manifested itself in many ways over the years, from the Arab leadership's opposition to any Jewish self-determination in British Mandate Palestine during the 1920s and 30s to the more recent rise of Islamist hostility the world over to Israel's very existence since the 1980s and 90s. It also lies behind the terrorist attacks against Israel by the early Fatah and PLO movements during the 1950s and 60s before Israel took Gaza and the West Bank in the Six-Day War. Most starkly of all, it explains Arafat's rejection in late 2000 of the best deal that can ever be done between Palestinians and Israelis: a Palestinian state alongside Israel in East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the equivalent of the whole of the West Bank. Instead, Arafat not only gave approval for a new terror war against Israel's civilian population in the form of the so-called second intifada. But the world by and large also blamed - and still blames - Israel unfairly for the dire situation that has resulted right up to the present day.

For those whose views are shaped mainly by *The Guardian* and the BBC, that may all sound rather harsh on Arafat and the Palestinians, as well as on their supporters in the wider Arab, Muslim, and Western worlds. But it's precisely because there is another side to the story that rarely gets an airing in the UK media that this kind of book is so sorely needed today. Everyone, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, whose default position is generally to blame Israel should read it.

Jonathan G. Campbell

Neill Lochery, *Why Blame Israel?* (London: Icon Books, 2005). 257 pages. ISBN 1840466243. £8.99.

Parashat Kedoshim : Leviticus 19:3

“You shall each revere his mother and his father”.

In his introduction Derek Brown drew our attention to the various ways in which the Hebrew word “yerah” has been translated. Plaut has chosen “revere”, whereas “fear” would appear to be closer to the Hebrew meaning. In Exodus 20:12 the Commandment uses a different word “kavod”, which we translate as “honour”. In considering the two ideas, it would appear that the one – “fear, revere, hold in awe” – is to do with our attitude, while the other – “honour” – implies action.

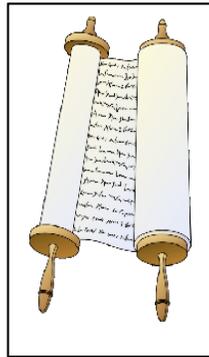
It is easy enough to understand “fear” when thinking of children, who are sensitive to a parent’s disapproval, and who might fear actual punishment, but the Commandment is directed at adults. However, there is one occasion where the parent may not assert authority, and that is when it would incur the breaking of the Sabbath. Today there is not even the fear of incurring a notional death penalty for an infringement of the law, but we are nevertheless expected to keep the Commandment.

The attitude that we learn as children of respecting our parents remains as our relationship develops, but the manner in which we honour them may well change. In the Talmud we read: *Our Rabbis taught: What is “fear” and what is “honour”? “Fear” means*

*that he (the son) must neither stand in his (the father’s) place nor sit in his place, nor contradict his words, nor tip the scales against him.*

*“Honour” means that he must give him food and drink, clothe and cover him, lead him in and out. Rashi adds: “if he is infirm”. The scholar, Rabbi Ovadya S’forno, placed the emphasis firmly on the attitude of reverence and respect as*

*being essential, for “One can take care of all one’s parents’ physical needs without actually honouring them, therefore the extra dimension of fear or awe is necessary, even to ensure the kavod”.*



Our attitude to authority is complicated and many-sided, and the complexity in relationships comes out in the difficulty we have in arriving at a single interpretation of what exactly is commanded.

Thank you, Derek, for helping us to look more closely at this relationship which is important and unique for each one of us.

**Kate Withers.**



Some of you may know that I have often thought that in this country there should be one non Orthodox Jewish movement.

When I became involved in our community I understood that we come from many different Jewish “places” and that the body that represents us should be of a wider base.

After reading this book I was reminded how important are my liberal roots. I was reminded why I felt so at home when I walked into the LJS in 1980 and why the Liberal Judaism as exemplified by John Rayner has captivated me ever since. Effie and I attended that synagogue from 1980 to 1986. It was always an inspiration to attend a service led by John Rayner and to listen to one of his sermons.

This book represents a collection of some of his sermons and lectures and by reading them I understood why the principles of the Progressive Judaism that John Rayner espoused had such an influence upon me.

In a sermon in 1997 he said, “It is hard to see how there can ever be a reconciliation between the Orthodox and the Secular, they are so fundamentally and bitterly opposed to one another.”

He argues for a middle way, a middle way that says to the Orthodox, “You do not have to reject modernity, Judaism is quite capable of absorbing it, and will be the better for it;”

Then he says to the Secular, “You do not have to reject your religious heritage; appropriately modernised it can still speak to us both rationally and inspiringly”.

He sees this middle way as Progressive Judaism and he argues sooner or later it will grow exponentially. “My generation will not see it, but the next or the next but one surely will.” That surely is prophecy.

The whole thrust of this excellent collection is to ask what Progressive Judaism can offer. There are two excellent essays related to Christianity. I would suggest required reading for anyone wanting to hear an authoritative Jewish view on the subject should be his essays “A Jewish View of Jesus” and “The Truth about the Pharisees”.

Also he has views on Israel/Palestine. In his essay “The Ethical Issues Surrounding the Middle East” he sets out the arguments and concludes that the two state solution is one that should be worked for and he also



## Many Hands Make Light Work at Cheder Slimbridge Weekend

A heartfelt 'thank you' to all those wonderful parents and children who made our weekend at Slimbridge truly memorable. In particular, I'd like to thank Iris and Irit who organise the bulk of the weekend. Also Lisa Sachs who helped in so many ways.

Grateful thanks also to our guests, Louis Bloch and Marcus Freed.

There will be a full report, with personal accounts and remembered highlights, in the next issue of Alonim.

**David Dwek**  
Head of Cheder



Signposts to the Messianic Age ctd.

concludes that the Jewish people's claims to Palestine, "... is not as clear cut as that of the Palestinians." (page 249)

I cannot finish without referring to his sermon "We and They" (page 55) in which he argues for a greater inclusivity in relation to non-Jews being made as welcome as Ruth herself was welcomed. We should declare non-Jews welcome to our synagogues even if they do not convert. They are welcome into our community as honoured guests.

May I urge you to look at this book. In relation to my last paragraph may I suggest that if you have a non Jewish partner or

friend, he or she may be interested in reading it. On that note I should point out that the Foreword, written by Professor Raphael Loewe, (himself Orthodox) says that it "would be a pity if the readership which this book reached were to be confined to membership of liberal and reform congregations". By that I understand that he would hope that Orthodox Jews would also read it.

This is the last published work of a great spiritual leader and I would commend it to all.

**Michael Romain**

"Signposts to the Messianic Age" by Rabbi John D Rayner

Published by Vallentine Mitchell



# Future Synagogue Events

A day for meditation and quiet contemplation.



During the day we shall practise some familiar meditations and also explore some new ones.

No previous experience is necessary : all are welcome.

For more information please contact: Sheila Yeger

**350th Anniversary Celebrations**

**COMING HOME....**

**What does it mean to be Jewish in Bristol and the South West today?**

**MEETING**

Are you enthusiastic, energetic, thoughtful, opinionated, idealistic,  
nostalgic, artistic, musical, dramatic...  
...or any combination of these?

Would you like to be involved in researching, devising and performing  
a community event which investigates and celebrates being Jewish  
in Bristol and the South West today?

So why not come along to this exploratory meeting...  
Tea and cake and lively discussion, All ideas warmly received.

If you are interested, but unable to attend this meeting, please contact Sheila Yeger.



# A History of Yiddish

## OLD YIDDISH

The Jewish migration southwards and eastwards following the persecution brought about by the Crusades and the Black Death - which had been blamed on the Jews - brought the people to Bavaria, Austria, Bohemia, Moravia and northern Italy.

It was in the Slavic environment of Bohemia and Moravia that a distinct withdrawal from German influence on Yiddish began. The migrants settled amongst Jews already living in those areas, who spoke Slavic and Knaanic (a Slavic-based Jewish language). Yiddish however became the dominant language and was adopted by the original population which at the same time introduced Slavic words into Yiddish.

Remarkably, a very different attitude towards the Jews was developing in Poland and during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries they were welcomed by Polish rulers who issued charters granting them equal rights. As a result the Rhineland Jews together with the Moravian and Bohemian Jews moved north to eastern Germany and into Poland where they were welcomed as traders and a rise in social rank. It is reckoned during the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Polish Jewish population rose from 15,000 to 150,000 - this naturally brought about the addition of many Polish words to Yiddish and the adoption of Polish given names. At this period a relatively uniform literary Yiddish language developed - even before the development of printing.

As a result of this settlement in a Slavic speaking area of Europe which was to expand, Yiddish formed two main dialects - western Yiddish spoken by Jews who had remained in Germany and France and eastern Yiddish in

the Slavic zones.

The Slavic element in Yiddish is put at roughly 5% - a few examples

Krentsl=garland

Zhaleven=spare

Pitshevke=particular detail

Yungatsh=rascal

Stolyer=carpenter

Other words or word structures : Abi (only) - as in "abi gezunt!", vedlik (according to), tamevate -naïve person.

Slavic influence would also change aspects of German syntax. For example the use of negative clauses of purpose after certain verbs, e.g. "ikh hob moyre, dos kind sol nit veynen" - I'm afraid the child might cry - is like Polish, but unlike German. A change in the standard German word order occurs and these deviations become more apparent in the following period - Middle Yiddish - 1500-1700, which we shall look at in the next issue of Alonim.

**Malcolm Rawles**



# SHIUR: June

Exodus 19:1 “They entered the wilderness of Sinai...”

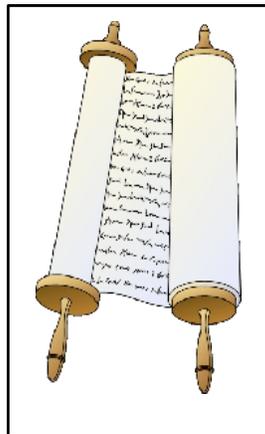
Our discussion was very much enriched by Michael Romain’s sharing with us his experiences in the Sinai wilderness. As one of a small group of pilgrims, his first reaction was that the problems of escorting a mere fifteen adults across the desert for a week were such that he could scarcely envisage anyone leading several hundred thousand men, women and children, across such hostile terrain on such a journey as Moses made at the head of the fleeing Israelites.

The guide took the group to the traditional site of the giving of the Commandments, which the Muslims call Mount Moses. Here Michael was shocked (his word) to discover at the foot of the mountain what is claimed to be the very bush that Moses had seen burning but not consumed. He, and most of us too, had never connected the two places. Again, Michael’s experiences travelling east from Egypt had enabled him to appreciate what it must have meant for the young man Moses fleeing into the wilderness after murdering the Egyptian soldier. Did he really get that far – or even further? And then, to go back to Egypt, only to set out again, on the same journey, this time at the head of a whole people!

Muslims and Jews have the same stories, the same collective memory, but there are differences. In our tradition we have both

Abraham and Moses arguing, negotiating with God. This attitude is alien to Muslims, and the difference is reflected in the way we identify ourselves; - Israel: struggle with God; Islam: submission to God. We discuss, challenge, ask questions.

In reading the history of our people in the Torah, as one of the group pointed out, it is important to remember the “wow” factor which serves to reassure ourselves as well as making it exciting for the children.



Michael wondered whether it would be profitable to pay more attention in the Service to, say, the Haftarah, especially if the Torah portion is obscure or difficult. This would, of course, necessitate a deeper knowledge of, for instance, symbolism.

Thank you, Michael, for sharing your experiences and insights with us.

We have mentioned before that the Shiur does not have to be based on the Torah portion for the week, so if there is anyone out there with something special to share please come along to our discussions. The next one will be on July 8<sup>th</sup>, but usually we meet on the first Saturday of the month, at 10am, before the Morning Service. All are welcome.

**Kate Withers**



## Caring for our Community we need your help!

In an earlier Alonim I thanked those members who kindly came forward and offered to visit or keep in touch with less able or elderly members.

Now with the Rabbi and Kathy away for most of the next few months it would be helpful to have a few extra offers of help with caring for our community.

What's involved? Not a lot, just a little of your time!

When someone is ill or in hospital, a telephone call from a fellow-member to find out how they are can make all the difference. It may result in

a visit, or some shopping, or just a friendly inquiry, but that is up to you and the other member to arrange. I usually hear when someone is unwell and likely to appreciate a call, so I would make all the initial introductions, with consent, of course.

We are a growing community, with a lot of young energy and we want to take care of each other at all times of life.

Many thanks in anticipation.

**Linda Hurst**

**Membership Secretary**

**O**n a warm afternoon (Sunday June 4th) a crowded Bannerman Road Synagogue was transformed into a theatre. Thelma Ruby kept an audience, drawn from both congregations, entertained for one and a half hours. She took us on a musical journey through her life on the stage— from the songs she learned in her Leeds childhood to her professional successes. Highlights included a duet with our own Robert Hurst from *Fiddler on the Roof* (she was Golda to Topol's Tevye), the 'Shabbos Blessing' from the same show and a revue sketch (also co-starring Robert). She told us about her long term collaboration with her husband Peter Frye on their

portrayal of Golda Meir.

She kept us entranced—she sang, she danced and she brought to life many of her past triumphs. It certainly was a memorable afternoon

**Judy & Norman Marks**