

SUKKAT SHALOM

EDINBURGH LIBERAL JEWISH COMMUNITY

FEBRUARY 2005

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וּפְרוּס עֲלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ
sukkat shalom - shelter of peace



Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Shalom!

February opens with a welcome visit from Rabbi Aaron Goldstein, outreach director of Liberal Judaism. A full weekend lies ahead with services, study sessions, a community meal and opportunities for individual consultations with the Rabbi. See **page 4** for details of the weekend's schedule and don't forget to RSVP if you would like to join us for a community meal.

The brochure for the Liberal Community Israel Tour is now available. There are three enticing options available – see **page 3** for details. Remember to book your place by 28 February!

Members should have now received the AGM agenda and proposed amendments to the constitution. The AGM is scheduled for Jan 30th: it has to elect the council and officers and fix the budget for our first full year of life. We will also discuss setting up an arrangement for associates – people who are not eligible to join the community but would like to formalise their connection with it. Please attend if you can.

The December tsunami has shaken the world, literally and figuratively. Maurice Naftalin shares his view on the Jewish response to the disaster and provides details on how we can help – see **page 2**. There isn't room in that piece for contact details for World Jewish Aid, which is still welcoming contributions to the relief effort; you can contact them at www.worldjewishaid.org.uk.

And finally, a belated but warm welcome to three new members - **Freddie Broadie**, **Philippa Levinson**, and **Bill Zachs**. Welcome to Sukkat Shalom! And to **Steve Engleman**, who has rejoined, a warm welcome back!

I felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes - until I met a man who had no feet

Community Events

SUN 30 JAN, 4pm – Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace

The agenda and proposed constitutional amendments have been sent to all members. They are also available at www.eljc.org.

FRI 4 FEB, 7pm – Erev Shabbat service, Homeroyal House, 2 Chalmers Crescent

Rabbi Aaron Goldstein will lead the service. Please arrive in good time; if you are early press “5” then “4” then “call”.

SAT 5 FEB, 11am – Shabbat service, lunch & study, St Columba's Church Hall, 14 Johnston Terrace

Rabbi Aaron Goldstein will lead the service. The study session will be on siddur Lev Chadash (see page 4). Please bring a cold non-meat dish.

SAT 5 FEB, 7pm – Community meal at local restaurant

Please see notice on page 3. RSVP by 30 Jan.

SUN 6 FEB, 2pm – Cheder, 11 Braid Avenue

With Rabbi Aaron Goldstein. Please note earlier start time.

THURS 17 FEB, 7.30pm – Council meeting, venue tba

All Sukkat Shalom members welcome: please let us know if you intend to come.

SAT 19 FEB, 11am – Shabbat service, St Columba's Church Hall, 14 Johnstone Terrace

Torah service.

SUN 27 FEB, 3pm – Cheder, venue tbc

This week: rehearse Purim play.

FRI 4 MAR, 7pm – Shabbat service & supper, MacDonald Road Library

First time at this recently refurbished venue. Taste it and see! The library is on the corner of MacDonald Road and Leith Walk. Please bring a cold vegetarian dish.

Events

Parent-Toddler Group, Sun 6 Feb

The group meets at the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Centre, Salisbury Road. All welcome at next meeting on Sun 6 February, 10am - 12 noon. Toys, fun, snacks, coffee and chat.

For more details, phone Shari 0131 667 304

2nd Edinburgh Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality for Peace, 14 Feb - 6 March

On February 14th the 2nd Edinburgh Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality for Peace will be launched. A programme is available for the many events of the two weeks.

Contact Neill Walker for further information: 331 4469 or njwalk3001@hotmail.com.

The programme can be downloaded from www.eljc.org/links.html

One World Concert, Sat 19 Feb, St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Palmerston Place

Rebekah writes: I would encourage everyone to go to the One World Concert on Saturday 19th February, part of the Middle Eastern Festival for Peace. I'll be leading Hebrew Songs for Peace - it would be so good to see a crowd of our community there. If past concerts are anything to go by, they are usually very good (and long). FOOD is available at the beginning - doors open 5.45pm & food is served until 6.30pm. Buy tickets at the door £6/£4 - **buy one, bring a friend free!** Folk will be coming from all over the world and it would be good if Sukkat Shalom showed a strong presence! There is something for everyone in the Festival - debates, concerts, workshops and a multitude of other things including FOOD! Do please come along and 'show the flag' for Sukkat Shalom!

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society talk Sun 27 Feb, 8pm, 4 Salisbury Road

Dr Brian Klug will speak on *The Other Balfour: Recalling the 1905 Aliens Act*. This Act was aimed at limiting Jewish immigration; Dr Klug will make specific reference to the role played by Arthur Balfour and the light this sheds on the 1917 Balfour Declaration.

Talks by Rabbi David Rose, 4 Salisbury Road

Tues 8 Feb: Intermarriage

Tues 22 Feb: Traditions in Judaism – Reform/Orthodox/Conservative

For further information contact: Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, Salisbury Road Synagogue

Thoughts of Chairman Mau

When I spoke about the famine of our days (last newsletter) I didn't expect such an immediate and dramatic illustration of my words, in the form of the Indian Ocean tsunami. This event, so terrible in its human impact, appears at first sight to be truly beyond the control or influence of humanity. Comments on the indifference or even enmity of nature towards humans miss a central point: the earthquake that caused the tsunami was only one tiny shift in the endless movement of the continents over the earth's surface. It is this same majestic movement that renews the earth itself over many millions of years and ensures that it remains fit to support life. Human life – and death – seem insignificant by comparison.

Does that mean there is nothing that we can do except to wait for inevitable disaster, then rush to help? Vital as they are, rescue operations are not the only answer. The tsunami has thrown into high relief many aspects of the global crisis that I discussed last month. Its impact was greatly worsened by many of the ways in which humans have altered the landscape of the region: natural coastal defences of coral reefs and mangrove swamps have been weakened or destroyed by pollution, over-development, or global warming. The worst-hit area, the Aceh region of Indonesia, has been suffering for many years in the grip of a brutal war. Everywhere the infrastructure was badly underdeveloped, making the relief effort doubly difficult.

So in fact this natural disaster had a very strong human component. And so too did its relief: everywhere – in rich and poor countries alike – there was a huge outpouring of sympathy, shaming ungenerous governments into catching up with the generosity of their citizens. (And Jews were not absent from this either: World Jewish Aid in the UK had raised more than £130k at the beginning of January)

But the deep-rooted structural problems of the region, which made this disaster so much worse than it need have been, will only be solved by a determined drive to bring economic justice and sustainable development to the poor regions of the world. At least the Paris Club of “donor nations” has temporarily frozen debt repayment from countries affected. But much more is needed. That is the connection that I see with the campaign to **Make Poverty History** that I wrote about last month. To work for its three aims of “Trade Justice”, “More and Better Aid”, and “Drop the Debt” would be the best tribute we could pay to the terrible suffering caused by the tsunami.

So – give what you can now (if you haven't already done so) and let's get on with helping the campaign change the world for good in 2005.

Notices

Happy Birthday!

Mazel Tov to twins Joe (8th Feb) and Ben (9th Feb) Naftalin on their

12th birthday.

Happy Birthday also to Nick Silk for 5th Feb.

Evening meal with Rabbi Aaron Goldstein

We're going to mark the occasion of Rabbi Aaron's visit with a restaurant outing on Sat 5th February. Community members and anyone attending the weekend's services are welcome to come (at your own expense, sorry!) (See page 4 for more details on R. Aaron's visit)

Pre-booking by **Sunday 30th Jan** is essential to allow a restaurant booking to be made. *Contact 226 6234 or membership@eljlc.org*

Israel Trip, May 2005

The brochure for the Liberal Judaism Community Israel Tour is now available. Check out the **three options**:

A: Northern Exposure

Expedition to the north of Israel. A day with MDA; explore the beauty of the Galilee and Golan Heights; visit borders with Lebanon and Syria; visit UJIA projects and programmes bringing together Israeli Jews and Arabs. On the way back to Jerusalem we will stop at the multicultural Haifa, including its Leo Baeck School campus.

B: Art & Culture

Immerse yourself in the creative and cultural milieu with a team of professional artists. The programme will include participative painting session, guided visits to institutions of artistic interest, a dance workshop and Israeli night culture.

C: Off the beaten track

Includes: Rabbis for Human Rights, visits to a settlement, Palestinian village and tour of security fence; Dawn service on Masada, walk in Ein Gedi national park and an overnight Bedouin experience; JNF day; visit to Mizpeh Ramon crater.

The three groups meet up in Jerusalem for the final two days.

For more information or to book a place download the brochure from www.ejlc.org or contact Gili on 020 7631 9823 or slicha@liberaljudaism.org

Bookings must be made by 28 February.

Sponsored Cycle Ride

There is also the opportunity to join a sponsored 5-day bicycle trip in Israel with the the *Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, IMPJ*. Cycle along some of Israel's less well-known and more attractive paths and routes, and pass through sites of scenic and historical interest together with other Progressive Jews and friends from Israel and around the world. The sponsorship will raise funds to promote Progressive Jewish communities and education programs in Israel organised by the IMPJ.

The ride is open to anyone aged 18 or over (17 if accompanied by a parent or guardian) who is capable of strenuous riding over five days. For more info see www.riding4reform.org

For those who would like to ride but cannot make the trip, the IMPJ also suggests organizing a one-day **local bike ride** to take place on **Sunday, April 3, 2005** - the first day of the Israel ride. If anyone would like to organize an Edinburgh ride feel free to advertise in this newsletter.

Book Corner

Many thanks to Anat for her extremely interesting book reviews for the December and January newsletters. The invitation is open to all members of the community to put pen to paper!

Stock up for Chanukah!

Rebekah notes: Sainsbury's Savacentre at Cameron Toll has a supply of lovely coloured candles for Chanukah (obviously left over from this year) - top shelf, kosher section, aisle 9. Buy early for next Chanukah!

GNS Memberships

A recent GNS Executive Meeting discussed the matter of those who currently have both GNS and Sukkat Shalom memberships. They would be delighted and honoured if we wish to continue our links with them and are very happy that we give a 'donation', or whatever we wish to call it, and maintain our friendly links with them. They have suggested that each of us, on an individual basis, has a word with Mae Naddell to discuss our own level of giving. Rabbi Nancy would also be very honoured to be able to offer any Rabbinical support to us individually (or collectively) should we need it. She would also be very happy to help us 'navigate' our way around the LJ Siddur (if we wish it) as she is very familiar with it.

Rabbi Aaron Goldstein visit

Sukkat Shalom are delighted to welcome Rabbi Aaron to Edinburgh for the first weekend of February. This is Rabbi Aaron's timetable:

Friday 4th

Erev Shabbat service at 7pm at Homeroyal House.

Saturday 5th

Shabbat service at 11am at St Columba's followed by lunch and study session. *As always, please bring along food for the lunch; something which we can eat cold and please ensure the food does not contain any meat.* Our study session will be on the Liberal Judaism prayer book 'Lev Chadash' (see "A word from the Rabbi").

After the service there will be the opportunity for any members of the community to see Rabbi Aaron on an individual basis - a sort of **'Rabbi's surgery'**! However, as we have to vacate St Columba's after the SLS, we will have to make separate arrangements for those who would like to see Rabbi Aaron. So please contact Nick Silk if you would like to see Rabbi Aaron.

On Saturday evening there is the opportunity to go out to a restaurant with Rabbi Aaron. Members and those attending the services are welcome at their own expense. Pre-booking by Sun 30th Jan is **essential** to allow a restaurant booking to be made. Please contact 0131 226 6234 or membership@eljc.org if you would like to come.

Sunday 6th

In the morning Rabbi Aaron will be spending some time with the bar mitzvah boys and their parents. In the afternoon he will be at cheder. Please note: cheder will be between 2–4pm.

"Ask the Rabbi" discussions

Rabbi Aaron is also more than happy to answer written questions. For example, these may be general questions about Liberal Judaism, about the Jewish response to particular world issues, or theological questions.

There is also the suggestion that discussions that might be of interest to the community—that is, to all Jewish individuals—could be included in the newsletter. If you have a general question for the Rabbi please contact newsletter@eljc.org or Rabbi Aaron direct.

A Word from the Rabbi

"I have always found prayer difficult. So often it seems like a fruitless game of hide-and-peek, where we seek and God hides... Yet I cannot leave prayer alone for long. My need drives me to God. And I have a feeling that God has reasons for hiding, and that finally all my seeking will prove infinitely worthwhile. And I am not sure what I mean by 'finding.' Some days my very seeking seems a kind of finding. And, of course, if finding means the end of seeking, it were better to go on seeking."

I am utterly drawn by these words from the turn of last century; words not of a Jew but of Leslie D Weatherhead, a Christian. They really hit the mark for me and sum up my relationship to the theological games that God and I play when I am in shul (and sometimes outside of it).

However, I am fully aware that this is not the only reason why I or anyone else steps foot in a shul. We are all there for different reasons and, for your own reasons, you chose to become part of the family of Liberal Judaism and to adopt its liturgy.

I do hope that you will join me in using Siddur Lev Chadash (Prayer book of a New Heart), for the second time in your history on Friday 4th and Saturday 5th February.

I would also like to invite you to spend time with Siddur Lev Chadash with me as chaperone on the Saturday afternoon. It is a 'get-to-know-you' in terms of using the liturgy that is as relevant for home use as it is for the shul, for use in study as well as prayer. I will be guided by you in terms of the direction we take, so it really is your opportunity to challenge me until I call 'time' for Havdalah!

I am really looking forward to seeing you all again.

B'shalom, AaG

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