

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Sukkat Shalom is a constituent of liberal judaism

August 2006

Chairman: Maurice Naftalin, chair@elj.org
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EVENTS & SERVICES

Date **Friday 4th August**
Event **Erev Shabbat Service**
Venue **Columcille Centre, Newbattle Terrace, Edinburgh.**
Time **7pm**

Please note that Rabbi Mark is **not** now coming up this weekend, and we will **not** be having a family supper after this service

Date **Saturday 19th August**
Event **Shabbat Service**
Venue **St Mark's Unitarian Church, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh.**
Time **11am**

Date **Friday 1st September**
Event **Erev Shabbat Service**
Venue **Columcille Centre, Newbattle Terrace, Edinburgh.**
Time **7pm**

Rabbi Mark is now visiting us this weekend, so we will now be having a family supper after this service. **Please bring along a non-meat dish which we can all share.**

As Rabbi Mark is up the weekend of 1st/2nd September, we will also be holding the **Choosing Judaism** and **Talmud Reading** groups. The regular attendees will be informed of the details, but if you would like to attend either group, please contact Rabbi Mark or Nick for more details.

Date **Saturday 16th September**
Event **Shabbat Service**
Venue **St Mark's Unitarian Church, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh.**
Time **11am**

HIGH HOLYDAYS

Listed below are the details of our services and other information which you may find helpful.

Date **Friday 22 September**
Event **Erev Rosh Hashanah**
Venue **St Mark's**
Time **7pm**

Date **Saturday 23 September**
Event **Rosh Hashanah**
Venue **St Mark's**
Time **11am**

The service will be followed by lunch and Tachlis at the Raab's

Date **Sunday 1 October**
Event **Kol Nidrei**
Venue **St Mark's**
Time **7pm**

Date **Monday 2 October**
Event **Yom Kippur**
Venue **St Mark's**

Morning service	11am
Additional service	1pm
Break	2.30pm
Study Session	3pm
Afternoon service	3.30pm
Children's service	4.30pm
Memorial service	5pm
Concluding service	5.30pm
Conclude	6.30pm

We intend going to a restaurant after the service, although at the time of writing, we still need a volunteer to co-ordinate this!

"A man should remember the place from which he has derived a benefit."
Bereshit Rabbah 79, 6

Thank You

"Thank you everyone for the many cards and well wishes, as well as practical help, I received after my accident. It was really heartening to feel the concern of people in our community. I am well on the mend, and apart from the scar and a sore lump on my forehead, I should be pretty well back to my normal self in a couple of weeks' time.

Thank you all again, so much. Sei gesund!"
Sue Lieberman

Lulav and etrog



If anyone would like to buy a lulav and etrog, please contact **Rebekah**. The cost is £30, which must be paid in advance.

Security Help

We are looking for additional help with manning the door on Yom Kippur. Would you be free for even half an hour to offer your assistance? If so, please contact Gorgon Barclay on gordon@barclaygoring.fsnet.co.uk

Festival of Spirituality and Peace Launch Event Invitation

You are cordially invited to attend
The Festival Launch Event on
Sunday 6th August - 6pm
at **St John's Church Princes Street**

Bishop Kallistos Ware

will give a keynote address, with music from the
Choir of St John's

and Edinburgh Inter-Faith Choir.

This will be followed by a reception.

RSVP stjohnsoffice@btconnect.com

or

0131 229 7565

Inter-Faith and Intra-Faith Dialogue

Rebekah has been selected to be a Jewish representative on the **Edinburgh Interfaith Executive** and the **Edinburgh Religious Leaders & Representatives Council**. If anyone has any issues which should be brought to attention regarding either Inter-Faith or Intra-Faith matters which are of interest or concern to you, please do not hesitate to contact her and she will do her best to help.

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Open Day

There will be tours of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation for performers and visitors at the Jewish Edinburgh Group's annual Festival Open Day. An exhibition on the history of the Edinburgh Jewish community will also be displayed. Performers will be invited to talk about their acts and perform extracts at the event on **Sunday, August 20, (12pm-4.30pm)**. Interested performers should email jeg@ehcong.com

Arts & Crafts Afternoon

Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group
invite you to take part in an
Arts & Crafts afternoon
On
Saturday 26th August
at **Nicholson Square Methodist Church**
(in the Undercroft Café).

If you are skilled in any arts & crafts and would like to share your expertise or perhaps learn a new skill, please contact me a.s.a.p. as we need to know the numbers who will be attending. It would be helpful if you indicate if you are prepared to offer to share skills or if you just want to come along to learn a new one. Please email rebekahgronowski@hotmail.com

Some Interesting websites

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research
www.jpr.org.uk
Holocaust Memorial Day (2007)
in Newcastle-Gateshead
www.hmd.org.uk

Social Events - Education

Now is the time to think about what we might organise for next year. Some ideas the Council has suggested are

- Boat trip to Inchcolm
- Beginners Hebrew
- Improvers Hebrew
- Bike rides
- Country walks
- Trip to see Moishe's Bagel (see Page 4)
- Theatre outings
- Revival of Shiurim
- Group suppers

Would you be interested in participating, or even helping organise, any of these? Have you got any other good ideas?"

Contact Gillian with your ideas and preferences so we can make them happen.

Gillian.Raab@googlemail.com or

tel **07748 678 551** to give her your opinion

Ot Azoy! Yiddish Crash Course Sunday 6 to Friday 11 August

'Ot Azoy!' is an opportunity to get to grips with a language that so many people have a smattering of or curiosity for. In one week you can learn from scratch or re-awaken what you heard as a child from a beloved grandparent. With an outstanding International faculty including **Peysakh Fiszman** of New York, **Lily Kahn** of University College London under the Direction of **Heather Valencia** of Stirling University, Scotland you will be swept into Yiddishland where you will also learn Yiddish through song with the exquisite Yiddish Singer **Shura Lipovsky** from Amsterdam and you will learn more Yiddish through films selected and introduced by **Barry Davis** of London.

Registration forms are on the Website www.jmi.org.uk or you can contact the **Jewish Music Institute** on Tel **020 8909 2445** e-mail jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk.

Full fees are £285; Students £185. there is a discount if attending KlezFest or Song School (the following week) as well as Ot Azoy!

Scottish Inter-Faith Council A Special Invitation

Women's Inter-Faith Seminar **'Women and War: how can we work together for peace?'**

The Scottish Inter-Faith Council will be hosting an inter-faith seminar for women at.....

St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art
from **11.00a.m.-3.00 p.m**
on **1st of August.**

The seminar will include guest speaker **Farkhanda Chaudry** who will share her experiences of working with women in Iraq during the current conflict (for which she received the MBE), a tour of Jenny Matthews renowned 'Women and War' exhibition, discussion workshops and refreshments - the seminar is free (donations welcome) and we hope to see as many women from diverse faith traditions (and none) there as possible.

Bookings can be made by writing, emailing or telephoning Maureen at the address below. Please state if you have any special requirements when you book.

Dr. Maureen Sier

Development & Education Officer

Scottish Inter Faith Council

523 Shields Road

Glasgow

G41 2RF

Tel: 0141 420 6982

maureen@interfaithscotland.org

Patriothall Studios Open Day Saturday 5th Aug 11 am until 4 pm

This centre will be open to show the work of the resident artists, including paintings by ELJC member, **Miriam Vickers**.

Entrance is just beyond Theatre workshop on Hamilton Place, Stockbridge. All welcome.

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

The latest newsletter is now available to read on www.j-scot.org.uk/4corners/issue10.pdf

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

www.edfringe.com

0131 226 0000

Full details of all these events can be found in the Fringe brochure or website.

Jewish Music

There are lots of opportunities to hear Jewish music in the festival this year from two Edinburgh based bands Celter Shmelter and Moishe's Bagel. **Celter Shmelter**, playing traditional klezmer tunes and wedding dances will play at the Book Festival on **Friday 25th August**.

While **Moishe's Bagel**, who are probably well known to all by now for their wonderful original compositions and Jewish and Balkan tunes, have multiple gigs listed below.

Wednesday 2nd August, 8.45pm

The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh (*part of Edinburgh International Jazz Festival*)
www.edinburghjazzfestival.co.uk

Thursday 10th August, 7.15pm

Acoustic Music Centre at St Brides, Orwell Terrace, Edinburgh
www.acousticmusiccentre.com or
0131 346 1405

Tues 15th & Wed 16th August, 7pm

The Famous Spiegeltent, George Square Gardens, Edinburgh www.spiegeltent.net or
0131 667 8940

Music

David Vernon and Dick Lee

Accordion and Clarinet duo perform an eclectic musical mix with genuine sense of enjoyment - French, Jewish, Balkan, Classical and Traditional.

Valvona & Crolla, Tel **0131 556 7800**

Handel 1738: Israel in Egypt.

Edin Symphony Baroque offer a rare opportunity to hear Handel's great oratorio including its original first part.

Canongate Kirk. Tel **0131 226 0000**

Handel 1738: Saul

Handel penned two oratorios in 1738. Saul describes David's triumph over Goliath and subsequent accession to the throne of Israel, told from the perspective of the old jealous king threatened by the burgeoning renown of his protégé.

Canongate Kirk. Tel **0131 226 0000**

Theatre

My Name Is Rachel Corrie

Alan Rickman's production is 'A triumph' *Observer*, 'Pitch-perfect' *Independent*, 'Vibrant' *Standard*, 'Skilful' *Financial Times*, 'Gripping' *Telegraph*. Why did a young woman leave her comfortable American life to stand between a bulldozer and a Palestinian home? Direct from sell-out West End season.

www.mynameisrachelcorrie.co.uk

Pleasance Courtyard Tel **0131 556 6550**

My Brother's Keeper

During the hard years of the Taliban, one thing kept the Jewish community of Afghanistan together. They both hated each other. A religious farce about Menorahs, meshugenehs and the price of carpets.

C Central Tel **0870 701 5105**

The Black Jew Dialogues

Who knew that American rednecks, slavery, bar mitzvahs and chicken livers were so funny? Multimedia romp of sketches, improv, theatre and video, which reveals the funny side of prejudice and hate.

C Venue Tel **0870 7015105**

Sophie Tucker's One Night Stand

Enjoy a rollercoaster ride through the highs and lows of Sophie Tucker's life in a show filled with song, cellulite and Kosher comedy.

Pleasance Courtyard Tel **0131 556 6550**

Denial

Three 'pilgrims' visit Auschwitz in the present day. They come not to mourn the dead but to celebrate the architects of the final solution. A powerful and disturbing insight into holocaust denial. Poignant, shocking but ultimately hopeful.

Calton Theatre Tel **07757 352 709**

Theatre (continued)

Petrol Jesus Nightmare #5 (In the name of the Messiah)

Fringe First winner Henry Adam's (The People Next Door) chillingly apocalyptic thriller about the violent consequences of faith and belief for five people caught under fire in occupied territory.

Traverse Theatre Tel 0131 228 1404

Rose

Martin Sherman's powerful account of one feisty Jewish woman's journey from Russia through the Warsaw ghettos to the Atlantic City boardwalks, the Arizona canyons and Miami Beach, receives a stunning tour de force performance from the wonderful Fiona York.

ClubWEST Tel 07720 285 550

Comedy

Simon Amstell

'Simon Amstell'

Hilarious stand-up from this young Jewish comedian.

Pleasance Dome Tel 0131 556 6550

Andrew J Lederer

'Anthology'

Comedian/storyteller from New York.

Laughing Horse Tel 0131 556 4481

Jerry Sadowitz

'Equal Opportunities Offender'

Comedian/Magician from the 'mosy offensive comedian on the planet'

Assembly Tel 0131 226 2428

John Oliver and Andy Zaltzman

'Detonate 70 minutes of unbridled afternoon'

Comedy and political satire

The Stand Comedy Club Tel 0131 558 7272

Juliet Meyers

'A Life: A Fantasy'

Has an unshakable religious conviction. Or has she?

Laughing Horse Tel 0131 556 8974

Simon Brodtkin

'Everyone but Himself'

Outstanding character comedy from this young Jewish comedian.

Pleasance Courtyard Tel 0131 558 7272

Klezmer Cruise April 29 – May 11, 2007



In a modern and unique twist to an old custom, David Krakauer and Michael Alpert will return to the historic homeland of Ashkenaz with an international group of Klezmerim in the Spring of 2007. Aboard a chartered cruise ship on the Dnieper River, the musicians will perform *en route* and in public concerts from Kiev to the Crimea and Odessa.

Passengers on the "Klezmer/Heritage Cruise" will also be offered lectures on Yiddish culture and language, Jewish literature and history, the politics and history of old Russia and the new Ukraine. There will be dance instruction and a festival of special films as well. During the days spent in the major ports along the way, tours will visit secular and Jewish heritage sites. Arrangements will be made for those with family roots to rediscover their ancestral towns and shtetls.

For more information please visit www.magma.ca/~klezmercruise or you can also speak to their nephew in Edinburgh,

Elie Dolgin on elie.dolgin@ed.ac.uk or **07961 072266**





www.fairtrade.org.uk

Banana Loaf by Michael Barry.

Makes one loaf.

225 g (8 oz) self-raising flour
 100 g (4 oz) butter
 150 g (5 oz) caster sugar
 450 g (1 lb) Fairtrade bananas (the gooier the better)
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 eggs
 175 g (6 oz) mixed dried fruit

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Peel and mash the bananas, and then mix all the ingredients except the dried fruit together. You can do this in a food processor, or by hand in a basin. When they're all thoroughly mixed, add the dried fruit. Spoon the mixture into a 1 kg (2 lb) non-stick loaf tin, spread it out evenly and bake it for 1½ hours. The loaf is done when a skewer pushed into its middle comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack before slicing.

Letters

Hello, I am a Jewish playwright and my play, *My Brother's Keeper*, is going to be performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this year. It will be on at C Venues at 7.30pm from 4 to 28 August.

The play deals with the bizarre true story of the last two Jews of Afghanistan. I don't know if you are familiar with the story. When the Taliban abandoned Kabul in October 2001, against the backdrop of the US and UK airstrikes and the ground approach of the Northern Alliance, a Reuters journalist happened upon two Jews living in a disused synagogue. Amazingly, they had survived the Soviets, the civil war, the Taliban and the air raids. Even more amazingly, they hated each other. They lived on different floors, held separate religious services and even denounced each other to the Taliban.

I thought the production might be of interest to your society. Of course, I am very interested in reaching as many members of the local Jewish community as possible and would be very happy to come and talk to you, if you think that this would be of interest.

More information is available at my website below. Thanks,

Michael J Flexer

www.apikoros.co.uk



Invites you to the 'Kooolest Kourse' of the year

When?	Wednesday evenings
Dates?	13, 20, 27, Sep and 4 Oct
Time?	7 to 9.15 pm
Where?	Montagu Centre, 21 Maple St London W1T 4BE
Cost?	£25 for 4 sessions or £8 per session
13 Sept	Rabbi Mark Solomon - <i>The Nature and development of Kabbalah</i>
20 Sept	Janet Berenson-Perkins <i>4 Worlds and Sefirot</i>
27 Sept	Rabbi Larry Tabick <i>Kabbalistic Texts and Prayer Technique</i>
4 Oct	Janet Berenson-Perkins <i>New Year, New Perspective</i>

For registration form and information contact:

Judy Thwaites j.thwaites@liberaljudaism.org

Tel: 020 7631 9824

Many thanks to all who contributed this month. Items for publication are welcomed as are responses to items published. The deadline for the next newsletter will be Wednesday 23rd Aug. Please email any contributions to newsletter@eljc.org

**Support Israel! - Sermon for Shabbat
Pinchas 2006**

by Rabbi Mark L. Solomon

In the portion we read today Moses petitions God to appoint, as his successor, a leader “who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them in – so that the congregation of the Eternal One may not be like sheep that have no shepherd.” (Numbers 27:17)

The significance of the terms “to go out before them...” is clearly related leadership in battle. But why does the verse add “to come in before them ... and bring them in”? Perhaps we could interpret this to mean that leadership needs the ability to lead out to war but also to persuade people of the need for restraint and peace negotiations, even in the face of fear and danger.

In the horrific crisis in Israel, Gaza and Lebanon, we may deplore what appear to be Israel’s acts of “collective punishment” and the deaths of civilians, especially children. With regard to the latter, though, we should recognise that it is an established practice of terrorist leaders to hold meetings in buildings where there are civilians.

Terrorist statements are full of deceit. These groups clearly have no concern for their own people.. In their perverted and evil concept of martyrdom, their children and other innocent civilians are not so much human shields as human sacrifices. It is clear now that Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon and Gaza has been seen as a sign of weakness. This doesn’t mean that it was wrong – it was manifestly right – but no-one must be allowed to suppose that Israel’s willingness to withdraw and compromise for the sake of peace should be construed as weakness or lack of determination to defend its people and its legitimate existence.

In this conflict Hamas and especially Hezbollah are the proxies of Syria and Iran. It is these states that have armed Hezbollah with its estimated 10,000 rockets, now striking far into Israel, bringing death and terror to Haifa, where Jews and Arabs have a history of living together in relative harmony and co-operation. Some of you will know that I have supported Palestinian rights and, explicitly or implicitly, criticised Israel for its injustice to Palestinians. I do not regret this, nor do I think any of it was

wrong in principle. Many of us believe that friendly, if trenchant criticism is the best way to urge Israel onto a path that will lead to its greater safety and prosperity.

Where I personally have always stopped short, however, is from any word or action that suggests that Israel should not exist, or that would directly harm its people, my people. Proposals for boycotts, economic, academic or of any other sort, should be hateful and unacceptable to every Jew. Public statements, such as advertisements in the Times, by groups that embrace the possibility of Israel’s non-existence, should fill us with revulsion, however glittering and talented are some of those who subscribe to such pronouncements. |

We need to make a firm distinction between groups, such as British Friends of Peace Now, which define themselves as moderate or left-wing Zionists and criticise some of the policies of Israeli governments while proudly supporting the existence of a Jewish State; and groups dominated by non- or anti-Zionists and are manifestly indifferent or hostile, to the very existence of Israel..

We should acknowledge the sins and mistakes of Israel for its part in creating the Palestinian refugee problem and the suffering it has caused to many innocent people. We must demand from Israel recognition of the equal human and moral rights of both Palestinians in the territories and the Arab citizens of Israel, with those of Jews.

But we must also understand the forces of history that have made Israel a vital reality of contemporary Jewish existence, and that Israel is now the largest centre of Jewish population in the world, a thriving democracy where vigorous and morally informed debate is accompanied by a rich cultural, scientific and economic life. We are allowed to be ashamed of Israel when it disappoints us, but we can and should be intensely proud of our people’s achievement in creating and sustaining such a state under constant fire from our enemies.

We must embrace Israelis as our Jewish brothers and sisters, the sharers and bearers of our destiny, who stand at the front line of the battle – and sadly it is still a battle – for Jewish survival. There is no shame, no moral deficiency, in putting our own people first in a time of crisis, any more than one could be condemned for saving one’s own children or

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parents, sisters and brothers first from a burning building.

Finally, we must stand up as champions of Israel even when we are distressed by some of its actions. It is our duty to remind the world that, except for the ephemeral Christian Crusader kingdom of Outremer in the Middle Ages, the only autonomous states ever to exist in the bulk of the territory between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea were Israel and Judah. We may hope for the establishment of a state of Palestine, living in peace alongside our state of Israel and fulfilling the national hopes of the Palestinian Arabs—but it will be the first state of Palestine ever to exist, and it is doubtful if it ever will as long as the terrorists hold sway over Palestinian affairs and threaten Israel with destruction.

Unlike Joshua, who already had a record as a military leader when he was appointed as Moses' successor, Ehud Olmert is the first recent Prime Minister of Israel who has not been a general. It is especially important, then that Olmert emerges in this crisis as a shepherd who can lead his flock to safety both by decisive military action to eliminate the terrorist threat and by appropriate negotiations with Arab governments that are prepared to live alongside Israel in peace. Shepherds are normally placid figures, but there are vicious wolves out there which need to be killed or scared off if the sheep are not be savaged with impunity.

Jeremiah the prophet was vigorous in his denunciation of Israel's faults, both moral and political, often being thrown in prison for his pains. At the same time, however, he upholds Israel's place in God's love, as our Haftarah today concluded (Jeremiah 2:3):

*Israel is a holy portion to the Eternal One,
The first fruits of God's increase;
All that devour him shall be held guilty,
Evil shall come upon them,
Declares the Eternal One. Amen*

D'var Torah – Mattot Masse'y 5766, 15th

July 2006

Maurice Naftalin, Chairman ELJC

Today's *parsha*, the itinerary of the Children of Israel through the wilderness, look like an ancient version of the directions that I followed for many hours last weekend. I was visiting Lincoln with my dad for the barmitzvah of the Liberal community. My parents lived there from 1948—before even I was born!—until 1979, so it was a doubly special occasion for us.

During the whole time we lived there, the Naftalins were almost the only Jewish family in Lincoln. I have only just understood why this town of 70,000 people has had no organised Jewish community, and almost no Jews, in modern times. It was very different in the Middle Ages, when the Jewish community of Lincoln was central to the financial affairs of England. The chief Jewish financier, Aaron of Lincoln, lent money—tens of millions by today's measure—to finance the building of the great abbeys and minsters of England. He was the second richest man in England, after the king. The wealth and prominence of the community didn't always protect it—rather the reverse, since burning a Jew's house would also burn inconvenient evidence of your debt to him. The oppression suffered by Lincoln's Jews in the bad times is heartbreaking to read. They were the property of the king, and could be bought and sold. Their property could be seized at any time, and always reverted to the king when they died. They needed his permission to marry or to settle anywhere. And sometimes there was worse; Lincoln was the scene of an infamous blood libel and pogrom in which much of the community was exiled and many murdered.

That is why, after the expulsion of 1290, Lincoln remained *Judenrein* until now, when we have returned to take up our place again. The town and the Cathedral have welcomed us back, making generous amends for the injustices of the past. It was very moving to hear the Torah read in the very same room in which the Jews of Lincoln held their services 700 years. On a beautiful summer's day the windows were open, and our voices carried out on to streets that last heard us in very different times. The sense of connection was very strong with the Jews who flourished and suffered there. Simply by existing, the community in Lincoln is healing an ancient wound, and I felt highly privileged to be part of that.

...continued

This connection to the Jewish people is as problematic as it is strong. I'm not related to the mediaeval Jews of Lincoln, I don't share a language with them, my culture is very different. Not even religion can explain it. But, like most Jews, I feel it whether I want to or not.

In this week's *parsha*, Mattot-Masse'y, there is an extraordinary passage in which Moses upbraids the Israelite fighters for not punishing a defeated enemy sufficiently. "You have left the women alive", he reproves them, and under his new instructions they kill all the male children and every married woman. Rabbi Marc Saperstein, in this week's D'var Torah on our website, declares that this incitement to genocide should not be excused or overlooked; it is simply wrong. We are connected to this part of our tradition too, and it is a big step for Jews to say, bluntly, that any part of Torah is wrong. But our ethics tell us that genocide is wrong, and we may not suspend judgement on it: not for Moses, not for God. After all, what is Judaism for us? Many things, of course: ritual, spiritual and social place, collective identity, but central to it all a message: Justice! *Tzedek, tzedek tirdof.*

Genocide is just an extreme example of the most outstanding crime against justice in the world today: collective punishment. The reason we hate terrorism is that it is collective punishment. Terrorists kill people they have never met and know nothing about, simply to punish them for their nationality, or their race, or maybe even just their place of residence. What could be more unjust than that? We can think of examples of this injustice all too easily: the bombings of 7th July, the massacre at the Istanbul synagogue, and more recently the terrible scenes in the railway workshop in Haifa and elsewhere in Israel. Almost 20 Israeli civilians have been killed and many more injured in the Hizbollah rocket attacks since this latest war began. If you have close family connections in Israel, as I do, you feel the injustice of these attacks even more strongly.

Fortunately for me, I don't have any family connections in Lebanon, where more than 300 civilians have been killed over the same period amid apocalyptic destruction of the country's buildings, roads, bridges, airports, power stations, and the expulsion of half a million people from their homes. Or in Gaza, where the Israeli Air Force's destruction of the power

station has left more than a million people without electricity to pump water, to treat sewage, to refrigerate food, or—soon—to maintain vital medical services. The destruction in Lebanon and in Gaza is collective punishment too, on a huge scale, and if we are not clear to ourselves and others about how wrong that is, we are rejecting the central call for justice in Jewish thinking. In the famous story, Hillel summarised Torah in one sentence: *That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour.* What could speak more directly than that to Israel's actions towards its neighbours, the ordinary people of Gaza and Lebanon?

A D'var Torah isn't the occasion for a political speech, much less a military seminar. Israel faces real threats from determined and able enemies, and discussion on the best ways to end these threats is for another time. But if there is anything Jewish (beyond the name) about the Jewish state, then Jewish morality as well as Jewish survival should be guiding it. Are our morality and our survival really so far at odds? I talked earlier about healing and wounding; if that were true, it would indeed be a terrible wound.

But still, there is healing. Preparing this D'var Torah, I turned to the "Families Forum". The 500 families in this group, Israelis and Palestinians, have all lost family members in the conflict. But their pain and grief leads them to seek reconciliation. One initiative: they have set up a phone line with which ordinary Israelis and Palestinians—400,000 so far—unable to meet in person any more, can still encounter the other. Their director says: "We don't have all the answers, but if we can face our loss and still see that violence and revenge is not the way to solve this problem, then perhaps people will listen and think again."

Rabbi John Rayner once closed a sermon about the Middle East by telling his congregation about a demonstration in Tel Aviv on the anniversary of Rabin's assassination. One huge banner read "Peace – the sane retaliation".

In his words, "*That* is the moral of the story of Esau and Jacob, of Edom and Israel, of the Middle East conflict, and of the whole bloodstained history of humankind. It may not be easy to find, but we had better find it soon.

Bimherah b'yamenu, Amen."