

CHATHAM MEMORIAL SYNAGOGUE NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2007

PESACH 5767

I can hear the groan from our regular contributors as they see the e.mail marked newsletter but they never fail us and even if the copy arrives well past the deadline. The newsletter reaches you, the reader in time for the Chagim.

I have just realised that I have been associated with the newsletter since 1981 some 26 years, well. before mobile phones and the worldwide web!!! Miraculously a newsletter has been produced at the appointed time even before word processors were the norm and it was reproduced on a Gestetner Machine *. As a small community we now restrict the publication to twice a year but copy is still required and it would be great to have additional contributors so that I do not have to rely so heavily on family and the internet. I look forward to hearing from you in time for Rosh Hashanah. In the meantime I hope the new Pesach parodies will enhance your seder and the jokes make you smile!

Chag Sameach

Jo Freeman (Hon editor) joeyfied@hotmail.com

With thanks to Gaye Lancaster for reminding me of the name of the machine he used!

FOR TIMES OF PESACH SERVICES SEE BELOW

From the chairman – Pesach 5767

You may not believe this but in considering what to write, I was for a while completely lost for words. What can I say that has not been said many times before?

One thing that I find so enjoyable about our religion is the diversity of our festivals, each one with its own unique character. The year starts with the blast of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, a time of reflection as well as hope for the future. Over the following weeks, the solemnity of Yom Kippur turns into the joy of Succot and for us in Chatham, the intimacy of the community, adults and children together, sharing an evening service and Kiddush in the succah. Simchat Torah has always been one of my favourite festivals – a time of celebration and a time to honour someone of seniority in the community and someone with a new beginning in their life.

Chanukah has its own magic. My two year old granddaughter Olivia still remembers the candles some three months later and every evening of Chanukah she asked to see the “pretty candles”. Our festivals are a time to involve the children and one of the central themes in Jewish education is to teach the children the meaning and the tradition of the festivals. It is always a wonderful sight in our Centenary Hall to see all the Chanukiot lined up on the table with the candles burning while we enjoy our traditional tea.

Purim, a few weeks ago, was also a time for the children to have fun. What a wonderful opportunity for

them to come to shul and to actually be expected to make a racket!

And Pesach is a time to get together as a family or as a community to tell the story which has been told by every family for 3000 years. This year we are aiming to hold a communal seder on the 2nd evening of Pesach and we intend to make this an evening as much for the children as for the adults. In fact what would a seder night be without the four questions from the youngest child? I actually enjoy eating matzo (especially with chopped herring) and I am quite disappointed when Pesach is over.

And after Pesach we only have to wait seven weeks to celebrate Shavuot with cheesecake.

Life has changed in many ways since I was a child, but the way we celebrate our festivals is much the same as it always was. By involving the children we can ensure that this tradition will continue into the future.

I would like to wish everyone Chag Sameach and a very Happy Pesach

Jon Weiner.

Look forward to welcoming you to the Yom Tov service

Shabbat Chol Ham'Moed 7 April at 10 am.

Communal Seder Starts at 6pm

Hi there everyone,

I just wanted to let you know that I have entered a classical singing competition on classic fm. I wondered if you could go onto the classic fm website and in their homepage click on Live and Uploaded, watch and rate artists, and cast me a vote. Please could you let all your friends and family know too - I need as many votes as possible.

I am listed as Ismini Phillips, Soprano, Songwriter.

Thank you all so much and see you soon.

Ismini

<http://www.classicfm-intel.co.uk/isminiphillipsopranosongwriter/Default.aspx>

PLEASE SUPPORT ISMINI & CAST YOUR VOTE BY 2 APRIL 2007

A Biography of Ismini Phillips

My first memories of singing are the school choir where I sang soprano, playing Nancy in Oliver and also setting up a band where I co-wrote a lot of songs with a friend and sang/played guitar - we performed gigs in our local area.

At 14, I joined Erith Operatic Society. I later joined Dartford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society playing at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford and the Hulviz Society performing at the Bob Hope Theatre in Eltham.

I first took singing lessons at the Blackheath Conservatoire of Music and then I studied singing with Linda Stewart - under her guidance took part in the annual Blackheath and Bexley Music Festivals where I sang various coloratura and oratorio pieces - such as Mozart's Alleluja, Suzannah's arias (the Marriage of Figaro), the Queen of the Night (Magic Flute), Handel's Let the Bright Seraphim etc.

I have enjoyed playing Mabel and Edith in Pirates of Penzance, Eurydice in Orpheus in the Underworld, Rosalia in West Side Story, Fiametta in the Gondoliers to name a few.

I stopped performing when I had a family so I could look after my daughters. To maintain my singing I joined the local church choir where I sang such pieces as Mozart's Laudate Dominum, Allegri's Misere and led Prophecy, the contemporary band for the church. During this time I co-wrote a musical meditation based on Ezekiel 37:1-14 entitled "Can these dry bones live?" which was performed at local churches.

During 2001, I auditioned and was successful in joining the Kentish Opera. Sadly due to divorce I was unable to perform with them as my singing took a back seat since I had to take a demanding job in London to support my daughters.

I have since remarried and it is only recently that I have started to sing again, mainly at weddings, although I'd love to do more.

I have a passion for singing both to entertain and for relaxation too! My husband, Ari, and my Mum have encouraged me to enter the classic FM competition as a stepping stone to get me back on track!

To win such an event would be a dream come true!

We all wish you every success Ismini

Remember to cast your vote by 2 April 2007

SOCIAL & PERSONAL

MAZELTOV TO:

Jordan Godden and his family Joshua celebrated his Barmitzvah in the shul in February 2007

Alex Halpern and his family who will be celebrating his Barmitzvah in the shul in July 2007

Amy Mackay who was 21 in February 2007

GET WELL SOON To : Laurie Hack who has been in hospital

CONDOLENCES to The Halpern & Freeman family, on the sad loss in March of their dear cousin Sylvia Browne. Sylvia was an extraordinary person who enriched the lives of all who knew her. We wish them long life.

SPECIAL THANKS to: Dalia Halpern Matthews for all her hard work for the Guild, especially undertaking the arrangements especially the catering for the Communal Seder scheduled for second Seder night Tuesday 3 April.

Additional assistance with the Seder will be greatly appreciated: Call Dalia on 01892 723365. To offer your help

The new Singer siddur

Very shortly the familiar red or blue Singer siddur is to turn green, at Chatham at least. The Godden family is very generously donating 50 copies of the brand new edition of Singer to mark the occasion of Jordan's barmitzva earlier this year. The latest version is a handsome volume in its dark green binding, and I look forward to making its acquaintance properly.

Beyond the new colour and the fact that the familiar page numbers are naturally going to change, the adoption of a new siddur is a significant happening in a Jewish community. It has often been remarked that the siddur has become more than just a handy compilation of common prayers, as the first siddur editors probably intended it to be some 2000 years ago. For many Jews, the siddur is their main point of contact with the written tradition.

Since the driving force behind the new edition was our friend Elkan Levy of the Office for the Small Communities, some of us have had an insight into the care which has gone into it. Every detail, down to the precise shade of white of the paper, has been thought through in order to make this siddur as user-friendly as possible.

Those who read it with care will quickly find one or two innovations, and since the siddur is such an old friend, innovations may take some getting used to. One of the boldest is the change in the translation of the famous instruction "Shema" from "Hear" to "Listen". In a sense the latter is more correct, since the Hebrew verb "lishmoa" certainly has the sense of taking note and obeying, not just hearing. Then again, "Hear" is a particular and slightly antique usage which to my ears already carried that sense, whereas "listen" has very slightly the sound of someone starting to go into detail – not quite the right nuance.

Some other translations have been changed as regards sense rather than mere style. The results are sometimes welcome, sometimes less so, but always worthy of discussion. That strikes me as an ideal subject for an impromptu talk on one of those occasions when we are waiting for the shul to fill up a bit. And in that respect, the ranks of new green books present us with a subtle challenge; there are now considerably more of them than there are of us.

David Herling

"THE GUILD FROM AFAR – AS FAR AS YOU CAN GO"

I have thoroughly enjoyed my 10 weeks away mostly in New Zealand in our daughter Adina's home with her lovely family. I knew that Dalia (our younger daughter) on my behalf and her own, would help as much as possible with Guild matters, but I did feel guilty and anxious about "deserting" the shul for so long and passing on work for the Guild to her. However, to be honest, I was also pleased for the break!

This report is really a tribute and a great big "Thank you" to Dalia. In addition to her considerable other commitments, stresses and responsibilities, she has organised, run and executed the activities of the Guild. There is no formal Guild now but the community has still had its Kiddushim, the Purim party and, in a few days time, a Communal Seder (the first in many years). She has indeed excelled in her efforts and I am truly grateful to her, as I hope we all are. I am proud of her and thankful that she is continuing in the Halpern tradition at the shul.

I also thank all of you who have contributed in any way to these efforts for the shul.

Now I know that, all being well, I can go away with an easy mind (though Dalia might object?) - but not too soon!

So who's going to write the next Guild report?

Wishing you all a very Happy and Healthy Pesach. Chag Sameach!

Marie

P.S. Now I'm back at home I am writing this at 2 a.m. on 30/3/07 – it's my conscience again!

Under Jewish law, animals have some of the same rights as humans do.

Animals rest on Shabbat, as humans do. We are forbidden to muzzle an ox while it is working in the field, just as we must allow human workers to eat from the produce they are harvesting.

Several commandments demonstrate concern for the physical or psychological suffering of animals. We may not plough a field using animals of different species, because this would be a hardship to the animals. We are required to relieve an animal of its burden, even if we do not know its owner, or even if it is ownerless. We are not permitted to kill an animal in the same day as its young, and are specifically commanded to send away a mother bird when taking the eggs, because of the psychological distress this would cause the animal. In fact, the Torah specifically says that a person who sends away the mother bird will be rewarded with long life, precisely the same reward that is given for honouring mother and father. This should give some indication of the importance of this law.

We are permitted to violate Shabbat to some extent to rescue an animal in pain or at risk of death.

© Copyright 5756-5760 (1995-1999), Tracey R Rich
Webmaster@JewFAQ.Org

So Here are my thoughts on the:

THE DOG THAT CAME TO STAY

Jo Freeman

What is the Jewish view on euthanasia of animals?

When I had just finished editing the Rosh Hashana Newsletter we had a new addition to our household, a pretty Tibetan Terrier known as Roxy, who was threatened with euthanasia having bitten the cleaning lady. You know how it is - easier to replace the dog than faithful domestic help. Cassie my eldest daughter was horrified at the prospect of her friend's dog being put down and took pity on the pretty little thing and brought it home to the countryside of Carluke.

On her arrival Cassie and I gingerly introduced her in our car park, to our two lively Springer Spaniels!! Bella the eldest not known for her tolerance towards smaller dogs treated it like a rag doll and Roxy retreated under the car. She eventually came out tempted by Choc drops, only to meet Tevey, Bella's two year old son and even less friendly!! However after several runs around our Equestrian Centre the three of them seemed to come to terms with each other and we took the plunge and went inside the house. All was peaceful and the dear little bundle of fluff even slept in the utility room!!

Day two dawned all seemed well and Roxy's death sentence unwarranted That is until I tried to rescue a pair of socks from her mouth - What a revelation! a snapping, snarling angry creature baring its teeth bit my hand - I fell backwards and she bit my knee. 'Help Help' I shouted, Cassie came to my rescue and armed with the mop successfull fended off the still snarling visitor. Bella and Tevey looked on in amazement. Did I believe in euthanasia at that moment?

'What did YOU do' said my son accusingly? 'What's all the fuss' declared my husband William who was not happy about the new addition in the first place. 'She's a bit possessive' offered Cassie 'We just need to show her who's in charge' - 'Good job my tetanus is up to date' I thought.

We decided that perhaps she was bored and let her run all day together with the other two dogs but Roxy did'nt seem to like getting her paws wet and rushed back to the house on her own looking very bedraggled, she reminded my of the story 'Town Mouse and Country Mouse' her look said 'what am I doing here I should be in a Glasgow town house '

Roxy's second psycho moment came a few days later when she ate my sandal under the dining room table. This time Cassie was on the receiving end of her sharp teeth. I was forced into hiding behind the dining room furniture! 'Mother you can't show Roxy that you are scared' laughed Laurence

Little did he know I was not scared just plain terrified. How DO Jews feel about animal euthanasia??

Not only was Roxy terrorising me but the cats were having a very raw deal, they didn't know about aggressive dogs, but one of them Tate decided to fight back, resulting in Roxy getting an infected eye. 'All this aggravation and now a vets bill' was William's response.

Our regular vet Niall was surprised to see the new addition. I suggested that a muzzle might be a good idea before any examination took place. Niall assured me that this was standard practice with dogs of this type. 'Aggressive little tykes aren't they?' They only get away with it because they are so small and cute looking and the breeders say they have a strong character' I could'nt have agreed more.

Well several weeks past and we got to know the tell tale signs of impending psycho moments and took steps to avoid confrontation. Roxy really is very sweet when she sleeps on your feet without first chewing the slipper. She continued to sleep in the utility room which got her 'brownie' points but we are actively trying to find her a new home with loving owners who will realise and learn to live with her foibles otherwise.....

Now how do I feel about euthanasia for aggressive dogs whatever their size?

PS: Roxy now lives with a very nice young couple who livery their horses with us – I don't know why but she always wags her tail enthusiastically when she see me!!

NB The Champion of Cruft 2007 is a Tibetan Terrier Araki Fabulous Willy. How DO his owners cope?

We have a talented author in our midst Ella Matthews age 8

Here are two of her recent works

Turn of the Seasons

From November to February the following year
It's snowy and wintry, so wipe away that icy tear
It's Winter and Winter it is for four months
This is the start of the seasons!

From March to May along comes Spring
It waves its wand with a ting-a-ling-ling
And here it is so clear and fair-
This is the turn of the seasons!

From June to September Summer is here
So come right along and open an ear
For the sounds of the animals chatting away
This is the turn of the seasons!

Middle of September to November quite far
Along comes the Autumn in its posh leafy car-
It comes, kills leaves to fall down on the ground
This is the turn of the seasons!

THE END OF A GOD

By Ella Matthews

Read on to find out how Aliminny stops trees falling and defeats the fearsome Snoozywazzle!

Far, far away in the nearest forest to the Sahara Desert in Africa, a strange happening was going on. A weird looking egg had landed on a mound of soil and grass. It lay, as still as a brick, for an hour and a half then slowly started to fold back.

Abruptly the metal head of an aluminium bush baby popped out of the rapidly unravelling egg. It slowly climbed out of the uncomfortable shell of the steel egg to explore the world.

But no longer had the little aluminium bush baby started out on his extendable journey, a colossal, iron elephant stood before him.

The vast, eight metres long, seven metres high elephant completely blocked the bush baby.

“Who goes there?” boomed the elephant whose name was Thunderbolt.

“My name is Aliminny,” confessed the little bush baby. “I am travelling to find a living for myself.”

“Pass!” bellowed Thunderbolt, and Aliminny did.

Aliminny found himself in a beautiful glade, shaded by blossoming cherry and apple trees. On the floor of the glade a carpet of luscious olive green grass spread across the glade with a few apple and cherry blossoms decorating the woodland carpet.

Part of Aliminny had decided to live in the magnificent space, but part of his decision was to have a peak at the area around the lovely patch of nature.

Aliminny decided to peak at his surroundings before settling in.

Aliminny pushed his way through a couple of broken branches and ferns to explore around the realms of the secret glade. Many a time bunnies hopped to and fro, making the little heather that there was spring up and down.

Abruptly, there, right in front of Aliminny, was a huge, beaming face of...an orang-utan!

“Hi! Nice to meet you!” grinned the orang-utan unexpectedly. “The name’s Jolly. I own this glade. Wanna live here? Pay me a blossom for the glade!”

At first Aliminny was too startled to speak, but managed a few words out: “Erm, yes, I do like your glade, Mr Jolly. And I would love to live here.” And with that, Aliminny rushed off to find a blossom for Jolly.

Aliminny hurried back to Jolly with the blossom only to find Jolly had gone. So Aliminny placed the blossom where he had hung and settled in at the glade.

There seemed to be something magic about the wonderful place.

As Aliminny slowly walked in through the entrance of the glade, a shower of confetti-like petals rained down on his metallic fur.

Aliminny gathered together a bed of heather and a duvet of leaves. Next, he crept out to find food for himself.

He discovered a spring next to the glade. Its overflowing crystal clear water was the perfect drinking water, so Aliminny took great mouthfuls of the delicious liquid.

He had the most beautiful home on Earth. Gone to him, an aluminium bush baby. He was the luckiest animal in the colossal universe.

A luxury filled life would follow, almost certainly! He might call himself Lucky, Lucky, Lucky!

Without warning disaster struck!

A tree from outside the forest had fallen, and closed up the exit to the forest! All woodland creatures were trapped!

Aliminny made his way through the forest to the tree. He climbed over it to find an extremely cross Thunderbolt.

“With your tusks and help we could shift that tree out of the way and slice it into planks!” Aliminny called to Thunderbolt, who was startled so he hardly knew what he was saying! “Yes, yes, I’ll do anything!”

Thunderbolt shifted and sliced the tree while Aliminny directed. A lot of work was to be done, but finally it was finished. All creatures were given a plank of freshly sliced wood to do what they wanted with.

But as the last slice had been taken, another tree fell, and another. As hundreds of trees fell, an ear-piercing CRASH, BANG, BOOM, CRASH, BANG, BOOM noise was heard.

Slowly and cautiously the creatures peeked around the remaining trees to see a huge scarlet thing with eighty legs and huge nostrils with smoke billowing out. This was the great SNOZZYWAZZLE!!! The Snozzywazzle was supposedly the animal's God. A young frisky squirrel scampered to the Snozzywazzle, said "Hello!" and bowed. But the Snozzywazzle just took delight in eating it! By now all the creatures except Aliminny were petrified of Snozzywazzle. "I'll fight you, you thick, thick, thick-face Mr Thicketty from Thicketalia!" Some power had come over Aliminny as he fought and raged and raged and fought.

Some power had come over Aliminny for sure now as some force-field kept the Snozzywazzle back. A great yellow light shone from Aliminny's tail and the Snozzywazzle turned to dust. The animals were angry and hopped as their God slowly disappeared.

But just as the Animal's Council had begun to get outraged Snozzywazzle returned, but as a monkey. He swung through trees all day long then disappeared back to the darkness.

The next day it was a giraffe, and so on until he disappeared for a long time.

Now, years later, the Iron Man came strolling along. He noticed the Snozzywazzle and pounced on him. Soon after, Aliminny saw, pushed the Iron Man off with his incredible strength, and used the same strength on Snozzywazzle.

AND HE WATCHED.....

AND WATCHED....

AND WATCHED!

This was a great day and was recorded in "The Animal History Of Brave Deeds", and thereafter was told to animals all over the world. And at last it reached the hands of a bush baby- called you!

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2007

Holocaust Memorial Day 27. January, was arranged in Medway by a planning committee having representatives from the Synagogue, Medway Inter Faith, Rochester Cathedral and Medway Council. For 2007 it was agreed to concentrate on schools and arrangements were made to use the excellent facilities at Chapter School for Girls, in Strood, for an event to be devised by the Committee. However, matters were taken out of our hands by the Sixth Form Drama Class, who devised an emotional evening of music, dance, readings of poetry and prose, backed by a powerpoint projection arranged by one of the teachers. The last item was memorial prayers led by representatives of the Jewish, Moslem, Hindu, BaHai and Christian faiths, with an Ein Mole Rachamim sung by Jon Weiner, all on a darkened stage, with members of the cast in black, holding lighted candles, backing the readers. A highly emotional occasion, which showed that the youngsters had an understanding of the events of the Holocaust.

We are indebted to Miss Sue Dore, Head Teacher at Chapter School, for her support for the event.

Medway Interfaith Action, strongly supported by the Jewish Community, has been awarded a grant of £5,000 by the Communities Capacity Fun, for their Inter faith work in 2007/08. This follows a similar grant in 2006/07 for their work and was one of only 343 granted this year from 1,200 bids

Gabriel Lancaster

Continuing the tales by Pip Lancaster (Brother of Gaye)

14. Israel.

Why, you are asking, and I ask myself, am I writing these "Memoirs"? It may be because, with one exception, my Grandparents were grey unknowns to me. This was particularly so when I was younger and like most people curious about my "roots", so now I would like to be known to my own descendants as a whole person, real as themselves, but with opinions, ideas, and memories of my own time. Not too much to ask?

Here are some figures. Putting my memories and my grandparents' memories end to end would cover some hundred and fifty years. Add to that those of their parents, and grandparents, and we might have first hand personal experiences, bringing two hundred and fifty years or more, from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, to life. I reckon there was more political, economic, medical and scientific progress (and worse atrocities were committed too) during that period, than in the previous couple of thousand years. Now that would make interesting reading for us today, if only some one or more of my forbears had taken the trouble to commit their memoirs to paper.

My nephew Ian called me from Hampton, near London, on a computer link the other day. He was using his web camera, and for the first time in our lives, we were able to both see, and hear him talking, from some five thousand miles away. You know how these things go, his call triggered an early memory from my own childhood, when I was six or seven years of age and the whole family, my Mother and Father, Brother Gabe and baby sister, were gathered round an early radio receiver in Scunthorpe, marveling as we listened to music and static from far away in London. What my Mother told us then, was that when she was a little girl, living in Bristol, one of the first telephones in the city was installed at her home. "My Father" she said, "your Grandfather, when we all marveled at that tinny little voice coming over the wire, he told us that one day, in years to come, we would be able to see the person we were talking to, as well as just speak with them." So my Grandfather, although I never saw him, was no fool and at least in this regard, over a hundred years ahead of his time.

I wish I could have known him. I wish he had left us a record of his experiences and memories of the eighteen hundreds, and early nineteen hundreds, as he saw them. Think of seeing through his eyes, the change from horse to steam to petrol engine, from oil and gas lights to electric light, from sail to air travel! You will note that I haven't included postal services, because despite changing from surface to air mail, a letter now take weeks to complete a journey that once took days; but that is just a measure of our human capacity for anti-progress. Well, my Grandfather did not leave a record, so we are left with only that little scrap of second hand memory, my memory of my Mother's memory. Not enough!

My own experiences start from the nineteen twenties, some I have already set down in these pages. Here are a few more, not in any particular sequence. Confucius, Chinese sage, referring to the poor wretch who gets caught between the teeth of history's cog wheels, said we should pity the man who lives in interesting times. Chaim Sil, my friend, though coming close, just escaped those teeth, or at least appeared to escape them.

Chaim was the son of a Jewish bank manager and his wife living in Berlin. Before his Father and Mother were taken to the Auchwitz concentration camp by the Germans, they managed to spirit their two sons, Chaim, sixteen years old and his younger brother, out of that charnel house of a country. I met Chaim in London. I had gone there from Nottingham to work while waiting to enter the Royal Air Force. Chaim was a refugee. We met through common interest in the Jewish youth organization Habonim, went on camping trips together, became friends, shared an apartment for a short time, and kept in touch through the war years and after. In the early nineteen sixties, I applied from Jamaica for a communications job in Israel, and stayed with Chaim in Rishon L'Zion, then his home.

I didn't get the job, and Chaim had to leave me in Rishon when he was called for his annual Army service, so the trip was not an unqualified success, but there was time for him to tell me what had been happening, since we last saw each other in London in the early nineteen forties. When the war ended, hoping to find his Parents, he worked with an organization set up to trace survivors from the concentration camps. His Parents, he soon found, had perished, murdered by the Germans in the Camps, so he devoted himself to helping those who had survived to find a new life in Palestine. Understandably, the majority of survivors wished to get away from Europe speedily and as far as they could. It was for them a place of misery and carnage. He took ship for Palestine across the Mediterranean Sea, shepherding some four hundred men, women and children, in a rusty old vessel that never made it. They were caught by the British naval blockade, set up for the Arabs by the Royal Navy, what a proud moment for England, and were soon behind bars, imprisoned again in a Cypriot concentration camp. Released when Britain gave up the Mandate, they did at last reach Palestine, by then Israel, to start new lives. I found Chaim still working with a refugee aid organization, but his real interests lay in politics, and surprise, he was now agitating in behalf of the Israeli Arabs. He felt they were getting a raw deal, and foresaw problems if they were not made to feel full citizens of the new State. Of course he was right about those problems, which are still unsolved as I write, over forty years later.

Some six million Jews died in the German holocaust between nineteen forty and forty six, along with another four million Gypsies, Slavs and others considered undesirable or unnecessary by the Germans. Died is a weak word, murdered is the truth. Hopefully their memory will not have faded completely by the time you read this, though even now, only seventy years after it happened and while there are still witnesses living, it is no longer a burning issue.

Back in the nineteen fifties Ernest de Sousa and I ran the Jewish Scout group in Jamaica. There was a little chubby fellow in the Cub pack named Henry Haye. He was shy and retiring and very much a "Mummy's boy". I knew his parents, his mother European, an effervescent little lady, his father a quiet Jamaican. They were both Doctors and doted on their only son. We were invited to his Barmitzva, along with most of the Jewish community, and after the ceremony and the eating were over, sat back to suffer through the usual speeches. But these were not the usual speeches. His Father, a heavy set black man, thanked us all for coming, introduced his wife and sat down. Henry's Mother, Doctor Haye, was a little round faced round bodied person. Very quietly she said she had a story she wanted to tell us. Rolling

back her sleeve she held up her arm so that we could see the numbers stamped into her flesh. When she was a little girl, she told us, as she lowered her arm, she lived in a small village in Bavaria. One day, she and her family were gathered in the central square for transportation, along with other Jewish families in the village. They each were allowed to carry just one small case. Soldiers in the square told them to climb into the back of a truck, which took them to a railway siding. When the train came, it was not the usual passenger train, there were no windows in the rail cars, in fact they were not passenger cars at all, they were cattle wagons. They, her family and herself and the others with them, were forced in and the doors were locked and shuttered. They were so tightly packed all had to stand. For three days they were in the cattle wagon without food, water, blankets or toilet facilities. Space was made for the children to lie down, but the adults were standing all of that time, some fainted, some slept standing, some slept but did not wake again, their bodies stayed and decayed in the wagon. When they arrived at the camp, the old people were taken away, they did not see them again. She did not see her Grandpa, or her Grandma again.

She said "I shall not describe that camp, not on a day of joy like today. I will just tell you that my family, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins all went, some by starvation and disease, some to the gas. Perhaps I should have joined them, but I clung to life with the hope that this horror would not be for ever, that sometime in the years to come there was a life for me. That I would have a son, and he would Barmitzva, and I would be there to see him Barmitzva!" She sat down, there was quiet, and Henry stood to give his Barmitzva speech "Today I am a man....."

When Chaim left to serve his annual stint in the Army, I seized the chance to explore Israel on my own. Rishon sits between Tel Aviv on the Mediterranean coast and Jerusalem, which is Israel's capital - at least in Israeli eyes. Jerusalem is where the Knesset, Israel's Parliament is located, but most European countries, with an eye to Arab oil interests, refuse to recognize it as such and their embassies are in Tel Aviv. Jerusalem was my first target. I had been as far as the Communications Ministry offices on my job interview, but now, with time to look and satisfy curiosity I was a tourist. I walked the narrow streets, admired the golden brown stone buildings and the great bronze candelabra in front of the Knesset, given Israel by the people of England, to mark the re-birth of the Nation. This was in the early nineteen sixties, before the Jordanians were driven out, and the old city of Jerusalem was still in Arab hands, including the Temple mount and the ancient cemeteries, desecrated and barred to Jews by the Arabs. I looked across the valley separating the divided city, to the high wall topped with Arab machine guns pointed in a most unpeaceful way at the bustling Israeli traffic below them. I drove that road to reach the Tower of David and the indescribable Hall of Remembrance with the names of those communities which are no more, destroyed in the Holocaust.

I joined other foreign tourists in a taxi ride to Tel Aviv, passing wrecked trucks and tanks, reminders of the war that established the new state some twenty years before, when the Arab armies tried but failed to choke off the convoys which ran their blockade with supplies for Jerusalem's defence. Tel Aviv was vibrant and ultra modern, with pavement cafes and coffee and continental confections. I enjoyed more the contrasting and nearby port of Jaffa, though all I have in clear memory of that ancient place, are the mud coloured buildings and the quiet dusty streets running down to the waters' edge.

Next I headed North for an overnight in Haifa, where my bedroom, more bed cupboard than room, was over a dockside restaurant. The evening meal was a revelation. It started quietly enough, I had a table to myself, but beside my small table was a larger one, and sitting around that were a dozen outdoor looking men and women. They were eating and drinking and talking, and it wasn't long before talking became shouting, and a couple of small guitar type instruments appeared. Singing began quietly, then just like the talking had, it grew louder and louder until every soul in the restaurant was swept into the noise. I have no idea what they were celebrating, and wouldn't be surprised if no one else knew either, but it really was enjoyable. I half recognized one or two of the songs from Habonim days, so reckon we had Kibbutzim with us that night, but there were tables of Greeks too, and it wasn't long before their girls were up on top of the tables, dancing to the singing and the guitars.

Next morning I did the regular tourist thing. Toured Kibbutz Degania and saw where the Syrian Tanks were stopped during the war; walked the shore of the Sea of Gallilee, Lake Kineret, and the ruins of the early Synagogue there. Then I walked the hillside streets of Haifa, and I believe it was somewhere near the site of the Haifa zoo, that I saw a young mother reading a paperback on the grass, while her two young children played on the edge of the steep drop overlooking the port. I went over intending to call the children back from danger, but had second thoughts and turned instead to the mother who smiled when she saw my alarm, "Don't worry" she said "we come up here often, and here we don't mind the Kids taking a little risk. They have to learn that this world is dangerous, and must learn early to look after themselves." She smiled again "This is Israel" she said.

PGL15/1/2007.

In a world dominated by distractions galore, Passover affords parents an opportunity to connect with their children in a most meaningful and magical way.

by Rabbi Yaakov Salomon

My Dear Fellow Parents,

I assume:

1. You love your children.
2. You only want what is best for them.
3. When they are happy you are invigorated.
4. When they are depressed, in a rut, or confused you worry-perhaps you lose sleep.
5. You wish you could do more for them, improve your relationship with them, but you just don't know how or can never find the time.

If these don't apply to you, you can close this letter and go back to your iPod or your Greek salad.

But if these assumptions do ring home, I want to share a message that is neither new nor revolutionary, but an important reminder we can all utilize.

In the midst of this craziness you're trying to raise healthy, happy, productive, NORMAL children. Good luck.

Our kids are growing up in a very, very crazy world. We all know that. It is a world where right and wrong appear synonymous, where more marriages dissolve than endure, where addictions are normal, where you can't wait on line at the supermarket or listen to the radio without blushing, and where people use eBay to rent out their foreheads for advertising space. And in the midst of this muck you're trying to raise healthy, happy, productive, NORMAL children. Good luck.

When they are young, you choose their schools, their friends, their clothes, and their music very carefully. You take them to the playground (less often than you should) and you bandage and hug them when they fall. And you hope for the best. You may even pray a little... just in case. But they don't stay young very long, do they? No, not any more. Your window of serious, effective influence is swiftly and steadily diminishing.

In short, what's a mother (or father) to do? What can you do to keep their earrings in their lobes, their hearts in sacred places, and their values intact?

The answer, in part, is Passover.

More than any other holiday, Passover is for the children. It affords parents an opportunity to connect with their kids in a most meaningful and magical way. It's a chance you do not want to miss.

No matter what your level of interest, observance, or commitment, you will likely attend a Seder (perhaps two -- unless you reside in Israel). Somehow the Seder has, over the years, morphed into *the* emblem of Western Jewry. Chanukah has been genericized by Adam Sandler, bagels have been loaned out (as in *Lender's*) to the every day working guy, and Jackie Mason now belongs to Broadway. What's left? The Seder. If you're Jewish, you show up. It's become the insignia of Club Jewish. You might grumble and moan, you might dread it and fret it, but it just *feels* wrong if you skip it. So you go.

And if you walk into Grandma's or Aunt Emma's every year with your Manischewitz Malaga and a face that says, "I'll just make the best of this," you are in good company. That's the mantra of the majority. What a pity.

Seders come in all shapes, sizes, and choreographies; from long to longer, spirited to droning, meaningful to moot. By now, you just go with the flow. You understand very little, your watch appears to be in desperate need of a new battery, and you're glad you finally remembered to eat before you came. But guess what? It doesn't have to be that way. You can leave the bitter with the herbs. Really.

**This Passover, you
can leave the bitter
with the herbs.
Really.**

My advice? Put your fatigue, your apathy and your tedium aside and focus on the kids. Make it their night... one they can and *should* remember. Dedicate those few hours to them by focusing on *their* needs, interests and ideas. Depending on their age, of course, there are countless ways to stimulate them. Hear their questions and ask them others. Tell them stories and read their expressions. Value their every observation and revel in their wonder.

As is the case with any worthwhile endeavor, much of the success of this operation depends on your level of investment and preparation. If those two words frighten you, you are certifiably normal. I know. Investments must always be approached with appropriate caution and preparation would be fine as long as you didn't have to prepare for it. But in a world dominated by distractions galore, kids are simply STARVING for attention. And if they don't get it from you, they'll find it elsewhere -- mostly in places you dread.

So preparation is the key. Read a portion of the Haggadah in English a few days before the Seder. Make a list (okay, a mental one) of questions you have about it. Study a commentary on that same topic -- there are literally thousands out there (Did someone say Google?). Call Uncle Sol and ask him for a story about Grandpa's Seder in *Olden Times*. Find a website (like Aish.com and others) that offer a plethora of insights, recipes, and hands-on activities that can enhance your kids Passover experience.

Passover celebrates perhaps the most seminal event in Jewish History -- the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. So great is this happening that God employs it to identify Himself in the very first of the Ten Commandments! *I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves*. This is, in fact, an unusual way in which God chose to describe himself. But by not using the more obvious description that He is the Creator of the world, He declares then and for eternity that He is much more than the architect of the Universe. He is, in fact, involved the continuing daily fate of His creations. Now that is a powerful message to deliver to *everyone* sitting around the Seder table.

My guess (hope) is that the benefits and enjoyment gleaned from this dedication and preparation will be so great, you'll decide to extend it for the full eight days of Passover. It is THE perfect time to take a bit of time off of your outside job and put it inside your kids. Nowadays we call it 'bonding.' Visit a park, a museum, or a Nursing Home. Have an old fashioned catch, spend an hour building something out of plaster, glass, or imagination, or bake a Passover cake together for yourselves and for Zaidy.

For generations, your ancestors understood that the bond created on Passover is an investment that is unique and priceless.

Use it to the fullest.

Your kids will love you for it.

JO – NEWSFLASH from Hilary Halpern Just in time to meet the final deadline!!

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

The good news is that we came back 2 days ago from a ten week holiday of which nine weeks were spent with our wonderful daughter Adina, who treated us as royalty as did her husband David and her three beautiful children Nate, Benjy and naughty little Hannah.

The bad news is I have a stinking cold and I had a rotten day at the Art Centre where I will probably have to repaint at least 12 pieces of sculpture – we should have taken 11 weeks!!

Love and kisses,

King Hilary (The Queen has not read this)

This made me laugh out loud - I hope you like it too (ed)

There was this family of Schmohawk Indians sitting around the shtetl one night. The papa, Geronowitz; the mama, Pocayenta; and the beautiful young daughter, Minihorwitz.

"So, nu," says the daughter, "You'll never believe."

"What?" says the mama.

Today, at high noon, I was proposed to in marriage."

"Yes?" says the mama, "so what did you say?"

"I said Yes."

"You said Yes?"

"I said Yes."

"That's wonderful," says the mama. "She said Yes! Did you hear that Geronowitz, Minihorwitz is getting married!"

"I heard," says the papa, "I'm kvelling. So who's the lucky boy?"

"Sittin' Bagel."

"Sittin' Bagel?" says the mama, "of the SoSiouxMe tribe?"

"That's the one," says Minihorowitz.

"Oy, Geronowitz! The SoSiouxMe's! There are so many of them! How can we feed them? How can we get them all in our teepee for the wedding?"

"We'll think of something," says Geronowitz.

"Geronowitz! Get me a buffalo!" says the mama.

"What, at this hour?"

"No, Geronowitz, for the wedding! I can make buffalo tzimmes from the meat, and we can make an extra teepee from the hide. Get me a buffalo!"

So Geronowitz goes out to hunt a buffalo. A day goes by, and a night and Geronowitz has not come back. Another day and another night, and still no sign of him. Another day and half the night, and Geronowitz comes home - Exhausted. Staggering. And empty-handed..

Geronowitz! I've been worried sick. Where have you been? And where's my buffalo?!"

"It's like this," he says. "On my first day out, I hunted high, and I hunted low, and I finally found a buffalo. But this buffalo, he made Mickey Rooney look strong. It was a tiny, scrawny little buffalo, with no meat on his bones for buffalo tzimmes, and barely enough hide for a rain hat. So I settled in for the night to try again the next day.

"The second day, I looked high, and I looked low, from this way and that way, and I finally found a buffalo. He was a big buffalo, with lots of meat, and lots of hide, but I tell you, Pocayenta, this was the ugliest buffalo I ever saw in my life.'This', I thought to myself, 'is not the buffalo for MY daughter's wedding.

So again, I settled in for the night to try again the next day.

"The third day, I got up early, and I looked high and I looked low, from this way and that way, going up hills und down hills, suddenly, there it was! A magnificent buffalo. It was a big buffalo. It was, as buffalos go, a beautiful buffalo. It was, if I say so myself, the perfect buffalo. This, I says to myself, is the buffalo Pocayenta wants for Minihorowitz's wedding.

"So I reach into my backpack quietly for my tomahawk and, as I tiptoe over to the buffalo, I raise my tomahawk slowly over the buffalo's neck, when suddenly, like a bolt of lightning from the sky, I see it."

"See what?" says Pocayenta.

(are you ready for this?)

"I've brought the milchedik tomahawk!"

As an addict of Musical Theatre I have just found this on the internet and it works really well
Just get out your Chicago DVD / CD and brush up on the tunes!!

We will definitely be incorporating them into our family seder!!! (ed)

www.leherercommunications.com

Based on the musical Chicago

Announcer: And now, ladies and gentleman, I present to you Pharaoh, singing of a problem he has noticed in Cairo.

All Those Jews

Special words by Lia Lehrer and Julia Latash

(Sung to the tune of "All that Jazz")

Come on babe, why don't we rid the town
Of all those Jews?

I'm gonna break their knees,
And make them all fall down—
All those Jews.

Start the day,
I'll make them work a lot
Where the Nile's cold, and the sun is hot
They're gonna build a town, and all their sons will drown
And all those Jews.

Announcer: And now, ladies and gentlemen, the keeper of the keys, the master of the slaves—slave master Pharaoh!

When You're Good to Pharaoh

Special words by Lia Lehrer and Julia Latash

(Sung to the tune of "When You're Good to Mama")

Ask any of the people in my land
They'll tell you that I won't lend them a hand
I like them all but all of them hate me
Because my system works, my system called, Hebrew slavery

Got a little motto, always sees me through
When you're good to Pharaoh, Pharaoh's good to you.
There's a lot of favors I'm prepared to do
You do one for Pharaoh, he'll do one for you

Announcer: And now, the Hebrew slaves of Cairo, in their rendition of the Slave Plague Tango.

Slave Plague Tango

Special words by Lia Lehrer and Julia Latash

(Sung to the tune of "Cell Block Tango")

Blood, frogs, lice, beasts, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death

He had it comin', he had it comin', he only had himself to blame, if you'd have been there, if you'd have seen it, I bet you you would have done the same.

So we had this slave master, Pharaoh. He wasn't a very nice guy. He was always hoppin' around, telling us what to do. Never gave us time to relax. So one day, we had G-d teach Pharaoh a lesson. G-d sent Pharaoh frogs...into his bed.

He had it comin', he had it comin', he took a flower in its prime, and then he used it, and he abused it, they were 10 plagues, but not a crime.

Eight plagues later, and you'd think he'd have gotten the hint. But Pharaoh still kept the light out of our lives. He still treated us really badly, and made us do all this work. So G-d decided to send him another warning. Unfortunately for Pharaoh, this plague didn't shed a whole lot of light on the situation.

He had it comin', he had it comin', he only had himself to blame, if you'd have been there, if you'd have seen it, I bet you you would have done the same.

Blood, frogs, lice, beasts, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death.

I bet you you would have done the same.

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, your fearless and dedicated leader, Moses

Moses

Special words by Lia Lehrer and Julia Latash

(Sung to the tune of "Roxie")

The name on everybody's lips
Is gonna be, Moses
The leader leading all the trips
Is gonna be, Moses

I'm gonna be a celebrity
That means somebody everyone knows
I'll be the guy the people trust and love
They'll even call me Mose

From just some Hebrew basket boy
I'm gonna be, Moses
But who says leadership's not hard?

Who knew a guy who was in exile
Would lead his people from the Nile?
That's Moses

AND IF YOU LIKE THE BEATLES!

HELP

Special words by Lia Lehrer and Julia Latash

(Sung to the tune of "Help!")

Help!
We need somebody, help!
Not just anybody!
Help! You know we need someone!
Help!

When we were younger, so much younger than today,
Put you in a basket and you floated far away.
And now your life has changed in oh-so-many ways
Our freedom really seems to vanish in the haze.

Help us if you can, we're feeling down.
We know you're the best leader we have found.
Help us get far away from town.
Won't you please, please, help us,
Help us, help us!

Yesterday

Special words by Lia Lehrer and Julia Latash
(Sung to the tune of "Yesterday")

Yesterday, all the Hebrews seemed so far away.
Now it looks as though they should not stay,
Oh, I believe in yesterday.

Suddenly, I'm not half the prince I used to be.
Will the Hebrews put their faith in me?
Oh yesterday came suddenly

Why, they have to go, I don't know, but I know they
cannot stay.
Pharaoh's doing everything wrong, now I long for
yesterday!

Yesterday, I killed an Egyptian beating a Hebrew
slave
Now I need a place to hide away.
Oh I believe in yesterday.

Why, I have to go, I don't know, but I can't stay.
I did something wrong, now I long for yesterday!

Yesterday, the Egyptian palace was my home to stay,
Now I really need to run away.
Oh, I believe in yesterday!

Mm mm mm mmmm mmmm

Ticket to Ride

Special words by Lia Lehrer and Julia Latash
(Sung to the tune of "Ticket to Ride")

We know we're gonna be glad
We think it's today, yeah.
Pharaoh said that we could be free
So we're goin' away.

We've got a ticket to ride,
We've got a ticket to ride,
We've got a ticket to ride,
And yes we care!

For we were slaves you can see,
It was bringin' us down,
We would never be free
While the king was around.

We've got a ticket to ride,
We've got a ticket to ride,
We've got a ticket to ride,
And yes we care!

We don't know why he's letting us go
He's gonna think twice,
He's gonna make us go back!
Before we get to sayin' goodbye
He's gonna think twice,
He's gonna give us a smack!

We know we're gonna be glad
We think it's today, yeah.
Pharaoh said that we could be free
So we're goin' away.

We've got a ticket to ride,
We've got a ticket to ride,
We've got a ticket to ride,
And yes we care!

www.holidaysonthenet/passover.com

Chinese Pesach Stir Fry

Chicken, the mainstay of Jewish cooking and Chinese,, the mainstay of North American Jewish eating out combine to make a wonderful Pesach meal at home.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small red pepper, cut into 2 inch (5 cm) long, thin strips.
- 4 scallions, cut into small rings.
- 1 cup (250 grams) thinly sliced celery (against the diagonal)
- 1 cup (250 grams) sliced carrots
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 2 finely minced garlic cloves
- 1/4 tsp. dry ginger
- 1/2 lb (1/4 kilo) sliced fresh mushrooms - preferably Shitake, but in a pinch any type will do.
- pinch salt
- 3 cups (grams) of cooked diced chicken

In a large skillet or a wok heat the oil; add the red pepper, scallions, celery, carrots, cayenne pepper and garlic. Saute until tender. Add the ginger, salt and mushrooms - cook for an additional 5 minutes. Lower the heat and add the chicken. Heat the chicken thoroughly. Serve over Pesach noodles or rice (Sephardim).