

Etrog

The Newsletter of Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh



Sukkat Shalom

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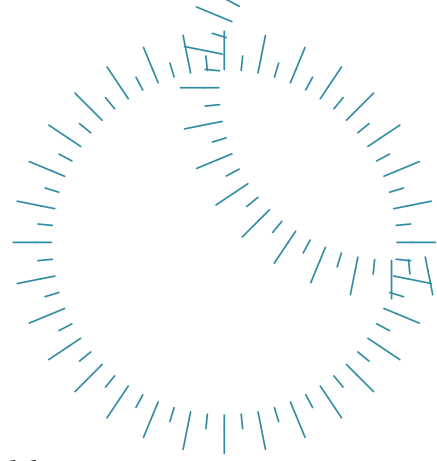
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Word From the Sofa

Nick Silk

In July, Rabbi Pete Tobias led our two in-person services, an erev Shabbat and a Shabbat morning service. For those of you who don't know, Rabbi Pete was instrumental in the establishment of our community. Some twenty years ago, Rabbi Pete was the rabbi at Glasgow Reform Synagogue (or Glasgow New Synagogue as it then was), and he supported those of us who lived in the east of the country to hold our own services while still being members of Glasgow Reform. Rabbi Pete would come through and lead some of our services, and it felt a bit like old times seeing him back with us. This was especially so since Rabbi Pete came through with his guitar and most of the singing was accompanied by the guitar – as I say, a bit like old times.

Prior to the services, Rabbi Pete had asked if it was okay to bring the guitar – since I’ve just told you that he used his guitar during the service, you can probably guess that we said yes! But Rabbi Pete asking that question before the services reminded me of another question that he had asked when he was the Rabbi at Glasgow all that time ago. I’m pretty sure that the question was asked as part of an afternoon event which we held after a Shabbat morning service, and it may have been that the event was held as a way of encouraging Edinburgh-based members of Glasgow Reform Synagogue to come along to the service. The question was part of a game that Rabbi Pete had created, with a title something like ‘building your community’ and the question was: “You have a finite budget and can only afford to employ a Rabbi or get your first synagogue building. Which do you choose?”

I can quite clearly remember my choice, which I’m pretty sure was a minority opinion, and that was that I

would choose a synagogue building. Today, some twenty years later, I’m less sure whether I would make the same choice. With the support of our exceptional rabbi, Rabbi Mark, we as a community have continued to grow since we were first established. I’m pretty sure that this wouldn’t have been the case without Rabbi Mark.

However, if we had our own building, there would be other advantages; we would be able to have all our events in the same place and, for example, our cheder could take place at the same time as our services – as was the case when Rabbi David Schwezoff visited us in May. As it happens, we didn’t really have a choice to make in deciding if we wanted a rabbi or a building since we were very lucky to be supported by Liberal Judaism when Rabbi Mark first came to lead services with us, and money wasn’t an issue. Now, I hope you don’t think I’m suggesting that we now need to give up on Rabbi Mark and look for a building instead! But I do think our next ambition should be that we have somewhere that we can call our own - be that something that

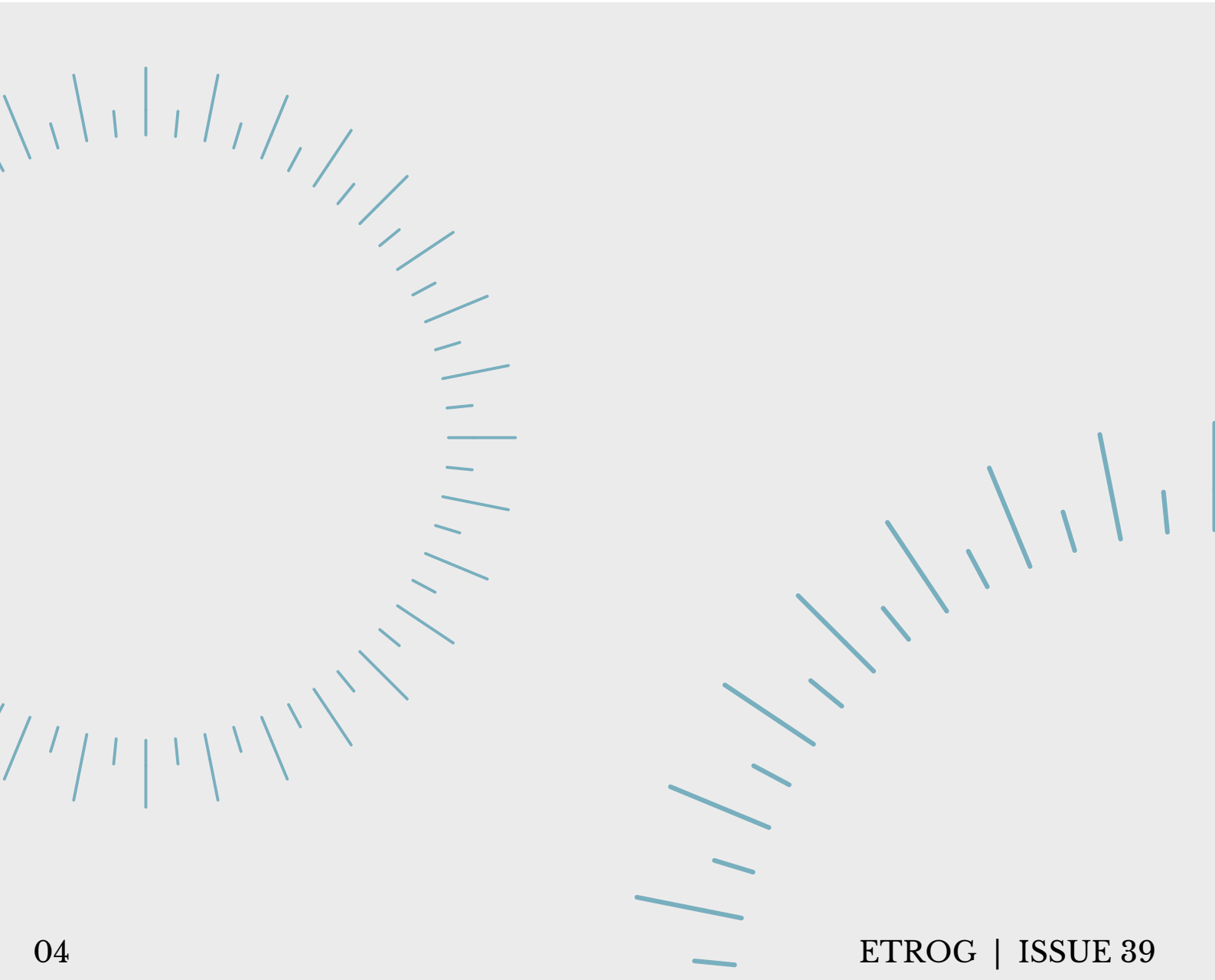
we ourselves own, or as part of a greater Edinburgh Jewish community building.

Coming back to Rabbi Pete's questions, they remind me that we all have choices to make in our lives. Some of these are trivial, some not so; unfortunately (or probably that should be disgracefully) it's looking like some of these choices could soon be as severe as "do I buy food or put on the heating?" You'd have thought that Judaism, or indeed any religion, would help you make choices in your daily life. And while Judaism does help, as I've said many times before, it's not that Judaism tells you exactly what to do. Just before I was writing this article, I was doing some preparation for taking some services. The torah reading for the Shabbat includes the ten commandments, and I was reading some commentary highlighting the difference between the two versions of the Ten Commandments, in Exodus and Deuteronomy. Without going into the differences in any detail whatsoever – since all I'd be doing is

copy what I've read! - and noting that there are, I'm sure, plenty of explanations for why the two versions are different, all I would say is that you would have thought that with something as central as the ten commandments, there would have been a single version in the torah. But there's not, there are two versions, so you have to make a choice as to which one is correct / best / whatever! So, even from the source document of Judaism, there were choices to be made from the start.

Arguably the biggest choice that Judaism says we have to make is something that we read over the High Holydays. We read on Yom Kippur: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that I have set before you life or death, blessing or curse; therefore choose life that you and your descendants may live". I hope that over the coming year we all make the right choices, and in advance of the High Holydays, I wish you shanah tova and well over the fast.

And while that may have sounded as if it was the end of my article, I would like to finish on a different note. As I have mentioned in previous articles, all of us at Sukkat Shalom have a responsibility to each other to ensure that we can meet and conduct our activities in a safe environment. With that in mind, I would like to remind you of our safeguarding policy, which you can find on our website. I mention this not because of any concerns or specific issues, but rather that it is important that we remind ourselves every so often of our policy. And while it is Council's responsibility to publish the policy, we would welcome any comments, at any time, on the policy.



Welcome to baby Amelia Linda Silk!



Warm congratulations to Andrew and Rebecca Silk on the birth of their first child, a daughter, Amelia, on 4 August. Congratulations too, to new grandparents, Nick and Kate Silk. We look forward to meeting Amelia in person in due course!

Welcome to baby Amira Schulz!

Marc Schulz

After almost two years of fertility treatment and a miscarriage in 2020, our beautiful daughter Amira was born at Northwick Park Hospital in London on Wednesday, 22 June 2022. From the very beginning of her life's journey, Amira was quick. During the IVF, when the doctor was implanting the egg cell that would eventually become Amira, she was so keen to get out of her eggshell that Jutta saw her hatching in the petri dish. During the first eight weeks of pregnancy, we had a few scares as Jutta had some bleeding, but Amira developed very well and was always a bit ahead of her time. So, Jutta and I always believed that Amira would not wait until her due date, and she didn't. Instead, she made her first appearance in week 38 and, once more, couldn't wait to get out. Jutta went into labour in the late evening hours of the 21st, and the doctors at the hospital did not expect the birth before the night of the 22nd. Yet Amira didn't wait that long. In fact, she came so quickly that Jutta missed her chance

to get pain relief, and at 4.02 pm, Amira was with us.

Amira's English name has two different meanings: In Hebrew, it derives from a root meaning 'to speak'. So, we hope she will always speak up on matters close to her heart. In Arabic, Amira means 'princess'. We chose the name for its Hebrew meaning, but there is a lovely story regarding its Arabic meaning, too: We didn't tell anyone her name before the eighth day. Yet, on the day she was born, I sent a message to our neighbour, who is Muslim and speaks Arabic, to tell him about the birth, and he replied, "Our street has a new princess!".

Amira first went to shul at six days old, and on 2 July at just over a week, Amira had her Brit Bat ceremony. I had created the liturgy for the ceremony from two different ones given in Siddur Lev Chadash. So, to create a booklet for us to follow during the service, I printed the prayers from a digital copy

of the siddur, cut them out, glued them to pieces of paper, and then scanned the resulting sheets. It felt a tad like producing a ransom note.

Jutta and I enjoyed Amira's Brit Bat ceremony very much, especially as we could share it with so many wonderful friends from far and wide, and Amira slept right through the whole thing. In the end, we were flabbergasted by how quickly it was all over. So, we went back to YouTube later in the day to experience it at a slightly slower pace. As part of her Brit Bat ceremony, Amira was given her Hebrew name, Liviya bat Chaim Eliyahu v'Chana Tikvah. Liviya means lioness of the Lord and appears only once in the Bible in Ezekiel 19, where it is a metaphor for Israel.

Amira is, at the time of writing, almost two months old and has been to shul at least twice a week ever since she was a week old. She now spends less and less of her time sleeping and has followed a few services fully awake. Amira loves music, and she has started imitating our movements. Yesterday evening,



Jutta and I had crisps on the sofa, and when we looked over at Amira, she was moving her hand up and down as if eating crisps too.

We won't be able to take Amira abroad for the next couple of months as we're waiting for a visa. But we are hoping to make some shorter trips in the UK in the following months, and hopefully, we will be able to take her to Edinburgh and introduce her to her other community.

News from our cheder

Gila Holliman & Mor Kandlik Eltanani

Our cheder has exciting plans for the coming year. Fortnightly cheder sessions will be half online and half in person (at Marchmont St Giles) and the start of the new cheder year will be marked by a family picnic and get together at Inverleith Park on Sunday 4 September.

Last year, 25 children were registered for cheder, with numbers expected to rise slightly in the coming year. There are three classes: Aleph (preschool-P2); Bet (P3-6); Gimel (P7 until Bar/Bat Mitzvah). The curriculum takes children from introduction to Hebrew letters all the way to pre-Bar/Bat mitzvah Hebrew reading and prayers. It focuses on modern Hebrew and Jewish holidays, with lots of crafts and activities for the children.





A call for more cheder teachers has been successful, with both parents and non-parent members of the community coming forward. We are very thankful for all the support and wanted to take the opportunity to introduce our new teaching teams:

Aleph Team:

Lizzie: I'm a psychiatrist with interests in medical and Jewish education. I enjoyed growing up in the UK Jewish youth movement and am looking forward to getting involved with our youngest class, Kita Alef, which my two daughters attend.

Ash: I'm Ash - an artist, performer and former youth worker who wants to make cheder learning as fun and accessible as possible. I look forward to helping the children grow and thrive by encouraging curiosity, creativity and compassion

Katy: I'm a Pilates teacher with an art and making problem! I'm very interested in cultural and social history and how to help children who have relatively small Jewish circles feel part of the wider community. I have two children, one in Kita Gimel and one in Kita Bet.

Bet Team:

Mor: I'm a statistician in Public Health Scotland, I grew up in Israel and enjoy teaching Hebrew to my own kids (one in Kita Aleph and one in Kita Bet) and to cheder kids. I teach Kita Bet and am co-head of the cheder. I have a soft spot for holiday parties.

Meghan: I'm a PhD student at St Andrews studying Classics and History. I enjoyed my cheder experience in the states and am excited to get more involved in the Sukkat Shalom community.

Gimel Team:

Rabbi Pete: I was a primary school teacher in my past life before becoming a rabbi over 30 years ago. I have written several children's education programmes and books and will no doubt inflict them on you and the children at some point. I helped found the Edinburgh congregation 25 years ago and am very excited to be involved again. And I play guitar (a few chords).

George: I'm an academic who works on conflict and peace building, with experience of different Jewish communities and an interest in what makes young Jews engage with Jewish values and culture. My two daughters are in Kita Gimel.

Co-Chair

Gila: I co-Chair cheder with Mor, help out with anything the cheder needs, and particularly love getting involved with anything crafty! I work in administration at the University of Edinburgh and have a daughter in Bet and a son in Aleph.

During the year, the cheder is hoping to join the community for three Shabbat services, followed by a communal lunch. We'll also be inviting the whole community to join us at our parties:

- The Chanukah Party (17 December)
- The Purim Party (11 March)
- The End of Year Celebration (20 May)

All children are welcome at the cheder - if you would like to add your child or have any questions, please contact the cheder heads **Mor** mor.kandlik@gmail.com or **Gila** gila07@gmail.com



Thank you to Simon Rothstein, editor of LJ Today and to Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah for giving us permission to re-publish Elli's excellent article that first appeared in LJ Today, July/August 2022. We're proud of the role that our own rabbi, Mark Solomon played in helping to bring about these changes, and of the influence he continues to have in making Sukkat Shalom the community it is today. Thank you also to long standing member, Ellen Galford, and newer member, Ash Alexander for their thoughtful comments.

From same-sex commitment ceremonies to the full inclusion of LGBTQI+ Jews

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah

Twenty years ago, Liberal Judaism took a huge step towards putting one of the movement's core values into practice. From its inception 100 years earlier, Liberal Judaism was committed to an approach to Jewish heritage that, alongside the prophetic inheritance of justice, was rooted in modernity's values of democracy and equality.

In 2002, the Rabbinic Conference and the Council of Liberal Judaism agreed a policy of inclusion of lesbian and gay individuals and couples – including couples with children – that also involved making provision for same-sex commitment ceremonies. The policy was a milestone. It also represented a compromise. Two years earlier, in response to my request and that of Rabbi Mark Solomon, the Rabbinic Conference (now called the Conference of Liberal Rabbis and Cantors) had set

up a Working Party. Chaired by Rabbi Danny Rich, it included Rabbis Margaret Jacobi, Mark Solomon, Moshe Yehudai-Rimmer and me.

In the process of consulting with the Rabbinic Conference and the Liberal Judaism Council, it became clear that the consensus at that time was not in favour of using the language of 'marriage'. Consequently, the new Liberal Judaism policy on the inclusion of lesbian and gay Jews and same-sex commitment ceremonies, agreed in 2002, did not describe such ceremonies as 'marriage' – although the Hebrew term for marriage, kiddushin, was used.

The next step was for the Working Party to get to work on the liturgy for same-sex commitment ceremonies. Rabbi Mark Solomon took the lead in creating what became an anthology of

ceremonies. In 2005, Rabbis Shulamit Ambalu and James Baaden joined the Working Party. As the Chair of the LJ Publications Committee at that time, I was delighted that the liturgy was agreed in time for a booklet to be published in December 2005 to coincide with the Civil Partnership Act coming into force. The title of the booklet, B'rit Ahavah: Seder Kiddushin – Covenant of Love: Service of Commitment for Same-Sex Couples, reflected the compromise we had made.

Fortunately, things moved on. As the climate of public opinion changed with the advent of civil partnership, and the consequent increasing acceptance of lesbian and gay relationships, so reluctance within Liberal Judaism to use the word 'marriage' declined.

It is in this climate that the equal marriage campaign in wider society gathered pace. The goal was the provision of equal choice: a change in the law that would enable all couples – whether they are lesbian, gay or heterosexual – to have the choice of entering into either civil marriage or civil partnership.

And so it was that, in February 2011, the

Rabbinic Conference agreed and adopted a Statement on Equality of Access to Marriage and Civil Partnerships. It made clear that Liberal Judaism supports “the right of all couples, of any gender and sexual orientation, who are in a committed and exclusive relationship, to enter into a legally binding civil partnership or marriage.” The statement further committed our movement to lobbying for the necessary changes in UK law to bring about this much-needed equality and for the right for Liberal Judaism to conduct the legal as well as religious aspects of these marriages or civil partnerships. That year, efforts to change the law intensified and Liberal rabbis and members participated in a range of activities. These included an event at the Scottish Parliament offices at which, as rabbi of Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community, Rabbi Mark Solomon spoke on behalf of Liberal Judaism.

A key point in the campaign came in the 2012-13 parliamentary session when, in his position as Liberal Judaism Chief Executive, Rabbi Danny Rich gave evidence – presented both in person and as a document – to the

Parliamentary committee deliberating the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill. Liberal Judaism was joined in this fight for equal marriage by our friends in the Quakers and Unitarians. Other religious denominations came on board, including the Movement for Reform Judaism.

Then, in 2013, the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act was passed. It was a momentous milestone in British society. At the same time, having become a champion of full equality for LGBT+ people, Liberal Judaism was already looking to the next step needed for true inclusion and working with queer and trans Jews to achieve this. Shaan Knan joining Liberal Judaism as Heritage Project Manager enhanced this commitment to equality through a series of groundbreaking projects. The first was Rainbow Jews, launched in October 2012 with funding from the Lottery Heritage Fund. Recording Jewish LGBT+ history from the 1950s to today, the project has produced a film, exhibition and educational materials.

Two further inclusion projects hosted by Liberal Judaism with Lottery Heritage funding followed. The trans interfaith

project Twilight People discovers and celebrates the hidden history of transgender and gender-variant people of faith in the UK past and present.

Rainbow Pilgrims tells the stories of LGBTQI+ migrants to the UK, from the Kindertransport to today's refugees. It explores the narratives around 'rites and passages', documenting the interconnection between faith, sexuality, gender and ethnicity. Both projects included pop-up events, cutting-edge learning tools and archive collections that can be found online.

Shaan and Liberal Judaism were also involved in Ritual Reconstructed – looking at the ways in which Jewish people who identify as LGBTQI+ engage in religious and community life.

So, after all this, what is there left for Liberal Judaism to do? In general, Liberal Judaism has a role to play in enabling all its constituent congregations to ensure that LGBTQI+ Jews, including trans and gender non-binary people, can participate fully in the life of the synagogue, as well as having equal access to marriage and the full range of lifecycle ceremonies.

In 2018, Brighton & Hove Progressive

Synagogue began to offer all young people the option of gender non-binary b'mitzvah, alongside bat and barmitzvah. It would be wonderful if such a policy was adopted throughout our congregations. Similarly, ceremonies to mark gender transition also need to be offered across the movement. Ultimately, achieving full inclusion and equality means that LGBTQI+ people are able to participate in every aspect of congregational life wherever they live.

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah is a Liberal Rabbi, author, and social justice activist. An LGBTQ+ pioneer, who became one of the first two openly lesbian rabbis in the world in 1989, Elli is a long-time participant in interfaith dialogue, a member of the British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights, and an advocate of a 'two equal states' solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Liberal Jewish Chaplain at Sussex and Brighton universities and Rabbi of Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue for over 20 years, following retirement in April Elli was appointed as the congregation's Rabbi Emeritus. Elli is currently writing two books: 'Triangulating Judaism' and 'Torah Mediations Week-By-Week'.



Ellen Galford comments:

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah's very lucid account of LJ's efforts to ensure full inclusion for LGBTQI+ Jews (my own "tribe within the Tribe") earns a place in my Keep file. It reminds me why I joined Sukkat Shalom in the first place, and why—when there are online surveys on Jewish matters and boxes to be ticked—I'm happy to describe myself as a Liberal Jew.

For many queer Jews of my vintage, coming of age and coming out in the last century, it felt as if the only way to relate to the various Jewish communities we'd grown up in was to slam the door behind us (if someone inside hadn't slammed it on us first) and head for the hills. And some people never turned back. For a long time I thought I'd be one of them. I wasn't then—and I'm not now—a regular service attender. I might describe myself as 90% secular, but I'm 100 percent Jewish to my bones. I'm convinced as anyone else that I was standing at Sinai alongside every other Jewish soul past, present and future, even if there may have been certain injunctions where I never got the memo.

The sea-change that floated me back was part of an extraordinary convergence of political, cultural and ethical upheavals, new (or revived) forms of radical re-thinking about power relationships, social justice, exclusion, access, and the values we try to live—and love—by. The people Elli Tikvah Sarah names in her brief history -- and others, such as the late Rabbi Sheila Shulman (z'il) —have been activists and pragmatists, simultaneously insiders and outsiders. They've also, incidentally, displayed an incredible amount of patience and fortitude to sit through all those meetings, engineer compromises without killing each other, and then come back to make bigger and bolder changes when the time was ripe. They haven't just opened the windows of the LJ house; they've given a lot more of us our own keys to the front door.

Ash Alexander comments:

Rav Elli Tikvah Sarah's article on the LGBTQIA+ inclusion journey of Liberal Judaism rightly brings up the need for more ceremonies to mark and celebrate gender transitions.

As a trans man who has become a Jew in adulthood, there are some rites of passage that I feel I've missed out on, and would love to be able to find a way to translate them into my life now, and to mark the milestones I'm still travelling toward.

Too often, I've seen gender transition and exploration treated as something to be sad and afraid about, and unfortunately there is good reason for trans people to feel that way, as our society does not yet reliably embrace and protect us, but it should be a time to be happy that a person is coming to know themselves more fully. What better way for Liberal Judaism to lead the way in honouring trans lives than to officially have sincere and joyful ceremonies to celebrate their journeys?

I hope that there may be more conversations with other trans Jews and trans Jews-to-be about creating and engaging with ceremonies that fit our spiritual and community needs, so that our collective joy may be multiplied.

I am Forbidden by Anouk Markovits

Elaine Samuel

I have been singing the praises of Anouk Markovits' *I Am Forbidden* ever since it was the recommended monthly read at our Jewish book group*. When asked the reason for my enthusiasm, I've been at a loss to answer – which isn't an auspicious start to a review, but at least it's a challenge. Indeed, I have to admit that I initially greeted the choice of this book with some reservation – oh no... not another book about leaving a Chassidic community. And in one respect it is, but in many others it is anything but.

The narration commences in Szatmar/Satu Mare, Transylvania, home to the Satmar Chassidim, with a nocturnal emission - hardly a beguiling beginning. Yet in these few short pages and with meagre explication, Markovits manages to evoke the piety and everyday concerns of the Satmar Chassidim. It is the early 1940s on the borders of Hungary and Romania, in that corner of Europe where life for Jews is nasty, brutish – and too often very short.

After the parents of a young Jewish boy are killed in devastating circumstances, their son is rescued by the family's Gentile maid. She calls him Anghel, teaches him how to take communion and warns him, "You will not be first in class. If you understand, don't show it - don't answer the teacher's questions". Meanwhile, along the nearby railway tracks, sealed box cars are travelling with white flutterings: "Maybe they were butterflies or maybe they were fingers begging for water". In the space of two short chapters, Markovits conveys the piety of the Satmar and the fate that befell most of them. She wastes no words but allows her readers to fill in the gaps. Her prose is simple and her sentences are short. Indeed, more than 50 years ago, my old GCSE teacher might have deemed them incomplete. It is pure poetry, which may speak more persuasively than factual documentation.

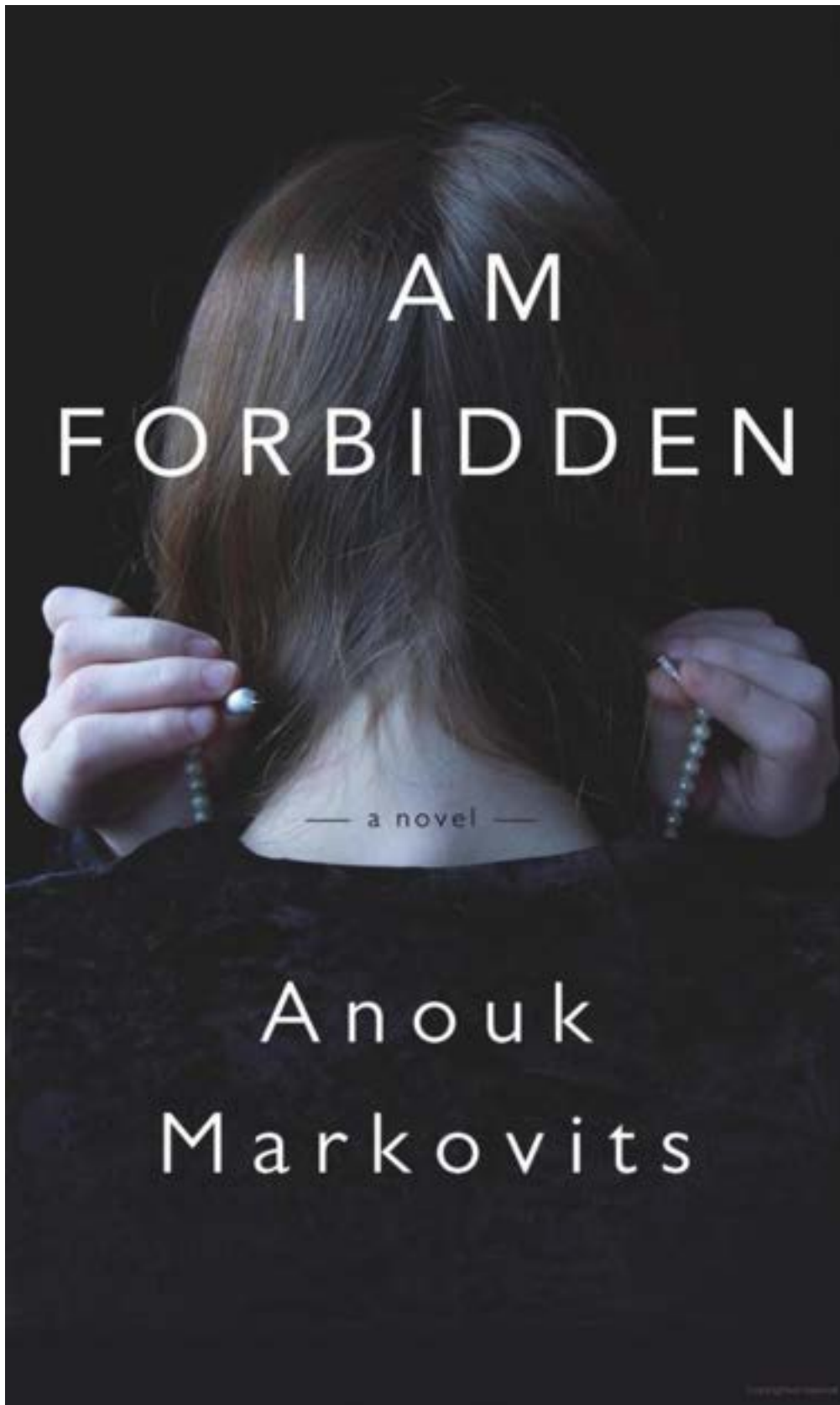
If it's poetic, this is not to say Markovits' writing is slow or dreamy.

On the contrary, in less than 300 pages, this slim novel takes us along at a compelling rate from Transylvania, to Paris, to Gateshead (perhaps the first appearance in literature of Gateshead's orthodox Teachers' Seminary?) to Brooklyn's Williamsburg, and it takes us across four generations. I know that others in the book group also found it to be a 'page-turner'. Given the topic, this is already an achievement. To my mind, however, its greatest achievement is its ability to take us into the lives and concerns of the Satmar community, and to do so with absolute surety as to its authenticity.

We are told on the cover of *I am Forbidden* that Anouk Markovits had been herself a member of the Satmar community, which she abandoned to pursue a life outside arranged marriages and motherhood. Interestingly, the direction she herself took finds little space in the novel. The lives of two girls growing up in the same family are portrayed, one obviously modelled on herself and the other, an adopted sister, who chooses to live within the confines of obedience to the laws and customs of the Satmar community.

Some members of the book group expressed dissatisfaction with this omission: they wanted to know more about what happened to the rebellious daughter and how she fared. I disagree. The omission of the rebellious daughter allows Markovits to portray the Satmar community from the vantage point of the Wise Son or Daughter: What does this mean to us – and not what does it mean to them. And this, I think, is Markovits' major accomplishment. Despite the fact that she herself has rejected the Satmar community, she rejects a view of that community as 'other'. And because she is by no means dismissive, she is able to narrate with huge heart and compassion a tale which challenges us because it does not fit neatly into our pre-conceptions.

Why exactly one of the main characters of the tale is 'forbidden' becomes evident as the novel reaches its final chapters. Suffice to say that this book was suggested purely coincidentally at a time when Rabbi Mark was devoting his Talmud classes to a discussion on this very issue. Indeed, one enriched the other. I hope it will not disappoint.



*If you would like to join Edinburgh's Jewish book group, please contact me at elainesamueledin@gmail.com. We meet monthly by Zoom or face to face in each other's homes. The only stipulation to membership is that books selected for discussion are of Jewish interest.

Sarah Broadie: A Legacy

Jonathan Broadie

It's hard to believe that a year has gone by since the death of my stepmother, Sarah Broadie, Professor of Philosophy at St Andrews University, and one of the most eminent philosophers in the world. I know the shock at her sudden passing is still there for some. We were very appreciative of the many messages about her received from within our community. Thank you again for that.

Sarah was a founder member of Sukkat Shalom, attending services when she could. From the start of the pandemic, she came to our Friday night Zoom services and, as for many of us, they became a significant anchor point of her week. Being a member of our community was very important to her, and she held Rabbi Mark in the very highest regard.

As joint executor of her estate, I've recently given our Council the news that Sarah has left a bequest of £5,000 to Sukkat Shalom. From conversations with her, I know this was a way for her to show appreciation for all that our community and its leaders do, but also



to provide practical help after she had gone. It was a wonderful gesture which was greatly welcomed by the Council. I know that the Council would also like to gently encourage other members of our community, where possible, to consider remembering Sukkat Shalom in this way. Not just for us, but for future generations of progressive Jews in Edinburgh and, of course, well beyond the city limits.

Those who knew Sarah well will not be surprised to hear that she had a large collection of books. They were piled up in every room, without exception!

They include many volumes which cover Jewish themes. I'm hoping that quite a few of them can be added to the Sukkat Shalom library.

Sarah left a huge literary legacy of her own, including eight major books on philosophy, the last one published just weeks before her death. As I've said before, she would have been embarrassed by all the accolades. She hated a fuss! But there is one more accolade to come. The University of Edinburgh has decided to posthumously award her an Honorary Degree, which will be conferred on her at a graduation ceremony later this year. As some of you will know, Sarah and my father, Frederick Broadie, met when they were philosophy lecturers at Edinburgh University. The rest, as they say, is history! I'm honoured to have been invited to receive the award on her behalf. Hopefully, she and my father will be smiling!

Get involved with Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre!

Have a look at these two interesting and challenging opportunities!

Learning for All

Jane Ansell

Some years ago, a few of us in Edinburgh Jewish community set up a Dialogue, no winners, no losers just a better, positive way to communicate with each other. The aim is to share what we have in common in Judaism, an umbrella to include all those who want a connection to Judaism. The Dialogue became the Cultural Centre to many, but actually the spirit and language of the Dialogue still remains. We want better partnerships with other organisations, and to enjoy working together, so why not join the steering group for Learning for All?

The Learning for All sessions are a programme strand of The Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre. Learning for All aims to encourage and enthuse the diverse Edinburgh community to enjoy learning about Jewish halacha, philosophy and many other topics.

We would like to have a planning group that includes both of the Edinburgh communities, so will you join us?

I am happy to talk this over with anyone interested; just email jansell@fastmail.fm.

International Women's Day – The Herzfeld Award

The EJCC has delivered successful programmes for International Women's Day for the past six years, including establishing the Herzfeld Award, in collaboration with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. This is a biennial award, named after the pioneering Jewish surgeon Dr Gertrude Herzfeld, and made to eminent female Jewish leaders in the field of health care.

The planning committee for the 2024 award, co-chaired by Edinburgh University students Hannah Handelsman and Sarah Cohen, is now being formed and is seeking a representative of Sukkat Shalom to join the committee. If you're interested in helping with the interesting and challenging task of bringing the next award to fruition, contact Professor Joe Goldblatt on joe@joiegoldblatt.scot to find out more.

Study opportunities

We're approaching our Jewish New Year, which is also the start of the academic year with its prospect of new learning. Rabbi Mark is back, and his online classes will start again in the week beginning 5 September. At the time of writing, it looks like the Monday class will be studying Judah Halevi, the great poet and thinker of the early 12th century, whose famous work *The Kuzari* is a fictional dialogue between a Jewish scholar and the King of the Khazars, subtitled "In defence of the despised religion". The Thursday class will continue with the fascinating Talmudic and later discussions of matrilineal Jewish status.

In this (hopefully) post-pandemic time, we keep the wonderful opportunities we had to study/learn/leyn with far-flung people, as well as restoring our physical groups. Read on to find out about The Ark's Biblical Hebrew classes and Leo Baeck College's Lehrhaus study programme. And don't forget Learning for All with EJCC (see above), Edinburgh's Jewish Book Group (see Elaine Samuel's review of *I am Forbidden*) as well as EHC's and Sukkat Shalom's own libraries.

Learn Biblical Hebrew

Learning Biblical Hebrew isn't easy, and it hasn't traditionally been much fun. However, many of us want to do it – both those coming to it for the first time, and those who want to improve our existing knowledge. The Ark Synagogue offers stimulating and supportive online learning opportunities at a range of levels.

The Ark says:

Want to unlock the ancient language of the Jewish people? Whether you are an absolute beginner, wanting to improve your reading fluency or work on being able to translate our ancient texts, we have a Hebrew course to suit your needs as you can choose from five different levels or even attend more than one class. Classes meet weekly and are free of charge. However, we ask that those who are not members, friends or supporters of The Ark Synagogue consider making a regular contribution.

Hebrew from Scratch (Level I) with Rabbi Aaron

Tuesdays 7-8PM

Learn to read Hebrew from scratch. No prior knowledge required.

Hebrew reading (Level II) with Rabbi Aaron

Tuesdays 7-8PM

Improve your Hebrew reading with a focus on the Weekly Torah Portion.

Introduction to Biblical Hebrew (Level III) with Rabbi Lea

Tuesdays 6-7PM

Learn to understand and translate Biblical Hebrew. Prior knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet assumed. Requires purchase of Hebrew book.

Advanced Biblical Hebrew (Level IV) with Rabbi Lea

Tuesdays 7-8PM

Work on improving your Biblical Hebrew in this class focusing on translation of the weekly portion. Prior knowledge of Hebrew assumed.

All classes will start on Tuesday 6 September.

Register:

www.arksynagogue.org/Hebrew

Leo Baeck College Lehrhaus Adult Learning Programme Autumn 2022

Lehrhaus is the adult Jewish learning programme at Leo Baeck College, following in the footsteps of the Frankfurt Lehrhaus established in 1920 by Franz Rosenzweig. This autumn Leo Baeck's entirely online programme of both free and paid for talks and courses is full of fascinating topics.

ESCAPE FROM KYIV - Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich

Free live online talk.

Wednesday 21 September 7.30 – 9.00pm UK time.

Join Rabbi Tanya for an exclusive talk about her and her family's week-long journey out of Kyiv at the beginning of the war, illustrated with photos and videos taken during their escape. During the talk, Rabbi Tanya will share some of the history of the Jews of Ukraine and their fate during the Second World War through her own family's story. To secure your place please go to [the website](#). You will need to register by setting up your own login account.

ISRAEL'S PERPETUAL ELECTIONS: WHAT NOW? - Rabbi Lea Mühlstein

Free live online talk.

Wednesday : 26 October 7.30- 9.00 pm UK time

On 1 November, Israelis will be heading back to the polls for the fifth time in under four years. In this session led by Rabbi Lea Mühlstein, we will try to understand why Israel has so many elections and how the Israeli electoral system works. And then we will attempt to look ahead – who will be the likely winners and losers and what will this mean for the issues that Progressive Jews care about? To secure your place please go to [the website](#). Here you will need to register by setting up your own login account.

ISRAEL HAS VOTED: A POST-ELECTION ANALYSIS - Rabbi Lea Mühlstein

Free live online talk.

Thursday : 17 November 7.30-9.00 pm UK time

In this session chaired by Rabbi Lea Mühlstein, we will look at the results of the 1 November Israeli election and analyse what this will mean for the formation of a new Israeli government. Who will be the future Prime Minister? And what coalition will support that new Prime Minister? Will we see a comeback from Bibi Netanyahu? And what will this mean for the issues that Progressive Jews care about? To secure your place please go to [the website](#). Here you will need to register by setting up your own login account.

THE TRANSITION TO IVRIT AS A MODERN VERNACULAR AND HEBRAIZATION OF ISRAELI SOCIETY - Norman Berdichevsky

4 week live online course, cost £60. All sessions will be recorded and available to students for 7 days after each session.

Tuesday 7.30-9.00 pm UK time 25 October, 1, 8, 15 November.

To pre-book your place on this course please email Jarek on lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk. When the course is confirmed we will send you the link to register and pay.

The course will cover new vocabulary changes in the language and pronunciation including the development of indigenous slang. We will also discuss other areas, such as whether Israelis and Diaspora Jews “do not speak the same language”, the conflict with and rejection of Yiddish, other national revivals, Arab and Druze use of Ivrit in Israel and the perceived threat of English dominance in Israel. We will look at the kibbutz ulpan programmes and discuss attempts to Latinize Hebrew to improve reading comprehension and the Hebrew teaching that took place underground in the USSR following the Six-Day War. The course will encourage active discussion amongst participants of their own experiences and impressions. No previous knowledge is needed to participate in this course other than an interest and curiosity in the Hebrew language!

DAVID BECOMES KING - Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet

8-week live on-line course, cost £120

Tuesday 7.30-9.00pm UK time 18, 25 October, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 November, 6 December 2022

All sessions will be recorded and available to participants for 7 days after the class. To pre-book your place on this course please email Jarek on lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk When the course is confirmed we will send you the link to register and pay.

The Book of Samuel is one of the masterpieces of world literature. While the overall story can be read and appreciated in translation, the full richness and subtleties of the narrative deserve spending time with the Hebrew text. This year we will continue our reading using the insights of rabbinic tradition and modern literary approaches to the text. Newcomers will quickly catch up on what has been covered before and together we will explore the unfolding drama of David's rise to power.

THE HISTORY OF THE PALE OF SETTLEMENT - Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich

4-week live online course, cost £60

Monday 7.30-9.00pm UK time 7, 14, 21, 28 November 2022

All sessions will be recorded and available to participants for 7 days after the class
To pre-book your place on this course please email Jarek on lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk. When the course is confirmed we will send you the link to register and pay.

The Pale of Settlement is a very important part of Jewish history. Many Jewish families around the world can trace their roots back to the Pale. The Pale of Settlement was formed in the territory of 5 modern countries: Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, parts of Poland and Moldova. Officially, this was the biggest Jewish ghetto in the history of humanity, which lasted for 126 years and had a profound impact on Jewish and the world's history at the time.

THE JEWISH GOD: WHO, WHAT AND WHERE? - Professor Melissa Raphael

4-week live online course morning class, cost £60

Sunday 9.00-10.30am UK time 23, 30 October 6, 13 November 2022

To pre-book your place on this course please email Jarek on lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk. When the course is confirmed, we will send you the link to register and pay.

Although Jewish scriptures and liturgy are full of God-talk, the nature and personhood of the Jewish God is surprisingly little discussed by Jews compared to, say, Jewish law, history, politics and culture. Assuming no prior study of theology (or belief), this course, taught from a Jewish feminist theistic perspective, will select a range of texts, art and photography to explore different, sometimes controversial, aspects of the Jewish theological imagination.

BACK TO “BACK TO THE SOURCES” - Rabbi Fred Morgan

4-week live online course, cost £60

Tuesday 9.00-10.30am 22, 29 November 6, 13 December 2022

All sessions will be recorded and available to participants for 7 days after the class.

To pre-book your place on this course please email Jarek on lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk. When the course is confirmed we will send you the link to register and pay.

Barry Holtz first published “Back to the Sources”, a ground-breaking collection of essays on the major areas of classical Jewish literature, in the mid-1980s. It remains today one of the best introductions to the subject ever produced. The diverse authors of these essays write in a style that is both scholarly and accessible to lay people. Each session we’ll look at one of the essays to unpack its insights into that genre of rabbinical literature: midrash, talmud, Biblical commentary and medieval philosophy. Along the way we’ll update the bibliographies. By the end of the course, we’ll have a comprehensive overview of the classical sources of our Jewish heritage and how they both mould and reflect Jewish understandings of the world. “Back to the Sources” is readily available in hard copy and on Kindle through online booksellers.

Shira Ba Zoom - Sing and/or Leyn with Mich Sampson

Thursday 13 October 7 -8pm

If you haven't already experienced Mich's joyful and supportive singing sessions, now's the time to try them. You don't have to have sung before - you just have to want to.

Bring the Festival season to a joyful conclusion on Thursday 13 October 7-8pm by joining Mich online for some beautiful songs with a Sukkot theme.

Listening to the beautiful chanting/leyning of the Torah, have you ever wanted to learn how to do it? Mich breaks down the learning into easy steps, building confidence in the process. She also provides great written and recorded resources.

'Learn to Leyn' online in 5 friendly sessions is coming up; dates still to be confirmed.

To get more information or register interest contact mich@mich-sampson.com

Shira Ba Zoom - Sing and/or Leyn with Mich Sampson



Community Care and Support

In these difficult times, we are here for each other, so don't hesitate to ask for any help and support you may need, including simply the need to talk.

OUR EXISTING CONFIDENTIAL CONTACT SYSTEM: phone 0131 777 8024 or email contact@eljc.org and one of the small group of people who respond to calls and emails will get back to you quickly.

OUR WHATSAPP GROUP allows people to be in direct contact with each other very quickly where help is needed. If you're not already on it and would like to be, text your mobile number to waadmins@eljc.org and ask to be part of the group.







Sukkat Shalom

Scottish Charity Number SC035678

Sukkat Shalom Contacts

Community Phone - 0131 777 8024

This phone number sends voicemail to members of the Contact Team

To reach the Care Team, call the Community Phone or email care@eljc.org

Contact Team - contact@eljc.org

Etrog Team - newsletter@eljc.org

Co-chairs: Sue Bard, Maurice Naftalin. Gillian Raab and Nick Silk (chair@eljc.org)

Treasurer and Membership: Stefano Giossi (membership@eljc.org)

Secretary: Gillian Raab (secretary@eljc.org)