



**March–April 2018**  
**Adar–Nisan–Iyar 5778**

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# Diary



On your mobile: check the diary on our [web page](#) rather than here.

## March 2018 / Adar – Nisan 5778

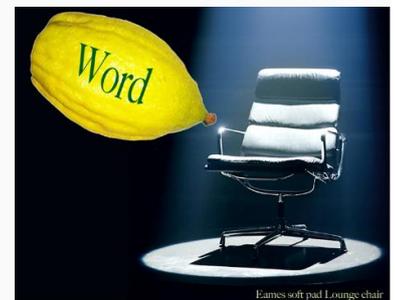
Fri 9	Nisan 23	7pm	Erev Shabbat service + communal supper (NB non-standard venue)	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>
Sat 17	Nisan 1	11am	Shabbat service, led by Rabbi Mark Solomon – Yael Budd batmitzvah	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sun 18	Nisan 2	3pm	Singing Practice	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sun 18	Nisan 2	4pm	Discussion Group	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sat 24	Nisan 8	11am	Shabbat service	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Fri 30	Nisan 15	6:30pm	Communal Seder	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>

## April 2018 / Nisan – Iyar 5778

Fri 6	Nisan 22	6pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>
Fri 13	Nisan 29	7pm	Erev Shabbat service, led by Rabbi Mark Solomon	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sat 14	Nisan 29	3pm	Tea and Talmud	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sun 15	Nisan 30	4pm	Discussion group	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Fri 20	Iyar 6	6pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>
Sat 28	Iyar 13	11am	Shabbat service	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>

## Word from the Chair

Do you ever think about what it means to be a Liberal Jew? We are members of Sukkat Shalom, the Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community, and while I sign off formal e-mails and letters as the Chair of ELJC, it's not so often that I think specifically about the word 'Liberal'. The reason I ask is because last week, at one of our services at St Mark's, I was at the back of the sanctuary and so had a good view of most if not all of the congregation. As we rose and started reciting one of the prayers, it struck me quite noticeably that the majority of the congregation were bowing at



Eames soft pad Lounge chair

certain points in the prayer. I can't actually remember which prayer it was but that wasn't the point – my immediate thought was “we shouldn't be doing that, we shouldn't be bowing during a prayer, we're a Liberal community”. I didn't think too much more about it at the time, but later on I did and as I often do I started having a bit of a debate with myself. (Is it just me that does this? I probably shouldn't ask!)

I'd say that it's almost ingrained in me that you don't do what I remember once being called ‘bobbing and weaving’ during the services. Having thought about it, I can't actually remember why that's the case, or indeed ever being told specifically that you can't. It's just something I ‘know’ – you just don't do it. So what was this bowing going on in our Liberal community?

While I may think that you don't do this in a Liberal Jewish service, a main tenet of Liberal Judaism – and a much more fundamental one, to be sure, than whether or not you bow during a service – is that we do what is relevant for us. **And when I say ‘we’, that is both** in a communal and an individual sense. Keeping kosher is probably a good example of this communal and individual sense. **For me, keeping kosher isn't something that I find important** to my Jewish identity. However I do understand that for other people it is, so while I as an **individual don't worry about it, I do believe that it is very important that when we have any** communal meals, we do always say that no forbidden foods are permitted.

How does that relate to what I saw during the service? I think **it's actually the same idea as the way I feel about kosher, in as much as for me, I don't bow during the service.** However if other people want to do so, then that, of course, is fine. **Just because it doesn't mean anything to me doesn't mean the same applies for others. And it's not as if anyone is making me bow during the service, so what's the problem?**

Judaism, and I suspect many religions, has many rituals that on the face of it don't necessarily make a lot of sense. There are some things that I would always do during a service which feel right for me – **or actually if I don't do them it feels wrong. I ‘know’ that when the scroll is raised, you have to stand, and you always have to face the scroll.** Why is this any less strange than bowing at certain points during the service? The answer of course is that it **isn't, and it's all down to personal choice and preference and often what you have been** brought up with or what is familiar. I know that early in its life, Liberal Judaism shunned many rituals on the basis that they were seemingly meaningless. Interestingly, Liberal communities seem to be embracing more rituals these days, because people are finding more value in them. I have to say that I can understand this, which makes it even more strange as to why I **thought “you can't do that” when I saw my fellow congregants bowing in the service.** I like to think of myself as someone who understands Liberal Judaism, but this incident shows that **there's still plenty for me to learn.**

**On that note**, I'd like to end by plugging the Liberal Judaism biennial conference that is taking place over the weekend of 29th June – 1st July in Solihull. **It's a chance to meet with** fellow-minded Jews, whether they bow or not during services, and explore different aspects of our Judaism. I know that some of our members have been to previous biennial conferences, **and while I have been to equivalent Reform events, I've never been to a Liberal Judaism** one. More details are on the Liberal Judaism website (<https://goo.gl/KGQm1Z>), and I hope to see some of you there.

Nick Silk

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## New members: Adam Clark and Paul McPhail

### Adam

**We're delighted to welcome Adam as a new member of Sukkat Shalom.** Although a new member, over the last three years Adam has become a valued and familiar figure, getting involved in various events and activities including recently becoming one of our treasurer. Thank you Adam for all that you do.

Adam was brought up around Edinburgh, where as an undergraduate he studied Japanese. Always someone to whom religion was important, his interest in Judaism was sparked by a course he took on the Jewish diaspora in China. He has found plenty of scope for his linguistic interests in Yiddish and Hebrew, both biblical and modern. He enjoys the opportunities for debate that Liberal Judaism offers and is looking forward to our trialling of the new Siddur over the coming year.

Adam is now completing his PhD on language policy in Hong Kong. Fortunately for us, he plans to remain in Edinburgh for the next few years at least and we look forward greatly to his continued involvement in Sukkat Shalom.

### Paul

Warm congratulations to Paul McPhail on his admission to Liberal Judaism. We are delighted to welcome him as a new member (as well as an established friend) of Sukkat Shalom.

Paul was born in Forres, Morayshire, moving as a young child to Malta where he lived until he was eight. His father was in the RAF and when he retired the family moved back to the UK. Paul has lived in various parts of the UK, as well as in Hong Kong and Spain. Trained in hotel management (though with diverse work experiences) Paul has quite recently moved with Bruce, his partner of 28 years, to Berwick-upon-Tweed where they own and run two hotels. Paul and Bruce are also long-term kinship foster carers and have set up a charity to support others in a similar position.



Although Paul was christened in the Church of Scotland, he reflects that he never really felt a connection with Christianity and that growing up, he felt little interest in religion. He first **became aware of Judaism as a young teenager when his father gave him Leon Uris' novel Exodus** to read. Since then Paul has had a number of Jewish friends with whom he **always felt at home, but he also assumed that you could only be Jewish by birth. It wasn't until 2013 that he was disabused of this belief by reading the novels of Faye Kellerman; his mother's sudden death later the same year prompted his** desire for a more religious life and a decision to explore Judaism more fully.

Looking for information about being Jewish and being gay led Paul to Rabbi Mark Solomon and to Sukkat Shalom. Paul says **'I simply knew after my first visit that Judaism was what I'd been looking for. The warm and friendly welcome from everyone I've met at Sukkat Shalom has been quite incredible.'** Paul describes his conversion process as **'an interesting journey.'** **At times, it's been difficult for him to attend services and classes as often as he'd have liked, but he says the support he's had throughout from Rabbi Mark and from Norman Crane has been fantastic.** Despite his trepidation, he found his examination by the Beit Din to be a wonderful and memorable experience and particularly appreciated the inclusion of Bruce in it.

Paul has already ensured through his challah workshop a few years ago that Sukkat Shalom has a cohort of competent challah makers and has promised that he will continue to inspire us with his own superior and original challot. For the immediate future, Paul wants to **be involved in the aspiration for a Jewish Cultural Centre in Edinburgh. Eventually, he'd like** to be able to do some outreach and education work with children and young people on Judaism and Israel. In the long-term, Paul hopes that he and Bruce may one day make Aliyah to Israel. In the meantime, we will enjoy the presence of Paul and Bruce in our community and all that they bring to it.

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## International (Jewish) Women's Day Event in Edinburgh

Shira Eliassian, programme manager of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA), is visiting the UK in March. Her speaking tour will include a visit hosted by Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue and the Edinburgh and Glasgow JSocs on Wednesday 21 March at the Godfrey Thomson Hall at Thomson's Land, St John Street (off Holyrood Road), Edinburgh EH8 8AQ, starting at 6.30. Shira will be talking about The Art of Crafting Ritual, including looking at how new rituals evolve, and how Jewish rituals can be shaped to include women.

There will also be a presentation on Jewish Suffragettes based on The Jewish Museum in London's 2015 "Blackguards in Bonnets" exhibition, plus musical entertainment and light refreshments. More details will be available shortly.

Tickets £10 (students, disabled, unwaged – pay what you can) – pay on the night but book in advance via Eventbrite: <https://goo.gl/oHybwu>. Disabled parking is available at the venue.

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## Dr Rowan Williams and Prof. Mona Siddiqui

Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury and currently Master of Magdalene College, University of Cambridge will be in conversation with Professor Mona Siddiqui, Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies, University of Edinburgh

Wednesday 21 March 7.15 – 9.00 ( registration from 6.30 ), **St Mary's Cathedral**, Palmerston Place, EH12 5AW. Tickets £10/£8/£3. To register for this event contact Neil Walker, [mesp2018@hotmail.com](mailto:mesp2018@hotmail.com) 0131 331 4469

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## Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms x3

2018 marks the 100th anniversary of Leonard Bernstein's birth and during March there will be no fewer than three opportunities to hear his Chichester Psalms around Edinburgh. The Chichester Psalms provide a rare opportunity to hear classical music composed for original Hebrew text on a religious theme. You can expect to hear modern settings of words from Psalms 2, 23, 100 and 108 set to music across three movements. The second movement **features an astounding weaving of two threads of song: women's voices float on top singing "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" over male voices belligerently hammering out "Why do the nations so furiously rage together?" It all concludes with an uplifting melody for Hinei Ma Tov.**

The Edinburgh Royal Choral Union (<http://ercu.org.uk/concerts.html>) performs in Linlithgow and in Edinburgh at the beginning of the month and their programme includes an excerpt from Michael Tippett's oratorio "A Child of Our Time", written in response to the events of Kristallnacht.

**Saturday 3rd March: St Michael's Church, Linlithgow: 7pm** (sadly cancelled)

Sunday 4th March: **St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh: 3.30pm** (going ahead)

Tickets £12/ £10 (£5 students) on the door or from [tickets@ercu.org.uk](mailto:tickets@ercu.org.uk).

The Edinburgh Bach Choir (<http://www.edinburghbachchoir.org.uk>) sings at the end of the month; their programme also includes Bernstein's Missa Brevis (which he did not live to hear performed), Charles Ives' setting of Psalm 90, and Barber's Agnus Dei (a vocal setting of his own Adagio for Strings).

**Saturday 24th March: St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh 7.30pm**

Tickets from Usher Hall Box Office, 0131 228 1155 ([www.usherhall.co.uk](http://www.usherhall.co.uk)), from members of the Choir, or at the door.

Sukkat Shalom members Sue Lieberman and Rebecca Wober sing, respectively, with the Edinburgh Bach Choir and the Edinburgh Choral Union. Some keen singers will be attending all three dates, whether as performer or audience member!

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## Tu B'Shvat , New Year of the Trees

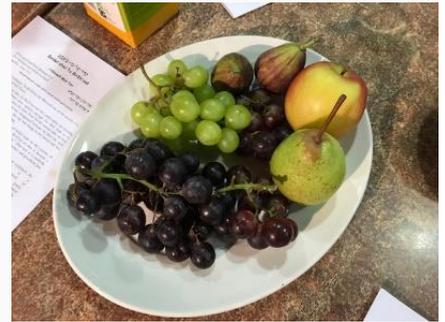


Tu B'Shvat is one of the four 'new years' of the Jewish calendar (why do these things by halves?), and is thought to have originated in marking the time of year when the fruits of the trees begin to form. While the observance of this day used to consist mainly of eating fruit associated with the land of Israel, the Kabbalists of 16th Century Safed built on this custom, relating it to the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and developing a Seder during which four questions are asked, four cups of wine drunk and fifteen types of fruits and nuts eaten. The celebration of Tu B'Shvat in this way, with its spiritual and ecological significance,

has been revived in some quarters, including here in Sukkat Shalom **where it's becoming a treasured** tradition.

This year, Rabbi Mark Solomon once again imbued the Seder with meaning, vitality and song for members and friends of Sukkat Shalom and for our guests of other faiths, and we followed the seder with a wonderful communal supper.

Our Cheder celebrated the festival too, using compost made and donated by Tiphereth Camphill Community in Colinton. The children filled planters made out of recycled egg boxes, water bottles and containers and planted bulbs and alfalfa, watercress and snapdragon seeds. **They learned the Hebrew word for tree ('etz')** and used stamping blocks to write the name of the festival, which means the fifteenth of the month of Shevat.



## Edinburgh Interfaith Alliance news

The main interfaith highlight of January (apart from the Tu B'shvat seder of course!) was the EIFA Holocaust Memorial day event, organised in partnership between EIFA and the staff and students at Gracemount school. It was an impressive and musically rich event, with several moving instrumental and sung performances inspired by tragic events of the last century. A candle lighting ceremony marked the memory not only of the victims of genocide, but also, closer to home, of students who have suffered under homophobia and bullying.

## Upcoming events





1. The next community meal will take place on Monday 23 April and will feature engaging speakers on the topic of 'unsung women of faith in present day'. Community Meals are a casual, free event open to all and serve as an opportunity to bring the Edinburgh community together and celebrate our diversity. Time, venue and

registration details to be confirmed.

2. Until 23 April : 'Our Story' exhibition at the Museum of Edinburgh, 142-146 Canongate, Edinburgh EH8 8DD, closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The **Our Story project has collected together people's memories and stories from the** many faith communities in Edinburgh through oral histories and interviews. This exhibition **celebrates the city's rich diversity through the stories of people who live here.** I can personally vouch for **Our Story** which involves extremely good photography, and fascinating and accessible testimony about contemporary religious community life in Edinburgh. For more information please visit <https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/our-story>.

3. The International Women's day event 'Press for Progress' Saturday 10 March will be **held at St Columba's by the Castle 14 Johnson Terrace EH1 2PW 10am – 4 pm.** There will be a Public Speaking Workshop at 10am and Open Community Stalls from 1 pm. The **#unsungwomentoday nomination exhibition is on display all day. If you'd like to register** ahead of time for a workshop place (limited places available) you can do so on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/international-womens-day-tickets-43284854164>.

### **Sam Danzig**

For more information about interfaith in Edinburgh please contact your interfaith reps Sam Danzig and Clare Levy at emails [samdanzig@live.com](mailto:samdanzig@live.com) and [clare\\_levy@hotmail.com](mailto:clare_levy@hotmail.com) respectively.

## **Joint Burns Supper with Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation**

For the second time, after a gap of seven years, Sukkat Shalom and Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation got together for a joint Burns Supper. It was a wonderful evening and, as several guests commented, it showed what an array of talent we can draw on when we get together. Most of the cast are below, but missing are Rabbi David Rose who led Ha'motzei and Grace after the meal, Gowan Calder who addressed the Haggis/Kishka and Micheline Brannan for her toast to the next 200 years with a science fiction (maybe) vision of a future when Jews flocked to Edinburgh for the expanded cultural centre, protected from climate change, and Michael Adler who thanked everyone who had made this happen.



Those in the picture are, from left to right :-  
 Joyce Caplan replying for the lassies, on behalf of Kate 'Shanter, Michael Elam who gave a wonderful recitation of Tam O'Shanter, Marjorie Broadie with a different take on the

Selkirk Grace, Adrian Harris toasting the lassies, Rabbi Mark Solomon who performed Burns songs in Scots and Yiddish, behind Mark musicians Gica Loening and Jen Hill, in front of him Phil Alexander who accompanied Mark and played with the other musicians and Jamie Errington who piped in the Haggis. Continuing to the right of Mark we have our Chairman for the evening, David Neville, then Fred Freeman who raised a most learned toast to Auld Lang Syne and, last but not least, Professor David Purdie, who gave a magnificent toast to the immortal memory of Robert Burns.

## Lit News

The Lit was scheduled to hold three events in March, where unfortunately **“was” is the** operative word. On Sunday 4th March, Professor Ilan Zvi Baron from Durham University was **scheduled to speak on the Jewish diaspora’s** relationship with Israel - a fascinating subject to most of us. Sadly, several feet of snow, not to mention Arctic winds and Storm Emma, forced us to cancel. **We now plan to reschedule “Obligation in Exile” to later in the year.**

Hopefully, weather will not be a constraint for our other two March events. On Sunday 11th March, Rabbi Sybil Sheridan, part-time rabbi at Newcastle Reform shul, will be speaking about her work with the organisation Meketa, which works to support Ethiopian Jews still living in Ethiopia. Some of you will remember the Etrog interview with Des and Rome Shanko,

Sukkat Shalom members who came to Scotland from Ethiopia many years ago. Having a real-life Ethiopian connection in our community means that Sybil's talk should be of even more relevance than usual. The talk will be at the usual time of 8pm at EHC.

Finally, on Thursday 22nd March, James Renton, Reader at Edgehill University, will be speaking on "Fanaticism and the Balfour Declaration." This event is jointly sponsored with Edinburgh University and will take place at the earlier time of 5.30pm at New College (at the top of The Mound).

With two more events to come in this year's programme (one in April and the last in May), it has been an exciting and rich year of talks and activities. More details about our events are on the website, <http://ejls.org>.

Sue Lieberman

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## Be a Service Leader!

Like all voluntary organisations, Sukkat Shalom suffers from one big problem: how can we distribute work and responsibilities more evenly among our members? No-one likes the situation in which a few core people do everything—aside from anything else, an organisation run like that can't be properly responsive to its members. Our members know that there's been a lot of effort over the last couple of years to change the situation, with some success; our activity is shared much more widely than in the past.

It's ironic, then, that one of the last remaining areas run by "the few" is virtually the central function of the community—that is: the leadership of religious services. And what makes this worse is that for our higher-profile Shabbat and Erev Shabbat services, the few are overwhelmingly male and (at best) middle-aged—in other words, not very representative at all!

So, we need new service leaders! The purpose of this piece is to make **everyone** contemplate starting to take part in service leadership. You're thinking "I can't do that", but that's exactly what our existing lay leaders thought—until they found that they could. There are all kinds of ways in which you can get an easy introduction to service leadership:

- take a short part of a service, sharing it with other people;

- if you're concerned about your Hebrew fluency, stick to parts that can be read in English;
- try yourself out in a Kabbalat Shabbat service: always very small, informal, and friendly;
- lighten your load by sharing the readings with everyone present (we often do this now in Kabbalat Shabbat services);
- talk to one of our lead singers, who'll be prepared to be at the front with you, taking over from you for the songs.

If you'd prefer a more formal introduction, that's a good alternative too: two of our current service leaders attended a **Baal Tefillah** (service leadership) course at Leo Baeck college, and that gave them the confidence and knowledge that they needed to do something that they would have previously thought impossible. There are many ways in: what's important is to start. Remember, everyone will be on your side. In fact, it's an order: Exodus (19:4) tells us "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests". And, we might add, a queendom.

**Maurice Naftalin**

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## For Irena Sendler

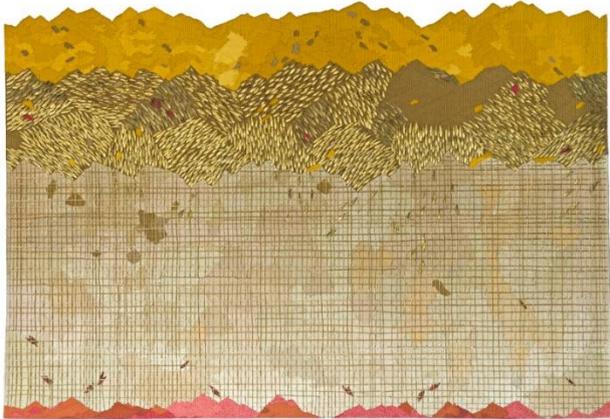
I am a tapestry weaver, and in February 2015 I received an unexpected letter, inviting me to participate in the 15<sup>th</sup> International Triennial of Tapestry, which **would be held in Łódź, Poland** in the summer of 2016. This is a prestigious exhibition, so I was honoured to be able to accept. I decided to create a tapestry specifically for the show, rather than sending an existing work. I started to research Polish history, looking for positive stories, sometimes a difficult task. I had had a vague recollection of a woman who had been part of the resistance during World War II. I eventually found the story of Irena Sendler.

Irena Sendler was part of the Polish underground group, Żegota. Her father had been a doctor who had treated members of the Jewish community in the small town of Otwock, near Warsaw. She now lived in Warsaw, had trained as a nurse and decided to try to help those confined to the Warsaw Ghetto. Typhus was endemic there, because of the overcrowding and poor sanitation. The Nazis feared that typhus in the ghetto would spread outside its walls, so they hired health inspectors,



including Irena. She would go into the ghetto with a kitbag, gain the trust of parents and smuggle babies and children out. She and her comrades in Żegota saved the lives of 2500.

The children were given new identities, taught Catholic prayers in case they were tested and sent to live with families, in convents or orphanages for the duration of the war. Their identities were preserved and hidden in jars that were buried, so that they could be reunited with their parents after the war. Sadly, very few of the parents survived. In 1943 Irena was arrested by the Gestapo, severely tortured and sentenced to death, but she never betrayed her colleagues or the children. Żegota bribed the members of the firing squad just before she was due to be shot. Undaunted, she carried on in the resistance for the duration of the war.



I was inspired by the story of this heroic but little-known woman, and I wanted to honour her, since she did not get the recognition she deserved during her lifetime. My large tapestry, **For Irena Sendler**, includes 2500 ash keys (seeds of the ash tree) painted gold, one for each precious life preserved. They are attached to the surface with gold metallic thread. The lower section is in the form of a grid over the surface, suggesting the connections between Irena,

the other members of Żegota, the foster families, the nuns, etc and ultimately between all of us. The main colours are yellow, gold and shades of off-white, suggesting light and hope. I hope the whole piece has a feeling of upward movement.

I have previously made a large body of work on the subject of my family history that I called **Unmarked Lives**. In doing extensive research on my ancestry, I have often thought of the heroism of these ordinary people, whose everyday struggles have gone unnoticed. Irena Sendler **also never expected admiration. She said, 'Every child saved with my help is the justification of my existence on this Earth, and not a title to glory.'**

**Besides being shown in Łódź, For Irena Sendler** was recently included in **Daughters of Penelope** at the Dovecot Gallery, Edinburgh, an exhibition about women weavers, in particular those with a connection to the Dovecot Studios. I hope that this allowed a few more people to become aware of Irena Sendler and show that goodness can flourish even in the face of colossal evil.

**Joanne Soroka**

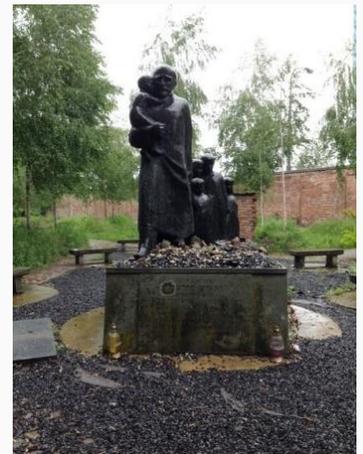
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## Janusz Korczak

This year, marking both the beginning of Scotland's 'Year of Young People' and World Holocaust Memorial Day, a performance of David Greig's 2004 play for young people, 'Dr Korczak's Example' was staged at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh. This visually arresting and moving production brought to the attention of a full house the complex and eminent figure of Janusz Korczak, the Polish Jew who was paediatrician, children's writer, teacher, educational theorist and for thirty years founder/director of the Warsaw Jewish Orphanage. The end of Korczak's life has become a legend. On the 6<sup>th</sup> August 1942, the Nazis evacuated the ghetto orphanages. Korczak, his staff and 192 children marched with dignity, the orphanage banner held high, to the Umschlagplatz where cattle trucks waited to take them to the extermination camp at Treblinka. Korczak himself had many contacts on the Aryan side. He was on numerous occasions offered forged papers and the promise of safe hiding places out of the ghetto. He refused such offers with the words, 'you do not leave a sick child in the night and you do not leave children at times like this.'

Korczak was a national figure in pre-war Poland and a great populariser, writing and broadcasting for ordinary people struggling with the ordinary problems of bringing up children. In his book, 'How to Love a Child' written in field hospitals on the Eastern Front during WW1, he developed the concept of self-knowledge and self-respect as the wellspring of any meaningful love for a child, or children. For Korczak, this was the prerequisite for regarding the child as a separate being with her/his inalienable rights and it was from this concept that sprang much of his innovative experimental practice in the orphanage with its systems of democratic self-government and attempts – not always successful and abandoned in the last difficult months of the orphanage's existence – to place the control of behaviour within the orphanage in the hands of the children through a children's court. Children's freedom of expression was encouraged; the children themselves wrote and produced a weekly orphanage newsletter and in 1926 Korczak established a weekly supplement to 'Our Review', a Zionist Polish language daily. This was the 'Little Review' full of contributions from Jewish children all over Poland, with a team of child investigative reporters. It dealt with a wide range of issues and included a special column of letters from children reporting on antisemitism. Reporters were encouraged to write about their own experiences and spelling and grammar were left in their original form – incurring the wrath of various educationalists.

In his attitude to staff and in his training methods, Korczak was unconventional. He was scornful of established training courses, stating that he 'would rather leave a child in the care



of an old woman who had bred chickens than in the care of a newly graduated nurse.’ In the orphanage, he valued the contributions of staff with no medical or pedagogical background, such as construction workers, carpenters, cooks and cleaners. Korczak held seminars on **child psychology at two of Warsaw’s pedagogical institutes where his methods avoided the** use of text books but relied instead on putting students in touch with their own childhoods. In the orphanage, Korczak established an apprenticeship system for student teachers who were offered board and lodging and a weekly seminar in exchange for part-time work that included every aspect of daily life.

Korczak’s work and writing has had a lasting and significant influence in the field of children’s rights. In 1979, the International Year of the Child, the Polish delegation to the United Nations, inspired by Korczak’s ideas, called for an international treaty safeguarding children’s rights, leading to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. The UNCRC in its embrace of children’s civic rights, rights to respect and to self-expression as well as **rights to protection owes much to Korczak’s work.**

**Korczak’s beliefs continued to inform life in the orphanage until the end.** In the last months, Korczak resisted pressure to disband the orphanage and to arrange hiding places for individual children. His reasoning was that it would be impossible to ensure the safety of all the children. It is probable that Korczak believed that both he and the orphanage were too high-profile to be subjected to the final solution. By the time it had become obvious that this **was not the case, Korczak’s concern was, as it always had been, as much with the spiritual** as the physical survival of his charges and the quality of the short life that was left to them. The last months of life in the orphanage were marked by puppet workshops, choir practice, the nurturing of petunia seedlings and writing, talking about and dramatizing death, as well as foraging for food.

Sue Bard

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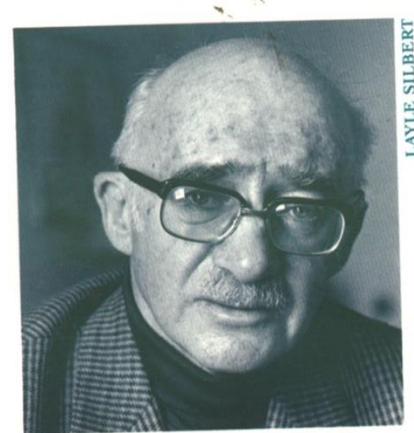
## **Book Review: *Still my Word Sings: Poems. Yiddish and English***

**by Heather Valencia (Dusseldorf University Press , 2017)**

There is no way this could be a conventional book review. **Right upfront, I’ll have to declare** an interest. The members of our Edinburgh Yiddish Group know just how lucky we are (keyn-ayn-hore!) to have Heather Valencia as our teacher. As well as guiding us with heroic patience through the thorny thickets of Yiddish vocabulary and grammar, she has introduced us to the

brilliant—and often little-known—19th and 20th century Eastern European writers who brought Yiddish culture into the modern world.

One of the most powerful of these voices belongs to the poet Avrom Sutzkever (1913-2010). Out in the (surprisingly wide) world of Yiddish academic studies, Heather has earned a well-deserved international reputation as a Sutzkever scholar, producing an impressive body of critical works and **translations. She was also, in the poet's later years, a Sutzkever friend.** So the first thing to say about this wonderful **new translation is that it's not only eminently readable and elegantly done, but has the ring of truth.**



For English-speaking readers, this is a wonderful **introduction to a giant of European literature. If you're interested in modern poetry, or even if you're not, you may already have heard of Sutzkever. Some of his poems** have, with good reason, been chosen as texts at Holocaust memorial events. But although he came of age as a writer in the subterranean world of the Vilna Ghetto, and battled his way through the Nazi occupation in a band of Jewish partisan fighters, he is far more than a poet of war and devastation. He is indeed a witness and a survivor, using his gifts to mourn his murdered mother and his infant son, and to shout out his fury at the destruction of a world, but his poetry—like his lifespan—goes far beyond those hellish boundaries. Some of his works will inevitably burn a hole in your heart and take you to dark places. But others pulse with life and light. There are surprises, journeys into strange and beautiful worlds, puzzles and pyrotechnics, electrifying insights into the here and now.

But this poetry is only part of the pleasure. The book begins with an edited translation of **Sutzkever's own narrative piece "My Life and My Poetry", given by the poet to a Yiddish-speaking audience in Montreal in 1959. It ends with Heather's own critical discussion of the poet's life and writings, an eminently useful guide for readers of every stripe--students, academic Yiddishists and "civilian" Sutzkever-admirers alike.**

And for those of us who can (or keep trying to) read Yiddish, there's a special reward. **The book's bi-lingual format of Yiddish originals and English translations on facing pages is definitely a blessing and a boon.** Instead of having to put aside the text and go scrabbling through the dictionary every time we meet an unfamiliar or forgotten Yiddish word, we can **make the connection at a glance. So there's no need to interrupt the flow**—which, as any language student will agree, is as annoying as a coughing fit in a concert hall.

**Still My Word Sings: Poems** is available from all good bookshops (and Amazon).

Ellen Galford

## Mark Solomon is a Scammer!

I realise that may come as a shock to some of you. But I should reassure you at once: I don't mean **the** Mark Solomon, just **a** Mark Solomon. **Or rather, a "Mark Solomon". Or maybe** someone else completely, who just liked the name and wanted to borrow it. Why? Because they wanted to send a little message to our treasurer – Phil Wadler at the time – to persuade him to transfer some money to... well, you'll see to whom, if you read on in this correspondence. But someone was eavesdropping on Phil's treasurer e-mail, and decided to see if they could take the scammer for a little ride, pretending to be Phil. So when you're reading this, bear in mind that neither party is exactly who they're claiming to be:

Rabbi Mark Solomon <marksolomon@btinternet.com> to treasurer@eljc.org

Phil, Are you available to make a bank transfer to a vendor today, let me know the available balance in our account then i can get further instruction on the transfer. Thanks,  
Rabbi Mark Solomon

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Philip Wadler <treasurer@eljc.org> to Mark Solomon <markpedroduke@gmail.com>

We have a little more than £5k. Who is the vendor?--P (a **cunning forgery of Phil's signature**)

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Rabbi Mark Solomon <marksolomon@btinternet.com> to treasurer@eljc.org

Philip, The vendor is taking care all prepaid service to the Community would you be able to redraw and send payment via western union or money gram.Thanks, Rabbi Mark Solomon

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Philip Wadler <treasurer@eljc.org> to Mark Solomon <markpedroduke@gmail.com>

Mark **Certainly, Western Union would be fine. I take it that you've** checked that the vendor is kosher? --P

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Rabbi Mark Solomon <marksolomon@btinternet.com> to treasurer@eljc.org

Yes i did and its kosher here is the western union information for a payment of £2,150 and send the receipt to me

Name Elizabeth Elendu, Address 23 Leghorn Road se 18 1sz

Thanks, Rabbi Mark Solomon

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Philip Wadler <treasurer@eljc.org> to Mark Solomon <markpedroduke@gmail.com>

**OK. I'll do that this afternoon. But as treasurer I'll need to report on this to our council meeting this week. What's the service that Elizabeth Elendu is providing for us?--P**

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Rabbi Mark Solomon <marklsolomon@btinternet.com> to treasurer@eljc.org

This is for the new accessories like altar cloths, candles and posters etc which all would be included in the receipt from the vendor.

Thanks, Rabbi Mark Solomon

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Philip Wadler <treasurer@eljc.org> to Rabbi Mark Solomon <markpedroduke@gmail.com>

Excellent, the council **will be glad to hear that we'll have new altar cloths: the old ones are** quite shabby. But £2150 is quite a lot – nearly half our reserves. For that money, do you think Elizabeth would be able also to supply us with some small kosher animals for sacrifice? Guinea pigs or hamsters would do.--P

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Rabbi Mark Solomon <marklsolomon@btinternet.com> to treasurer@eljc.org

Philip, Yes. some kosher animals would be included, awaiting payment confirmation

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Philip Wadler <treasurer@eljc.org> to Rabbi Mark Solomon <markpedroduke@gmail.com>

Mark **That's great; we haven't had any animal sacrifices in our services for a while now (they'll go nicely with the new altar cloths). Could you confirm** what the animals are – guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits or whatever? If Elizabeth could send anything bigger, that would be welcome too, of course. We need to know how many are male, and how many female.--P

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Rabbi Mark Solomon <marklsolomon@btinternet.com> to treasurer@eljc.org

Philip, Everything would be included. guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits ,deer , sheep, go ahead and make the payment before today runs out.

Regards,  
Rabbi Mark Solomon

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Philip Wadler <treasurer@eljc.org> to Mark Solomon <markpedroduct@gmail.com>

Mark Deer and sheep would be excellent! But I was serious when I asked how many were **male and how many female. As a rabbi, you'll know very well that we have to be certain that** all the male animals are circumcised. We heard of a community that were delighted to get an armadillo to sacrifice, but forgot to check whether it was circumcised, and things went **very badly for them for a while after that. So it's very important to get this** right.—P

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Rabbi Mark Solomon <marksolomon@btinternet.com> to treasurer@eljc.org

Philip, What is the status regarding the payment? Regards, Rabbi Mark Solomon

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Mark seems oddly uninterested in the finer points of ritual here. The correspondence continued for a while longer, so if we're really desperate for material for the next **Etrog**, you may get to see in Part 2 how Elizabeth really, actually, got paid!

**Maurice Naftalin**

## 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](mailto:care@eljc.org)

Contact Team – [contact@eljc.org](mailto:contact@eljc.org)

Etrog Team – [newsletter@eljc.org](mailto:newsletter@eljc.org)

Chair: Nick Silk

Treasurer: Adam Clark

Membership: Gillian Raab

**Scottish Charity SC035678**