

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

לולב *Lulav*

vol 1
issue 4

**April
2014**

**Nisan
5774**

- 4** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
- 11** Erev Shabbat Service
and Musical Journey
(See p. 3)
CC 7.00
- 12** Tea and Talmud
MSG (St Giles Room) 3.00
- 13** Philosophy Reading Group
MSG 4.00
- 14** Erev Pesach First Seder
See the [booking form](#) and
reserve your tickets now
MSG 7.00
- 18** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
- 26** Shabbat Morning Service
CC 11.00

May

Iyar

- 2** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
- 9** Erev Shabbat Service
CC 7.00
- 16** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15

Venues

CC Columcille Centre
2 Newbattle Terrace

MSG Marchmont St Giles
1a Kilgraston Road

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Contributors' addresses are not published, so as to prevent them from being harvested from our website and used for spam. Contact Lulav contributors by using contact.eljc.org

Stop Press! We welcome Sharon Goldwater to the role of membership secretary

Community Phone This phone number sends voicemail to members the Contact Team **0131 777 8024**

Urgent Support Only for use in emergency; alerts the whole the Welfare Team **0131 208 1447**

Email Contact Email the Contact Team and the Newsletter via the webpage at contact.eljc.org

Website www.eljc.org

Chair/Lulav Norman Crane *Treasurer* Gillian Raab
Admin/Lulav Catherine Lyons *Membership* Sharon Goldwater

Scottish Charity SC035678

Report from our correspondent in Chasidikistan

Purim 5774, revised 1 April 2014

This special report has relegated a much reduced Word from the Chair on to the next page.

Here I am at the rump end of Chasidikistan. 'Treif, treife hindquarter,' the cry goes up from several thousand gentlemen in long black coats and streimels gathered round as I record my report. I'll rephrase that. Here I am in the most remote part of Chasidikistan, about to reveal an amazing story.

Chasidikistan is little known here in the West but it is a very hilly country and its capital, Fruminopolis, straddles two steeply sided hills called Oy and Veh. Certainly seven hills, like Rome, would not be permitted, because that would be *Chukat Ha-Goy*. Originally the inhabitants of fair Fruminopolis lived on just one of the hills. But, thanks to HaSh-m, they all had so many children that their numbers could not be contained on just the one hill. Their growing families had to make their homes on the other hill. But, oy veh! Between the two hills ran a very deep chasm. A journey between the two hills involved a circuitous route and a great deal of time, not to be recommended if Shabbos were rapidly approaching. If only there were a direct route between the two hills, families could visit each other as often as they wished.

Some years ago, I was told, the Rebbe, an *ilui* of his and many another generation, applied his mind to the problem. He thought and he thought and he thought. Until he came up with a solution; not, it might be said, without the help of technologically minded members of his group of Chasidim elsewhere in the world. Why not run a cable car between the two hills?

There were of course complications. Naturally some of the inhabitants of Fruminopolis were Cohanim. Now the two cemeteries for the capital lay just down the slopes leading to the chasm directly underneath the only available line for the cable car. Cohanim are forbidden to have contact with dead bodies or enter a cemetery. The Rebbe said that the Cohanim could not just simply glide over the cemeteries inside their cable cars, not good enough. The Din, according to the Talmud, is that the vertical space above a cemetery is limitless and constitutes part of the cemetery. The Cohanim would be entering a cemetery, oy veh!

What to do? Fortunately, the Rebbe had been in contact with a Dayan in London, also a Cohen, who undertook many aeroplane flights, which took him over a number of cemeteries, and so was familiar with the problem. He recommended that a separate sheet of aluminium be suspended underneath each cable car, and that would constitute a barrier between the cable car and the cemetery. The Cohanim would not be guilty of entering a cemetery. All would be Glatt Kosher!

What about the interior fitting of each car? At first it was thought that the cars should be for men only, for what need did women have for travelling away from home? However the good ladies of Fruminopolis settled their sheitels firmly on their heads, planted their feet, and insisted they were not going to be prevented from seeing their families. This threw their husbands into consternation, for it would not be seemly for the women to travel in the same compartment as the men. An ingenious young fellow solved the problem, a mechitsah from floor to ceiling of each carriage. The front of each carriage was fitted out with seats with arm rests for books so the men could daven or study as required. The seats were comfy and capacious. In the remaining third of each carriage behind the mechitsah, padded benches were fitted round the sides for the women to sit on. This left enough room in the middle of each carriage for the children to play in.

Finally, arrangements were given the approval of the Rebbe. From that time on the Chasidim of Fruminopolis have travelled from one hill to the other of their fine city with the greatest of ease, whenever they wished. In fact, I was told that among Chasidim of more low lying areas they are known as *Bobover* Chasidim.

Based on an actual rabbinical decision — honest!

Word from the Chair

We have received a request for financial support from **SCoJeC**, and I am pleased to say that Council agreed to the request in principle but the exact level of support will be settled when further details are clarified. In the meantime I am also pleased to announce that we are partners in a Voluntary Action Fund 'cluster project', sharing a £30000 grant. It will fund leadership training, and will facilitate a project that will enable us to support refugees and asylum-seekers. The grant was obtained by Fiona Frank of SCoJeC. Other project partners are the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

The group of us who came together to consider the **Portable Ark** project remitted the task of submitting a funding application to the NLPS Trust to Lauren Fox, and the application has been sent. We shall probably have to wait until May for the outcome of our application. Design and making will take place over the Summer. We have already done quite a bit of thinking about the parameters involved, which should stand us in good stead. Our goal is to have it ready for our tenth anniversary celebration in September.

I have made initial contact with the manager of the **Food Bank**, Ewan Walker, who is keen to come and give us presentation about the work of the Food Bank, and we are now arranging this.

Hurry up and book your place at the **Communal Seder**; places are limited. [You can get the Seder Booking Form from our website](#). It was also attached to the February edition of *Lulav*.

And finally, Wendy and I will be having a **House Warming Party** from 7.30pm on Saturday **12 April**. All members of the Community and *Lulav* readers are cordially invited. RSVP soon for the sake of planning: 26/5 Southfield Place, Portobello, EH15 1LZ.

Norman Crane

The Musical Journey continues

Thanks to everyone who stayed behind after our Shabbat morning service and for their productive contributions in both eating Lisa's birthday treats and kick-starting our singing practice.

How lovely are your tents O Jacob, your dwelling-places O Israel!

Mah Tov is where we begin, with a melody by Danny Maseng. We have our standard set of tunes, but for this session we are striking a musical balance with a more modern rendition. You can listen to [Danny Maseng's Mah Tov](#) on Youtube. If you have Spotify, merely type in Danny Maseng, and voilà!



Image: Shiraynu Hackney Jewish Music Choir

We will be getting together for some singing and harmonising at the end of the next **Erev Shabbat service, 11 April**. If you are interested then please, have a listen to this melody, it will make things that bit easier if you are at least familiar with the tune. Listen to it in the car, practise in the shower, and come prepared! We are looking forward to seeing you.

Ricky Hogg, Rebekah Gronowski, and Joanna Bleau

For more information, you can contact Ricky through contact.eljc.org.

The Holocaust Commission: call for evidence

What measures should be taken to ensure Britain has a permanent and fitting memorial to the Holocaust? The Board of Deputies encourages us to respond to the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission. We can respond individually and could also formulate a response from our community, at the [Number 10 website](#).

'Lots' of fun at another spectacular Purim!



Cheder rehearses for the Purimspiel grand finale

An expectant crowd gathers in its finery



Welcome back to the ELJC Purim Cow!



Want to be a Purimspieler?
It helps to have a beard (false or not) ...

... a really, really, big beard!



And for the ladies,
luscious locks!

Rainbow hamantaschen, anyone?



Most young people have never been to a funeral: dying well and why it matters

On Wednesday 11 March Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger (*right*) delivered the annual Malcolm Goldsmith lecture, organised by the organization “Faith in Older People”. Baroness Neuberger was the chairman of the independent review of the Liverpool Care Pathway for end of life care. The review recommended that the Pathway should be phased out and replaced by an individual end of life care plans. She has recently published *Not dead yet*, a manifesto for the rights of older people. She kept the audience of around 200 people enthralled by a very lively and witty lecture and in her well-informed answers to questions.



The lecture started by reviewing a history of dying in around five minutes, skipping in a sentence everything up to the 18th Century, when the idea of a good death, *ars moriendi*, appeared. Though she approved of much of 18th and 19th century practices — splendid funerals and lots of ritual to go with them — she argued that the peaceful scenes in Victorian deathbed portraits were due to the effect of massive doses of laudanum (opium), which, for the first time, had taken the pain out of dying; but at the expense of any consciousness for the deceased. This changed, she argued, after the First World War, when so many young people died that the collective trauma over these deaths made it impossible for people to talk about them. Whether one agrees with this analysis or not, there was much to agree with in her criticisms of the current state of death and dying and her prescriptions for how things could be better. This matters for the dying person, but even more for those who are bereaved.

Her main criticisms were as follows. We no longer talk about death and dying. Funerals are low-key affairs. They often take place well after the death and are followed by a few sandwiches and a glass of sherry at the person's home, with little talk about the deceased person's life. Most young people have never been to a funeral. They should be both a celebration of a life and a support for the bereaved.

She had a large number of suggestions as to how things could be improved, these are just a few of them. We should all have advanced directives or living wills that give details of our wishes for end-of-life care and funeral, including whom we would like to invite and perhaps whom we would *not* want to be there. A show of hands in the audience revealed that even in this select group very few of us had such a thing, compared with the vast majority of us who were organ donors even though organs from older people are not of much use. We need a national conversation about death and dying, and schools should have it on the curriculum. At question time a teacher said that she had put on a play in which either someone died or death was mentioned, and a parent complained that she didn't want her children exposed to death as they didn't have any experience of it.

There was little explicit mention of Jewish practice in Rabbi Neuberger's presentation. However, when she was talking about how badly death was managed these days — low-key funerals, etc. — she said Jews, as well as Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus, had a meaningful ritual that made mourning so much better. In an aside about heaven and hell she said, "we Jews don't do the afterlife; we get on with the practicalities." But she was advocating many things — early burial, visiting and providing food for the bereaved — that are aspects of our tradition.

Gillian Raab, and Hilary Rifkind from the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

IDF soldier ordered to demolish his own home: Bedouin life under Israel's Praver Plan

Participants in our Human Rights Trip to Israel and Palestine gave a presentation to the Lit (the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society) last month. One of the participants was **Judy Sischy**, of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, and in the audience was a long-standing friend of Judy's, **Jeremy Beecham**. A Labour peer, Lord Beecham is Vice-Chair of the New Israel Fund UK and has participated in the UK Task Force on Issues Concerning Israeli Arabs.

Sue Lieberman and **Gillian Raab**, also participants in the Human Rights Trip, are pleased to share with Lulav readers Jeremy's first-hand report of life under Praver.



Bedouin Homes in the Negev
Photo: Judy Sischy/ELJC Human Rights Trip

The IDF soldier returned to his home in the Negev on leave to find a notice affixed to it requiring him to demolish it, failing which, the authorities would do it and send him a bill. This story, related to me by Dr Thabat Abu Raas, Director of the Negev Project for Adalah, the Israeli Arab civil rights organisation, is a stark illustration of the current situation facing some thirty thousand members of one of Israel's most deprived communities.

Some years ago, the Goldberg Commission proposed that the unrecognised Bedouin villages in the Negev be recognised, but the Praver Commission appointed to implement the proposal came up with a radically different plan, modified by Minister Benny Begin, which would lead to the demolition of some 35 villages and the relocation of their residents. The plan has stalled in the Negev, with the right wing MKs describing it as too generous, and the centre and left members opposing it as unjust.

Dr Raas, whom I met with other members of NIF recently, points out that the Negev occupies 60% of Israel's land area, with just 8% of its population. He welcomes plans for substantial investment in the area by the IDF, and the JNF's plans to bring 250,000 Jewish Israelis to the area. Both will help build the local economy and provide employment. But he argues, reasonably, for the needs of the existing Bedouin citizens to be treated in the same way. He supports an alternative plan for the unrecognized villages drawn up by a team of Jews and Arabs, which looks to adopt the planning policies which apply to Jewish developments, moshavim, kibbutzim, towns, and private farms (like Ariel Sharon's), consistent with the Bureau of Statistics' definition of locality. All the unrecognised villages meet the definition. The alternative plan envisages a range of models for the villages reflecting different needs and aspirations: some agricultural, some pastoral, some industrial.

Under Praver, all the villages, and their 30,000 residents, would go, in some cases to be replaced by Jewish settlements. Yet people who have lived in these places for generations would be uprooted and relocated in places like Rahat, a town of some 55,000, people, with unemployment running at 35%, and with 60% of the population under 18. Indeed, the Bedouin population is estimated to double over the next twenty years.

Of course, not all the Bedouin's problems are caused by Government policy. A patriarchal, tribal, clan-based society, with high birth rates and rates of cousin marriage, presents problems which the community must itself address, and which, importantly, increasingly vocal Bedouin women are beginning to do.

cont'd

New Israel Fund

Progress. Together.

The New Israel Fund (NIF) exists to help secure Israel's long term survival and prosperity for all its citizens. We support Israelis who apply its Jewish and democratic values by protecting human rights, tackling poverty, promoting religious tolerance, cultivating co-existence and preserving the environment.

NIF has granted more than \$200 million to 800 organisations in Israel. All grants go to Israeli non-governmental organisations based within the Green Line. None support partisan political activity.

NIF takes on issues other funders won't address. NIF provides seed money to new organisations, helping them grow and become self-sufficient.

greater priority in its philanthropic endeavours to support the necessary investment in this small group of Israeli citizens, in their interests as well as of Israel as a whole.

As in other deprived communities in Israel and elsewhere, there is a huge need for investment in the social and physical infrastructure to encourage full participation in the modern economy, indeed the modern world. Critically, housing conditions, health, and educational opportunity must improved. All this is very much in Israel's interest, as well as that of the Bedouin.

Dr Raas sees a real danger of the young Bedouin becoming increasingly disaffected and alienated from Israeli society. He has been campaigning, so far unsuccessfully, for a radio channel to broadcast to the Bedouin; the only one doing so at present is operated by Hamas!

Israel needs to address the problems of this community in accordance with the values on which the State was founded. The Diaspora should encourage it do so, and perhaps give a

Jeremy Beecham

Jewish Dialogue: the Stockholm Model

In the third of three events discussing models to inspire Edinburgh's Jewish community, we will hear from Lena Posner-Korosi, President of the Stockholm Jewish Community and the Official Council of Jewish Communities of Sweden. The Stockholm Jewish Community is open to all Jews, whether their interests are religious or cultural, and the organisation is responsible for cultural events, youth programmes, informal education and social services as well as the three synagogues in the city.

Fiona Frank from SCoJeC will also be speaking at the event to introduce two new Scojec projects.

The event takes place on Sunday **11 May**, 1.30–4.30 pm at Room G43, Paterson's Land, St John Street (off Holyrood Road), Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ. A light lunch will be provided, for which a donation of £5 is requested on the day. Book your free ticket using [Eventbrite: Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue: Stockholm Model](#).

Janet Mundy

Exposing a clash of civilisations or easing social cohesion — religion on the BBC

Professor Aaqil Ahmed, Head of Religion and Ethics at the BBC, is a keynote speaker at the Inaugural Conference of the British Association for Islamic Studies, **10 April**, 6.00–7.30pm, at the John McIntyre Conference Centre. Book your free ticket using [Eventbrite: Why We Need Religious Programming](#).

