בס"ד

BERESHITH
"In The Beginning"

A Newsletter for Beginners, by Beginners

Vol. XX No. 1
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בראשית

MY MOTHER WAS RAISED BY COMMUNISTS

Enid Langbert

My mother was raised by Communists. My father by assimilated German Jews. There wasn't a lot of Jewish learning going on in my house. And there wasn't much in the synagogues that I irregularly attended in my youth that piqued my interest. How is it, then, that I now attend a very traditional synagogue? That is a useful question to ponder.

We are approaching Rosh Hashanah, our New Year. It is a time to reflect upon where we are and where we wish to be next year. It is a time to make Rosh Hashanah "resolutions."

How do Rosh Hashanah resolutions differ from the ones we make, and seldom keep, on that "other" new year in January? The answer, of course, lies in the difference between, on the one hand, a celebration of the day on which G-d created humankind and, on the other hand, an arbitrary secular system of counting. On the day of the latter New Year, it is wholly appropriate to evaluate our material progress and consider giving up smoking, losing 10 pounds, or saving more money. On the former, we must consider our soul and evaluate our individual progress in relation to the overall purpose for which G-d created the human species. *(cont. on p. 4)*

THE UNIFYING TERUAH

Rabbi Barry Gelman

On both days of Rosh Hashanah, we read excerpts from the book of Genesis. Many have wondered what special connection the rabbis saw between the book of Genesis (specifically the events of the life of Abraham and Sarah) and Rosh Hashanah that they chose these particular chapters.

Although many answers are given to this question, I would like to suggest an answer based on the introduction to the book of Genesis written by Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (known as the Netziv). The Netziv was the head of the famed Volozhin Yeshiva for almost 40 years -- until it was closed by the Russian government in 1892. He was a man who went to great lengths to maintain unity between the different factions of the Jewish community. He once wrote that the idea of separating the Jewish community into two communities, one observant and the other not, was the equivalent of *(cont. on p. 2)*

TRAVELING FORWARD

Harriet Edleson

After September 11th, I was in complete denial.

How could the greatest country in the world -- the one that had given me and millions of others the freedom that so many of us, at times, take for granted -- be attacked? It was unthinkable and, at least for me, unimaginable.

But life had to go on. In an era when a large percentage of Americans were reluctant to fly and the airline industry was collapsing -- I was writing about travel! I was terrified. Yet, I barely acknowledged this fact to myself or to anyone else. I refused to admit how tough things were and plowed forward.

In February 2002, I signed on with *The New York Times* to write for the travel section. And write I did -- for that newspaper and any other publication that would publish my work. The money, however, just trickled in, leaving me wondering how I was going to pay for my Upper East Side apartment, not to mention just living. *(cont. on p. 3)*

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BERESHITH is dedicated in loving memory of Larry Beck, z"l, by his family.

THE UNIFYING TERUAH *(cont. from p. 1)*...swords being thrust into his body.

The Netziv begins his introduction by teaching that Genesis, the first of the five books of Moses, is also called *Sefer Hayashar* -- The Book of the Upright, Straight or Honest. He says that: "Rabbi Yochanan explains the reason for this name is that it is the book of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were called *Yesharim* (the plural of *yashar*)." The Netziv proceeds to explain why our ancestors were called *Yesharim* (Upright Ones), rather than *Tzaddikim* (Righteous Ones) or *Hasidim* (Pious Ones): The destruction of the Second Temple took place in what the Torah refers to as a "perverse and crooked generation" (Deuteronomy 32:3), which the Netziv explained to mean that while there were both *Tzaddikim* and *Hasidim*, as well as Torah scholars, they were "not upright in the ways of the world."

The Netziv then elaborates and explains that these supposedly righteous and pious individuals had such a level of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred) in their hearts toward each other that they suspected heresy of anyone who disagreed with them. Such hatred eventually led to violence and other evils, and eventually led to the destruction of the Temple. "This," the Netziv pointed out, "is the justification for the destruction: for G-d is *Yashar* and G-d does not tolerate this type of 'righteous person.' G-d prefers people who are *Yesharim*, not those who act crookedly, even for the sake of Heaven…"

The greatness of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was not that they were *Tzaddikim* or *Hasidim*, or even lovers of G-d to the highest degree possible. But, rather, according to the Netziv, that they remained *Yesharim* throughout their lives. "Thus they behaved respectfully even toward the most despicable idol-worshippers. They treated them with love, and cared about their well-being. This kind of behavior sustains the creation. We therefore see Abraham pray for Sodom even though he hated the Sodomites for their wickedness, as he explained to the King of Sodom. Nevertheless, he desired their well-being...."

Genesis is therefore known, according to what we have just seen from the Netziv, as the Book of *Yesharim,* "the Upright Ones," because of the central characters -- the matriarchs and the patriarchs.

What a powerful and daring action it is to call for supporting efforts for communal unity. The courage that the Netziv showed in writing this and, even more, by living in this manner, is a model for us all. The Netziv claims that Abraham was willing to go out on a limb and argue with G-d for the sake of people outside his faith community. How much more so should we endeavor for unity within the Jewish community?

The importance of Jewish unity is reflected in our custom of how we sound the shofar on Rosh Hashanah.

It is quite clear in Jewish law, that on Rosh Hashanah we need to sound a *Tekiah* followed by a *Teruah,* followed by a *Tekiah*. This must be done three times. At the time of the compilation of the Talmud, the sages knew that a *Tekiah* was supposed to be sounded as one solid note. But, the question arose as to what, exactly, does a *Teruah* sound like. There are three opinions:

1. What we call a *Teruah* (three medium-length notes)
2. What we call a *Sh'varim* (nine quick notes)
3. What we call a *Sh'varim–Teruah* (three medium notes followed by nine quick notes)

One must ask an obvious question: How could we not know the sound of a *Teruah*? If G-d taught Moses all of the laws on Mount Sinai, including how to sound the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, and the shofar was sounded on every Rosh Hashanah from that moment on, it is hard to imagine that the details of the mitzvah would suddenly be forgotten.

Rav Hai Gaon (969 – 1038, Babylon) suggests a beautiful answer. It is not that a doubt first arose in Talmudic times, but rather that different communities had accepted and passed down the tradition of their *Teruah*, while at the same time recognizing that there were other traditions that were also valid.

The resolution of the Talmudic question was decreed by Rabbi Abahu (a third century Palestinian sage), who decreed that all three versions should be sounded. This is why we sound thirty shofar blasts at one time during the service. Rabbi Abahu saw the diverging opinions, and felt that it really did not look very good if each community did their own thing, so he established a rule that all communities should follow all the customs. This act of Rabbi Abahu, which was universally accepted, is one of the greatest examples of the creation of unity in all of Jewish history.

I once learned from a very wise man that if ideology becomes so blinding that we cannot see human beings in the followers of a different ideology, then we have gone too far. If that happens, we have moved from worshiping G-d within a certain ideology to worshiping the ideology itself.

Rabbi Abahu understood that all three ways of sounding the *Teruah* were correct, because all the communities involved were focused solely on fulfilling the commandment to sound the shofar, and on serving G-d to their fullest ability.

"SOUND THE SHOFAR OF UNITY"

And this was what made our fore-fathers and foremothers the great people that they were -- they were able to stay focused on the goal of doing G-d's will, even during the most trying circumstances.

In the spirit of the *Yesharim*, the Upright Ones, who find delight in unity and commonality of purpose, may this year be a year when we reach greatness as a community, united in service of G-d.

Rabbi Barry Gelman is the Rabbi of United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston, Texas.

TRAVELING FORWARD *(cont. from p. 1)...*

Six months later, my father suffered a severe stroke, and, within a month, he was gone. I was stunned, feeling as if I had been hit by a truck -- the kind that carries six cars. I wanted to recite *Kaddish* for him, but my grade school Hebrew had all but abandoned me. More than anything else, I was numb. Unmarried and living in Manhattan for just two years, I went through the motions of life. Luckily, my mother still lived in our family's home, a mere 37 minutes away by commuter train, and she needed me. I had another reason to live.

Winter roared in with temperatures hovering around freezing. After having attended Lincoln Square Synagogue's Beginners High Holy Day Services at the New York Historical Society earlier in the fall and, afterwards, Torah classes in the city, a friend invited me to spend Shabbat with a family he was close with in Brooklyn. Actually, he'd invited me several times before that, even before September 11th, but, new to Manhattan, I was not eager to take the train to Brooklyn -- for any reason.

That day, going for coffee with him on 85th Street, I had a change of heart, "Yes, I will come for Shabbos."

By this time, I was a regular at parasha classes throughout the city, eagerly absorbing as much as I could. I read everything I could find and attended Shabbat dinners in the city from time to time. I had also attended the NJOP Crash Course in Hebrew Reading at Kehilath Jeshurun to revive the near-dormant Hebrew I had studied for two years when I was 10 or 12. By the time I arrived in Brooklyn, I thought I knew a few things.

But it was as if I knew nothing -- minimal Hebrew, a few words of Yiddish. Fortunately, the *berachot* (blessings) for wine, challah and candle lighting were staples in my Jewish vocabulary.

I had been raised very Jewish as far as I was concerned. It became apparent, however, after I moved to Manhattan that I had just skated across the surface of Judaism. Despite my Jewish upbringing, what did I know? I didn't realize what I had been missing. My soul -- once exposed to information -- thirsted for more. I drank of the spiritual waters, satiating my soul.

But it wasn't easy. At the Shabbat dinner in Brooklyn, I was somewhat dazed, then beleaguered, as I wandered through the maze of *zemirot* (Shabbat songs) that penetrated my soul, *Divrei Torah* that nourished my intellect, and new Shabbat friends with whom to share it all.

Upon my arrival, my host's 15-year-old daughter bounded up the stairs to speak with me, about anything and everything, telling me definitively, "We're Chassidish!" I didn't stop to think much about what that might have meant. All I knew was that I liked these people: They were my people, and that was enough for me.

Spring came, and I returned for another Shabbat. By the fall, my host was calling me regularly on Thursdays to ask if I was coming for Shabbat. When Sukkot came, the phone rang again, asking if I was coming for *Yuntif* (the festive days). Indeed, I was. Sometime between Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot, a kind rabbi from Chabad agreed to come to my apartment to *kasher* my kitchen. I had called several times until I reached him, almost begging him to do the job. I just couldn't spend the rest of the holidays at home unless he did.

And so I read as many books as I could at my host's home in Brooklyn, learning about everything ranging from *Taharat Ha'mishpachah* -- the Jewish Laws of Family Purity -- to commentaries on the parasha of the week, from Rashi to the Ramban. I continued to attend classes in Manhattan through NJOP and the Hineni Heritage Center, as well as Aish Hatorah on the Upper East and Upper West Side and the Manhattan Jewish Experience.

And so it was a beginning: Keeping Shabbat and kosher as best I could. I waded in so as not to jump out, as the advice goes. The beginning has now become an advanced beginning, and, with G-d's help, I will continue to grow spiritually.

Three years after that first Shabbat in Brooklyn, I began to say the *Shemoneh Esrei*, the silent *Amidah* (at first mostly in English), witnessed two of my friends marry, signed my first book contract, and felt like I had come home to my Jewish roots.

My grandparents and my father would be as proud of me as my mother is.

A Manhattan-based writer, Harriet Edleson is author of the forthcoming book, The Little Black Book of Washington, DC, *to be published by Peter Pauper Press, 2007. She can be reached at Harriet333@aol.com.*

MY MOTHER *(cont. from p. 1)...* This sounds grandiose. But it is not, for the simple reason that there is no dichotomy between inner and outer life. For us on Earth, the spiritual manifests itself in the material. And that is why I ponder, at this time of year, the path that led me from secularism to traditionalism.

I believe that my parents and the synagogues that I attended when I was young were well-meaning. They tried to make my life easy and fun by eliminating *Halacha* (Jewish law and ritual). But, in the process, they lost spirituality. That was why I, and great numbers of my generation, who were not interested in a life that was simply "easy and fun," became disaffected with Judaism. Those of us who yearned for spirituality believed that we had to seek it elsewhere.

My first intimation that there was more to Judaism than was dreamt of in my philosophy, came in a Reconstructionist synagogue in Woodstock, New York, filled with Jewish mystics of all flavors and denominations: Buddhists, Yogis, Hindus, Sufis, Jews who had meditated, Jews who had left their bodies, Jews who had taken mind-altering drugs, Jews who had read Tarot cards, Jews who had sought gurus in India and Egypt, Jews who had studied astrology, etc., etc. I discovered, with a shock, that the spirituality that I had sought in all the other teachings was alive and well and living in Judaism. Moreover, the Jewish teaching had a warm familiarity that had been absent in all the others. Even if I did not, at the time, know any more Hebrew than I did Sanskrit, I knew that this was my teaching. This was my voice.

Then I met Rabbi Buchwald. From him I received the second, and even more surprising, gift of Judaism -- *Halacha*. Nothing I had ever studied, in an Ivy League college and three different graduate school programs, or anything I had ever experienced, as a poet, Revolutionary, Hippie, Mystic, Lawyer and Judge, could prepare me for the shock of what Rabbi Buchwald taught me -- that my life could be enhanced, even saved, through the traditions of Jewish ritual.

Unfortunately, all of this happened after my children were adults. My children, like me, grew up in a home in which there wasn't a lot of Jewish learning going on. You can imagine the joy I felt a couple of years ago when my daughter-in-law told me that I had inspired her to send my three granddaughters to study in the Jewish Center in Tokyo, Japan, where they live. It is a wonderful place. Some of the children there, like my granddaughters, have two American Jewish parents. But there is also a rainbow of others -- children with one American parent and one Japanese parent, children with one Japanese parent and one Ethiopian parent, and children with two Japanese parents.

This summer, my whole family, three children, three spouses and five grandchildren spent a week together at a lovely resort in Maine. It was what my mother would have called a really "Goyishe" place. On Friday evening, I sat at a long table with my granddaughters. We recited the Shabbat blessing together and sang a rousing chorus of "*V'shamru Bnai Israel et ha'Shabbat*" (Exodus 31:16, the commandment to the People of Israel, instructing them to keep the Shabbat). It may have been the first time that the Sabbath was welcomed like a Queen at Linnekin Bay, Maine.

Enid Langbert is Principal Court Attorney in the NY Supreme Court and a proud grandmother.

Illustrations by Wendy Dunn

בראשית *Bereshith: "In the Beginning" is edited under the direction of Sarah Rochel Hewitt of the* ***National Jewish Outreach Program****. Special Beginners Services are conducted at synagogues throughout the United States to introduce those with limited backgrounds to the beauty of the traditional Hebrew service. For more information regarding the Beginners Service closest to your home, to establish a local Beginners Service, or to learn more about NJOP programs, please write or call: 989 Sixth Avenue, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018,* ***646-871-4444****, e-mail info@njop.org or visit* ***www.njop.org.***

Readers: This is your newsletter and we'd like to hear from you. Article contributions are always welcome.

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DATED MATTER

A CALL TO BE JEWISH

C. King

Like the call of the New Year heralded by the shofar, can one receive a call to be Jewish? A call to accept the Torah as was done by the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai? With absolute conviction, I say yes! I believe, just as the blast of the shofar is a call to the Jew, stirring his Jewish spirit, so is the Shema to the proselyte; a whisper awakening his inherent Jewish soul.

But how can this be? Especially in a case such as mine, where there is no real prior exposure to Judaism? While I would never attempt – in such early stages of my study – to explain my belief through the profound Kabbalistic interpretations of the transcendent, I will make my argument on the seemingly simplistic, yet solid faith based assertion, "It is G-d's will."

As a child growing up in Barbados, where I reside, I have always been seen as somewhat enigmatic by family and friends - but by none more so than myself. I could never understand why I felt as if I didn't fit in. And why, the more that I did, superficially, the more bereft my spirit felt.

I mean, if I didn't fit in, in my own country, where would I fit in? In this part of the African Diaspora terms such as the racially tinged 'minority' is a misnomer. People come to visit my island and don't want to leave! How could I be so ungrateful?

I seemed to be in a constant fight for self-determination which would hopefully lead to acceptance and ultimately, the cornerstone of happiness, contentment. But it never came. Indeed, my early thirties brought more confusion than my angst-filled teenage years.

It was then, with my intellect defeated, emotions ragged, that I heard it; the compelling whisper of my unraveling soul, asking truly painful but insightful questions. "Why don't you belong? Why do you feel spiritually bankrupt while living the best moral life that you can? Why are you so dis-satisfied when you should be proud of the overall monotheistic mores that largely represent your island?" "Because," came the answer, "there is more."

So I began my quest. It took me from churches through the Caribbean to Europe and from mosques in London to Turkey, while I learnt about obscure faiths such as the Christodelphian movement, mainstream Christian dogmas and Islam. The whispers encouraged my journey. They never grew wary of my indecision nor my rejection of the faiths I was shown. They already knew what I soon would.

That the need to answer the ubiquitous humanistic question, "Who am I?," is the soul trying to break free of its mortal bounds; the soul trying to reconnect with the Creator of its very existence – The One and Only G-d. It was only a matter of time.

Therefore when I stepped into the Synagogue in Lincoln Square in March 2006, I knew my search was over because the whispers stopped. When Rabbi Buchwald looked up and said "'Shalom" that morning of Shabbat, the Shema was no longer undecipherable but one clear, beautiful note, crystal in its clarity of sound and meaning. *"Hear O Israel, the Lord is our G-d. The Lord is One. Blessed be He."* I was home.

For the first time in my life, I don't question who I am. I don't feel far from G-d and I don't feel lost, even with the obstacle of distance and lack of communal support. (In Barbados, the lone Synagogue, with no Rabbi, is more of a tourist attraction due to its historical significance.) But I remain undeterred. I am very cognizant that the path to conversion will be littered with sacrifices, as showing devotion to G-d through a Jewish way of life will seem retrogressive and contrary to those I love.

But the example of Abraham who was willing to prove his love for G-d by offering his beloved son Isaac, reminds me of G-d's mercy to those who love and serve Him. Because of his willingness to put G-d first, Abraham was rewarded more highly than he could ever have imagined, securing a lasting covenant. *"All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your offspring, because you have listened to My voice." Genesis 23:18.* In other words, to hear G-d's call is a blessing, but if one listens and does as He wishes, you will be truly blessed.

I look forward to the year ahead. With the new beginnings ushered in by Rosh Hashanah, I am hopeful of my Jewish future. My connection to Him grows stronger every day with my reading of the Torah. It is, as it always will be, the greatest source of inspiration. I see the New Year as propitious; creating more reasons to be thankful, while allowing for a deep retrospection - an exquisite opportunity for renewal and growth.

To all Beginners and those already blessed to be Jewish *"L'shanah tovah tikatevu v'taichatemu*! May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year!"

"THE CALL OF THE SHOFAR"

Cindi King is a resident of Barbados, and, until recently, was a major TV and radio personality on the island.

CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

MARRIAGES

Susan Hecht and Lonny Bardash
Mim (Miriam) Senft and Shlomo Ben Yaacov
Ilene Freier and David Brookler
Patricia Mechoulam and Marc Zilkha
Sarah Rivkah Goodman and Zvi Gewirtz
Mazal Tov to parents Barbara and Shlomo Dov Gewirtz
Ruti Haleva and Mark Heilman
Raquel Smith and Steven Herz
Lisa Axelrod and Steven Jaffee
Amy Nelkin and Mitchell Kase
Tzippy Stern and Gedaliah Levy
Mazal Tov to parents Naomi Hildebrand and Barry Stern
Neva Peretz and Mark Marmer
Kayla Cooper and Leonard Rosen
Kellie Price and Elisha Rothman (oops 2/06)
Tamara King and Michael Stark (oops 12/05)
Mazal Tov to parents Joan and Arnold Stark
Mayelin (Maye) Rodriguez and Dr. Mark Vaynkhadler
Tsivi Kobre and Yitzchak Zuckerman
Mazal Tov to parents Miriam and Jeff Zuckerman

BIRTHS

Tamarah and Tsuriel Bialeh, on the birth of a boy, Yuval Yair
Mazal Tov to grandparents
Anne Bossewitch and Ken Bossewitch
Chava and Naftali Burnham, on the birth of a boy, Ariyeh Aitan
Arona and Steve Gittleson, on the birth of a boy, Gadiel David
Lisa and Paul Glazer, on the birth of twins,
Eliana Rivkah and Michael Yaakov
Miriam and Rabbi Ephraim Osgood, on the birth of a girl,
Dina Faiga
Davi Osgood and Chris Heagney, on the birth of a girl,
Sadie Fay
Mazal Tov to grandparents Marilyn and Armin Osgood
Dr. Tina Sichrovsky and Dr. Boaz Kurtis,
on the birth of a boy, Tubia Ariel
Sara and David Wolkenfeld, on the birth of a boy,
Shraga Feivel Noam
Mazal Tov to grandmother Dr. Jo Lang Wolkenfeld

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Noah Daniel Adler
Mazal Tov to parents Karen and Stuart Adler
Michaela Rachel Elias
Mazal Tov to parents Sheryl and Ernest Elias
Olivia Devillers
Mazal Tov to parents Carla and Claude Devillers
David Faust
Mazal Tov to grandparents Adair and Norton Goodman
Moshe Yitzchak Bezalel Jacober
Mazal Tov to parents Vardi and Dr. Chaim Eliezer Jacober
Amitai Aviv Ruskin
Mazal Tov to parents Maura and Adam Ruskin
Daniel Sokol
Mazal Tov to parents Miriam and Stacy Sokol

SPEEDY RECOVERY/REFUAH SH'LAIMA

D'vorah Deena bat Malka

CONDOLENCES

Dr. Janice Bennett, on the loss of her father,
Dr. Jack Drandell
Susan Blond, on the loss of her husband, Michael Feiner
To the family of Irv Elias
Susan Esken, on the loss of her father, Howard Kent
To the family of Paul Kaufman
David Landau, on the loss of his mother, Queenie Landau
To the family of Phyllis Nevins
Robert Novig, on the loss of his father, Abraham Novig
To the family of Sara Rofheart
Michele and Nina Sacharow, on the loss of their husband
and father, Larry Sacharow
Susy Sarfaty, on the loss of her father, Roberto Sarfaty Salong
Ellen Silber, on the loss of her mother, Harriet Silber
Robert Stark, on the loss of his father, Irving Stark
Amy Tarshis, on the loss of her father, Julius Tarshis

THANK YOU

To Dr. Leonard Davidman and Dr. Stuart Blaustein who
conducted the Beginners Service with much devotion
during the summer.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Fri September 1, 2006 -
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 7:11 PM
Mincha . . . . . 7:15 PM

Sat September 2, 2006 - 9th of Elul
Ki Teitzei
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 6:00 PM
Mincha . . . . . 7:00 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 8:11 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 7:10 PM

Mon September 4, 2006 - 11th of Elul
LABOR DAY
Morning Services . . . . . 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Fri September 8, 2006 - 15th of Elul
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 6:59 PM
Mincha . . . . . 7:05 PM

Sat September 9, 2006 - 16th of Elul
Ki Tavo
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 5:50 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:50 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 7:59 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 6:55 PM

Fri September 15, 2006 - 22nd of Elul
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 6:47 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:50 PM

Sat September 16, 2006 - 23rd of Elul
Nitzavim-Vayeilech
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 5:35 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:35 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 7:47 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 6:45 PM
Early Selichot. . . . . 10:00 PM
Late Selichot . . . . . 12:50 AM

Sun September 17, 2006 - 24th of Elul
Morning Services 7:10 & 8:30 AM

Mon September 18, 2006 - 25th of Elul
Selichot & Morning Services
. . . . . 6:40 & 7:30 AM

Tue September 19, 2006 - 26th of Elul
Selichot & Morning Services
. . . . . 6:40 & 7:30 AM

Wed September 20, 2006 - 27th of Elul
Selichot & Morning Services
. . . . . 6:40 & 7:30 AM

Thu September 21, 2006 - 28th of Elul
Selichot & Morning Services
. . . . . 6:40 & 7:30 AM
Late Selichot . . . . . 9:00 PM

Fri September 22, 2006 - 29th of Elul
EREV ROSH HASHANA
Selichot & Services. . . . . 5:45 & 6:45 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 6:36 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:40 PM

Sat September 23, 2006 - 1st of Tishrei
ROSH HASHANA 5767
Kollel Minyan . . . . . 7:30 AM
Main Sanctuary . . . . . 7:45 AM
Ballroom. . . . . 7:45 AM
Beginners. . . . . 9:00 AM
Daf Yomi. . . . . .5:40 & after Maariv
Mincha . . . . . 6:25 PM
Yom Tov candles after . . . . . 7:36 PM
Maariv . . . . . 7:36 PM

Sun September 24, 2006 - 2nd of Tishrei
ROSH HASHANA
Kollel Minyan . . . . . 7:30 AM
Main Sanctuary . . . . . 7:45 AM
Ballroom. . . . . 7:45 AM
Beginners. . . . . 9:00 AM
Tashlich . . . . . 5:35 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:35 PM
Maariv . . . . . 7:36 PM
Yom Tov ends. . . . . 7:36 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 6:25 PM

Mon September 25, 2006 - 3rd of Tishrei
TZOM GEDALIAH
Fast Begins . . . . . 5:34 AM
Selichot & Services. . . . . 6:20 & 7:15 AM
Mincha . . . . . 6:15 PM
Fast Ends. . . . . 7:20 PM

Tue September 26, 2006 - 4th of Tishrei
Selichot & Morning Services
. . . . . 6:30 & 7:15 AM

Wed September 27, 2006 - 5th of Tishrei
Selichot & Morning Services
. . . . . 6:30 & 7:15 AM

Thu September 28, 2006 - 6th of Tishrei
Selichot & Morning Services
. . . . . 6:30 & 7:15 AM

Fri September 29, 2006 - 7th of Tishrei
Selichot & Morning Services
. . . . . 6:30 & 7:15 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 6:24 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:30 PM

Sat September 30, 2006 - 8th of Tishrei
***Ha'Azinu* SHABBAT SHUVA**
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Mincha . . . . . 5:55 PM
Shabbat Shuva Drasha . . . . . 6:20 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 7:24 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 6:20 PM

Sun October 1, 2006 - 9th of Tishrei
EREV YOM KIPPUR
Selichot & Services. . . . . 7:00 & 8:30 AM
Mincha . . . . . 1:30, 3:00 & 4:10 PM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 6:20 PM
Kol Nidre . . . . . 6:25 PM
Daf Yomi after Maariv

Mon October 2, 2006 - 10th of Tishrei
YOM KIPPUR
Kollel Minyan . . . . . 7:30 AM
Main Sanctuary . . . . . 8:00 AM
Ballroom. . . . . 9:00 AM
Beginners. . . . . 9:00 AM
Final Shofar Blast. . . . . 7:20 PM

Fri October 6, 2006 - 14th of Tishrei
EREV SUKKOT
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 6:12 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:15 PM
Begin Meal in Sukkah after . . . . 7:01 PM

Sat October 7, 2006 - 15th of Tishrei
SUKKOT
Morning Services . . . . . 8:00 & 9:00 AM
Daf Yomi. . . . . 5:15 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:00 PM
Yom Tov candles after . . . . . 7:12 PM
Maariv . . . . . 7:12 PM
Begin Meal in Sukkah after . . . . 7:12 PM

Sun October 8, 2006 - 16th of Tishrei
SUKKOT
Morning Services . . . . . 8:00 & 9:00 AM
Daf Yomi. . . . . 5:30 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:15 PM
Maariv . . . . . 7:12 PM
Yom Tov ends. . . . . 7:12 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 6:05 PM

Mon October 9, 2006 - 17th of Tishrei
SUKKOT (CHOL HAMOED)
COLUMBUS DAY
Morning Services . . 6:45, 7:30 & 8:30 AM

Tue October 10, 2006 - 18th of Tishrei
SUKKOT (CHOL HAMOED)
Morning Services . . 6:45, 7:30 & 8:30 AM

Wed October 11, 2006 - 19th of Tishrei
SUKKOT (CHOL HAMOED)
Morning Services . . 6:45, 7:30 & 8:30 AM

Thu October 12, 2006 - 20th of Tishrei
SUKKOT (CHOL HAMOED)
Morning Services . . 6:45, 7:30 & 8:30 AM

Fri October 13, 2006 - 21st of Tishrei
SUKKOT (HOSHANA RABA)
Morning Services . . 6:15, 7:00 & 8:00 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 6:01 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:10 PM

Sat October 14, 2006 - 22nd of Tishrei
SHMINI ATZERET
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:15 AM
Morning Services . . 8:00, 9:00 & 9:30 AM
Mincha . . . . . 5:50 PM
Yom Tov candles after . . . . . 7:01 PM
Maariv & Hakafos. . . . . 7:01 PM

Sun October 15, 2006 - 23rd of Tishrei
SIMCHAT TORAH
Morning Services . . . . . 7:00 & 8:30 AM
Womens Tefillah Group . . . . . 9:00 AM
Daf Yomi. . . . . 5:20 PM
Mincha . . . . . 6:05 PM
Maariv . . . . . 7:01 PM
Yom Tov ends. . . . . 7:01 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 5:55 PM

Fri October 20, 2006 - 28th of Tishrei
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 5:51 PM
Mincha . . . . . 5:55 PM

Sat October 21, 2006 - 29th of Tishrei
Bereshit
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 4:40 PM
Mincha . . . . . 5:40 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 6:51 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 5:50 PM

Sun October 22, 2006 - 30th of Tishrei
ROSH CHODESH
Morning Services . . . . . 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Mon October 23, 2006 - 1st of Cheshvan
ROSH CHODESH
Morning Services . . . . . 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Fri October 27, 2006 - 5th of Cheshvan
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 5:41 PM
Mincha . . . . . 5:45 PM

Sat October 28, 2006 - 6th of Cheshvan
Noach
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 4:30 PM
Mincha . . . . . 5:30 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 6:41 PM
REMEMBER to set your clocks backwards
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .4:40 PM EST

Fri November 3, 2006 - 12th of Cheshvan
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 4:32 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:35 PM

Sat November 4, 2006 - 13th of Cheshvan
Lech-Lecha
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 3:35 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:20 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:32 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 4:35 PM

Tue November 7, 2006 - 16th of Cheshvan
ELECTION DAY
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM

Fri November 10, 2006 - 19th of Cheshvan
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 4:25 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:30 PM

Sat November 11, 2006 - 20th of Cheshvan
Vayera
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 3:30 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:15 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:25 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 4:25 PM

Mon November 13, 2006 -
22nd of Cheshvan VETERANS DAY
Morning Services . . . . . 7:00 & 7:50 AM

Fri November 17, 2006 - 26th of Cheshvan
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 4:18 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:25 PM

Sat November 18, 2006 - 27th of Cheshvan
Chayei Sara
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 3:25 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:10 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:18 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 4:20 PM

Tue November 21, 2006 - 30th of
Cheshvan ROSH CHODESH
Morning Services . . . . . 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Wed November 22, 2006 - 1st of Kislev
ROSH CHODESH
Morning Services . . . . . 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Thu November 23, 2006 - 2nd of Kislev
THANKSGIVING
Morning Services . . . . . 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Fri November 24, 2006 - 3rd of Kislev
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 4:14 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:20 PM

Sat November 25, 2006 - 4th of Kislev
Toldot
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 3:20 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:05 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:14 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 4:20 PM

Fri December 1, 2006 - 10th of Kislev
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 4:11 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:15 PM

Sat December 2, 2006 - 11th of Kislev
Vayetzei
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 3:15 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:00 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:11 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 4:15 PM

Fri December 8, 2006 - 17th of Kislev
Morning Services . . . . . 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 4:10 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:15 PM

Sat December 9, 2006 - 18th of Kislev
Vayishlach
Daf Yomi. . . . . 7:00 AM
Bible Class . . . . . 8:30 AM
Morning Services . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . . 3:15 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:00 PM
Maariv/Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:10 PM
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . . 4:15 PM

Fri December 15, 2006 - 24th of Kislev
Chanukah Candles before . . . . . 4:11 PM
Candle Lighting . . . . . 4:11 PM
Mincha . . . . . 4:15 PM

HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES
at the New York Historical Society
West 77th Street and Central Park West

ROSH HASHANAH
Fri., Sept. 22, 6:40 pm
Sat. & Sun., Sept. 23 & 24, 9:00 am
Sat., Sept. 23, 6:25 pm

YOM KIPPUR
Sun., Oct. 1, 6:25 pm
Mon., Oct. 2, 9:00 am

Tickets
LSS Members $75, Non-Members $100

MY MOTHER *(cont. from p. 1)...* This sounds grandiose. But it is not, for the simple reason that there is no dichotomy between inner and outer life. For us on Earth, the spiritual manifests itself in the material. And that is why I ponder, at this time of year, the path that led me from secularism to traditionalism.

I believe that my parents and the synagogues that I attended when I was young were well-meaning. They tried to make my life easy and fun by eliminating *Halacha* (Jewish law and ritual). But, in the process, they lost spirituality. That was why I, and great numbers of my generation, who were not interested in a life that was simply "easy and fun," became disaffected with Judaism. Those of us who yearned for spirituality believed that we had to seek it elsewhere.

My first intimation that there was more to Judaism than was dreamt of in my philosophy, came in a Reconstructionist synagogue in Woodstock, New York, filled with Jewish mystics of all flavors and denominations: Buddhists, Yogis, Hindus, Sufis, Jews who had meditated, Jews who had left their bodies, Jews who had taken mind-altering drugs, Jews who had read Tarot cards, Jews who had sought gurus in India and Egypt, Jews who had studied astrology, etc., etc. I discovered, with a shock, that the spirituality that I had sought in all the other teachings was alive and well and living in Judaism. Moreover, the Jewish teaching had a warm familiarity that had been absent in all the others. Even if I did not, at the time, know any more Hebrew than I did Sanskrit, I knew that this was my teaching. This was my voice.

Then I met Rabbi Buchwald. From him I received the second, and even more surprising, gift of Judaism -- *Halacha*. Nothing I had ever studied, in an Ivy League college and three different graduate school programs, or anything I had ever experienced, as a poet, Revolutionary, Hippie, Mystic, Lawyer and Judge, could prepare me for the shock of what Rabbi Buchwald taught me -- that my life could be enhanced, even saved, through the traditions of Jewish ritual.

Unfortunately, all of this happened after my children were adults. My children, like me, grew up in a home in which there wasn't a lot of Jewish learning going on. You can imagine the joy I felt a couple of years ago when my daughter-in-law told me that I had inspired her to send my three granddaughters to study in the Jewish Center in Tokyo, Japan, where they live. It is a wonderful place. Some of the children there, like my granddaughters, have two American Jewish parents. But there is also a rainbow of others -- children with one American parent and one Japanese parent, children with one Japanese parent and one Ethiopian parent, and children with two Japanese parents.

This summer, my whole family, three children, three spouses and five grandchildren spent a week together at a lovely resort in Maine. It was what my mother would have called a really "Goyishe" place. On Friday evening, I sat at a long table with my granddaughters. We recited the Shabbat blessing together and sang a rousing chorus of "*V'shamru Bnai Israel et ha'Shabbat*" (Exodus 31:16, the commandment to the People of Israel, instructing them to keep the Shabbat). It may have been the first time that the Sabbath was welcomed like a Queen at Linnekin Bay, Maine.

Enid Langbert is Principal Court Attorney in the NY Supreme Court and a proud grandmother.

Illustrations by Wendy Dunn

בראשית *Bereshith: "In the Beginning" is edited under the direction of Sarah Rochel Hewitt of the* ***National Jewish Outreach Program****. Special Beginners Services are conducted at synagogues throughout the United States to introduce those with limited backgrounds to the beauty of the traditional Hebrew service. For more information regarding the Beginners Service closest to your home, to establish a local Beginners Service, or to learn more about NJOP programs, please write or call: 989 Sixth Avenue, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018,* ***646-871-4444****, e-mail info@njop.org or visit* ***www.njop.org.***

Readers: This is your newsletter and we'd like to hear from you. Article contributions are always welcome.

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DATED MATTER

THE LURE OF THE TREE *(cont. from p. 2)*...Of course, my father added what he probably saw as the greatest lure: We don't get presents on just one day, we get presents on all 8 days!

Well, presents or not, his explanations didn't fly with me because I wanted to be just like everyone else!

My father was not a religious man, but he had a lot of Jewish pride. He had survived the Holocaust and had fought in the Israeli Army during the War of Independence. After everything he had gone through (his story is for another time), he wasn't going to just flush his Judaism down the drain just because his son wanted a tree.

We didn't get a tree that year (but, as my father had promised, I did get a present every day for Chanukah).

I was only a few years older when we moved to Torrance, 20 miles south of Culver City. My new friends were a mixed bunch of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. Once again, there were no other Jewish kids around.

That first Torrance winter, Chanukah arrived well before Xmas, and out came our beloved menorah. Each night, as my father lit the candles, all my friends would come by and listen to father say the blessings and, of course, watch as I opened my daily present. They were thoroughly intrigued by Chanukah. More surprising to me, however, was that they were envious that I received a new present each day for eight days. (Of course, I wanted to argue that they received *25* presents on one day).

That first Chanukah in Torrance, something special happened. Maybe it was that the other children were envious that I had received so many gifts, or perhaps I liked being the center of attention and having my friends ask me questions. It doesn't matter what specifically lit that spark— what does matter is that the spark was lit. By seeing something beautiful in the Holiday of Lights, I began, slowly, to be proud of my being Jewish.

Years, well, really decades, went by before I fully acted on that pride and claimed my heritage. Today my children live in a community where, come Chanukah, we are surrounded by lit menorahs, and my family's joy at being Jewish is expressed in our everyday life.

I often think back to Culver City and Torrance, about being the only Jewish kid, and about how much I wanted that tree. Then I am struck by how interesting it is, maybe even how miraculous it is, that sometimes it is the outside variables that make us truly appreciate that which we have had all along, but have taken for granted.

Happy Chanukah.

Michael Harshaw, originally from Los Angeles CA, has lived in Passaic, NJ, with his wife and two children since November of 2000. Before moving to Passaic, he spent four years at Yeshiva Aish haTorah, in Jerusalem.