

Sukkat Shalom

June 2012

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

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Events and Services

Date **Friday 1 June 2012**

Event Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Venue Marchmont St Giles, 1a Kilgraston Road
Time 6:15pm

Date **Friday 8 June 2012**

Event Erev Shabbat Service
Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace
Time 7pm

Date **Saturday 9 June 2012**

Event Shabbat morning service led by Rabbi Mark Solomon, followed by a lunch and trip to Melrose Abbey. If you would like a lift or are able to offer one, please let Nick know (email nick_silk@btinternet.com) or leave a message on the community phone.

Venue Village Hall, Newstead, near Melrose
Time 11am

See page 3 for details

Date **Sunday 10 June 2012**

Event Choosing Judaism
Venue Usual location
Time 10:30am

Event **Spinoza**

Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace
Time 4pm

Date **Friday 15 June 2012**

Event Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Venue Marchmont St Giles, 1a Kilgraston Road
Time 6:15pm

Date **Saturday 23 June 2012**

Event Shabbat morning service
Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace
Time 11am

Date **Friday 29 June 2012**

Event Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Venue Marchmont St Giles, 1a Kilgraston Road
Time 6:15pm

Note: No Kabbalat shabbat services in July

Date **Friday 13 July 2012**

Event Erev Shabbat Service
Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace
Time 7pm

**Deadline for copy for July
2012 newsletter: 28 June
2012**

ELJC support line

0131 208 1447



Use this number if you have an emergency and really need to speak to someone. It goes to one of our members. Otherwise please leave a message on the community phone and we will respond as soon as possible.

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Future Dates

Our regular schedule is as follows:

Our **Erev Shabbat service** will be on the **SECOND** Friday of each calendar month and our **Shabbat morning service** on the Saturday after the **FOURTH** Friday.

These services take place in the **Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace.**

Jewish Calendar

Festivals begin on the evening before the day listed.

9 Av	29.7.2012
Rosh Hashanah 5773	17.9.-18.9.2012
Yom Kippur	26.9.2012



Israel Recognises First Ever non-Orthodox Rabbi

Liberal Judaism was absolutely thrilled to hear the news today that Rabbi Miri Gold has become the first-ever non-Orthodox rabbi in Israel to receive state recognition. This is a watershed moment for pluralism in Israel, and we raise our glasses high in celebration. The Israel Religious Action Centre (IRAC) in particular has worked very hard to fight Rabbi Gold's case for recognition. We salute its sterling work and are immensely proud to be associated with it.

The majority of affiliated Jews around the world are Progressive. We hope that Rabbi Gold's success signals a new era of pluralism in Israel and that we shall see the vibrancy of Progressive Judaism and its message of prophetic Jewish justice brought to more and more Israelis of all backgrounds.

Support Progressive Jews in Austria!

Progressive Judaism in Austria is under attack by a new law which will significantly limit rights for non-Orthodox communities. Read Rabbi Danny Rich's letter of support: liberaljudaism.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8997ce9fee901471473e7ac05&id=1fbecfdda9&e=363051ea5b.

See Liberal Judaism's statement of support click: <http://www.liberaljudaism.org/news/547-support-progressive-jews-in-austria.html>.

and the latest EUPJ bulletin (liberaljudaism.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8997ce9fee901471473e7ac05&id=364a7ad81b&e=363051ea5b) to find out what you can do to help. The chairman has already written on behalf of the Community, but individual letters would also help. The Lebow/Lawrence family (Kate, Andrew, Naomi and Jake) are now members of the progressive Community in Vienna.

Scotland: winning the gay marriage fight

www.gaystarnews.com, 11 May 2012

Moves towards gay marriage in England and Wales have been making big headlines but many south of the border don't realize that Scotland has been having its own battle on the issue and is actually leading the way.

The UK government's consultation on how to introduce gay marriage in England and Wales only started in March and is still going on (you can take part here:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/equal-civil-marriage/>) but Scotland is far ahead having started its government's consultation in September, finishing it in December.

Israel National Council for Children - Help the INCC by donating a chai (£18)

The Israel National Council for Children is an independent charity that is not government funded and relies purely on donations to do its work.

The charity works with all children in Israel (Israeli, Arab, religious or secular) and seeks change in legislation, practice & policy for the benefit of Israel's younger generations. To find out more about the charity & to donate please click:

http://www.children.org.il/index_eng.asp

Rabbis' Relay Ride

Rabbis *Aaron Goldstein* and *Anna Gerrard*, both of whom have visited us in the past, will be taking part in this cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats. Sadly neither will be doing a Scottish lap, but see next page for how any cyclists in our community could join Rabbi Shoshana Boyd Gelfand for some or all of the Edinburgh/Glasgow ride on Friday 22nd June .

Chairman's Word



It has been a busy month with Rabbi Mark visiting us for Shavuot for the first time and I am now struggling to get everything done before we leave on a short break to visit family in Washington DC; so I don't have any particular thoughts to share with you this month.

I am only sorry that I will miss our trip to the Borders and a chance to sit in the garden of Isobel King's beautiful cottage; see details below. Last visit, two years ago, we explored the Roman camp of Trimontium nearby with a guide from the local historian/archaeologist. Here you can see him showing us the sights. This year you can visit Melrose Abbey in the afternoon. I hope you have as wonderful a day this year as we did on our last visit.

As you know most of the work of running our community is done by members giving their time to help run things. We are always pleased to have offers of help and we are delighted that Joanna Bleau is taking the lead on doing something about our singing, supported by Rebekah Gronowski, and also that Helen Sherbourne is taking the lead on our new Facebook page (see below). Thanks to them all. Please let us know if you would like to help. In particular we are always

pleased to have people organise outings or social events. Just let us know your ideas and we will support and publicise it for you. Our greeting team are also looking for new recruits - see page 7. *Gillian Raab*

Details of Service at Newstead

Once again we are delighted to have a Shabbat service at Newstead, near Melrose, which is on 9 June. The service will start at 11am, will be led by Rabbi Mark, and will be held at Newstead village hall. As well as making all the arrangements, Isobel King will be providing us with a soup and snack lunch, after which there will be a trip to Melrose Abbey for those of us who wish to go. The Abbey is a 20 minute walk from Newstead, or an even shorter drive in the car! The entrance cost is £4.95 (concessions available) with a 10% discount if there are 11 or more of us. Historic Scotland members with their cards go free and do not count towards the 11! If you would like to go but do not have transport, contact Nick who will help arrange lifts and if you are going and have space in your car, please also let Nick know.

Directions can be obtained from Nick (nick_silk@btinternet.com). **Please remember that there is no parking immediately adjacent to the hall** and all vehicles should be left at the east end of the village in the Health Board Offices car park - 2 minute walk away. And finally, even if you can't offer a lift, it would help Isobel with lunch if you could **let Nick know you intend going**. Thanks once again to Isobel for making the arrangements for what will no doubt be an enjoyable day.



Our Facebook Page

Helen Sherbourne, seen here on Loch Ness, has been active in putting content on our Facebook page: see <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sukkat-Shalom-Edinburgh/409490615745959>. If you are on Facebook please "like" it if you do like it. More importantly, please send comments to Helen and suggestions as to what you would like to see on the page and how it should be organised. email h_sherbs@hotmail.com.

Join the Rabbis' relay bike ride

<http://www.rabbirelayride.org>

On 22nd June Rabbi Shoshana Boyd Gelfand will do the Edinburgh Glasgow lap mainly on cycle paths. she has emailed us as follows: *"It would be amazing to have some of the locals riding along and sharing their love and knowledge of the countryside. I'm riding to support both Gefiltefest (the sponsor of this ride) and a local park called Avenue House, which fell into a financial crisis last year and was almost sold to a private developer: <http://friendsofavenuehouse.org/>. The house not only has a children's playground, rose garden, and café, but also a manor house which hosts all sorts of local community events. So I feel strongly that not only would the public lose a beautiful green space, but also a neighbourhood meeting ground. It's very much a local cause, but any support that folks want to give would be welcome. They just click on my name on the rabbi relay ride website: <http://www.rabbirelayride.org/profiles/shoshana-boyd>".*

Shoshana and two supporters (Michael, director of Gefiltefest and his wife Rachel, see www.gefiltefest.org) are looking for hospitality on the night of 21st June. If you are interested in joining her or could offer hospitality, please contact Gillian (chair@eljc.org) for details.

Adam and Leora Wadler's Bar and Bat Mitzvah



On the final Shabbat in April Adam and Leora, seen here with Rabbi Mark Solomon and parents Catherine Lyons and Phil Wadler, celebrated their Bar and Bat Mitzvah. It was wonderful to have such a large crowd of Community members and friends and family present. We knew they would do well, but they exceeded all our expectations with the confidence with which they led the service and read from the Torah. They each gave a d'var torah that you will find on the following pages.

Credit goes to the twins and their families and of course to their teachers, Rabbi Mark and cheder teachers Norman and Wendy Crane who have

all given so generously of their time to prepare them for this special day. Thanks to the Wadler/Lyons family for a splendid lunch after the service. The day finished with a ceilidh where Celtica Shmeltica had young and old joining together on the dance floor in a blend of Scottish/Yiddish music and dancing.

Members' News

Refuah Shlema, a speedy recovery, to three Sukkat Shalom members who have had recent health problems. Jonathan Broadie is recovering well from his recent heart surgery, although he will have to take it easy for the coming weeks. Joy Northcott has started chemotherapy for her recently diagnosed breast cancer. Both Joy and Jonathan managed to prepare for their ordeals with wonderful holidays to Greece and Africa respectively.

Thanks - Ruzena Wood wishes to thank everyone for their good wishes for her recovery. She is making good progress at home but will not be joining us yet at Services for a short while.



Mazal Tov to Melissa Wood who had her admission to Judaism ceremony at the Shabbat service on 26th May. We couldn't resist showing you the glamorous outfit she wore for the occasion. Melissa and fiance Yonathan Eisenberg will have their aufruf at the Service in Newstead on the 9th of June when they will both be called to the Torah. We wish them all the best for their wedding on midsummer's day.

On the same Shabbat we were delighted to be able to call Alex Guilherme to the Torah for the first time, after he had his interview with the Liberal Judaism Beth Din in London.

We are very pleased to welcome Melissa and Alex as full members of the Community.

Adam Wadler's D'var Torah



Parashah Acharei Mot: Leviticus 16: 1-18

Earlier this year I sat a minor music test, where almost every question was worded: "what do you think", so in theory I should have got all the questions right. I didn't.

For this speech, I've been told there's no right answer. So here's my analysis of my parashah.

My parashah, Acharei Mot, Leviticus, Chapter 16, Verses 6-29, outlines an annual cleansing ritual that involves two goats and two bulls. The bull is Aaron's 'own, bull of the sin offering, to make expiation for himself and his household'. So he may be clean from sin while purifying the shrine, the tent of meeting, and the altar. Aaron then draws lots upon the two goats, 'one for The Eternal One and one for Azazel'.

The goat for the Eternal One, shall be sacrificed as a sin offering for the people, while the goat for Azazel, is left alive before The Eternal One, until it is sent into the wilderness. Aaron then actually slaughters his own 'bull of the sin offering' to make expiation for himself and his household. He goes on to purge: the shrine, the tent of meeting, and the altar, with the blood of 'his bull of the sin offering', and 'the people's goat of the sin offering'.

"Aaron shall then bring forward the goat for Azazel, and confess over it all the sins of the people of Israel. Thus: the goat shall carry upon it the transgressions of Israel."

The last main section of what I'm reading describes how everyone involved should wash, after the ritual, so as not to recontaminate the camp with sin. The final verse of my reading, tells us that in the seventh month, on the tenth day, that means on Yom Kippur, we shall fast and do no manner of work.

Everyone is familiar with the term, 'scapegoating', but, not everyone knows much about the concept, and its roots.

In biblical terms, scapegoating was a tool to free yourself from your sins, and feel cleansed. For, even if you are forgiven, you might not let go of the guilt.

This idea, of transferring sin, and other bad things, away from yourself, was also paralleled in other ancient societies, and in history. *The Golden Bough*, by James Frazer, was one of the first anthropological texts. It gives us an example, from the nineteenth century, in India. When a person died, their sins would be transferred to a buffalo calf, through a long ritual. All the possible sins of the person were recounted three times, with the community responding, at the end of each transgression, 'it is a sin!' In *The Golden Bough*, there is an eyewitness account of a funeral, explaining that,

"By this act, the calf was supposed to receive all the sins of the deceased. It was then driven away, to a great distance, that it might contaminate no one".

I believe, that the ritual in the Bible, helped to let go of sins. Having sins confessed upon the head of a goat, and having the goat sent into the wilderness, to Azazel: this ritual allows for guilt to be removed, for the spiritual sin to be physically taken away from you, thus: literally and spiritually putting a distance between you and the sin.

Today, 'scapegoating' has a much less subtle meaning. This ancient ritual has been misunderstood, and has given way to the modern concept of scapegoating, which is quite simply shifting blame, from one person or entity, to another. Instead of repenting, and being freed of guilt, people don't hold themselves to account, and try to lay the blame somewhere else.

Historically, over centuries, Jews have been scapegoated, in this sense of the word. For example, Adolf Hitler scapegoated Jews in the run-up to the Holocaust. Gypsies and other minorities have also been scapegoated, particularly in times of economic crisis. In today's economic difficulties, Muslims are being scapegoated in Western Europe.

But what is that strange name, Azazel, that we mentioned before, and where does the scapegoat actually go?

There seem to be many answers, most of them saying Azazel is a demon, or devil. In Seventh-Day Adventism, Azazel is seen as Satan, and bringing the scapegoat to Azazel, as forcing the blame of all sins back to Satan.

In modern culture, Azazel is often an fictional character, usually evil. There are Marvel and DC comics both with a villain called Azazel, and a good demon, called Azazel, in a series of short stories by Isaac Asimov. Azazel doesn't appear elsewhere in the Bible, but does appear in the struggle between good and evil in the apocryphal

Book of Enoch. There are biblical scholars who believe Azazel represented a guardian of goats, and some who think Azazel is a place in the wilderness.

The wilderness, or desert, is a common biblical theme, but in modern life, there is no wilderness any more, at least not on earth. So, sending a goat into the wilderness, as a tool to remove guilt, will not work any more. But we still send our sins away from us. We send pollution to far off regions, we bury our nuclear waste, we change the climate with waste gases, and leave it all for others, including our descendants.

Instead of freeing ourselves of guilt, using an ancient tradition, we rid ourselves of our pollution by forcing others to deal with it. And that is not purification; quite the opposite.

Leora Wadler's D'var Torah



Kedoshim: Leviticus 16:6-29

My parsha is called Kedoshim, which means holiness.

It starts with God telling the people 'you shall be holy for I your God am holy'.

Now, let's be honest: holiness is an idea that most of us find boring! It is not something that we think about a lot in everyday life.

However, when the parashah goes on to tell us how we should live our lives, it is not just aimed at priests or people who are especially religious. It was just aimed at the average people who live normal lives, and even though some of it seems strange (like the fields and the sacrifices), it is aimed at the average person back then. So it is mostly about how to live a good life, and how to treat other people in the fairest and most considerate way possible. Some of the rules are:

- You should respect your parents and keep shabbat.
- You shouldn't make idols or turn to other gods.
- Only eat a sacrifice the day you sacrifice it or the day following.
- You should leave the corners of your fields for the poor to glean and leave grapes in your vineyards for them.
- Don't rob.
- Don't steal.
- Don't defraud your neighbour.
- Don't deal deceitfully or falsely with each other.
- The wages of a labourer should not remain with you until morning.

... and finally:

Love your neighbour as yourself, the commandment known as the Golden Rule. But that's not what I'm going to be talking about today because it has been discussed so many times that there is no way I would be able to find anything else to say about it.

Instead, I'm going to talk about verse 14: it says 'do not insult the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind, fear your God, I am the Eternal One'. When you first read this verse it seems kind of pointless: like, who would deliberately trip up a blind person? However it has come to mean 'don't take advantages of someone else's weakness' and 'cursing the deaf' and 'placing a stumbling block before the blind' are just the most obvious examples.

I think that some of the biggest 'stumbling blocks' you can get are books. When I was researching this topic I found a lot of commentary on the subject and many are innocent things that some people would still consider to be 'putting a stumbling block before the blind', but not once did any of it mention books and how hugely influential they can be, or how misleading! One such book that I have read is *The Boy In The Striped Pajamas*. It is one of the most well known children's books about World War 2. In Primary 7 we were given it as a reading book, and it was used as an example of life in Germany during World War 2. I don't think I have ever read something as historically inaccurate and also unintentionally misleading! Even if we ignore how unfair and insulting the ending is by only worrying about Bruno, the non-Jewish German boy who died, and barely mentioning the millions of Jewish boys who died with him, the whole storyline is also completely impossible! I'm not going to go into much detail about why, as I could talk for hours about the many problems. The most obvious

problem is that Bruno, the son of a Nazi, would have been brought up to hate Jews from a very young age, and therefore would never have started talking to Shmuel, the boy in the concentration camp, in the first place. Even though it's fiction, it is still presented as something that could have happened, when it clearly couldn't have.

I consider this book a massive stumbling block, as it misinforms people about Germany and Poland during the war, and also it trivialises the deaths of all the people who died in concentration camps! I think all writing could potentially be a stumbling block. But at least when we read something on the internet, we know to check it with other sites, and are much less trusting of it. We are much more likely to believe what we read in a book. But there are some people who would say that this is unfair, that the author, John Boyne, never told people to read his book, and he never said that what he wrote is actually possible. And this ties into my next point which is How far do you take it? Some would say that not only must you personally refrain from exploiting people's weaknesses but you are also breaking the rule if you help someone (even if you don't mean to) or encourage someone else to break the rule. One example is given in a book called *Studies in Vayikra* (Vayikra means Leviticus) by Nehama Leibowitz. She is a well known and respected scholar who has written a great deal of commentary on the Torah. She quotes Rabbi Judah in the name of Rav who said 'Whoever has money and lends it without witnesses violates the prohibition of 'thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind.' Then it would be partly the fault of the lender for providing an opportunity for them to break the law by making it easy for them to lie. In this case their greed would be a metaphorical blindness. However, I think that is taking it a bit too far. In this situation the lender would clearly be the victim and blaming them would be unfair!

So where does the boundary lie? One example that would clearly be breaking the rules would be: if you were making a meal for a vegetarian and you hid meat in it, than that would be 'putting a stumbling block before the blind' because the vegetarian would have no suspicion that there was any meat in his food. (That actually happened to my dad when he used to be vegetarian). But let's say: you were making a meal for a vegetarian, and you put meat on the table where they could easily see it. They are not forced to eat it and you aren't deceiving them, because if they do eat, it is their choice, and they know exactly what they are doing by making that decision. On the other hand, that situation could also be defined as 'putting a stumbling block before the blind' because their wanting to eat meat could be classed as a kind of metaphorical blindness for their own rules for life. You are tempting them to abandon their moral code by putting it in front of them would be the stumbling block. I think that if you were TRYING to tempt them by putting the meat on the table then I think you would indeed be guilty of 'putting a stumbling block before the blind'. But if you only had good intentions, for example, if there were other people at the table who did eat meat, then you would not be guilty.

And I think that your intent should be what defines whether or not you are breaking the rule; if you do something with the intent to deceive someone, then you are guilty, if not, then you are innocent. However, if you are doing something that you mean for other people to read or hear (like *The Boy In The Striped Pajamas*) then it is your responsibility that you are not giving people misinformation, and if you don't fulfill that responsibility then you are breaking the rule. So that's what I think 'you shall not curse the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind' is supposed to mean!

Volunteer greeters needed

Could you help the community by joining our small team of greeters who welcome people to our Erev Shabbat and Shabbat morning services?

It is not a difficult task and you will initially be accompanied by one of our regulars. All that is needed is to arrive at the venue about 20 minutes before the service is due to start and welcome people as they arrive. We will let you know when we are expecting visitors who have not been before so you can help to put them at their ease.

If you could help out with this task for some services please contact Marjory Broadie at security@eljc.org.

ELJC Human Rights Trip to Israel

Maurice Naftalin has been making good progress with plans for this trip. The dates are now planned for 12th to 21st October and there is a draft itinerary on our web site (see menu on left of front page www.eljc.org). People will be responsible for their own travel arrangements and accommodation, though suggested flights and hotels/hostels will be provided.

The idea of the trip arose from a challenge from Miri Weingarten who said "Come and see for yourselves" when we asked what we could do to help her organisation (Physicians for Human Rights Israel). She said that human rights organisations tell us that they take great strength from supportive visits such as this.

If you think you might join us, please contact Maurice (webmaster@eljc.org).

Events and Announcements

The following events have been notified to ELJC for members and friends who may wish to attend them

Edinburgh Film Festival



An award-winning Israeli film *Never Too Late* directed by Iso Fluk being shown as part of this Festival was awarded the Grand Prix Le Regard d'Or at this year's Fribourg International Film Festival. Given the current tension between their two countries, it was particularly moving when jury president Iranian filmmaker Sepideh Farsi handed the award to Fluk.

An enlightening look at the state of Israeli society, the film follows 30-year-old Herzl (Nony Geffen) around Israel after eight years traveling throughout South America, avoiding the expectations of his stern father (Ami Weinberg). His refusal to return home for his father's funeral now haunts him, but it's never too late to make amends, or is it?

Screenings are on Sunday 24th June at 15:15 and Saturday 30th June at 19.15. For details and to book tickets see <http://www.edfilmfest.org.uk/films/2012/never-too-late>.

Fringe and Book Festivals - help us to find shows

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe brochure is just out: see <http://www.edfringe.com/whats-on>, and the Book Festival programme will be out on 21st June <http://www.edbookfest.co.uk/>.

If you find any shows or events of Jewish interest please let our newsletter editor know by emailing newsletter@eljc.org so we may publicise them in the August issue. If something looks particularly promising we might organise a group outing. Here is one suggestion to kick off with:

Karen's Way at 15.05pm 13-25 August at Yellow Leaf Theatre in Jeffrey Street by Vanessa Rosenthal

Based on her autobiographies and poems, Karen Gershon's story tells how she criss-crossed wartime Britain from Edinburgh to Leeds to Bristol and beyond after arriving on the Kindertransport

Date for your diaries - Sunday 25th November 2012



Another Scotland Limmud day will be held in Glasgow that Sunday. We expect that there will be a bus going from Edinburgh and perhaps some other events during the preceding weekend. Further newsletters will have details.

Pride Scotia March 30th June 2012

In Princes Street area. Information can be found at <http://pride-scotia.org/>. Faith In Marriage will have a large presence. If you are able to join us, please do so.

See - <https://www.facebook.com/FaithInMarriage> on Facebook where you can see a photo.

Still Life: Tales from the West Bank

Sunday 10th: Edinburgh 7pm , Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL

The two women performing 'Still Life' volunteered with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel working alongside Palestinian and Israeli peacemakers for three months. They lived in the villages of Jayyous and Yanoun in the northern West Bank, witnessing and experiencing everyday life in the occupied Palestinian territories. Catch a glimpse of the struggle and humour of village life under occupation.

Interfaith

The **Edinburgh Centre of Spirituality and Peace** has a number of interesting events in June. These include the screening of a film about the Dalai Lama on 7th June as well as Music by the Turkish Mystic singer and musician Latif Bolat on 15th June. See www.eicsp.org for details and for other events.



June Women's Interfaith Meeting Date: Wednesday 20th June, Edinburgh Central Mosque, 50 Potterow Einburgh EH8 9BT [accessible parking in rear car park - ladies, enter at rear of Mosque].

See - http://www.edinwig.org.uk/EWIG/EWIG_Meetings.html