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Cover: ZVI HEIFETZ – The Israeli Ambassador. Page 12 – Barry Hyman in Conversation with the Ambassador.
THE NEW POPE AND THE JEWS

FOR MANY PROGRESSIVE Jews the worldwide response to Pope John Paul II’s death was disconcerting. It could not but remind us of the vast disparity in numbers between Catholics and Jews. But the unease was about more than numbers.

The lying-in-state, the calls for sanctity, the tomb in the crypt as a place of pilgrimage — human beings play a different role in Christianity from Judaism. Perhaps there is a partial parallel with the death of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe. That, too, made progressive Jews uncomfortable.

The media was unequivocal in hailing Pope John Paul II as one of the great figures of our time. There is no doubt that his opposition to communism and his determination to be with Catholics all over the globe justified the remarkable tributes. Yet his was a papacy that did not face numbers of key issues that the Catholic Church will have to tackle — contraception, the role of women, priestly celibacy, the over-centralised structure of the church itself. Could it be said that the press mirrors large sections of society who yearn for religion to reassert simple faith and old truths in the face of the moral and spiritual complexities of our time?

Yet in one respect Pope John Paul II was a radical and an innovator. In his relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people he recast Catholic theology in a way that was not only courageous but deeply compassionate.

Early in his papacy Pope John Paul II acknowledged the “misunderstandings, errors, indeed offences” that had been committed against Jews and declared: “The terrible persecutions suffered by the Jews in different periods of history have finally opened the eyes of many and appalled many people’s hearts. Christians have taken the right path, that of justice and brotherhood, in seeking to come together with their Semitic brethren, respectfully and perseveringly, in the common heritage that all value so highly.”

Judaism and Christianity share “a common root” and are linked by “the design of the God of the Covenant”. Yet they are different and dialogue should lead not to conversion but to greater mutual understanding.

When he paid an historic visit to the Great Synagogue of Rome in 1986, Pope John Paul II declared that: “With Judaism we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers”. He was unequivocal that “no ancestral or collective blame can be imputed to the Jews as a people for ‘what happened in Christ’s passion’—not indiscriminately to the Jews of that time, not to those who came afterwards, nor to those of today”. Jews are “beloved of God”, who has called them with an “irrevocable calling”.

Pope John Paul II visited Jerusalem in 2000 and prayed at the Western Wall. Six years earlier he had declared: “It must be understood that Jews, who for 2000 years were dispersed among the nations of the world, have decided to return to the land of their ancestors. This is their right”.

In his determination to transform the relationship between Christianity and Judaism and Christians and Jews, Pope John Paul II was building upon the work of his predecessor Pope John XXIII. It was Pope John XXIII’s Vatican II Council, which in 1965, gave birth to the defining statement Nostra Aetate which Pope John Paul II explained and developed.

What is significant about the two men is that they both had direct and intimate experience of Jewish persecution and Jewish suffering.

Pope John XXIII, as Angelo Roncalli, was the Vatican’s Apostolic Delegate in Turkey and played a decisive part in the rescue of many Bulgarian and Romanian Jews. This would have been striking in its own right but stands out as a clarion call in the face of the silence from the Vatican itself.

Pope John Paul II was born Karol Wojtyła in Poland, which in 1939 was the home of 3.3 million Jews, more than 10% of the population. He witnessed the extermination of an entire people and culture and later became Bishop of Kraków, a city which had long enjoyed a great and historic Jewish quarter. Speaking to representatives of the remnant Jewish community, he said: “The human past does not disappear completely. The history of the Poles and Jews, even though there are so few Jews currently living on Polish soil, is still very much present in the lives of Jews, as well as in the lives of Poles. I brought this to the attention of those of my countrymen who visited me in Rome on September 29, 1990. The nation which lived with us for many generations has remained with us even after the horrible death of millions of its sons and daughters”, I said. “Together we wait the day of judgement and resurrection”.

Karol Wojtyła’s radical conviction with regard to Jews and Judaism was something both of the heart and the head. It flowed from experience and empathy, as radical and courageous convictions so often do.

By the time you read this editorial, we will know who will succeed Pope John Paul II. It is unlikely that person will have such intimate knowledge and experience of Jews and Jewish history. Indeed, it is unlikely that there will be many other Popes moulded by the experiences of Roncalli and Wojtyła.

Therein lies a daunting challenge. Catholicism and Judaism are different — in numbers and in other ways. The Catholic Church has its own challenging agenda posed not the least by the huge cultural differences between South America or the Far East on the one hand and Western Europe and the United States on the other. Relations between Christianity and Islam, both missionary religions, is another.

Can the process of dialogue and reconciliation that Popes John XXIII and John Paul II initiated be maintained with a Catholic leadership who may have very different backgrounds, experiences and agendas? Will Jews, particularly Jews as Karol Wojtyła understood and encountered them, figure on the Vatican radar screen in the future?
LAST YEAR'S WORD WAS hamatzav, 'the situation'. Everyone felt happy to talk about hamatzav, Hebrew speakers and non-Hebrew speakers alike, as they had done for the past four years. It was shorthand for the breakdown in the peace process and the wave of violence that erupted in Israel and the territories. This year's word is hitnatzut, 'disengagement'. This year's 'thing', in fact, is to disengage. Everyone is doing it.

'Disengagement' is the term used by the government of Israel to describe its decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern sector of the West Bank. The settler movement began its opposition to this disengagement with a slogan that emphasized that, despite disagreeing with the policy, there was still love amongst the people of Israel, settlers and non-settlers. It wanted to engage so that no one would disengage. More recently, as the decisive moment draws closer, that love has evaporated and they are busily disengaging themselves from the rest of Israel.

I listened with amazement last week to a friend who, like myself, was involved in Zionist youth work in Britain in the 1980s. He now lives in a West Bank settlement, runs an Orthodox religious Zionist yeshiva in the Old City and is working tirelessly to scupper plans for the withdrawal. I on the other hand live in a non-descript suburb of Jerusalem, belong to a nearby Reform synagogue and teach Jewish history. He spoke about there being no choice but to resist the withdrawal from Gaza and to make it impossible for Israel to 'retreat' from the God-given land of Israel. I mumbled something about democracy, demography and morality, throwing in something about Palestinian rights at the same time. He was hardly impressed with me. I, whilst thoroughly disagreeing with him, could not help but be impressed by the consistency of his ideology, its dangerous logic notwithstanding.

The subtext of the continuing conversation was how 'my camp' sees the challenge of the hour. Where is the voice of Reform Judaism at this pressing moment of history? Beyond simply not wanting to occupy the lives of Palestinians – negative reasoning – what positive things do Reform leaders around the world say about Israel, the challenge of Jewish Statehood and relationship to the land of Israel? Where is the positive message? Where is the passion and the love for the people of Israel in its incarnation as an almost sixty year old independent polity?

I really do not know. Having been in the Reform movement since birth, grown up in its youth movement and currently teaching aspiring rabbinical students from the United States, I have never been more unsure of the movement's ability to feel intrinsically connected to the Jewish State.

Several clearly definable Reform camps coexist in relation to Israel. The first comprises those who have felt connected to Israel over the years but are now troubled by the complexities and frustrations of the outcome of statehood. For them, contemporary Israel is very different from the clean and pristine Israel dreamed of in earlier decades. I sympathize with this camp,
especially since I believe that its members are looking for a way to balance the inclination to feel close to Israel with a responsibility also to be critical. This dissonance has not dimmed their desire to connect and acknowledge the remarkable project of Jewish Statehood.

The second camp is a far more complicated group – part of a historical continuity of Reform discomfort with Zionism and Israel. Interestingly, they are currently and excesses of Israeli life in the name of Judaism, the Jewish People and its mission of prophetic justice. I am no less concerned by such actions and protest wherever I can. But equally I cannot separate my discomfort from a deep connection to and love of Israel. What troubles me and what I cannot fathom are those who encounter Israel solely through its negative side. Put plainly, I find such ‘engagement’ an expression of disengagement and, as such, just a little dishonest.

Historically, the Reform movement was always squeamish about Zionism since it made being Jewish just a little too ‘physical’. Judaism, it was argued, represented the moral idea, the spirit of Torah and the search for meaning. And one should not express such a pure inner cause in the murky world of a state complete with politics, borders and armies. Such a Reform position looked askance at Zionism and Israel as being somehow vulgar or below the best aspirations of prophetic Judaism. Officially the movement has been committed to Israel for many years now, but the old antipathies have not gone away. Conversations with colleagues, meetings with visiting groups, ongoing work with the movement all convince me that in some quarters the old anti-Zionism of the Reform movement is alive and kicking.

The chief pressure point is the idea of power and the inability to accept the value of ‘power’ that Israel represents. A rabbinical student of mine complained to me last year that we Reform Jews are ‘too exposed’ by having power, and suggested we would keep our moral edge by being without it. Flabbergasted at this strange conclusion, I blurted out that whilst physical power is an important challenge and one that cannot be taken lightly, it is infinitely better to have it than to be without it. For better or for worse, having power is part of the real, lived world, the world of the Middle East and a necessary part of the contemporary Jewish reality. Similarly, I really do need to talk to a former RSY-Netzer movement worker who was convinced I had gone ‘all right wing’ several years ago as we discussed the idea of shnat – the year-in-Israel scheme – participants joining Israeli army volunteer programmes. His complete rejection of such an idea in the name of Reform values seemed to be completely confused. Surely the possession of power, especially in the form of an army, is a remarkable opportunity to test the meaning of power. There is more to having power than occupying the West Bank. It also includes such values as protecting lives.

It may be old-fashioned to be a proud Zionist and supporter of Israel. But together with its state apparatus it remains the most challenging and demanding attempt to project Jewishness in the world. It is a state apparatus that also deals in saving Jewish lives, developing a Jewish education system, managing a complex Jewish society and creating a thriving and meaningful Jewish culture. Relating to Israel via campaigns against all the things that are wrong, the failures and frustrations of political sovereignty, is meaningless if it ignores seriously engaging with the core challenge of being part of a nation which has genuinely moved on in history.

Returning to my settler friend, I fear that we are all in for a very difficult time in the next few months, one which will require an enormous effort from all Jews everywhere. The machinery of this Jewish State is going to evacuate some 8,000 people from their homes against their will whilst restraining tens if not hundreds of thousands of others from coming to their aid. It is going to mean painful scenes of inter-Jewish violence, pitting the will of the state against that of large numbers of its citizens. The news is already filled daily with reports of extremist groups planning ever more dangerous moves to undermine the plan. And yet, this evacuation is the right thing to do, and represents a path that a clear majority of Israelis support. It may not look nice but it is the next stage in the unfolding drama of the Jewish People working out its relationship to core values – of land, power, peoplehood, democracy and Jewish solidarity. I hope it will also generate a renewed debate amongst Jews between those who worship the land as a value in itself and those who see it as a means to a higher end.

For this reason alone there has never been a more important time to be truly engaged.

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The Board of Deputies of British Jews was founded in 1760 and is the elected representative body of the British Jewish community. As such it has become a role model for other religious communities.

In 1840 Britain’s first Reform Synagogue, the West London Synagogue of British Jews was founded. Yet it was only in February 2005 that a Reform rabbi and Reform leader was invited to address a plenary session of the Board. The following is the text of Rabbi Tony Bayfield’s address.

Mr President; my President – Sir Sigmund; Deputies; this is a very great honour. It is an honour because there is no institution that is more important to the future of British Jewry than the Board of Deputies.

I would like to try to substantiate that statement in a characteristically oddball way and begin with two related sets of statistics.

Conventional wisdom has it that 60 years ago, British Jewry totalled around 400,000 souls. According to the 2001 census returns we are now less than 270,000. The precise figures are open to challenge but the steady and seemingly inexorable decline is not.

Though it is even harder to state with precision, it seems probable that sixty years ago those 400,000 Jews represented a figure larger than that of all the other minority faiths put together. Today, there are 1.6 million Muslims, more than 550,000 Hindus, 336,000 Sikhs and 267,000 of us – with the Buddhists threatening to challenge us for fourth place.

What does it signify, this decline in numbers? What are the implications of our fall from first to fourth place in the non-Christian minority stakes? Why do the two related sets of statistics make the Board of Deputies so important?

I have three answers.

My first answer starts with a perspective observation by Michael Wegier of the UJIA. He wrote recently: “It has been possible, during the past decade, to paint two entirely different pictures of the British Jewish community. On the one hand, it is argued, ours is a community in crisis. It is marked by demographic decline, increased intermarriage and assimilation; by the breakdown of identity, the fracturing of community, and weakening attachment to Israel. But recent research has suggested a quite different reading may be possible. British Jewry is home to thriving day schools, transformed synagogue communities, unparalleled levels of adult learning and outreach provision; it is a community discovering innovative and creative expressions of Jewish identity, one continuing to love Israel through good times and bad.”

I am absolutely certain that both pictures of our community are true and that, to a significant extent, the two pictures appear at different places on an axis which runs from ultra-orthodox to secularist non-affiliated and from the North West London ghetto to the rural shires.

I am equally certain that to console ourselves with the positive picture and ignore the negative picture is an untenable strategy because there is a point at which a minority community, however committed and active, lacks the numbers to sustain itself and re-exposes itself to the same, remorseless cycle of attrition.

The entire Jewish community needs our attention and it is clear that no single ideology, no single strategy will meet all needs. Our future depends not on institutional survival alone but on enabling every Jew to find meaning and purpose in their Jewish identity. There is no group capable of speaking to everyone and all the resources, all the talents, all the insights we can muster are desperately needed and of enormous value.

Thirty-five years ago I became friendly with another Cambridge undergraduate. He was studying a highly debatable subject for a Jew: philosophy. I was studying a much more suitable subject for a Jew: law. Jonathan Sacks and I have been close friends ever since. He and I have often said that our friendship is beshert and that we must use it in the interests of the community, to model a core value that we share. Namely that ‘religious differences, which should always be treated with respect, should not prevent different sections of the community from working together for the common good. Indeed, wherever they can do so, they must do so’.

It is a token of our relationship that I
done more to recognize the importance of every group and every individual to the future of British Jewry. May the Board of Deputies continue to develop and play that decisive, community-embracing role in our common future.

My second answer addresses the question of the meaning of those statistics which have transformed our status amongst religious minorities in Britain, the fall from first to fourth place. They must mean that the role of the Board of Deputies in protecting the interests and the safety of our community has grown over the last sixty years rather than declined. It could not be more apparent than it is right now, if you ken what I mean.

There is a cartoon to be drawn of all of you assembled as you are now – with one single, solitary Deputy re-dressed – and captioned: 'The only Jew who did not have personal access to Number Ten.' Despite that talent for networking, it would be all too easy for us to slide down the scale of public importance. 'What do they matter – 0.5 per cent of the population and declining? We in Government, in the churches and in society at large have bigger fish to fry, greater worries and concerns.' Education syllabuses could now focus on more numerous minorities and ignore Judaism and the Jewish heritage. Britain could follow the cynical lead of France. Numerical insignificance coupled with expediency could so easily govern public policy to our detriment.

These are dangerous times when others seeking a different relationship to British society may undermine the accommodation that we have built – from shechitah to faith schools. These are dangerous times when the number of acts of violence and desecration are increasing. These are dangerous times characterized by a recrudescence of anti-Semitism masquerading as anti-Zionism, expressed in fantasies about the Israel/Palestine situation as the key to world peace. These are dangerous times when it becomes all too easy to ignore the fact that Judaism has a geography as well as a history and that by 2020 more than half the Jews of the world will live b'Eretz Yisrael. These are dangerous times when we simply cannot afford for the decline in our absolute and relative numbers to remove us from the political and social radar. Never did we need the work of the Board of Deputies to defend our interests more.

But there is a third task which is also yours – ours – and on which I want to lay equal emphasis with the other two.

We are told in the Torah that we are not the most numerous of people. Our smallness is something in which I have always taken comfort and I am seriously driven by the awareness that the Jewish mission has never been realized by power or by might, ki im b'ruchi but by the religious spirit that has sustained us these nearly four millennia. We Jews have sustained the Jewish journey not through numbers and not through withdrawal into ourselves – we were ghettoized by others, we did not choose the ghetto – we have sustained ourselves with an absolute determination to give of the values of Judaism to wider society, to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. We are the authors of social justice, the originators of tikkan olam, repair of the world. That is our defining meaning, that is our existential purpose which goes far 'beyond survival'.

Once again the Board must lead the way, reminding us as a community that if we are not for ourselves who will be for us, but if we are only for ourselves, mah anu what are we?

Our agenda, I believe, is framed by three questions:

How do we, in our diversity, best sustain ourselves? How do we, in our relative numerical decline, defend ourselves? And how do we continue to contribute to the building of a multi-faith, multi-ethnic society in Britain founded on the prophetic values of social justice? The 'how' is clearly a matter for ongoing debate and discussion. That each question reflects a non-negotiable task for each of us and those we represent is, I believe, beyond question.

Even as it recognizes the significance of today and the honour you have paid me, the Reform Movement pledges itself to support the Board of Deputies and the shared agenda I have outlined with every fibre of our being. Chazak, chazak v'nitchazek

1 The figure given in the Jewish Year Book for 20 years from 1950 onwards was 450,000. Professor Barry Kosmin, however, has argued that this overstates the number by more than 90,000. Being Reform I have gone for a middle of the road position.
2 With thanks to Brian Pearce, Interfaith Network.
3 UJIA Strategic Review, 2005.
4 Paraphrasing only slightly Pirkei Avot 4.3.
5 Zechariah 4:6.
6 Genesis 12:3.
7 Obscure allusion to 'Beyond Survival', Dow Marmur, DLT.
8 Pirkei Avot 1:14.

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MANNA SPRING 2005
THE PERIL OF TEPID LOYALTY

BEYOND BELONGING: THE JEWISH IDENTITIES OF MODERATELY ENGAGED BRITISH JEWS
by Steven M Cohen & Keith Kahn-Harris, with a policy essay by Sir Trevor Chinn CVO,
UJIA, London, 2004, £10

WE LIVE TODAY IN A society governed by the habits and the mores of consumerism, in which people are presented with more choices of products and lifestyles than ever before. Modernity has also released individuals from religious imperatives, should they desire it, allowing them freedoms of thought and action undreamt of in past times. Although religion can still have a role to play in modern societies, for most people today that role has been scaled down from one of societal determinant to one of social guide. Religious establishments in general have found it difficult to come to terms with this new reality in which the public can choose from a wide-ranging universe of beliefs, practices and styles or ignore them altogether. Given such wide choices, some people still accept what we call a religious way of life, devout in their belief in God and diligent in carrying out all the positive commandments and proscriptions associated with this, and becoming actively involved in the institutions associated with their religion. Others have gone in the opposite direction, denying or at least questioning the existence of a deity and allowing their innate humanity to dictate their actions. But the vast majority of people in modern society pick a middle way, rejecting some religious demands, adapting others and ignoring yet more. It is towards this group, the so-called 'silent majority', that the religious establishment – church, mosque or synagogue – directs most of its attention when launching programmes of religious 'renewal'.
family, schooling, beliefs and much more.

The upshot of all this probing is to show that these moderately engaged Jews, who comprise the vast majority of British Jewry, do not correspond to what has become a useful buzzword in British government jargon – the Faith community. The reason for this is simple. The word ‘faith’ as used in current British parlance has to do with piety and beliefs. Yet everything meaningful that comes out of this research points in another direction: that what holds Jews together and what motivates them to do ‘Jewish’ things relates to their wish to strengthen the Jewish ethos. People attend synagogue, send their children to Jewish schools and Hebrew schools, have lots of Jewish friends, support Israel and generally continue to do ‘what their parents did’ not because of some overall spiritual need or belief in the deity but because it reinforces the ‘ethnic mortar’. It fortifies their sense of Jewish peoplehood.

This section of the Jewish public has chosen this particular way because they do not have strong religious convictions. Nor do they see a specifically religious or spiritual need to be Jewish. At the same time, they do it because they have no wish to be totally assimilated into the population at large. This book reinforces what several pieces of research by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research on British Jewry have shown over the past decade – that British Jews constitute an ethnic rather than a religious or faith group. Strong family feelings extend beyond the nuclear family to encompass the extended family, to being part of a group found throughout the country, indeed, throughout the world.

The authors go further in their analysis by identifying two sorts of Jews. It is this part of the study which we believe should be of most interest for Reform Judaism. Though they find some discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative results, the researchers divide the moderately engaged into two groups ‘the dwellers’ and ‘the seekers’. But it appears that most of this sample, a total of 77 per cent, are dwellers, a group that values ‘constancy, tradition and authenticity’ and for whom ‘to seek Jewishly, to innovate, may seem inauthentic and somehow not proper’. The authors rightly discern that further engagement in communal life requires an element of ‘seeking’ and that seeking breeds engagement. Yet ‘more engaged seekers’ are only 13 per cent of the sample. This reality certainly makes the work of the revivalists and the renewers who wish to fashion new policies and practices more complex than initially they may have imagined.

There are two other features that the authors are keen to communicate to the sponsors and their readers. The first is a belief that what we might term the generally ‘low key’ or ‘complacent’ Jewish loyalties of the ‘moderately engaged’ are not easily transmittable to the next generation. The second relates to their findings on parental attitudes to intermarriage in which they identify ‘a fatalistic acceptance of the possibility’. They are particularly disturbed by this lack of a ‘principled commitment to Jewish group survival that would entail hard choices and personal sacrifices’.

Should these findings be regarded in positive or negative terms by Reform Jewish leaders? From an internal perspective, although 88 per cent of the ‘moderately engaged’ are members of synagogues, only 20 per cent of the sample self-identified as currently Reform Jews. So the data may not be completely valid for this movement even if in terms of overall communal or group cohesion, the research explains a great deal. That is why JPR and RSGB are currently involved in a similar more focused study of the less active members of five Reform synagogues. Nevertheless in terms of Jewish renewal and ‘spreading the Jewish message’, Beyond Belonging does acknowledge a twenty-first century reality and it places an important message before UJIA and the whole community. As the authors put it, ‘one narrative will not fit all sorts of Jews and different sorts of Jews and constituencies require narratives ‘sensitive to their assumptions, perspectives and symbols’. This clear endorsement of Jewish diversity and the validity of pluralism on both ideological and practical grounds may be the study’s main contribution to and benefit for communal policy planning.

PROFESSOR BARRY KOSMIN is Executive Director of JPR/Institute for Jewish Policy Research, a London-based think tank. He was Founding Director of the North American Jewish Data Bank at the City University of New York Graduate Center.

PROFESSOR STANLEY WATERMAN is Director of Research at JPR. He is a former Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Haifa.
Rabbi Michael Farbman was born in Vitebsk, Belarus and came to the Leo Baeck College to study for the rabbinate. After gaining semikhah he worked for three years at West London Synagogue before fulfilling his obligations to the World Union for Progressive Judaism by returning to the Former Soviet Union. Less than a year ago he and his wife Olga Markus, a Jewish educator, and their two young children set off for St Petersburg.

Manna asked them how things are going.

**AN OLD RUSSIAN SAYING** insists: ‘Life is full of surprises and things unexpected’. If you wait for something to happen long enough, when it does finally happen, it has very little resemblance to what you expected.

When we packed our bags to fly to London in 1996, people said to us: ‘Five years is a long time.’ Even eight years passed – and we found ourselves going to Russia.

We spent almost the entire year before our departure explaining to our friends and congregants in London that we were not really going ‘back’ and certainly not ‘back home’. We were going to St Petersburg, Russia – a place that we had visited in the past, in the country where we had briefly studied over ten years ago. We spoke the language and shared the culture – at least in the past we did – but that was just about it. Our friends in London supported us as best they could: ‘Just imagine that you are going on an adventure. It will be very different, but it is an adventure. And you do speak the language, so you’ll be okay.’ So we packed our bags, we waved goodbye to eight years of life, to friends that have become our family, to our community that had become our home and went on a journey into the great unknown.

When people ask us how we are doing, we struggle to find words to describe the change. The short answer is – we’re fine. We have a place to live, we have a community to build and sustain, we have a movement to support and, above all, we have our children to raise. We are relatively comfortable, but not free of a number of annoying things that we have to grapple with daily as a result of living in Russia and in St Petersburg in particular. It drives us crazy but we are learning to live with it. The love and support that we continue to receive from England is overwhelming and so much appreciated – letters, phone calls, visits, items of religious significance for our new community – all this makes our existence here a lot less isolated and we are eternally grateful for that.

St Petersburg is stunning. It is still in a bad state and needs lots of investment to bring it back to its former glory, but it has all the charm of a very strange and very special city.

The locals are different from the Russians we expected and we are still not sure if we are faced with a specific St Petersburg mentality or if Russia has changed so much in the past ten years. We suspect a little bit of both. People do not establish contact easily. So don’t count on a smile from a passer-by in the street, or a shop-assistant, or a security guard. It took us weeks, even months, to teach our four year old Samuel not to start conversations with people in the street - not because it is not safe, but because people really find it difficult to handle. Even little children do not know what to do with this smiley chatty little kid who asks them a million questions.

But once settled at the nursery – school begins when you are six here – Samuel made lots of friends and they run around and play happily together. Parents are also quite nice, but we still find ourselves starting the conversations with them, or coexisting in complete silence. And they say English...
people keep themselves to themselves!

My new community could not be more different from the West London Synagogue — it is a small group of people in a small, rented space, exploring together how and, more often, why they should belong to a religious Jewish community. We are making good progress — in just a year from the community’s inception we have attracted over eighty members, with some forty or so attending Kabbalat Shabbat regularly. We have some twenty-five or thirty young adults — students and professionals — who come at least once a week for a study session and Havdalah. We have different study groups, a women’s club, a musical salon and a culinary club meeting every fortnight, and our Netzer club is beginning to take shape. The community, called Sha’arei

[Sukkot with Netzer Club in our own sukkah!]

Simchat Torah

‘Bonding’ at our leadership seminar in January

Shalom, is creating a good vibe in the city and people feel happy bringing their friends to us. So far, so good.

When I came to the Leo Baeck College I objected to being referred to as a ‘Russian rabbi’ — I insisted that for my own and for everyone else’s good I wanted to be taught to be a Rabbi, not a Russian rabbi. Eight years later, I have most certainly become an English Rabbi of Belorussian origin — so being a Rabbi in Russia is a shock to the system. In the past six months I have not done a wedding, or officiated at a bar or bat mitzvah, or attended a Briss. I did officiate at a funeral once. But I have become an expert on the real estate of St Petersburg. We are currently searching for a building, following a very generous donation from one of my former congregant. I have learnt how one buys computers in Russia, personally selected every bookcase, chair, synthesizer and photocopier that we have. I have discussed the legal aspects of employing people in Russia with our lawyer, trying to understand the nuances. I have come to terms with the fact that, as a foreigner, I cannot officially be employed as a ‘Rabbi’ by my congregation, but I can readily be a ‘lecturer’ who happens to also be a ‘rabbi’.

I have learnt to settle for what we can have, even though I keep stirring up trouble by insisting that it is not good enough. Years ago, during one of his trips to Russia, Rabbi David Soetendorp of Bournemouth Reform Synagogue said he thought of writing a book about his travels in Russia, entitled ‘Don’t take anything for granted’. If he ever writes this book, I will be the first to buy it. Our current experiences, perhaps, are worthy of a book too — but I doubt that we will ever have time to write it.

One of the most striking differences between British and Russian Jewry is the total lack of lay leadership here. The people who run the major and continued on next page
minor Jewish organizations are all doing a tremendous job. Some aspects of our local Jewish community and its achievements could make many European communities jealous. Yet all these people are professionals by virtue of the fact that they are paid to do their job. And therein lies one of their biggest limitations.

One of the key aspects of my work at the moment, in addition to establishing programmes and attracting people to our community, is teaching people the value of voluntary leadership and establishing a proper Council for our synagogue. It is a foreign concept and therefore a challenge. Most people still do not earn a decent salary. To ask them to dedicate time and effort without pay is not an attractive idea. In fact, I can see how some of them would be forced to decline the honour. But I am quite adamant that the time has come to do it properly or the community will never stand on its own feet and develop out of its own desire to grow. I have seen it happen in other Progressive communities in the former Soviet Union so I know it can be done. I have seen the true, undeniable benefits of such community organization in Britain and I am adamant about bringing to Sha'arei Shalom similar standards of voluntary leadership and involvement. It will not happen tomorrow and a year from now I may be forced to admit defeat. But for now I am very hopeful and enthusiastic. I guess in my place one has to be an optimist – or pack up one's bags and leave quietly. And I am not about to do that.

Being a rabbi here is odd – I can find no better word to describe the experience. The local Jewish community is diverse, with lots of Jewish things on offer – from nurseries to Yiddish classes, concerts, exhibitions, residential seminars on every imaginable topic for all ages. Yet for a number of historical reasons, all of these things are offered in a secular environment, with the only religious option for most of the city residents being the Chabad Lubavitch synagogue and yeshiva.

So I find myself attracting congregants who appreciate the fact the we provide a full religious service on Festivals and Shabbat, as opposed to the annual celebrations of the 'Festivals of Autumn' at a Sports Arena for ten thousand people, with a huge concert by Russian pop stars, big and small.

After more than ten years of Russia's Jews being able to rediscover Judaism, most of my congregants here are still as new to it as I myself was twelve, even fourteen years ago. Yet, despite the variety of secular Jewish attractions in St. Petersburg, I have not had to ignore the rituals in order to attract people to this culturally alien idea of Jewish religious life. I still have to watch what I do and how I do it, remembering to take my flock with me. But one of the greatest fears of my first few weeks has gone – they do come to us for the real thing, and this is what we have to offer: the only religious alternative to Chabad, the new way of living Jewish life and accepting Jewish responsibility.

Is this a lonely experience? I guess so. Having a group of lay leaders gently easing the rabbi into his new position would have been more comfortable, albeit with its own challenges. But I did not come to an existing community, I came to a brand new, less-than-six-month-old one. It is tough, but it is also exciting – doing all these things personally, laying the first rows of bricks, learning to make straight walls for this new building, working with wonderful people who are slowly beginning to surround us. Doing God's work in this world is always a challenge – but the excitement of it, the importance of it and the nachas we schep from the success of what we do, makes us want to do it even more. Lo alecha ham'lacha ligmor, v'lo ata ben horin lehibatel mimenah... It is not your task to complete the work, but you have no right to desist from it.

RABBI MICHAEL FARBMAN and his wife
Olga can be contacted by email on: ravnarf@yandex.ru

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Principal: Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet, Vice Principal: Rabbi Dr Michael Shire
Q: Can you tell us a little about your background as a child.
A: I was born in Siberia, but was there for only nine months. My family were exiled there by the Soviets from Latvia, from 1940 to 1956. The Soviets took Riga before the Germans reached it and my grandfather was too rich for their liking and too supportive of Jewish settlement in Palestine. He was charged, found guilty and executed. After Stalin died we were allowed to return to Riga, where I lived until we made aliyah. My mother was born in Berlin and her family came to Riga before the Second World War. She, my father, sister and grandmother lived in a tiny apartment.

Q: How conscious of Judaism were you?
A: My mother had been to Hebrew school in Berlin so we were Jewishly aware, celebrating the festivals, going to synagogue even though it was surrounded by the KGB. We left for Israel in 1971.

Q: Was making aliya difficult for you?
A: My grandfather had been planning to go before the War. He had been to Palestine on business in 1935 to move his business there, but was too late. So the wish to go was in the family long before the War.

Q: Where did you go?
A: We were sent on ulpan near Afula, then moved to Petah Tikvah. After High School I served in the Army for seven years in Intelligence and am a Major in the Reserves.

Q: Intelligence – the Army’s idea or yours?
A: Both. I passed certain tests, became an officer and an instructor in cadet school, then went into Intelligence. Later I graduated with a Law Degree, passed exams for the Israeli Bar and established my own practice in Tel Aviv. In 1989 I was one of the first to be asked to go to the USSR as relations began to be established. I spent some months there, then returned to my Law Firm but was also legal advisor to the Prime Minister’s Office on Soviet matters.

Q: You then moved on?
A: A: No. I was in Israel from when I was a child. Of course I remember certain things. I have been back to Riga and it’s part of my history. There is no family there, but I was appointed Honorary Consul of Latvia to Israel by the Latvian President, but had to resign that post on my current appointment. They are now part of the EU and I wish them well.

Q: Did you know much about Britain?
A: Yes. I had business connections here. My basic legal education was based on English Law, so I was often quoting the House of Lords. The transition was eased by the warmth of the Jewish Community, who embraced me. We had to jump in at the deep end.

Q: Our community are very demanding on Israeli Ambassadors.
A: But it’s a privilege. Certainly time consuming, but nobody forced me!

I knew what I was coming to, a supportive community. Sometimes in Israel, even just five hours away, you don’t realize that there is a community giving of its time, energy and resources and it is really encouraging to discover this.

Q: What knowledge do you have of Progressive Judaism?
A: I have friends in many different Jewish Movements at home. Here the Reform Movement under Rabbi Bayfield is very important for us, not least because of its contacts with non-Jewish organizations and NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations). The Reform Movement is in the forefront of this. Sir Sigmund Sternberg is a unique example of dedication and determination in this task. I admire his activities and especially his energy. I’ve been to his synagogue with him.

Q: How are your family settling in here?
A: Five of our seven children are here with me and my wife Sigalia - a ninth generation Israeli. They are the real heroes of this story. For my wife and me it was easy - we are fully engaged meeting people, but they had to move at a critical age from their schools and friends.

Q: Do you miss anything about Latvia?
A: No. I was in Israel from when I was a child. Of course I remember certain things. I have been back to Riga and it’s part of my history. There is no family there, but I was appointed Honorary Consul of Latvia to Israel by the Latvian President, but had to resign that post on my current appointment. They are now part of the EU and I wish them well.

Q: Would you care to name a favourite author, song or film?
A: No! They are mostly Israeli, but as a Diplomat perhaps I should say that I like all of them.

BARRY HYMAN, who left Marks & Spencer at the right time, is a former RSGB PR Officer, veteran Newsletter editor and compulsive writer of letters to the press.
Best wishes from

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ELICA COOKER HOODS
AROUND THE WORLD IN TWENTY-SIX DAYS

WHEN I WAS CHAIRMAN of RSGB I quickly learned the importance of visiting congregations, getting to know members in their own synagogues and homes in order to understand their strengths and weaknesses as a community. No written reports, however clear, or discussions at meetings, no matter how frank and open, can explain a situation as well as an hour with the rabbi and members in their own building. The journeys for me were relatively painless, mostly by car, usually there and back in one day, although I never understood why it was necessary to build the M6 under a perpetual rain storm. There were also necessary to build the M6 under a perpetual rain storm. There were also several flights to Glasgow, trains to Cardiff and always a welcoming face at the end of the journey.

Now as President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) the principle remains the same but the membership is more than one and a half million and the congregations are in forty countries on five continents. And the members speak many different languages, but the magic in visiting them is to find that they not only share common liturgy, perhaps presented differently, but they also sing the same tunes. Erev Shabbat sounds the same in Sydney, Cape Town, Moscow, Paris, Hong Kong, and even in Bombay. In addition they all continue the Jewish mission of ensuring that the world is not overrun by chickens – but the Shabbat chicken sure tastes different in Bombay.

Some time ago, I committed to holding a Governing Body meeting in Australia in recognition of their outstanding contribution to our work, both financial and in terms of leadership commitment. The membership in Australia and New Zealand raises, through their UIA campaign, many times more per capita in support of the programmes of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) than any other movement in the world. Their donations are vital in enabling our Israeli movement to play an important role in the successful absorption of immigrants into Israeli society. So it was agreed that a group from around the world would be in Australia to join their own AGM and to hold a WUPJ Governing Body meeting.

Rabbi Joel Oseran, the WUPJ Associate Director responsible for overseas development, said we really must stop in Bombay to visit our congregation there and, after all, it is an hour with the rabbi and members in their own synagogues and homes in order to understand their members in their own synagogues and homes in order to understand their needs. There were several flights to Glasgow and London before heading west to Bombay the following day. We spent a productive week in New York before the Awards Dinner in September and spending time with our son, David, who lives there. The dinner was a financial and social success and the WUPJ programmes in the Former Soviet Union received a much needed injection of funding.

Support for the development of Progressive Judaism in Israel and the Former Soviet Union are the highest priorities for WUPJ and are therefore top of the list for fundraising purposes. But there are many other countries in the world, in Europe, South Africa, South America, where so much more could be achieved if we had the money to pay rabbis, teachers, administrative staff and materials. But our staff is small in number but large in energy and dedicated to their task, and volunteers around the world contribute enormously. Movements which are rich in resource material share generously, and rabbis volunteer their services wherever they can.

Next came a seventeen hour flight from New York to Hong Kong where we had a welcome, twenty hour, overnight stop. We had been in Hong Kong before but one can never get used to the volume of people and the keen salesmanship of the shopkeepers who hang around on the pavement to invite or coerce one inside.

We took off again and landed in Bombay which was as crowded, dirty, and noisy as I feared. The hustlers in the streets make those in Hong Kong look like amateurs. There is always someone at your elbow offering to take you to whatever store you need. There are always two or three people to do every task. And bundles of people sleeping on every flat surface, not just on the pavement outside the tiny shacks they call home, but literally every flat surface throughout the city and along the route to and from the airport.

We stayed at the Taj Mahal hotel, an oasis and time warp from the Raj – wonderful rooms and service with an armed army guard patrolling on every floor, two people to do even the simplest task, wonderful shops and restaurants.

Our congregation members are Bnei Israel whose history states that they were shipwrecked some time in the early centuries CE on the coast of India just south of Bombay, and who give thanks on every occasion to Elijah who rescued them from the storm and permitted them to land safely. I had met some of them before and they are very dedicated and charming. But given the reduction in the Jewish population in India, a diminishing community. Rodef Shalom is one of the oldest affiliates of WUPJ, established in 1925 and represented at the first WUPJ international Convention in Berlin in 1928.

They were wonderful hosts who were thrilled by our visit, and they have...
members in many important positions. We visited the Times of India where a member is an editor who gave us a fascinating presentation. He also brought in other correspondents, one impressive young female correspondent who told us something of her own journey from a small village far from Bombay and answered many of our questions about Indian society. We were then taken to a famous vegetarian restaurant for lunch, served in the traditional manner – everyone had their own metal, galleried, tray into which the waiter put a succession of little dishes intended to be eaten with a naan and fingers. Luckily I sat next to a colleague who loves very spicy food and she was my taster who warned me what to avoid.

We travelled from place to place in a minibus that had air-conditioning which constantly broke down. We concluded that it could never run for more than half an hour. The driver always said it would be fixed for the next journey but that fixing lasted for the anticipated half hour. Bombay was celebrating Diwali which meant constant fire works, beautiful, very colourful decorations on almost any available floor space, and henna designs on people’s arms and hands – maybe also on other hidden places.

The saving grace as far as the volume of people, the dirt, and the dire poverty, was that the people themselves are gentle and good natured – they drive terribly and constantly bump into each other but no one complains. The big night of the festival saw tens of thousands of people along the sea front and outside our hotel which was just behind the famous Gates of India arch, but there was no crowd control or security but also no arguments or fights.

One night we were guests at the famous Bombay Gymkhana Club – more evidence of the Raj, except the members and guests of the vast country club, bar and restaurant, which doubtless never permitted an Indian to enter except as a servant, was now almost exclusively populated by Indians. We were the ones that stood out as aliens.

We had Friday night with the congregation with a traditional Bnei Israel dinner that was nothing like any Shabbat dinner we know. Many families came, all the women in saris, mostly worn with trainers. There were lots of children, all beautifully behaved. There was also total equality between the sexes with plenty of capable, educated, and tough women who play a full role in running the organization, producing the newsletter, handling the accounts. We were given great honour and enjoyed a warm, often emotional, evening. They were thrilled to have services conducted by three rabbis. There was even time to discuss their accommodation problems.

In Melbourne, our next stop, we spent two days. We were given a tour of the Jewish Museum and after lunch in Temple Beit Israel we spent time viewing their amazing stained glass ‘windows’ – not the usual window but rather larger medallions hung in front of each window which gives a special effect. They are an artistic wonder.

In the evening we joined a dedication at the King David School in anticipation of finalizing a magnificent new building that will eventually house the top classes of the school. The sad note in this ceremony was the news that the principal donor, Issadore Magid had died as we were en route.

We flew on to spend six days in Sydney, a lovely city, where we participated in the Movement’s annual conference.

A reduced group continued to Perth – as far from Sydney as Tel Aviv is from London. Like every city in Australia, Perth has a long, beautiful, waterfront of which the population takes full advantage. At a meeting in the synagogue we met an old friend, Cheryl Mariner, who now lives in Perth, and she invited us to dinner in her lovely home on our last evening to meet her father and her husband.

I worked out that we had spent eighty hours flying, and many more hours waiting in airports. If one has to spend unreasonable time in an airport, then Hong Kong’s new airport is the one to choose.

It took some days for the body to reconnect with the head and then time checking promises given and promises received, in New York, Bombay, Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth, that had to be redeemed and acknowledged. The longest journey in the immediate future will be to the office in Jerusalem and back.

RUTH COHEN is a past chairman of the North Western Reform Synagogue in London, where most of her family are still members. She was chairman of RSGB and subsequently chairman of the European Region of WUPJ before becoming President of WUPJ. Ruth and Harvey made aliyah in 1999 and now live in Herzlia Pituach. The WUPJ website is www.wupj.org
WHAT A JEWISH WEDDING HAS IN COMMON WITH THAT OF CHARLES AND CAMILLA

Michael Hilton

THE JEWISH LIFE CYCLE RITES OF PASSAGE FROM BIBLICAL TO MODERN TIMES
by Ivan G. Marcus

BOUND BY THE BIBLE JEWS, CHRISTIANS AND THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC
by Edward Kessler

A DAY OF GLADNESS THE SABBATH AMONG JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN ANTIQUITY
by Herold Weiss

I WAS INVITED TO WRITE contributions to a new Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations last year - 500 words each on bar mitzvah, on mourning, on marriage, each to be viewed from an interfaith standpoint. My task would have been easier if I had been granted a preview of The Jewish Life Cycle by Ivan Marcus. The author is a specialist in medieval Jewish history and so is able to chart a path through the obscure origin of many aspects of Jewish life today: wedding rings, chuppah, Kaddish, bar mitzvah speeches and much else. Our popular ceremony of bar mitzvah did not have its origin at one definable date but grew little by little through many centuries into the ceremony and celebration as we now know it.

How it all started should be of great importance to Reform Jews. For we do not imagine that the whole of modern Jewish ritual was born in a moment. A clear understanding of the cultural influences which have shaped our ceremonies can enable us to adapt rituals in ways that are meaningful for our own time with its own cultural influences.

Small details can be fascinating. It is recorded in the Babylonian Talmud that burnt ashes were placed on the forehead of a bridegroom, as a reminder of the destruction of Jerusalem, in the exact spot where he placed his tefillin. This custom died out in mediaeval Europe because most Jewish men did not bother with tefillin. Observant and less observant ages require different rituals. The destruction of Jerusalem came to be remembered instead by breaking a glass, and this ritual has survived.

So as old customs died out, new ones arose. Marcus documents the modern ultra-Orthodox innovation of combining a boy's first haircut with his formal introduction to Jewish education. More significantly for MANNA readers, around 1600 it is first recorded that a wedding ceremony took place under a tallith or canopy called a chuppah. Earlier the word was used for the place the marriage was consummated. The change reflects a growing view that marriage had become a public event. A similar change later took place in England. Because of the number of clandestine marriages in the eighteenth century strict laws were introduced in 1754 to make sure marriages took place in public. This has affected even Charles and Camilla, who could not marry in Windsor Castle without the venue being licensed for other public civil ceremonies.

And so the next stage of research into the Jewish life cycle will have to enquire even more fully into the outside cultural influences which led to changes. Much remains obscure, including many of the changes surrounding bar mitzvah. Marcus demonstrates here and in an earlier book how changes in education practice led to celebrating the end rather than the beginning of a boy's Jewish education, but it remains a mystery why bar mitzvah should have outgrown in importance and popularity the adolescence ceremonies of surrounding cultures.

I have only one quibble with Marcus' book. He overestimates the American influence on the origin of bat mitzvah and tombstone unveilings, stone-setting ceremonies, which he believes are twentieth century American innovations. There is evidence that they both began in Europe, and possibly earlier.

I write well under pressure. Ten years have passed since I wrote my own book, The Christian Effect on Jewish Life. My writing time was limited to a six month sabbatical in the Caribbean. Not having the internet or many resources, I was naturally worried that readers would find many omissions or mistakes. But it did not happen. There were those who disagreed with the whole idea of a book about Christian influences on Judaism.
Weiss. A Day of Gladness: The Jewish Shavuot and the Christian parallel festivals of revelation - the MANNA SPRING 2005 had already been made by the that? The link between Sinai and the Christian understanding of revelation What could be more significant than revelation at Sinai -see Exodus 19:16. misses that broader canvas. One of the other `third-day' events was the important and this book sometimes Kessler’s research has uncovered early dialogue between Jews and Christians arguments that `the third day' was not had been swayed by the rabbinic criteria are set up to prove when there has been an `exegetical encounter', meaning when the Jewish or Christian scholar is responding to a claim made by the other. There were many such encounters. Christian-Jewish dialogue is nothing new. One example will illustrate both the fruitfulness and the problems of Kessler’s approach. Abraham and Isaac completed their journey ‘on the third day’ (Genesis 22:4). For Christians who saw Isaac’s sacrifice as prefiguring that of Jesus, the third day is highly significant, as their creed states: ‘He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again.’ The rabbis responded by pointing out that many other biblical events occurred ‘on the third day’. So the significance is downplayed. Kessler suggests that the Church father Origen failed to link the ‘third day’ in the Abraham story to Christ, because he had been swayed by the rabbinic arguments that ‘the third day’ was not specially significant. By focusing on one brief story, Kessler’s research has uncovered early dialogue between Jews and Christians which otherwise we would not have known. But the wider picture is also important and this book sometimes misses that broader canvas. One of the other ‘third-day’ events was the revelation at Sinai – see Exodus 19:16. What could be more significant than that? The link between Sinai and the Christian understanding of revelation had already been made by the importance attached to the twin and parallel festivals of revelation – the Jewish Shavuot and the Christian Pentecost. The third book on my desk, Herold Weiss’ A Day of Gladness: The Sabbath among Jewish and Christians in Antiquity is hard going for a Jewish reader. Our ideas of Shabbat are shaped by the Talmudic regulations and other aspects of rabbinic Judaism. Weiss shows little interest in this. He takes us through the Sabbath in the book of Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus and the Christian Scriptures. The book has no overall argument – it is a collection of previously published essays. So this is not really a book for a Jewish readership. Our discussions on Shabbat centre on biblical and rabbinic texts. Neither of these is of great interest to Herold Weiss. His book managed to irritate me on the very first page, by building his history of Shabbat on an assumption that the Deuteronomy version of the Ten Commandments is older than that of Exodus. The difference is intriguing because Deuteronomy bids us rest because when we were slaves in Egypt we had no chance to rest, while Exodus bids us imitate God who made the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Deuteronomy gives us the human being as an economic animal, while Exodus demands that we be in tune with the natural world. A moment’s reflection shows us that the reason given in Deuteronomy cannot be the older one, because it offers us no reason why the day of rest should come once in every seven. Unless you believe the whole Torah was written backwards, it makes no sense. So all these books have their mistakes. Yet each of them pushes forward the boundaries of what we know about that particular field. For centuries, Jews have studied Jewish history and Christians their own history. Nobody explored the history of the relations between our faiths. At last, that history is being uncovered. And a fascinating tale it is. Dialogue, debate and polemic going back two thousand years. It is often said that in our secular world, our two faiths need each other. The truth is that we have always needed each other. The rich tapestry of our Jewish life and culture has only come through our interaction with other peoples and faiths. ■ RABBI DR MICHAEL HILTON is the rabbi of Kol Chai Hatch End Jewish Community. Author of The Gospels and Rabbinic Judaism and The Christian Effect on Jewish Life, Rabbi Hilton was one of the signatories of the Jewish Christian Muslim Platform recently published in MANNA.

QUEEN ANNE’S BOUNTY

is no more, for this fund established by Queen Anne in 1704 for the relief of the poorer clergy of the Church of England was merged with the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1948 to form the Church Commissioners. But the street which proudly bears her name lives on, vigorously. There are accountants, architects, solicitors, and surveyors all practising their professions, all anxious to serve their clients and to maintain the high standards which have come to be associated with this well-preserved, dignified part of Georgian London. We have practised here since 1951, offering clients business management, investment guidance and specialised tax advice, in addition to the more conventional accounting and auditing services. As the years go by the scope of our work widens, and the calls for our professional help increase, reflecting the fiscal and commercial complexities of the times: but the results remain mutually rewarding.

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TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

I remember intense discussions in my youth group days about the situation in South Africa. It was in the aftermath of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre when South African police shot dead some eighty demonstrators, wounding many more. Apartheid was in full stride, increasingly oppressive and restrictive. Perhaps the worst part for an observer was that it seemed invincible, its hold on the black population complete and total. The only way it could possibly end, we thought, would be with some sort of bloodbath. The blacks would reach such a level of anger, pain and despair that they would rise up against the whites, massacring them all. Hardly a pleasing prospect, but nobody seemed able to envisage any other way out. That it would happen didn't seem to be in doubt; the only question was 'when would it happen?'

One of the amazing things, therefore, about the collapse of apartheid thirty years later, was that it did not end like that. In very large measure this was due to the statesmanship of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu and the influence they brought to bear on others - both white and black. They displayed a breadth of spirit which enabled them to reject bitterness and revenge as their guiding principle, even after a lifetime of apartheid and all that it had stood for and meant in their lives.

They knew that the blacks would not accept a non-violent handover of power if the whites did not acknowledge what they had done under apartheid. But they were also politically astute and 'savvy' enough to know that the whites would resist any handover of power, at every step of the way, if they thought they were going to be subject to Nuremberg-style war crimes trials.

The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was, therefore, a brilliant medium by which to resolve that apparently irresolvable paradox, satisfying both sections of the population, while at the same time, leaving both with a - maybe even necessary? - level of dissatisfaction.

The end of apartheid meant the end of a 'civil war' in all but name alone. Victims and perpetrators might well come face to face with each other on the street, in a supermarket checkout or a cinema queue. They would have to evolve a very different relationship as they participated in the building of a different South Africa. The question facing the new South African leadership was going to be how to manage that new relationship?

Extremely bitter enemies do find ways to live together: Poles and Germans, Germans and French after the Second World War, Israel and Germany from the early 1950s. While it has obviously not been without its problematic dimensions, when it has worked, it has been, on the whole, because those involved have chosen to draw some sort of line under their shared past rather than dwell on it. Maybe it is easier when you do not inhabit the same patch of land, and share such a long common history and experience?

Perhaps the real questions with which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had to grapple were something like, 'what do you do with memory?' 'What does "justice" mean in these circumstances?'

South Africa had a number of potential models to follow. The Nuremberg Trials provided one: put the main perpetrators, the leadership, the prime instigators on trial. After due legal process, punish the guilty ones with death sentences or imprisonment. Lower degrees and 'levels' of perpetrator would need to go through some process of 'denazification'. It meant that until the 1960s, German school history textbooks could devote just a few lines to the war, to that nasty man Adolf Hitler and the nasty things he had done to others. In the event, other considerations soon got in the way of any thorough or long-term Trial procedure: the Cold War and shifting alliances in Europe; the need for the expertise of scientists, wherever they came from, in the nuclear arms race and so on.

After 1945, France followed a slightly different path. Here, too, they took their major wartime leaders - Laval, Pétain and so on - put them on trial, punished them, and then felt able to say: 'we have dealt with the past, and now we can move on.' In addition, having been an occupied country, it was possible to say and believe that all the terrible things had been done by an invader from the outside, not one's country-men and women. It became relatively easy for everybody to subscribe to the collective mythology that those few - 'and, of course, it was only a few...' - who had collaborated...
with the Germans or the Vichy Government had been dealt with in the late 1940s. The rest—‘and, of course, it was the overwhelming majority…’—of the French population had all somehow been in the Resistance. Only in the late 1960s did the truer, more nuanced, and more painful, picture begin to emerge. Marcel Ophuls’ masterly 1969 documentary Le Chagrin et la Pitié (The Sorrow and the Pity), for example, was one of the earliest exposes of the lie behind the collective myth. Even now, more than sixty years after the events, and in a new century, the Occupation remains a shameful, explosive and divisive issue in French society.

After 1945—and more or less through to the present day—Japan followed the path of outright denial. It used the destruction wrought by the Allies at Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a ‘reason’ for not needing to confront their war record. The appalling treatment of POWs, for example, the rape of Nanking in 1938 or the use of captured women as ‘comfort women’ and so on, have gone virtually unacknowledged by successive Japanese governments.

East Germany provided yet another model. The Stasi, the secret police, enlisted hundreds of thousands of ordinary Germans as informers and collaborators, all spying on each other. With the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the Stasi files were more or less thrown open. People were now able to get some sense of why what had happened to them during the Communist era had happened. Some shameful things emerged: parents and children had informed on each other, as had husbands and wives. Friends, neighbours and colleagues proved not to have been such good friends, neighbours and colleagues after all. In terms of its Nazi past, East Germany consistently claimed that it had purged itself of all Nazis and if there were any still around, they were all in West Germany.

Trials of perpetrators in the Yugoslavian civil war are taking place in the Hague and last year was the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. The same questions come up again and again: what do you do with those who commit atrocities against other populations or their own? How can victims and perpetrators find a way of living together?

In Northern Ireland, there seems to have been little attempt to confront the past. The recent killing of Robert McCartney, the subsequent admission of the IRA that they did it and their cold-blooded offer to shoot McCartney’s killers, have opened up many wounds which had barely begun to cicatrize. Denial, papering-over cracks and the like, had been the preferred path if it seemed to lead to some longer-term, over-arching end which could be argued to have justified the means. The Northern Bank robbery and the McCartney killing have exposed the bankruptcy of that way of thinking. People have been forced to ask some hard questions about their common past and prospects for a shared future.

As Israelis and Palestinians move, hopefully, towards some way of living together in peace, questions about what constitutes ‘history’ and ‘memory’ in that region since the 1930s, or even earlier, will need some sort of response. The past cannot simply be forgotten. Everybody has lived for so long with two very different readings of their common history. Unravelling rights and wrongs, establishing justices and injustices will be an incredibly difficult process.

Might the model of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission play some part in the eventual resolution and normalization of Israeli-Palestinian relations, helping two damaged and pained peoples move into a shared and peaceful future?

A slogan on one of the banners of the mothers of the desaparecidos—disappeared ones—in Buenos Aires read, ‘a people without memory has no future’. Or as one Australian Aboriginal poet put it, lamenting the virtual destruction of her people, ‘Let no one say the past is dead; the past is all about us and within.’ Post-Shoah, we Jews know just how much the past is, indeed, in us and all about us.

In South Africa, people like Mandela and Tutu, with a few of the white population, managed to create a structure whereby memory was honoured, but which didn’t simply replicate the Nuremberg Trials. Enormous secrecy had obviously surrounded so much of what had gone on in the Apartheid years. People didn’t know what had happened to loved ones. Post-Shoah, we know how difficult it is to move beyond mourning and grieving. If you have never been able to stand at a graveside and say Kaddish, or have no date on which to light a yahrzeit candle, there is no closure.

‘Forgiveness,’ explained Desmond Tutu, ‘does not mean condoning what has been done. It means taking what has happened seriously and not minimizing it; drawing out the sting in the memory that threatens to poison our entire existence.’ He laments the fact that so many whites denied any sense of guilt. ‘Those who do not consciously acknowledge any sense of guilt are in a way worse off than those who do. Apart from the hurt it causes to those who suffered, the denial by so many white South Africans even that they benefited from apartheid is a crippling, self-inflicted blow to their capacity to enjoy the fruits of change... When we look at some of the conflict areas of the world, it becomes increasingly clear that there is not much of a future for them without forgiveness, without reconciliation.’ Mahatma Gandhi taught that forgiveness is an attribute of the strong; the weak find it very difficult to forgive, perhaps because they are so disabled by, consumed with, their pain. Forgiveness does not, of course, mean forgetting. Indeed, the very model of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission is posited, precisely, on the argument that the truth about what went on must emerge, must be brought into the light from the shadows and darkness where it has been hidden for too long, and acknowledged.

Do Jewish sources have anything to teach which might be of guidance to us in this area?

Many Biblical injunctions counsel how we should relate to our enemies: ‘You shall not hate your brother in your heart...love your neighbour as you love yourself: I am the Eternal’, ‘You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is yourkinsman. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land.’ ‘Do not rejoice when your enemy falls and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles...do not say “as he has done to me, so will I do to him.” ’

Despite what our detractors often claim, Judaism has never understood the lex talionis—‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth’—in a literal way. Nigh on two thousand years ago it defined compensation as the key principle: not ‘an eye for an eye’ but ‘the value of an eye for an eye’. Judaism developed sophisticated laws of compensation for dealing with the unwitting damage done by one person to another.

In our sources, Moses’ brother, Aaron, has acquired the reputation of being peacemaker and conciliator. Building on this, a Midrash relates what Aaron would do when two men quarrelled. He would go to one of them...
happened. `He's beating his breast in
clothes in grief. He's really sorry about
manipulation of the
would embrace each other and kiss.'7

Was Aaron lying? Manipulation of the

When the two would finally
concludes the Midrash, "they
the victims and some of the families of

It is not surprising that not all South
Africans were overjoyed with the way
the Truth and Reconciliation
Commission functioned. If the crimes
committed under apartheid had to
come out of the shadows, so too did
the perpetrators of those crimes. Some of
them and some of the families of

The question, "what do we do with
the record, however unpalatable, must be
made clear whatever the
circumstances. There can be no
tampering with the truth. Memory is
hard enough to grasp at the best of
times; anything which obscures rather
than illuminates, must be held in
suspicion.

But without that truth, without
people telling their stories, everybody
in a conflict knowing something of
both the factual and emotional truth,
there is little chance for true peace ever
to become a reality.

Alex Boraine, Deputy Chairperson
of the Truth and Reconciliation
Commission, wrote of the difficulties of
establishing the truth, struggling with "what is truth?" at different levels.
There is the factual or forensic truth;
personal or narrative truth; social truth
and a healing or restorative truth." 12

I recently saw again an episode of
Timewatch, the TV history series,
titled 'Children of the Third Reich'.
It focused on the work of Israeli
psychologist Dan Bar-On in 1993, who
brought together the children of high-
level Nazis and the children of Camp
survivors for a week-long meeting in
Israel. Significantly, it took place at
Neve Shalom – the village dedicated to
fostering dialogue and reconciliation
between Israelis and Arabs. Those
children were all, by then, in their
fifties, a few even older. But in terms of
their childhood experience, they
remained, hardly surprisingly, the
children of their parents – marked
forever and indelibly by their parents'

Was a human rights
violation committed by
a black African
fighting for freedom
'less,' in some way,
than an act of brutality
committed by a South
African policeman?

enough to help people move beyond
the pain and anguish that suffuses a
victim who has suffered solely because
of their religion, race, nationality,
sexual orientation or whatever. While
Ben Azzi, a first century teacher,
suggests that the highest form of
strength is to control one's passions8,
his contemporary Ben Zoma suggests
that making one's enemy into one's
friend is an even higher manifestation
of strength, a more worthy virtue for
which to strive.

In the conflict between Israeli and
Palestinians, of course, who is 'victim,'
who 'perpetrator' is not always clear-
cut and easy to define.

The question, 'what do we do with
memory?' begins to transmute into:
'what do you do with the "mythology"
on which you grew up, the things you
believe about yourself which have
guided and nourished you, provided
you with a sense of your identity and
therefore the identity of the "other".'9

One observer of the Truth and
Reconciliation process said that 'it
enabled the citizens of South Africa
to begin to understand why people
participated in such grotesque actions
and what must be done to prevent such
tings from happening again.... for the
Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

and tell him how much the other was
full of contrition about what had
happened. 'He's beating his breast in
anguish,' he would say, 'tearing his
clothes in grief. He's really sorry about
the
victims who has suffered solely because

practice which naturally falls short of

justice is about uncovering what really
happened, about establishing reality in
all its conflicting perspectives. This
essential form of justice would not
have been found in the work of
adversarial court cases, but required an
amnesty process.10

It cannot be simply about forgetting.
One thousand five hundred years ago,
Rabbi Elazar argued provocatively and
paradoxically that whoever shows
herself merciful in circumstances
where they should have been pitiless,
in the end becomes pitiless in
circumstances where they should have
been merciful.10 Caesar Aronsfeld
wrote in the 1990s, that 'we like to
judge ourselves by our ideals, which
are never translated into practice;
wheras others are judged by their
practice which naturally falls short of
their ideals.' In any truth and
reconciliation work (whether with a
small or large 't' and 'r') we somehow
need to hold on to the reality of what
both Elazar and Aronsfeld are saying.

The Truth and Reconciliation
Commission worked because people
were able to tell their stories, what they
experienced, even the perpetrators. Of
course the latter were the 'guilty' ones;
yet they, too, had of course been
brutalized by apartheid, albeit in a very
different way from the actual victims.
And while there was a factual truth
that needed to be made public, the
emotional truth of what people
experienced also needed to be heard.
The establishment of the Truth and
Reconciliation Commission
recognized that this was the only way
South Africa could have moved
forwards without an actual civil war
breaking out.

In such a process, there can be few
winners or losers. Indeed, the very
vocabulary of 'win' and 'lose' scarcely
reflects the appropriate mind-set which
might help two peoples as they grope
towards a shared existence. The Truth
and Reconciliation Commission model
recognizes that, on the one hand, all
members of society lose if society
remains in victim-perpetrator mode;
but, on the other hand, it also knows
that society cannot move on while
injustices perpetrated remain ignored
and unacknowledged.

Wherever such things occur, the
record, however unpalatable, must be
made clear whatever the
circumstances. There can be no
tampering with the truth. Memory is
hard enough to grasp at the best of
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children of their parents – marked
forever and indelibly by their parents'
unique experience. It was an extremely painful meeting for many of them, and for the viewer. Some of the children of Nazis explained how they learned that their fathers were to be executed for what they had done. They had somehow had to reconcile the discovery that the man who had played with them, as any father plays with his

Nobody can be required to grant forgiveness. It is only the individual victim who can forgive the perpetrator — or not — and no ‘third party’ has the right to make any demand of the victim. Nor, in Jewish teaching, can anybody other than the victim forgive the perpetrator. If the victim is no longer alive, the perpetrator has to live with that deed and nobody can be a surrogate ‘forgiver’.

child, was also the man who had done the most appalling things to others, to people like the parents of those with whom they were now living for a week. Bar-On spoke of the need for a ‘common agenda to evolve beyond the broader frame. If that is ignored, then these are tough questions with which to be confronted.

Lawyers speak of two types, at least, of justice: retributive and restorative. The question is often put in a polarizing way: is the function of the legal system to indict and punish perpetrators or is it about working towards a society where the perpetrators don’t feel the need to do such things? The question does polarize but maybe retributive and restorative cannot coexist but require a choice. Those who committed gross and terrible things with State sanction in South Africa, or wherever we focus our attention, don’t do so in isolation. There is always a broader context. To understand is neither to condone nor to forgive — but it is to see things in that broader frame. If that is ignored, then the chances of a repetition of that aggression and injustice are multiplied.

The philosopher Hannah Arendt wrote that ‘the possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility — of being unable to undo what one has done though one did not and could not have known what he was doing — is the faculty of forgiving.’

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things: by truth, justice and peace. But a harmonious coexistence between truth and justice is easier achieved in thought than in reality. When dealing with conflict, between individuals and even more so between peoples, remembering and forgetting are necessary. Total amnesia would be unjust to the victims of injustice; total recall would be ultimately disabling because no progress is possible.

‘Some South Africans,’ wrote Alex Boraine, ‘argued very strenuously for amnesia, but the overwhelming majority were anxious to come to terms with our past and then to move on. We accepted that it was necessary to turn the page of history but first we needed to read that page.”

This is the balance which Israelis and Palestinians must seek — and hopefully find — as they move into a more hopeful part of their history and begin to develop their particular reconciliation process. That process is about reconciling two rights, not about redressing ancient wrongs and injustices. May it be a journey on which all who are engaged find peace and comfort.

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WHY OUR PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE UNIQUE

Helena Miller and Maurice Michaels

WHY ARE THERE THREE Jewish primary schools on a desert island? Of four shipwrecked families, the Cohens attend school one, the Greens go to school two and the Bergs join school three. Each school has a different ethos but the Levys cannot get in to any of them because they do not fit the admissions criteria. A cruel re-writing of an old Jewish joke, but utterly pertinent.

All schools, Jewish and non-Jewish, have an ethos. The three primary schools under the auspices of the Jewish Community Day School Advisory Board (JCDSAB), Akiva, Clore Shalom and Clore Tikva, have been grappling with questions of ethos. These concern the inclusive, pluralist nature of themselves as Jewish religious institutions, and attempt to define exactly what each means in practice. Each school has defined itself differently. Each uses different terminology, and sometimes within each school, varying terms are used at different times. But there are many issues on which our schools have a common understanding and share one ethos for the Jewish education of children in our communities.

All three schools are pluralist in their intake of pupils, which means they admit pupils from across the religious spectrum. Each school welcomes families from the Orthodox, Masorti, Reform and Liberal communities as well as families who have no synagogue affiliation. The published admissions criteria state that any child accepted as Jewish by any of the synagogal bodies can apply to enter. They welcome teachers from across the Jewish spectrum and our commitment to pluralism is also reflected in the make up of our Boards of Governors. On paper, and in practice, the population in each school reflects a wide range.

Each school has an ethos that embraces each family. Teachers encourage every child to respect diversity in Jewish background and practice through discussion and acceptance of differences, and of choice within Judaism. Inclusivity means that there is no value judgment on variations in our pupils’ expression of Judaism within their own homes and families. We understand that each family is in the process of undertaking their own Jewish journey as their child progresses from reception class to year six. Each journey may take a different route. That is fine. In each school, each individual journey is bound up with the collective journey of being part of a school community. That provides context, values and direction. We know that this will not happen implicitly or by osmosis. The families in each school are encouraged to explore and embrace Jewish practice, by being given opportunities to learn and celebrate together. Families attend workshops to learn how to celebrate Shabbat at home, Shabbatonim take place to show pupils and their families possibilities for deepening and extending their relationship with Shabbat. Links are made with local synagogues, working with them to involve our families in community life, as well as involving the synagogues in school life. Clore Tikva, for example, has run several highly successful festival workshops in collaboration with local Reform and Liberal synagogues. We expect that parents who choose to send their children to our schools accept this ethos. It is an inherent condition of their application.

Teaching in each school is a celebration of Judaism across k’lal Yisra’el. We are not dogmatic or fundamentalist in our teaching and the Jewish experience of each child is acknowledged and respected in our teaching of practice. We follow the continued on next page
ancient Jewish practice of allowing for many interpretations of text and practice. We believe that the text represents varied understandings by our ancestors of God and Jewish life. Many of these are relevant to us today. And we certainly teach mitzvot – but not as an absolute list closed to interpretation and development. We discuss, for example, that in some streams of Judaism, Shavuot is observed as a one day festival, and in some it is observed for two days. We examine the background and reasons for these differences. Most importantly, we look at what brings us together in our celebration of the concepts and practices of the festival. We understand that there is diversity within Judaism and we celebrate this and try to find a language that is common to all of us, whilst appreciating that there are also differences. Each school has an independent Jewish Studies and Hebrew curriculum, devised internally. Clore Shalom has, in addition, undertaken a huge Jewish Studies curriculum writing project over the past five years and all three schools will benefit from the outcome of this project. The LBC-CJE Department of Education and Professional Development brings together the Senior Management and school staff teams of all three schools regularly to explore aspects of curriculum and development. Recently, a collaboration between LBC-CJE and the Lokey Institute, Leo Baeck School, Haifa, enabled Hebrew teachers to spend
three intense days developing principles for Hebrew curriculum development.

A love for, and engagement with Israel, the Land and the People, is an integral part of the ethos and practice of all three schools. The year six Akiva Israel trip is the culmination for those children of a deepening relationship with this aspect of their heritage and identity. The children become part of the family of Israel through their links with the programmes in which they participate while in the state of Israel. They also become part of the family of Progressive Judaism in Israel, making links with the Kol Haneshama community in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, back at school in England, Israel permeates much of what takes place in all three schools. We also recognize that not everything that takes place in Israel, nor by Jews worldwide, is consistent with the Jewish values we espouse and encourage. We are able to be truly supportive, without ignoring the unacceptable.

The ethos in our schools does not imply a wishy-washy vision or a vague, ever changing curriculum. We start from the premise that our schools are religious, Zionist institutions. While we are fully accepting of difference, families whose children come to us as pupils know what the schools' intentions are in terms of Jewish Education. Jewish values and practice permeate every aspect of the schools. All pupils are exposed to a thorough Jewish and Hebrew curriculum. We hope that this strong foundation will provide a meaningful basis from which our pupils can grow, helping them to work out the principles and practices to develop through their Jewish lives.

Our schools also make choices within our ethos of pluralism and inclusivity. All three schools have decided to approach Jewish education from an egalitarian standpoint, and in that way embrace one of the enduring principles of Progressive Judaism. Each has adopted a kashrut policy that enables every child and adult in the school to feel comfortable. All three schools follow Reform practice of the numbers of days of public observance of each festival. All three schools understand that in order to enable our pupils to be fully part of wider society they must learn about others and so all three schools include world faiths in religious education as well as teaching Jewish Studies and Hebrew. Our schools also make public decisions in terms of admissions, teaching and opportunities offered to the school community. Even so, the private decisions of our staff, pupils and their families are all equally acknowledged and supported.

All three schools also have distinct characteristics and these are woven into the fabric of school life. Each school describes and conducts itself slightly differently within the boundaries expressed here. What matters is that within each school, time is given regularly to think about the vision and to ensure that everyone engaged in the school community has the opportunity to explore the values that we espouse. In January this year, every teacher and assistant in all three schools was asked to think about, and complete questionnaires relating to the Jewish values and visions of their school. The results of this survey formed the basis of an in-service training day for the staff teams of all three schools. The teams worked on an action plan to develop the Jewish values and ethos in each school. Time was set aside both to explore shared ethos in groups encompassing teachers from all three schools, and also for continued on next page
each school team to work separately on their particular response.

None of the words ‘pluralist’, ‘inclusive’ or ‘progressive’ do justice to what our three schools are trying to achieve. The reason is that we are doing something new and groundbreaking. In the UK, there are no other Jewish schools wholeheartedly committed to welcoming families from across the spectrum of Judaism, committed to embracing each journey as valid and important, and able to reflect these principles in their teaching. Our schools are distinct, with much that is not only shared, but also unique in Jewish Education.

So we return to our shipwrecked families on their desert island. If one of those three schools was one of ours, all four families would find it a comfortable and exciting place to be. But what would we do with the empty buildings? An inclusive Secondary school perhaps? But that’s another story...

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COMMERCIAL PROPERTY MANAGERS
THE CREATIVE JEWISH WEDDING BOOK
by Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer

IF YOU ARE PLANNING A Jewish wedding, and looking for a forbidding, scholarly tome to advise you, walk straight past The Creative Jewish Wedding Book and on down the aisle. This is a light, enlightening and delightful guide to the range of possibilities open to you, with the stress on how you can develop a personally meaningful ceremony. The liberal, hippish tone is set from the start, with a warning about the perils of the wedding industry. There is also a section for gay and lesbian couples. If, like me, you were unaware of the creative potential of the Chuppah, chapter four alone is worth the $20.

TG

THEIR HEADS IN HEAVEN: UNFAMILIAR ASPECTS OF HASIDISM
by Louis Jacob
Paper: £17.95/Cloth: £39.50

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN the philosopher and the poet is that the philosopher tries to get the heavens into his head while the poet tries to get his head into the heavens.’ Rabbi Jacobs adapts GK Chesterton’s saying as the title for his collection of essays on Hasidism.

This collection reveals Jacobs’ supreme erudition and the mystical ways of the Hasidic movement. Among its themes is the idea of the rebbe or Zaddik as a source of numinous power, a figure of danger as well as illumination. There is also a wonderful essay on the Rabbinic genius Hayyim Eleazar of Munkacs, ‘The Munkaczer Rebbe’, and his meditation on Christianity.

CK

DISENCHANTMENT: THE GUARDIAN AND ISRAEL
by Daphna Baram

THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER is frequently accused of being anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic in its Middle East coverage. This book is the story of the Guardian’s relationship with Israel over the course of the twentieth century. It starts with the pro-Zionist position, epitomized in the crucial friendship between Guardian editor CP Scott and Chaim Weizmann, leading to the issue of the Balfour Declaration. After independence, it continued frequent coverage of the region, through initial optimism of a new socialist experiment to the watershed of 1967. This led to growing disenchantment.

In this informative and thought-provoking book, Baram, an Israel journalist and senior associate member of St Anthony’s College, Oxford, offers a fascinating insight into the workings of a liberal newspaper striving to provide truthful reporting of a volatile and politically sensitive area. Baram highlights the newspaper’s integrity in its reporting of the Palestinian tragedy amidst Jewish fears and sensibilities. Through insightful writing and interviews with current journalists, Baram gives the position of a newspaper perceived as controversial in its Middle East coverage and the Guardian’s attempts to deal openly and honestly with the criticisms leveled against it.

DB

THE PLOT AGAINST AMERICA
by Philip Roth

DISTOPIAS ARE FAMILIAR ground when it comes to novels – from 1984 and Brave New World to just about everything Philip K. Dick and William Gibson have written. The common ground is that they are all set in the future. Philip Roth’s latest book is unlike all of these in that the distopia is set in the past, a past where anti-Semitic isolationist Charles A. Lindbergh, the all-American pilot hero, becomes President and keeps America out of the Second World War.

It is a scary image as we watch the slow creep of fascism in a democratic country, and realize that democracy is not the guiding principle that safeguards our freedoms. A great deal has been made about Roth’s veiled references to America, and by extension the UK today, but this is more of a cautionary tale than a political satire.

The true success of The Plot Against America is the strength of personal and family history. Roth writes this in the first person but, more than that, he names the main character Phil Roth, and models the Newark family closely after his own.

The sense of tragedy engendered by this technique alone make this book worth reading and its gripping menace matched with poignant and humorous moments make it a truly compelling read.

JN
In the remote past, Jews were idolaters. Since the time of Ezra, they were monotheists. In the modern era, the preponderance of Jews are humanists. (p.116)

Secular Humanistic Judaism (SHJ) is a movement created by one man, Rabbi Sherwin Wine. He formally established the Society for Humanistic Judaism in 1969 with the intention, according to its website, ‘to mobilize people to celebrate Jewish identity and culture consistent with a Humanistic philosophy of life, independent of supernatural authority.’ SHJ literature abounds with bold claims of being a fully formed branch of American Judaism – just as viable as Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reform. It claims to be an international movement, citing contacts across the globe.

Sherwin Wine – A Life of Courage is a Festschrift intended not only to educate readers in what Secular Humanistic Judaism is, but also to chart the achievements of the founder of the movement on his retirement. It aims primarily ‘to give Sherwin pleasure, to express...admiration and...to say thank you.’ (p.xiii) So one must consider the relevance of such a book here in the UK, where there are no SHJ communities, even though attempts were made to start one. The current British branch of the SHJ consists of one man. The reason for its lack of success, claims the British SHJ member, is that British Jews are uncomfortable thinking deeply about the logical implications of their religious practice. That theme runs throughout the entire book as a critique of most Jews today. So certain of their beliefs are most of the contributors, and so certain are they of the ‘truths of the Enlightenment’ that it seems as though this book is an effort to reach out to those poor souls who have not yet caught up with The Truth, a disconcerting notion indeed.

A number of similarly disconcerting strands run throughout the hefty tome, mostly related to the arrogant notion that ‘Wine declares that God has been retired from active duty’ (p.43). For the true intended readership, SHJ Jews and those with whom they interact, this may well be a comforting and true notion. But there are millions of Jews worldwide who can see this only as arrogance in the extreme. It is certainly one reason why a reader of this book might feel uncomfortable.

There are also many positive sides to this book. As an attempt to praise and record the work of Sherwin Wine, it lives up to its task. Almost every contributor recalls Wine’s presence in their lives, his clarity, single-mindedness, proficiency at public speaking, and most of all, his courage. In 1965 Sherwin Wine was dubbed the ‘Atheistic Rabbi’ by Time magazine, and he struggled to create a movement from the shadow of that simplistic label. But the constant references to his courage ultimately seem distinctly forced – as though each contributor were told the title of the book, and asked to refer to it.

What good does it do us to learn of this courage? Since most of us do not intend to create breakaway movements, would it not have been better to have focused on his excellent public speaking – another attribute which is constantly mentioned? It would have been more useful to have compiled a number of his greatest sermons and select essays in order to help us sample the power which he apparently possesses in the pulpit.

Apart from blanket praise, in which this book seems to bathe Wine, what does A Life of Courage offer the reader? It will not encourage many English readers to investigate Secular Humanistic Judaism. But it just might get them seriously to question their Judaism. And that is a good thing. While many contributors speak of unpalatably arrogant SHJ ideals, one cannot put this book down without asking how relevant it is for oneself. It fundamentally questions our assumptions, our beliefs and our practices, and it does so again and again in a way that forces us to respond. The dogged certainty of the contributors puts the reader on the defensive in a manner which is at first uncomfortable and then ultimately liberating. In one essay, we read that ‘For the God-believers, God is real before they look for the evidence. But reason starts with no commitment to...
conclusions. It allows the facts to judge’ (p.43). While some may be swayed by such conviction, more will question whether one can have independent ‘facts to judge’ without an already biased observer. One cannot fail to notice the irony that when Wine and most of his followers speak of the narrow-minded objectivity of the ultra-orthodox, they constantly fall into the same trap.

This reason-based movement, of which God became one of the first casualties – the Kaddish and the sanctity of the Sefer Torah being others – is based on an aggressive confrontational view of an oppressive God of Scripture, and fails to address the more tender aspects of divinity as represented in Judaism. For example, Wine apparently ‘finds no “facts” that can lead him to a belief in any “god”, much less Jahweh, who [he says]... is “an absurdity”, and if he did exist, I would have nothing to do with him. Petulant, jealous, ridiculous.’ (p.44)

One author relates how Wine always hated to be told what to do, and one must wonder how much this movement is the creation of a man who balks at authority. It should be noted that, while his followers hold Wine in very high regard, even they do not all agree with his thoughts, as reflected by the most thought-provoking essay criticizing some SHJ beliefs – a rare gem of criticism in this otherwise polarized text. The derogatory view of God is twisted into a derogatory view of ‘halachic Judaism’, by which Wine and his followers seem to mean orthodoxy. There is little awareness of progressive Halachah, and the fluidity that it can possess.

Overall, this book reflects the impotence felt by many Jews in a pseudo-rational society, because of the union of that rationality with belief and ritual, in which sometimes the Jew engages not because they know it to be true, but simply because they feel it to be so. Sherwin Wine is painted as someone who courageously hides from authority and who speaks with the arrogant tongue of The Enlightenment, while also being a powerful and yet sensitive rabbi and colleague. There is much here that will annoy or bewilder, but its propensity to ask probing questions is something of great value to every reader.

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DO WE NEED TO TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH?

Margaret Erlich

HOW MUCH TRUTH CAN A patient bear? How much should he or she be told? These questions are of crucial importance to patients who are suffering from a terminal illness, to their relatives and to those who care for them. The answers from within the medical world have changed significantly over the past thirty years. They continue to be debated within Halacha and Jewish ethical thinking.

Truth is highly prized within Judaism. But when the question of truth-telling is considered within halachic discussions it is often seen as conflicting with the even more important value of piskaach nefish, saving life. So what, from a Progressive Jewish point of view, should the place of truth be in relating to patients with serious or terminal illness?

Truth is described in rabbinic thought as 'the Seal of the Holy One'. Shimon ben Gamliel said, 'The world stands on three things: on judgement, truth and peace.' But truth is not seen as absolute. Shimon ben Gamliel places it together with peace and it was seen as desirable to compromise truth for the sake of peace. A Midrash on Genesis 18 tells us that God misquoted Sarah to Abraham in order to preserve peace between husband and wife.

In discussing the telling of truth to those who are ill, later tradition draws on two seemingly contradictory biblical texts. The first concerns King Ben Hadad in the Second Book of Kings (chapter 8, verses 8-10).

'And the King said to Hazael, Take a present in your hand and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the Eternal One from him, saying, Shall I recover from this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him... and said, Your son Ben-Hadad, King of Syria, has sent me to you saying, Shall I recover from this disease? And Elisha said to him, Go, say to him, You shall certainly recover. But the Eternal One has shown me that he shall certainly die.'

The interpretation of this text is complicated by the fact that there are two readings of it: the written text (ktiv) has Elisha saying 'you shall not recover', but the Masoretic understanding of it (k'rif) is as translated above. As the Masoretic reading is the one which was accepted by later tradition and used in halachic discussions, we shall also follow this reading.

The second deals with Hezekiah, also in the Second Book of Kings (20/1-6):

'In those days, Hezekiah was sick and approaching death. And Isaiah the son of Amoz, the prophet, came to him and said to him, Thus says the Eternal One: Command your house because you are going to die and you shall not live. And he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Eternal One, saying: I entreat you, Eternal God, remember, please, that I have walked before you in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight. And Hezekiah wept with great anguish. And it came to pass before Isaiah had gone out of the middle courtyard that the word of the Eternal One came to him, saying: Return and say to Hezekiah, the captain of my people, thus says the Eternal One, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer and I have seen your tears. Behold, I shall heal you and on the third day, you shall go to the House of the Eternal One. And I will add to your days fifteen years.'

These passages appear to give two contradictory messages. In the first, the truth is not told. But it does not seem to be out of any consideration for Ben Hadad. Elisha seems to have little respect for Ben Hadad and does not seem to be concerned about whether he recovers. His message to him seems to take the 'easy option' of telling him all will be well, even though it will not.

By contrast, Isaiah does not spare Hezekiah the truth. This gives Hezekiah the opportunity for prayer, which in turn gives him an additional fifteen years of life.

It is curious, given that Ben Hadad dies and Hezekiah is granted longer life, that the Halacha has tended to rely on the story of Ben Hadad and rule against the telling of truth. One of the earliest halachic sources is in the Talmud, Moed Katan 26b, which informs us: 'If one who is ill sustains bereavement, they should not inform him of it, in case his mind is disturbed (tiruf nada-at). They do not tear their garments in his presence and they prevent the women from wailing in lamentation.' The phrase tiruf nada-at is crucial in subsequent discussions of the subject. It means literally 'tearing of the mind', and indicates a disturbance of the mind so serious that it might lead to madness or to shortening of life. The central concern in Halacha is to prevent this happening, so if telling the truth will result in tiruf nada-at, then the truth must not be told.

But there is a tension between...
availing disturbing the patient and offering him or her the opportunity for repentance. The Shulchan Aruch resolves the tension by ruling: 'If one is near death, they say to him: “Confess”, and they say: “Many have confessed and have not died, and many who have not confessed, die. By confessing you may live, and everyone who confesses has a place in the world who confesses and have not died, and many repentance and preparation for death, American halachist. He rules This approach is typified by Rabbi ftczdr-crf that some authorities fiercely indeed live.

truth to patients who are suffering from oppose revealing the truth in any way. psychiatrist Elizabeth Kuebler-Ross6, who have worked extensively with findings of those such as the late diagnosis of cancer.5 For Bleich, the a terminal illness and defends strongly illness, are simply irrelevant.

Others within Orthodoxy have been more open to the possibility and desirability of telling the patients the truth. Rav Shear Yashuv Cohen, the Chief Rabbi of Haifa, for example, lists four reasons for considering it appropriate to tell the truth. These include the opportunity to pray and to take a spiritual accounting, to make provision for their family and, significantly, the fact that knowledge of one’s condition may strengthen a person’s mental and physical powers and so lead to the lengthening of life. Likewise, Rabbi Gary Lavit, in an extensive critique of the views of Bleich and others, argues that ‘... in many cases, truthful disclosure can improve morale rather than damaging it, thereby contributing to extended longevity; and therefore, where appropriate, truthful disclosure is to be preferred over suppression of the unpleasant, as a fulfilment of the requirements and objectives of the Halacha.’

For us as Progressive Jews, committed to combining what we learn from tradition with present day knowledge, research by Kuebler Ross and others must inform us in our decisions. They have found that patients often want to know their diagnosis, and indeed guess it before they are told. For them, the diagnosis may be less fearful than the atmosphere of secrecy they sense around them, and the wall that this builds between them and their carers and their family. As Professor Shimon Glick, a physician and expert on Jewish medical ethics, puts it: ‘In the modern age in the Western world it is clear from research and scientific observations that frequently telling the truth reduces suffering, and not the converse. In these cases, it seems to me that we are obligated to act in a way that helps the patient.’

The crux of the argument is whether telling a patient that he or she has a terminal illness will shorten their life or reduce the quality of their remaining days. We do not as yet have a definitive answer to the question and given the complexities, it may be that we will not find one. A study which has been carried out suggests that giving patients a message of the incurability of cancer negatively affects their quality of life more than telling them the truth. But telling a patient of the incurability of their disease must be part of the truth, so this would suggest that knowledge of the truth can indeed have negative effects. Clearly, the answer is therefore not a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’, but must depend on other factors, most importantly what truth we tell, and how we tell it. Rabbi Bleich rightly points out that ‘the physician has absolutely no right whatsoever to tell the patient that there is nothing that can be done for him,’ A patient should always be left with hope, even if this is hope for freedom from pain rather than length of days.

Within the medical profession, over the past thirty years there has been a dramatic change from non-disclosure to open discussion of terminal diagnoses. Truth and autonomy, and so ‘the patient’s right to know’, have become dominant values in our society. But there are now the beginnings of an awareness that autonomy may also include a right not to know if this is what the patient wishes. Truth need not be the whole truth, and certainly not all at once. Perhaps the greatest art in being a doctor is in responding to the patients spoken and unspoken needs and trying to gauge how much truth the patient wants to know. This will be a gradual and ongoing process, changing from day to day as circumstances change. If we are concerned with both quality of life and length of days, we have to learn to respond to what the patient is seeking for peace of mind. Tiruf hada-at may result both from being told the truth too abruptly and from knowing that one is being denied the truth despite requests for it. The biblical incidents quoted may be interpreted as showing that there is not a single right way, but that individuals must be responded to according to their needs.

Finally, there is another aspect to the question that is usually forgotten. For a patient who has a severe illness, to know that death is approaching may not be seen as evil but as good. Sometimes death is a release and comes as an end to suffering. I have known congregants who were ready for death, and even wished for it to come speedily. Whilst not for a moment denying the pain of impending death, for individuals and for their loved ones, a religious perspective does not view death as something to be feared. The words of Abraham Joshua Heschel make an appropriate conclusion. They both inspire and challenge us as we wrestle with this most difficult of issues: ‘Death is not sensed as a defeat but as a summation, an arrival, a conclusion. We trust that He will not desert those that trust in Him. The meaning as well as mode of being which Man hopes to attain beyond the threshold of dying remains an impenetrable mystery, yet it is the thought of being in God’s knowing that may be both at the root and the symbol of the ultimate hope.’

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This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. And seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper.'

Jeremiah 29: 4-6 written in the early 6th century BCE

Joe Fainsilber lay down on his bed a couple of weeks after his ninetieth birthday, and died peacefully. His great life’s work was over. He was the sole survivor of his family from the Shoah. Not a single blood relative closer than a fourth cousin whom he had never met survived. He was nearly thirty when he fled to Russia with his newly married wife, just as the Germans entered Poland – and almost all the people he had known perished, apart from a few of his wife’s family who did manage to escape.

In more than thirty years since I married Joe’s daughter (he had three children, Harry, born in Russia, Bracha, my wife, born in a Displaced Persons’ camp in Steyr, Austria, and Lynn, the youngest, born in Montreal) I hardly managed one prolonged conversation with him. He was a man of few words and we spoke different languages, literally. Joe was most comfortable in Yiddish, his ‘Canadian’ was almost impossible for me to understand and I was trapped in my Oxford English. To say that we had difficulty understanding one another is an understatement.

But the universes that we inhabited inside our heads, were still more separate. I could never conceive of what Joe had been through – and I still have no idea what he thought of me, a

HOW JOE FINALLY MADE HIS MILLIONS

Jeffrey Newman and Andrea Newman

Soldier Joe
British Reform Rabbi, who did not speak Yiddish. What sort of creature, I always wondered, was I to him? He had grown up in the smallest of shtetlachs, and had for a while been at yeshivah in Warsaw. Yet we knew that he loved and respected one another, though Joe was in no way an easy man — and we suspect that this was not merely a result of the traumas he had suffered.

He wanted to be successful and worked night and day to achieve this, using all his intelligence and ingenuity. He only got to Canada by saying that he was a tailor when he heard that the garment industry was looking for workers. He had never sewn a button or cut a cloth in his life. For a while he had his own shop, as a fruiterer and maybe would have flourished but for family problems. Conventionally, he achieved little, though all three of his children became active members of synagogues. Zayde Joe's two concerns, expressed forcefully and repeatedly to every grandchild, were that they should pay attention to their education, and that they had to marry someone who was Jewish.

This last summer, the first of his eight grandchildren got married, and all the others, apart from the youngest, have celebrated bar or bat mitzvah with Joe and all their cousins, either in Montreal, Seattle or London. For Joe, every grandchild was worth 'a million dollars'. As much as he could, in his own way, he had taken his part in re-establishing the Jewish people, in replacing — though, of course, it could never be done — all those he had lost. He was just 'an ordinary Joe' but he achieved great things.

More than this, Rabbi Lionel Blue once wrote that the extraordinary element in Judaism is the way that time and again, after the most terrible tragedies, Jews have re-established themselves, to all appearances as if nothing had happened. This is the everyday holiness, the sanctification of daily reality built through the tears which Joe, and so many ordinary Jews, must have shed every day for all that they had lost. Nevertheless, they lived their lives and rebuilt their families, just as Jeremiah had encouraged the exiles to do in Babylon.

I only understood this a few weeks after he died, when Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, brother of David the Rabbi of Bournemouth Synagogue for over thirty years, told me a story of their father. Rabbi Jakob Soetendorp, who re-established Jewish life in Holland after the war, ensured that Liberal Judaism would flourish through a deliberate mistranslation of Psalm 92 — a psalm to sing for the Sabbath Day, one of the favourites in most of our synagogues.

He wanted to be successful and worked night and day to achieve this, using all his intelligence and ingenuity. He only got to Canada by saying that he was a tailor when he heard that the garment industry was looking for workers. He had never sewn a button or cut a cloth in his life.

A couple of the verses read, in Hebrew, ‘ish ba’ar lo yeida, u’chesiyel lo yavin et zot’. The conventional translation goes ‘A stupid man cannot see this, nor can a foolish man understand...’. And it goes on: ‘that when the wicked flourish, they are only like grass, and their end is always destruction’. Jakob translated the words ‘ish ba’ar’ as ‘an ordinary man’, instead of ‘a stupid man’ because he taught that he, like all his compatriots who crawled their way back into life after the Holocaust, and tried with all their might to re-establish themselves and what remained of their families — they were all just ordinary people, and they did not understand. There was nothing stupid or foolish about not understanding what had taken place and where God was at such times. They were just ordinary people, and they just did not understand. They, too, were just ‘ordinary Joes’.

Now times have moved on and, to the astonishment of all of us, Jewish life is gradually reviving, not only in Britain and Holland but across Europe, across Eastern Europe and in the Former Soviet Union. But it is happening only because ordinary Jewish men and women have done something remarkable. After all the pain and suffering of the past they have felt that, despite everything, there is meaning and purpose in Jewish life and the Jewish people.

Joe and Tova

Extracts from a hesped by a granddaughter

It is not easy to paint a portrait of Zayde Joe, since we only know fragments of his life story. His biography is not a single narrative to recount — we have pieced it together from bits and pieces he told to different people.

We believe he was born in 1914. His birth certificate has been lost and he changed his date of birth a few times to avoid the army. The place of his birth was Stocek Lukowsky, Poland — forty miles from Warsaw.

He was sent to live with his grandparents at a very young age and was forced to start working. So he never completed the education he had wanted. For this reason, he placed the utmost importance on the education of his children and grandchildren — hence the mantra: 'you doing good in school?'

When he was in his thirties, he fled Poland with his young wife, and continued on next page
travelled through Europe. Every other known blood relative was killed in the Holocaust, and he was from a large family with many siblings. There is no doubt that this indescribable horror, the immense loss and incomprehensibility of it all, and the fact that he survived, was what defined the rest of his life.

With one child born in Russia, another in a DP Camp in Austria, the family finally ended up in Canada. Joe came over as a tailor, although he did not know how to ‘tail’, and then started his own greengrocery business.

His shop became a community centre and Joe knew everyone in the neighbourhood. He embarrassed his youngest, Canadian-born child immensely, as only a parent can do, when he used to stop random people to ask for a lift because he could not afford a car. And his favourite greeting to strangers was, ‘Hey, Mister, how’s your sister?’

Joe was defined by being a survivor. He made sense of his survival by the fact that he would create the next generation of Jewish life. His other mantra to us was: ‘You don’t marry a Jew – you break my heart’. In later years, when he had mellowed slightly, and was actually faced with this situation – my cousin married a non-Jew who later converted – Joe embraced him into the family immediately: ‘You’re already family. You’re like a cousin.’

He built a business. He built a family. He was single-minded in his quest to establish himself and his family’s future, to the point of being stingy. As a once in a lifetime treat, he took his family to a restaurant. It was a steak restaurant, and he told them they could order anything they wanted except steak.

If he was hard on his kids, he simply adored his grandchildren. After the funeral we debated whether he used to call us his ‘millions’ or his ‘billions’. The debate was finally resolved by deciding that we were his ‘millions’, but with inflation, we became his ‘billions’. Communication was limited. For me, it mainly boiled down to one single, solitary phrase. It was repeated millions, or perhaps billions, of times in my life:

‘Andie, Andie. You want a candy, Andie?’ He chuckled every time he said it!

He remained always a slightly mysterious figure to us – so very foreign, so very other, so unable to grasp our reality and we his. But there could not be a closer family. Every single grandchild flew in for his funeral – from as far away as Africa – as much to pay respect to him, as to be together. We were, simply, what his life had been about – the interest accumulated on the investment of his hard work and on his survival. He never earned the millions he wanted, but he realized the value of his life was his legacy. He lives on in the fabric of his family.

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ANOTHER PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

In MANNA 86 (Winter 2005) Professor Ruth Soetendorp began a groundbreaking exploration of Judaism and intellectual property law. This article concludes her study, with its focus on the impact of the invention of the printing press.

Ruth Soetendorp

IN A 1923 ENGLISH COPYRIGHT case Lord Atkinson commented that an infringer of copyright ‘disobeyed the injunction “Thou shalt not steal”. In the 1988 House of Lords decision in CBS Songs v Amstrad, a case in which the record industry attempted to prevent Amstrad marketing tape to tape recorders, Lord Templeman dismissed that comment. ‘My Lords, these considerations cannot enhance the rights of owners of copyright or extend the ambit of infringement... [intellectual property rights] are defined by Parliament, not by the clergy or the judiciary.’

There is no direct Talmudic reference to copyright. For centuries, Torah debate had formed the core of study, and there were inhibitions about committing the oral law to writing. Whatever was written down was done in privacy and preserved as a ‘secret’ scroll. There was no concept of an author’s original work being protected, because that would have been in conflict with the teaching that ‘the rivalry of scholars increases learning’ (Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 21 b).

The spread of printing in the sixteenth century changed things radically. Printing equipment was expensive to purchase, and only a print run of many volumes would recoup the investment. The Jewish printer was seen as the ‘performer of holy work’. Hebrew poems praised the art which ‘enables one man to write with many pens’ (Abrams, 1993).

Realizing that economic conditions were changing, the rabbis set out to create halachic decisions that would reward investments made in printing. They were afraid that as there was now an alternative to hand written scrolls for study purposes, unless they intervened to offer protection to printers and publishers, Torah study texts might disappear altogether.

A counter argument was put by R. Schmelkes of Przemysl: ‘Everyone retains the right to study and teach. Why should another not be able to benefit his fellow men and print and sell cheaply?’ When Rabbi Meir Katzenellenbogen published an improved edition of Maimonides’ code, a non-Jewish publisher printed the same work and sold it at a lower price. Rabbi Katzenellenbogen appealed to Rabbi Moses Isserles of Krakow to intervene. This he did by publishing a herem, excommunication order, forbidding Jews to purchase from the non-Jewish publisher until the Katzenellenbogen version had sold out. Interestingly, the herem was imposed on purchasers rather than on the printer. Rabbi Isserles’ ruling was innovative but impractical. It is nowadays easier, and more economically beneficial, to enforce a copyright infringement against a publisher rather than a purchaser.

A publisher would get a written statement from a local rabbi and place it in the front of each copy, warning that any person infringing the work would be subject to a herem. These haskamot have their modern equivalent in the copyright notices found in the front of any book, like the copyright notice in the front of any ArtScroll publication. Secular copyright notices do not always refer to civil action or criminal persecution. In England, failure to alert the public to copyright in a work may prejudice an infringement claim for damages.

The enforceability of rabbinic law was based on the accepted doctrine that the territorial area of jurisdiction of any one rabbi was severely limited. This was tested in the nineteenth century Roedelheim mazhor case. Wolf Heidenheim published a revised text of an annotated mazhor in a German version, bearing a rabbinic haskamah banning unauthorized... continued on next page
publication for twenty-five years—the general length of ban was between ten and twenty-five years. Publishers in Dirhenport ignored the herem and republished the mahazor arguing that the Heidenheim edition had sold out. Rabbi Mordecai Benet supported the Dirhenport publishers, on the basis that the herem only had binding force in the area of jurisdiction of the rabbi that issued it, and the law of the land did not forbid republication. Heidenheim won on the basis that he needed to sell multiple editions to repay his investment in the annotations (Herzog, 1965).

R. Joseph Saul Nathansohn (d.1875) said ‘Jewish law, even in the absence of an express herem, lays down that it is unlawful to reprint an original work without permission, for the creation of the author’s mind is his property.’ He may have been influenced in his opinion by emerging patent law in contemporary Poland. The rabbis debated the geographic scope of a herem within a haskamah on the basis that a publisher often distributed books to many communities. In practice, it was rare for infringements to result in excommunication, as rabbis soon recognized that monetary damages were a more logical sanction.

The rabbis made clear that a publisher owned no proprietary rights in the intellectual content of their work because the intellectual content was part of the public domain, (Babylonian Talmud Ketubbot 106a). Jewish law did not permit an author to sell the fruits of his intellect, although an author was entitled to compensation for the labour invested in preparing the work. The rabbis held that a publisher may receive compensation for the work involved in editing or annotating a manuscript because book readers in Talmud times were paid. The rabbis recognized the need to protect a publisher’s investment in the labour of editing and annotating. The intellectual content of responsa, compilations of rabbinic questions and answers, was original, but because they were always written in connection with text which was in the public domain, or published in the context of Torah study texts, they were not protected.

The nineteenth century rabbis would have been aware of secular developments in international intellectual property law1. On the basis of the Talmudic dictum dina d’malchuta dina—the law of the land is the law—they began to argue for recognition that the labour involved in authoring an original work was entitled to reward. In the Diaspora, contemporary observant communities can choose to use the secular courts to resolve disputes which would, in the nineteenth century, have been brought to a rabbi or a beit din. In 2002 the U.S. 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals heard a dispute between Merkos L’Inyonei Chi and Otsar Sifrei Lubavitch6. Merkos claimed that Otsar’s new version of the prayer book violated Merkos’ copyright by slavishly copying the Merkos English translation of the prayers.

In Israel there is also a choice between consulting a beit din or using the Israeli national court. Israeli state legislation conforms with international standards set by the Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the Patent Cooperation Treaty. In 2000 the Israeli courts were required to decide whether Quimron, the academic scholar who ‘filled in the gaps’ between the fragments of dead sea scrolls found at Q’man, was entitled to copyright in his work. If his work were a true reproduction of the original missing words, how could it qualify for copyright protection?

The court decided the intellectual skill and labour invested in his work was sufficient to qualify it as original in copyright terms. Copyright gave Quimron control as to who could access work, which meant, in effect, a monopoly over the use of the ‘completed’ scrolls5. This decision illustrates the difficulties encountered when one person’s individual intellectual property right gives him a monopoly that limits another person’s freedom of use.

There is little rabbinic discourse on trade marks or branding, even though ‘trade marks’ in the form of special shapes denoting origin for the shewbread were known in temple times (Herzog, 1965). This is not to say that Jewish symbols do not make attractive trade marks. That was the thinking behind a Canadian messianic Christian group, Chosen People Ministries, Inc, who chose to register a menorah as its trade mark. The registration was successfully challenged by the Canadian Jewish Congress on the grounds that no organization should be able to monopolize the menorah. It would have been ironic if the registration had been upheld. Jewish organizations would have been barred from using or adopting the menorah, which has always been associated with Jewish culture, as a mark.6

Sheer chutzpah can be an element of some actions. The anticipated Jewish Rock & Roll Hall of Fame virtual museum website is being challenged by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum for infringing their trademark. The museum is claiming $100,000 in respect of irreparable damage. The US Patent and Trademark office has recently refused to register The Kabbalah Centre’s application to trademark the term ‘Kabbalah Red String’ on the grounds that the group’s application ‘merely describes the goods/services.’

Rabbis do not appear to have been drawn into the debate concerning patentable inventions. Herzog suggests that this is because Jews were not permitted to join the mediaeval trade guilds. Nevertheless, Jews have always been inventive. The Jewish Encyclopedia refers to the thirteenth century invention by Jacob ben Machir ibn Tibbon of the ‘quadrans judaicus’, the navigational tool that contributed significantly to Spanish exploration of the New World.

The Talmudic argument in support of recouping an investment could equally be applied to patented inventions where the twenty year monopoly can be justified because of the money invested in research and development. For some inventions, such as the KosherLamp™ that facilitates night reading over Shabbat, it is important the invention be certified halachically acceptable, as well as patented to ensure the inventor reaps his reward.

Patent databases are respected sources of technological information. A quick search of the European Patent Database ‘espacenet’ using ‘Jewish’ or ‘Kosher’ will yield a number of inventions. These range from the quirky like a prayer shawl that can be worn as a scarf with the tizit – fringes – conveniently folded away9 to the quirkier, such as a mechanism for part-printing a Torah scroll allowing for a safer to complete the lettering to ensure its kashrut8. Patent documents give insights into a range of problems facing the Jewish community, from the design of pens to hold cattle for shechitah, to a method of projecting the cantillation marks onto a Torah scroll to facilitate chanting in public10.

Patents won’t be granted for discoveries of what exists in nature, which includes genes or gene sequences. But patents can be granted for inventions that disclose an industrial application of a gene sequence. Canavan disease results in brain degeneration, and occurs most frequently in Ashkenazi Jewish
families. Affected Jewish families organized tissue sample donations to a doctor who, in 1993, concluded the research necessary to identify the Canavan gene. Subsequently the doctor and his hospital acquired a patent for applications of the gene, and used their patent to prohibit Canavan testing without payment of a licence fee. The families sued the patent owners. In 2003 a settlement was agreed whereby royalty-based genetic testing by certain licensed laboratories will continue alongside royalty-free research by institutions, doctors, and scientists searching for a cure.

Rabbis continue to explore the possibilities of applying halachic concepts to modern intellectual property dilemmas. Hasagat ha g'mul (the prohibition against moving a boundary stone, as in Deuteronomy 19:14) underpins rabbinc intellectual property thinking. Whilst there have been disputes as to whether the principal of dina d'malchuta dina applies to all secular law, contemporary conclusions are that copyright legislation which promotes social justice and fairness should be recognized by Torah law as binding.

Nonetheless, differences of opinion continue. Google ‘rabbi+napster’ and you will find several examples of rabbinic debate concerning whether downloading is or is not theft. Rabbi Schneider writes: ‘Sometimes it may happen that one posek’s (authority’s) mitzvah is another posek’s aveirah (sin).’

On the subject of photocopying material for a class, one twentieth century rabbi thought it acceptable for a teacher to photocopy an article for her own use, but not for classroom distribution. Whilst another suggests that a teacher who makes copies for the students is performing the mitzvah of saving the students expense.

Rabbi Nechemia Zalman Goldberg suggests ‘shiu’r’ or retention could provide an opportunity for the owner of an intellectual property right to retain the right whilst giving others a licence to work the right, in exchange for royalties. He makes an analogy with the seller of sheep who retains a right over the shearings and offspring (Schneider, 1997). Rabbi J. D. Bleich sees a distinction between tangible objects that can be the subject of theft, and intangibles that cannot. Taking an animal that has been sacrificed is theft, smelling the pleasing aroma of the ketoret (accompanying spices) used in the temple is not (ayin meila ba-re’ach). Halacha has long been able to address the concept of trading in things that are not yet in being, making Rabbis do not appear to have been drawn into the debate concerning patentable inventions. Herzog suggests that this is because Jews were not permitted to join the mediaeval trade guilds. Nevertheless, Jews have always been inventive. The Jewish Encyclopaedia refers to the thirteenth century invention by Jacob ben Machir ibn Ribbon of the ‘quadrans judaicus’, the navigational tool that contributed significantly to Spanish exploration of the New World.

Rabbinic law comprises a treasury of wisdom accumulated from learned teachers through the ages. No doubt it will continue to be adaptable and applicable to intellectual property disputes the future.

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**RUTH SOETENDORP** is the first holder of the Chair in Intellectual Property Management at Bournemouth University. Her Jewish education began at the Wewyn Garden City Hebrew Congregation cheder, and continues through her partnership with Rabbi David Soetendorp, and includes being founder facilitator of the Bournemouth Jewish Women’s Study Group and Bournemouth Limmud.

MANNA SPRING 2005
The rabbinic course at Leo Baeck College-Centre for Jewish Education is a five year, postgraduate programme. The fifth year is devoted to writing a rabbinic thesis. What is it that our newly ordained rabbis have been working on so intensely? MANNA is embarking upon an occasional series in which rabbis are invited to give a brief synopsis of their rabbinic dissertation. Rabbi Tony Hammond sets the ball rolling.

GOD’S CALL AND GOD’S WORD

Tony Hammond

Rabbi Tony Hammond’s Ordination

By the time I had to decide the subject of my Rabbinic Dissertation, the figure of Samuel had been intriguing me for some while. I now wonder whether the ambivalent feelings Samuel aroused in me did not echo the ambivalence that lurked within me as I made my way towards the rabbinate. This ambivalence was not aroused by the vocation itself. And I say vocation not to be solemn. But where I was heading seemed to flow irresistibly out of more than three decades of teaching, research and literary-spiritual work both in and outside Judaism. The ambivalence itself I can trace back to my sense that there can be such a thing as authority which lays a claim on us, and my equally insistent refusal of authority in most of the forms that it has presented itself to me. And now here I was preparing to enter a role in which I would have to take responsibility for the projection of certain kinds of authority onto me: a role in which I would surely need to exercise something called ‘rabbinic authority’, and in which I would at times feel the need to protect and safeguard that authority.

In the figure of Samuel and the narrative of his childhood, his role as kingmaker and kingbreaker, but even more in his role as interpreter of the will of God, I found a model of authority that provoked my ambivalent feelings. Why was this? What was there in this text that so insistently appealed?

In the first place there was the relationship between Samuel and Saul. The story of Saul’s downfall had always evoked in me a sense of tragedy that sat uneasily with much of the rabbinic commentary that I had read. It was a tragedy with psychological aspects so much in the foreground that it comes closer to Shakespeare than to its contemporaries. Samuel seems so much to interpose himself between Saul and God that, as was said of Antony when Caesar was nearby, we might want to say to Saul: When Samuel is present ‘thy lustre thickens; When he shines by:...thy spirit Is all afraid to govern thee near him...’. (Antony & Cleopatra Act 2, scene 3).

Yet in Deuteronomic history, the psychological, like the historical itself, is in the service of a theological or covenantal narrative. The human drama is implicated in an account of Divine purpose. The understanding of this purpose is a more urgent and compelling task for the Deuteronomic redactor or authorship than any arousal of tragic catharsis for its own sake. The question a fairly large consensus of scholars now believe informs the narrative of the Deuteronomic historian is no less than a search to understand the transgression that brought the disasters of Exile and Dispersal. In this catastrophe the institution of kingship is undoubtedly implicated. Potentially the role of prophesy is also suspect.

As scripture, the Deuteronomic composition is itself an interpretation of history, constituting a narrative theology. Underlying all this is a belief that the divine will can be discovered by interpreting history. As a text embodying and fashioning that history, it is itself to be the subject of study in Israel’s ongoing duty to discover the divine will, to do it and to be redeemed.

In the light of this, the psychological elements in the Samuel and Saul drama, and indeed some particularly suggestive details of Samuel’s childhood and call to prophecy, all offer themselves for theological interpretation.

I was drawn to ask the question whether the early chapters of I Samuel, with all the narrative disruptions in the received text that are attributed by source critics to lost ‘original’ traditions, did not in fact constitute a careful and complex composition in which character psychology played a significant part. That the preservation of narrative disruptions in the received...
text is intentional, indeed functional, is a premise of such literary interpretations as Meir Steinberg’s. For him, ‘The Bible’s verbal artistry...operates by passing off its art for artlessness... The informational gaps... (suggest) a bifocal or multiple view of character and motive and event... announcing the birth of ambiguous narration’ (The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, Indiana, 1985, pp53-4).

Now the question of authority took another twist. On what authority would a literary psychological reading be based which moved beyond explicit characterization and made the case for character psychology? After all there are those who happily leave their revolver lying when they hear the word ‘culture’, but reach for it enthusiastically at the merest whiff of the psychological unconscious, particularly if it is claimed to be discerned in ancient texts. Here I was fortunate in the support of Dr Diana Lipton, with whom I had studied part of the text in my first year at the Leo Baeck College. Through her course on prophetic texts I had been introduced to contemporary scholarship which helped clarify for me theoretical grounds for a literary reading of Scripture. In most of the studies I was recommended, thematic and metonymic interpretation heavily outweighed character psychology, but there was sufficient confirmation from some scholars that scriptural character portrayal of Samuel in particular controlled in some measure his transmission of the word of God. Put another way, I felt a measure of confirmation for my increasingly strong feeling that there arose from the text of I Samuel a theological insight, which is also a psychological insight, into the ways human and divine will intersect.

There came a most satisfying moment, after reading and researching and testing out ideas and feeling I was ‘on to something’, when, well into the time allotted for actually writing the dissertation, and after numerous false starts, my supervisor finally approved, the exact formulation of ‘what I was setting out to show’. It came out as this: I intend to show how character psychology in I Samuel subverts the explicit categories of ‘word of God’ and ‘prophetic authority’. In other words, there is a subjective interference in Samuel’s intercession between the Lord and Israel, and the text gives us insights into Samuel’s motivation at both a conscious and an unconscious level. An implication of this is that the reader is made responsible for interpreting the word of God through a critical interpretation of Samuel’s transmission of it: his authority cannot go unquestioned.

The model for the themes of interpretation and also misinterpretation as well as the existence of an unexpressed inner world in the portrayal of character is offered at the very outset of the Samuel story, before his birth, and, as it were, attending his conception. Eli witnesses but misinterprets Hannah’s bitter prayer for a son, one part of which is revealed in the text, the other is not: it belongs to Hannah’s unexpressed inner world. Eli corrects his interpretation of Hannah’s behaviour when she explains herself, but neither we nor Eli have been made privy to all of Hannah’s prayer. Eli blesses her petition without knowing what she was asking for, and becomes instrumental in the Lord’s answering of Hannah: “then the woman went on her way and she ate” (1:18a). What is established here is an indication that the working out of divine will and purpose in the narrative operates through character relationship and through an inner world of character which remains to some important degree unknowable.

Samuel’s revelation in the night (I Samuel 3) most compellingly expresses the inwardness, the psychological dimension of the narrative, by the simple device of having Samuel think that it is Eli’s voice that calls him. The implications are profound. For the young boy, the voice of the Lord and the voice of Eli are indistinguishable. We recall how Eli’s blessing of Hannah’s prayer effectively articulates the Lord’s response to her request. Simply put, the text indicates that at some level the word of the Lord takes the form of human discourse. It is heard by Samuel as Eli’s voice until Eli himself ascribes it to the Lord: that is, until Eli interprets it as the word of the Lord.

Clearly this kind of literary reading is responding to characteristics of the text which open up interpretative possibilities without explicitly directing the readers’ conclusions. It is continued on next page.
a response to aspects of the text which remain 'open'. We cannot know what the text 'intended', but we can deduce that it has not taken pains to close itself to such interpretation. Indications of a hinterland of inwardness in the character portrayal, however, seem to me inescapable, and with this goes an indication that the word of God has to be interpreted as in some way belonging to that inner world. And just as a degree of unknowableness inheres in the inner world of the other, so we are alerted to the possibility that the word of God may be subject to some unknown refraction. It will be contextualized by character, and character is never fully transparent. After his call, and once recognized as prophet in Shiloh after Eli’s eclipse, we read in I Samuel 4:1a, ‘and the word of Samuel came to all Israel’. In this detail the word of the Lord, literally and rather ambiguously, is assimilated with Samuel’s word. The word of God does not so much come to Samuel as from him.

The problem of this conflation of the word of God with the word of Samuel in the great kingship debate that will sow the seeds of Saul’s downfall is played out in chapter eight. Here quite explicitly the text subverts any certainty that the word of God is relayed intact to the people. We see it in fact refracted through Samuel’s consciousness and coloured by his less altruistic concerns.

How did working on this thesis help me understand my ambivalence about authority? It reassured me that in our scriptural tradition the divine will remains ultimately unconfined by any single explicit interpretation and so escapes even the overarching authority of the text. One effect of this is that a door is left open to natural ethics within the framework of divine commandment: as readers we are obliged to exercise choice in making the interpretations the text requires of us, because everywhere interpretation is necessary to disengage the divine voice from the human voice into which it is continually elided.

And perhaps Saul’s undoing began the moment he accepted Samuel’s authority too uncritically?

RABBI TONY HAMMOND is Rabbi at Bromley Reform Synagogue. He graduated from LBC-CJE in the summer of 2005 after some years teaching English Literature and more recently Jewish literature and history at the LJCC, where he was Director of Education.

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LETTER

HERITAGE

Sir,

I AM ONCE AGAIN FLATTERED that Raymond Goldman singles me out at such length in the pages of MANNA (Winter 2005) as deserving rebuke for my religious stance. In his review of Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain’s valuable anthology Reform Judaism and Modernity, Mr Goldman takes particular exception to aspects of my post-theistic thinking. It seems that I have become something of a belle noire for him in my attempts over the years to integrate psychological insights into Jewish theology and practice, and articulate some of the complexities of a contemporary, mature Jewish religiosity. He confesses to feeling ‘violated’ by these explorations. So that sounds to me as if I must be on the right track — because radical theological thinking may well involve, for better or worse, an assault on some of the old pieties. The Midrash of Abraham smashing his father’s idols is an ancient recognition of this.

Post-theistic theological thinking is challenging. But the iconoclasm of Spinoza, Nachman Krochmal’s Guide for the Perplexed of our Time (1841) which articulates his view of an evolving God, Mordecai Kaplan’s ‘re-construction’ of Judaism around a belief in God not as a being but as a quality or process, Richard Rubenstein’s radical post-Holocaust critique of traditional understandings of God — all these feel like an honourable heritage to which to belong. And while I am name-dropping, I could mention a host of major religious thinkers — from Kant and Kierkegaard through Martin Buber to Paul Tillich, Bishop John Robinson, Don Cupitt and Karen Armstrong — whose work has blossomed into a fertile post-theistic theological garden, and to whom I also feel indebted.

Raymond Goldman consoles himself by imagining that my own small contributions to this rich heritage can be dismissed as ‘maverick’. I console myself that ‘maverick’ means ‘an unorthodox or independent-minded person’ (Oxford English Reference Dictionary) and that if progressive Judaism is to face with integrity the challenges of Modernity, then we might need more, not fewer such individuals.

Rabbi Howard Cooper,
Finchley, London

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LAST WORD

William Wolff

IN THE MOST SPECTACULAR replay in recent Anglo Jewish history, the London Beth Din has refused to accept the conversion of the Leicester born Helen Sagal by a prominent Israeli beth din, headed by the Chief Rabbi of Lod. Nearly two decades ago the Newcastle born Paula Cohen was dealt the same diktat by that Beth Din. In a year long campaign that repeatedly made national headlines, she pummelled Dayan Ehrentreu’s court against the ropes but failed to knock it out.

The lasting result of that campaign was that the communal school which refused to treat the Cohen children as Jewish had its reputation so damaged locally that it was forced to close. That is a fate which may give the JFS, which is now refusing admission to the Sagal child, a solid portion of health food for thought. And the arbitrary ways of the London Beth Din were held up to public inspection and for a while led to a change of tone. Now revealed again is the chaos of the system in which one beth din, contrary to Talmudic precept, merrily countermands and contradicts the rulings of another. Shown up once more is also the injustice of a system in which there is no appeal against the decisions of any of them.

That is why the astonishing feature of the current replay is the way that Beth Din has now forgotten everything and learned nothing. Above all, its “judges” appear to continue to treat their every hunch as conclusive and all evidence as irrelevant. With their carefree habits, could even one of them last five minutes on the licensing bench at Piddletrenthide?

☆

ARIEL SHARON IN THE MIDST of one of those transformation scenes in which fate specialises with even more drama than do fairy tales? For his pitiless return of bullets for bombs he is the most widely hated leader Israel has produced in nearly half a century. But it is the most widely hated leader Israel has produced in nearly half a century. And that will be the first time that by becoming one more extremist who delivers that of which moderates can only dream?

☆

THE UNIQUE WORDS WERE sweeter music to a rabbi’s ears than the Ode to Joy in that Beethoven symphony:

“You are the boss,” said one of my paymasters to me. He was fitting out the new prayer room in one of my German congregations. And he wanted to know whether to put up a mechitzah, a partition between the men’s seats and the women’s. Now he was taking a firm no for an answer.

When I first came to that congregation, there was a partition. The worshippers who came by tram, train or bus to the Shabbat morning service, fondly imagined that the mere crossing of the building's threshold made them ultra-orthodox. So I was ready to face a revolt when I said I was not prepared to preach to a curtain and pulled it aside. The response got no further than a glum mutter.

This time was different. As the word got around, more and more women from 17 to well over 70 started to pour in for services. Any week now they will outnumber the men. The only comparable experience is the relief of pulling a tooth that has been causing constant agony.

☆

AT SIX O’CLOCK ON A SUN gluttoned Wednesday morning in June, one Leo Baeck College student was among a motley 20,000 or 30,000 gathered in a park in Cardiff. He, like them, had come to see Pope John Paul II on his only visit to Britain. Four hours passed as four minutes. At 10 o’clock they heard his noisy helicopter, and ten minutes later John Paul was driven past in his popemobile. With his broad cheekbones he looked like my uncle Stephan, only a lot more tired. His eyes were sharp and did not stray over our heads. Their beam of attention kept going straight on us with intense interest, as if he was asking: “Who are all these people who have turned out to see me?” I, for one, was playing truant from the Talmud class of Rabbi Dr. Louis Jacobs whom I revere, because I wanted to see this charismatic leader in action. Another ten minutes later, with the first sound of his voice, he turned that park into a cathedral, and the crowd into a congregation.

One memory of that morning on the newly mown grass continues to haunt me every time I go into the pulpit. It is of thousands of teens and twenties cheering the Pope to the echo for his homily. And then going home in pairs to snub his message of no bed-hopping and no contraceptives. I knew from that moment that no sermon of mine will ever stop one congregant from scoffing jam tarts instead of coconut kisses at Pesach time.

Thank you, John Paul, for one of the abiding lessons of your memorable pontificate.

☆

THE LARGEST TUBE I HAVE ever seen on a post caught my glance as I entered my hotel, one of a medium priced German chain, in Bremen. The tube was a few yards to the right of the door. But could it be, would it be...... ? I let the revolving door spin me back into the street. And yes, it was a six inches long mezuzah. The young man on reception duty did not know it was there, what it was , or who put it there. A “frummer” who regarded mezuzot as amulets and could not bear to spend a night without one? Unlikely, I decided. He would have had a little one in his luggage, and put it temporarily inside or outside the door of his room. That leaves the Lubavitch Chassidim as the only ones who go in for these ostentatious gestures. As for the point of putting it there, whatever text I consult, I can find only futility.

RABBI WILLIAM WOLFF is the regional rabbi in North East Germany. He has previously served congregations in Wimbledon, Brighton, Reading, Milton Keynes and Newcastle upon Tyne. He trained at Leo Baeck College, and started in the rabbinate as an assistant to the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn at the West London Synagogue.
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The Last Goodbye is an exhibition by the Jewish Museum, Finchley, which tells the remarkable story of 10,000 unaccompanied children rescued from Nazi Europe on the Kindertransport.

The Last Goodbye records this extraordinary story through evocative photographs, documents and personal testimonies. The exhibition casts a vivid light on the experiences of these young refugees, the heart-rending decision of their parents to send them away, and their difficulties in adjusting to life in a foreign country. Tracing the rise of Nazism, the exhibition highlights core issues relating to prejudice, racism, conformity and indifference. It also demonstrates the courage and kindness of those individuals who opened their homes to these refugee children.

KINDERTRANSPORT EVENTS AT FINCHLEY

June 9th 2005 at 8pm Refugee Voices: From Enemy Aliens to British Subjects.
Dr Anthony Grenville will consider the barriers to immigration that confronted the Jewish refugees from Nazism who tried to find refuge in Britain after 1933.

Dr Bea Lewkowicz will introduce and screen her film Refugee Voices: Moments and Memories based on interviews with fourteen Jewish refugees and survivors who settled in various parts of Britain.

Admission £5 (Museum Friends and students £4)
Telephone 020 8349 1143
Email enquiries@jewishmuseum.org.uk

ALL MY LOVED ONES

July 12th 2005 at 8pm
This poignant feature film, directed by Matej Minac, tells the story of a Czech-Jewish family during World War II and how Nicholas Winton, a man who saved hundreds of Czech-Jewish children, helped to rescue them from the Nazis. In Czech with English subtitles.

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