
Kol HaKehilah

Rosh HaShanah

5781 / 2020



Dis location



Dislocation and Orientation

By Rabbi Joel Levy

Unrequested, Google has started sending me a strange monthly map of all the places that I have been over the past four weeks. I can look back and see all my movements traced out; every time I left home and where I went. Maybe in the future a whole life will be traceable like that – the broad trail of a life’s journey that can then be broken down into smaller and smaller pieces until perhaps we will be able identify all the individual movements that combine to make up the whole. Unbidden, Google will make it available at our funerals; this was my life’s journey!

I want to go back to basics about what it means to move, courtesy of the philosopher Hans Jonas. Every time we move from one place to another involves us first seeing some lack in our current loca-

like that it all sounds too complicated – I’ll wait until someone offers me a cuppa!)

We (and Google) could equally well pan out the camera and look at the broader journeys of our lives from the same perspective. What are the big journeys that we have been on and what have we sought on those journeys? Thinking more conceptually, and viewing ‘movement’ as a metaphor, we could trace out our intricate pathways; what we lacked and what we sought: movements away from loneliness, egotism, futility, indulgence, anger, stress; movements towards partnership, friends, marriage, divorce, new houses, new jobs, careers, countries, children, love. Every step has involved moving from a ‘place’ of lack to a ‘place’ where we think that that lack will be met. And we will never stop moving, reaching out, growing, until the day of our death, and there the journey of our lives will end. Then we will truly be static. Only then will we be fully located.

accepting and then acting on the discomfort of our current dislocation.

Some journeys are simple, although I clearly failed the cuppa test, but the more profound the desire the more likely it is that our path will be complex; rocky, prone to frustration and failure, requiring courage, persistence and resolve. There will not be one isolated moment of dislocation and orientation but a long-drawn-out process that will require us to stay for a long time within a protracted and painful zone of dislocation. All great narrative literature describes such journeys. Reading about journeys, in order to rehearse the tools required for journey, might be one of the reasons that we are so drawn to narrative itself. The Tanach of course is no exception, with every significant character in the narrative called upon to work towards an as-yet unrealised goal.

Abraham is told (Genesis 12:1) that he needs to leave everything he knows behind to travel to his real home, where he has never been:

א ויאמר יהוה אל-אברהם, לך-לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך, אל-הארץ, אשר ארצה.

1 Now the LORD said to Abram: ‘Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you.’

And Moses is told at the burning bush (Exodus 3:8) that God will take a people who have known nothing but Egypt for generations to a land that they have never set foot in, which will be their home.

ח וארד להצילו מיד מצרים, ולהעלותו מן-הארץ הזו, אל-ארץ טובה ורחבה, אל-ארץ זבת חלב ודבש--אל-מקום הקנעני, והחתי, והאמרי והפרזי, והחוי והיבوسی.

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good land and a large one, to a land flowing with milk and honey; to the place of the Canaanite,

and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

The archetype for all that wandering and searching is imprinted in Primordial Adam; we are told that Adam’s descendants, i.e. all humans, will never feel wholly at home until they leave home (Genesis 2:24):

כד על-כן, יעזוב-איש, את-אביו, ואת-אמו; וידבק באשתו, והיו לבשר אחד.

24 Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, and shall cling to his wo-man and they shall become one flesh.

The message is clear – that home is not where you are; it is what you dare to orient towards.

There is no way to reject the challenge of dislocation without rejecting the challenge of life itself. To lead a life without dislocation and re-orientation is to lead a life without direction and purpose. To lead a life of purpose is, by definition, to seek that which you do not yet have. To be oriented means, by definition, to be dislocated.

It is well known that Jews pray facing Jerusalem:

בבלי בבכות ל.
נמצא עומד במזרח מחזיר פניו למערב במערב מחזיר פניו למזרח בדרום מחזיר פניו לצפון בצפון מחזיר פניו לדרום נמצאו כל ישראל מכוונים את לבם למקום אחד

Babylonian Talmud: B’rachot 30a

It transpires that if he is in the East he should turn his face to the West; if in the West he should turn his face to the East; if in the South he should turn his face to the North; if in the North he should turn his face to the South.

In this way all Israel will be turning their hearts towards one place.

It is less well known that they also try to defecate facing away from the holy city:

בבלי בבכות סא:
תנו רבנן הנפנה ביהודה לא יפנה מזרח ומערב אלא צפון ודרום ובגליל לא יפנה אלא מזרח ומערב

Talmud: B’rachot 61b

Our Rabbis taught:

One who defecates in Judea should not do so East and West but North and South.

But the Galilee he should do so only East and West.

These are religious practices of orientation which are also meant provoke a

Seeing how precious it is in my eyes to behold the dust of the sanctuary.

If your world is perfect, and you are perfect within it, then you do not need to feel a sense of dislocation and you do not need to orient and you do not need to move. If this is what you feel then you are either God or Moses or dead or mistaken.

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sense of dislocation. We could say that they are dislocating spiritual practices; they are designed to teach us that we are in the wrong place. If I am orienting towards Jerusalem then I am not where I ought to be. A lifetime of such practices led to this famous, sublime mediaeval poem of Yehuda HaLevi, living in Muslim Spain, yearning to leave the wealth of his life behind in order to see even the grim ruins of the temple in Jerusalem:

לבי במזרח, יהודה הלוי
לבי במזרח ואנכי בסוף מערב אידך אטעמך את אשר אכל ואידך יערב איכה אשלים נדרי ואקשרי, בעוד ציון בקבל אדום ואני בקבל ערב יקל בעיני עוב כל טוב ספרד, כמו יקר בעיני ראות עפרות דביר

My Heart is In the East Yehuda HaLevi (1080-1141)

My heart is in the East, and I in the uttermost West. How can I find savour in food? How shall it be sweet?

How shall I pay my vows and my bonds, while yet Zion lies beneath the fetter of Edom, and I in Arab [Western?] chains? A light thing would it seem to me to leave all the good things of Spain

I am not suggesting that we torture ourselves, making our lives miserable with constant frenetic motion. There are times when the ‘movement’ that we lack and yearn for is actually the movement towards stillness; and for those in perpetual motion, moving towards that might be their next great challenge.

I am also not suggesting that we are forbidden to relax, stop and enjoy our lives. Stopping and appreciating one day in seven is built into the temporal fabric of Jewish life. It is wonderful to arrive and to rejoice in arrival. I am suggesting that the sense that we want better for ourselves, our families, our countries, our traditions and our planet should cause us to turn our faces towards a better world, to feel the tug of imperfection as a gnawing absence, as a ripping dislocation, to turn our faces towards that other world, to raise up the burdens that we have the strength and fortitude to carry, to orient ourselves well, and to set out yet again on the path.

Or, in the closing words of the penitential Psalm (Psalms 27:14), recited every day through Ellul until the end of Sukkot:

יד קנה אל-יהוה חזק וינאמץ לבך וקנה אל-יהוה

14 Look towards the LORD; take strength and courage, and look towards the Lord. ■



Disc–Location

By Chazan Jacky Chernett

I remember discussing with Nahum, on our journey to Limmud many years ago, what pieces of music we would want to have on a desert island. I have been a fan of the Radio 4 programme Desert Island Discs for years and was fascinated that on that programme the nearest musical choices to mine were those of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

When Cheryl asked if I would be her first guest in her new Kol Nefesh Tuesday morning series, I felt flattered, of course – but also daunted as she limited my choices to two! How on earth do you do that!

What Cheryl didn't realise (or perhaps she did) is that I haven't been able to listen to music for the past few months. We have had a year that has been very difficult to cope with. In my 'dislocation' I've been unable to engage in services or any shul stuff, let alone my beloved EAJL. My colleagues and friends have been more than patient and accommodating and for this I am extremely grateful.

However, I had now said yes to Cheryl, so how could I deal with it? And what did it mean?

Facing the music has been challenging, but more important to me than I could have imagined. First, I chose a piece that would cover so many issues. I changed my mind many times but kept coming back to it. There's a lesson there somewhere about trusting first instincts. The music is the Schubert String Quintet in C Major, D956. It meant I had actually to listen to it again. I am grateful that this happened, because it helped to unlock this door for me.

Music has always been of paramount importance. I can't work with music on

like many other people can. For me there is no such thing as background music because it takes over. It rides over the words all the time and provides a language of its own. It has the power to flood and also convey every possible emotion.

Describing the Schubert C Major Quintet, and particularly the second movement, the Adagio, the cellist Joel Krosnick said that Schubert was speaking to God. I chose Joel Krosnick's guest performance with the Canadian Afiara Quartet for Cheryl's programme. It is one of the most awe-inspiring pieces ever written and heartbreaking not only in its pathos but in that Schubert completed it only two months before his death at the age of 31 in 1828. Indeed, he was speaking to God. He never heard it performed.

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One of the features in this sublime second movement is the sustaining voice, the obligato under the melody. This voice transports, like our 'drone' sound in shul which embraces in the air the melodies and chants of the t'filla, carrying them in their movement in time. Another feature

is the unusual addition of a second cello. The voice of the cello resonates with me and the deep voices of two of them in this piece was a stroke of genius that Schubert was compelled to include.

This process has been an interesting one for me in that my 'speaking' to God isn't to do with words. Of course, language is a human communication carrier and we can't do without it. There is also a genius in the liturgy (this subject is for another time, I think) but, for me, it almost pales into insignificance under the power of the sound. That is why the poetry of the liturgy when carried on the sound of its chants and music are so important to me.

So deep has been my own current dislocation that, for more than three months, I found I couldn't daven. The book stayed stubborn and the words swam. Yes, a chazan who can't daven is a contradiction in terms. It is an oxymoron. Normally I wouldn't dream of sharing this in a publication (particularly the shul magazine!) but I think it is important to do it for the following reason. Davening is a discipline and one that I have adhered to for many years; it's part of my life. I have had to come to terms with my inability to conform with this for a while, and, thankfully, this dislocation is proving to be a temporary phenomenon. What does matter and something that has resonated even more deeply with me is that the values that it symbolises go far deeper than the action. Does it mean that I haven't been fervently engaging with God? Not at all. I would say I have been far more profoundly engaged than ever before.

That is why this personal experience is important to share. I don't like the word 'prayer'. It is English. I prefer the Hebrew *tefillah*, which means introspection. I think it is a vital, deeply profound part of the human experience that everybody is engaged with whether they are aware of it or think they believe in God or not. The human is provided with a consciousness which reaches far beyond thought. The

depths and heights of our life experiences affect us insofar as our emotional memories are concerned. We remember vividly far more how we felt at significant (and even less significant) moments in our life than what we thought.

Not one of us is immune to trouble, anxiety, pain, loss, etc. We all experience it. Our tradition has time-honoured ways of dealing with it. And, hopefully, we find

our own way through, often if we are lucky and also are open to accept help. So why am I writing about this? Not only because of my own painful experience at this time but because I want to share the humanity of it all so that anyone who reads this will be able to say, 'I have been there too'. It's OK to find the courage to just be with it and with each other in it, however long it takes.

Lockdown has been difficult for so many people. Not being able to be with loved ones, to hug them (especially grandchildren!) is so hard for us to bear. We have never experienced a plague like this. Our mental as well as physical health is at stake and, at the end of the day, our survival depends on love. My other desert island disc is about that! ■

The Schubert Quintet in C Major D956 played by the Afiara Quartet with guest cellist Joel Krosnick can be found on YouTube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtZgIKZ_jrw. The recording of Jacky's Desert Island Discs – the first in a new series conceived and presented by Cheryl Skelan – is available on our website, www.kolnefesh.org.uk/our-chazan.

Al Tashlicheinu: A Reflection

By Daniel Borin

Ellul is a time for introspection – or in the more traditional Hebrew phrase, a *Cheshbon Nefesh*, an accounting of the soul. On other festivals we celebrate the spiritual and historical life of the whole people of Israel; during the Yamim Nora'im we focus on ourselves. Yom Kippur is the Festival of the Soul, a phrase I first heard from Rabbi Danny Smith of Edgware & Hendon Reform Synagogue. It is a profound luxury, the mitzvah of introspection. And so when Yom Kippur is over and our sins are, so to speak, forgiven, we still say in the evening Amidah '*Selach lanu kei chatanu*', 'Forgive us for we have sinned'; sinned through the selfish act of introspection and not paying attention to others. What might we have done for others on Yom Kippur? The classic answer is that we could have visited the sick. For that omission we say '*Selach Lanu*'.

It seems characteristic of so much of what we say on Yom Kippur that everything is two-edged. The introspection is essential but comes at a cost and must be placed in context of our relationship to the whole world.

As part of the Kol Nefesh Ellul mailings, we have been sent a beautiful recording of 'Shema Koleinu' sung by Gilead. Moving words movingly sung. But then I thought about the meaning a bit more: '*Al tashlicheinu b'eit ziknab*': 'Do not discard us in old age.' One shudders. It sounds as if we are saying, 'Die, we must, but as we go, tell us that our lives meant something, that we will be remembered.' The word *Tashlich* is carefully chosen here. The same word we use for casting away our unwanted habits. We ask not to be cast away like that! The request seems to be almost the opposite of Cheshbon Nefesh. Cheshbon Nefesh is to make one's own evaluation and come to terms with it. 'Al tashlicheinu' seems to ask, if not for approval, then at least for tenderness from the Almighty. Perhaps we can keep both these themes in mind simultaneously and have a fulfilling Yamim Nora'im. ■

Gilead Limor's rendition of Shema Koleinu, and other liturgy from the Yamim Nora'im, can be found on our website, www.kolnefesh.org.uk/high-holydays-music-2020.

From the Editors:

As you all know, for the past ten years Kol HaKehilah has adopted the theme for the Ten Days of Learning and Reflection (the KN 'retreat') as the theme for our Rosh HaShanah edition. We've made an exception this year, as the theme for the Ten Days was chosen before the Covid-19 pandemic, and it seemed more important for this issue to address the sense of dislocation we're all feeling.

The theme for the Ten Days will be Jews and Universal Ethics. The aim is to focus on the seven Noahide laws – the Talmud's notion of biblical law meant to apply to all humanity.

Also, given the exigencies of the pandemic, we're not producing our usual Yamim Nora'im information booklet this year. For preliminary details on this year's Ten Day programme, see page 28. ■

Controlling the Zealot in Me

By Gabi Peretz

The theme of dislocation seems rather apposite for the way the second half of the year 5780 has played out, what with the pandemic and its associated economic and social impacts, along with the political ferment that has been with us for several months now. Perhaps you have felt the same level of dismay and anger as I have in the face of the incompetence and mendacity that appears so prevalent wherever we look? I can't be the only one. Yet what I started to notice as the months passed, as lockdown became a way of life and everything else was disrupted, is that along with the dismay and the anger, I was also fast on my journey to becoming a zealot. How did I find this out? Well, it happened when the idea of cutting off communication with a few members of my family, because of divergent political opinions, stopped feeling like an outlandish prospect. It happened when this actually seemed like the only logical course of action in the face of 5780/2020 in all its demented cacophony. If the world was going mad, and some of my siblings were joining in, I wanted no part in it and nothing to do with it, or them, for that matter.

I ought to give you some background. I have always leaned right politically. During my pre-teen years, I was an enthusiastic supporter of Reagan and Thatcher and this translated into becoming a defender of both Bushes as an adolescent and an adult. That was my outlook pre-1999 and it has remained pretty much the same ever since. Now imagine what it is like for someone with these views to witness how their birthplace is systematically devastated by people purporting to uphold a far-left socialist ideology. It's like being told that Frankenstein exists and then seeing him destroy your house with your own eyes. If such an experience doesn't harden your attitudes, then you are a better person than I am.

This was my mindset as the rise of Corbyn began in the UK – and you will for-

give my hyperbole if the confluence of all these factors didn't create a siege mentality in my mind. The far left had destroyed Venezuela and now it was on the verge of trying to do the same in the country where I now lived and had established a family. Mind, none of this means to say that I have ever supported the one who must not be named in the White House. In fact, I detested him for betraying the very principles that guided Reagan and Thatcher. But increasingly, as the left has become increasingly more radical in response to the rise of right-wing populism, I began to see him as the lesser of two evils.

Inevitably, this attitude created friction with my siblings, who live in the US and are vocal opponents of you know who. They see right-wing populism as the threat that hangs over their country and feel less pre-occupied by the rise of left-wing populism than I do. We could live with this by not discussing politics, but

that was at a time when our disagreements seemed limited and controlled. While my sisters are too close to the implosion of Venezuela to ever sympathize with the radical left, the younger generation in my family (my two brothers in their mid-20s and college-age niece and nephew) are not. Like most young people, they have wanted to explore ideas and evaluate them on their own, without taboos. But that was precisely the problem. I could not abide this. I felt the need to draw red lines in the sand. If any of them supported Bernie Sanders, I said with no small amount of self-importance, I would be furious. So what, they asked? Be furious. That is your prerogative (!).

Thus we began this very common 21st-century pas-de-deux involving social media posts and angry messages in response

to political opinions posted online that we vehemently disagreed with. They tried to convince me I was wrong. I tried to convince them. We were at an impasse. It should come as no surprise that all of this came to a head in this year of dislocation. We were at loggerheads on almost everything and then I took the drastic step of saying: I don't want to hear from you again. And I blocked them on social media and stopped participating in Zoom gatherings if they were present. For a while, I may have felt virtuous and right. But increasingly, I was sad. What had I done? At this time of great upheaval, why was I creating a rift within our family, willy-nilly?

The zealot in me is there. But he isn't particularly rigid and I've managed to get him under control. It took about two or three months of silence for me to reach

The zealot in me is there. But he isn't particularly rigid and I've managed to get him under control.

out again and mend fences. We don't discuss politics any longer, though the temptation is there. At Kol Nefesh, we have often talked about the value of *Makbloket*, of disagreement held within the frame of discourse and respect. It is a very hard balance to strike when the world around us seems to thrive in driving polarization. Yet it seems to me that when we try and see the humanity of those we disagree with, and stop seeing them as caricatures of every political idea we despise, we may have a chance to keep lines of communication going.

This doesn't mean I have any valuable answers. I am still uncertain about the idea of red lines. Surely, some positions are so toxic and noxious that they are beyond the pale. The question remains about what to do when someone you love adopts them. ■

Dislocation (A Diary with No Dates)

By Paul Collin



In the beginning was the letter but it was without form but was not void. It was formal and friendly and invited me to join the online leper colony.

This document was expected but when it arrived it was still a very strange experience. I thought about giving the letter a name, Magen Matt, as the Health Minister had signed it as if we were on friendly, first-name terms. Someone I had never met had examined my medical records and decided I was not superman but super-threatened.

The letter was also marked by a major mistake. It did not state the obvious. If I had to shield, it put Rosalind (who is healthy) in exactly the same position. Major advantage! I was not alone.

First action was to pack a bag. This contained everything I would need should I suddenly be taken into hospital. A week's supply (optimistic) of medication, night wear and favourite slippers.

Within a week food parcels started arriving. Calls from the NHS to check up on

exactly what I was and was not doing. My 6am walks in the park alone before anyone else was up could not be "condoned". (Whatever that meant.)



Subsequently a questionnaire appeared.

"What hospital did I want should the need arise?"

"Did I have a bag packed ready for this eventuality?" (No extra marks for predicting I needed this and it was already in place.)

"Had I made a will?"

In the multiple-choice section, I was also asked, "Where do you want to die?" Choice: At home/in hospital. As I had no immediate demise plans, I will admit omitting to answering that question.

So, where did I go from there, in this environment that was now my personal physical and mental boundary? It was time to create a strategic plan. In management terms I should look for strengths (none), weaknesses (many), opportunities

(none), and threats (refer to previous paragraph). This SWOT model did not help, nor could I find one, out of the many I had encountered, that was appropriate. I had spent years learning this stuff and nothing helped or came close to fitting. This experience was really new.

I made a list of books to read. Promised myself never to watch daytime television and then looked for support. But the question was, where to look? Some friends were in the same position and others were coming to terms with their new (ab)normal.

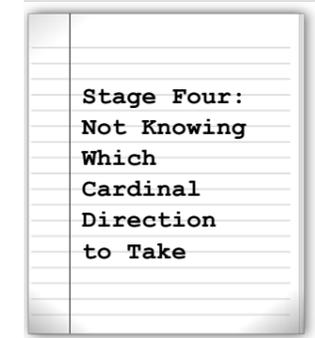


Tragedy struck several times, followed by Zoom funerals and Shiva services. At the other end of this spectrum I went (inaccurate word as I did not go anywhere) to our grandson's electronic brit, knowing that I could neither hold him nor see him except through the medium of WhatsApp.

At that point I started to rationalise the position. I was reasonably healthy with an ample supply of rubber gloves and masks. The latter

was a little pointless as human contact was banned. Communication made me feel like Gulliver in Lilliput. I was constantly talking to people who were two inches tall inside little boxes on a screen. Lectures, some interesting, some not. Meetings followed the same pattern.

Days passed and I lobbied for a change of names in this new circadian world. Times when the sun rose would all be called "Day", and when the sun went down, "Night". There were no other distinguishing features. Words like *weekend*, *holiday*, *short break* all had to be removed from the lexicon. That is why this diary has no dates.



I guess (at time of writing) I am at a liminal stage where I simply do not know where our new world is going and not particularly happy with the current position. It may not be justified, and I appreciate that it may be an overreaction looking for the status quo ante, but I know that simply is not possible.

My modest message to the decision makers is, do not leave us behind. ■

Crossing The Yabbok Again

By Holly Blue Hawkins

Yaakov crossed the ford of the Yabbok more than once: I imagine him leading a camel on which Rachel rode, with Joseph clutching his father's hand. Having delivered his family safely across, Yaakov then went back to send across all his 'household', including servants, livestock and livery, along with all his possessions. Why he does not complete the passage with all the others is a mystery; and though the text once describes his nocturnal adversary as a 'man' and subsequently only refers to him with pronouns, our oral tradition and commentators expand his identity to refer to 'ha-ish' as an angel, perhaps even an evil adversary sent by Esau to destroy his brother. Who – or what – Yaakov wrestles with all night we do not know, but it is a 'wrestle' and not a 'battle'. When at last the adversary realizes Yaakov will not be vanquished, Yaakov is dealt an injurious blow with repercussions still reverberating in our kashrut to this very day.

"You have struggled with the Divine and with men and you have overcome," Yaakov is told as he is blessed with the name Israel. But it is Yaakov/Israel who extrapolates – or recognizes – that this adversary was a Divine being and gives the place a name to reflect as much. Yet for all the specificity that frames this chapter, this key passage is filled with ambiguity and innuendo. Yaakov/Israel is left to ford the Yabbok alone, injured, exhausted, apprehensive, and blessed with a name based on his performance in life, rather than the portent symbolized at the moment of his birth. Now more than One Who Comes At the Heel of Another,

he becomes One Who Wrestles With the Divine. Unlike the case with his siblings, both his names speak of who he is, rather than only reflecting parental projections.

The encounter with Esau is also filled with innuendo. Those with fraught sibling relationships will easily realize how carefully Yaakov/Israel navigates the meeting and finds means for the brothers to part amicably, save face, but most importantly, go their separate ways. Their dialog is captured in detail and we are left to read between the lines and find the meaning in the mystery.

There are those who believe that we 'make' meaning, evidenced by the building blocks assembled to support a plausible whole. But I believe that meanings are manifestations of aliveness, like currents of wind and water, to be discovered and danced with as the winged ones and sea creatures cohabit with the elements of their environments. Meaning and Mystery swirl together in a common fractal: identify one and the other offers the seeker glimpses and guideposts along the journey of discovery.

And so, the very points of ambiguity in Tanach that give us opportunities to wrestle with the Mystery can provide the most significant, defining passages we return to again and again to discover Meaning: Yaakov wrestling with the 'ish', Ezekiel's chariot, the Akeidah...

We are plunged now into a collective Mystery. Our efforts to make plans based upon probabilities, tracking and trending, all seem now to be torment to some and

freedom to others, but certainly uncertainty to all. We are left to search for meaning amidst the rubble of our expectations and carefully constructed lives. Equanimity can only be found within in this ever-changing landscape. I was taught that 'the moment is eternal for as long as it lasts', and that was never more obvious than now.

Here in California, barely on the threshold of fire season, with already one evacuation from a fire less than a mile away and a setting sun like a brilliant Jack-o-Lantern leering menacingly through the smoky haze, I think of the millions of refugees fleeing war, the islanders moving livelihoods uphill or watching their ancestral villages disappear beneath rising sea levels. I am grateful for the pillow still beneath my head at night and the community in which I live, even when we reconvene in a parking lot, our cars packed with survival belongings and crated companion animals. I am grateful for the Beloved who sustains my lifestyle, while simultaneously fulfilling a sacred covenant far away.

As Jews we are blessed with a heritage of resilience, capacity for meeting challenging times with a full array of survival tools, and, yes, lots of practice in wrestling with ambiguity. Like Israel himself, we may ford streams with a limp and navigate difficult relationships with caution, but we prevail. Our tradition has blessed us with that. ■

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manifestations of
aliveness, like currents of
wind and water, to be
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with.

Enough

There was a time when I said
I am a sword beaten into plowshare
but now even that is not a satisfactory image

I do not want to do unto the Earth
the violence of a blade gouging my agenda into a landscape of living soil
but instead to find my way with careful pitchfork, shovel, trowel and fingers
wafting the pollen of my prayers across the landscape.

Let not so much as a humble earthworm be harmed by my mindless hacking away
I want to be at peace with where things are, the dirt, compost and mulch,
and let it be as nature Herself lets it be
working with What Is
instead of forcing what I want upon the Divine Plan.

It is time now to study
the intricate matrix of plants, soil, and creatures,
and to find my way among them
introducing food crops and ornamentals that work in harmony
and partnership with what Nature has intended;
learning the power of flow instead of domination,
channelling life force instead of harnessing it,
a mill wheel turning by the impetus of a passing stream
instead of an unforgiving paddle wheel pushing relentlessly onward
while somewhere in the bowels of a ship
sweaty laborers shovel fuel stolen from the flanks of the Earth Mother
into a gaping furnace leaving a trail of ashen tears across the sky.

Let the fire that warms my soul be fuelled by gathered windfall
as I gentle my way through my days,
nibbling mature fruit and foliage
from the generosity of harvest gathered with my own hands,
and celebrate a renewed understanding of
what it means to live from hand-to-mouth,
taste the first sun-warmed plums of summer
and gratefully pick the leaves from a kale plant
who has wintered over twice now without any help from me
and still continues to offer up her food for love.

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Hallel Bat-Malkah
(Holly Blue Hawkins)
© May 24, 2011

Dislocation

By Andrea Grahame

What does it mean to be dislocated? I have not thought about this directly over lockdown, but I think it has been a central theme of my day-to-day existence. There is something about being with people which is indescribable and hard to define. I have found interactions on Zoom a strange experience. I see others there, I look at them attentively, and talk with them, but somehow, when the meeting ends and I press 'leave meeting', there is empty space, as if it was an imaginary experience – gone in a puff of invisible smoke.

Is this what dislocation is? I then have a readjustment – was I just 'with' people? Well maybe in my head I was, but was it real?

Very strange. And when I am with people, now especially, there is a strange sense of urgency and immediacy – now people in real life are like in technicolour, almost too bright and too real and my system needs to adjust to it. So I suppose this is describing something like dislocation – and it seems that things are most in their natural state when I am talking on the phone. That hasn't changed and thank goodness for that!! ■



Torah Chat, KN's Wednesday evening Bible study group, has been probing the opening chapters of Genesis over the past few months. Here are some reflections on our recent discussions from Maurice Gold and Meira Ben-Gad. See also the article by Yehoshua Frankel on page 23.

Experiencing Exile: Stories as Solace

By Maurice Gold

The Torah Chat discussions on the two creation stories over the last few months have been fascinating. I'm sure all the participants will have learned new things and have their own ideas about what to make of them. For what it's worth I'm sharing my own thoughts and conclusions.

The two stories appear to have very different styles and I assume were originally penned by separate authors with different objectives. Of course, they share the fact they are both Jewish creation (literally: *genesis*) stories relating how the One God created the universe, the natural world and human-kind. Beyond that what I hear in them is a response to the experience of the Babylonian exile. The hypothesis I'm following is that for the exiles to retain their identity as Judeans they had to adapt: to develop cultural practices that filled the void left by the loss of homeland and temple and to provide psychological and spiritual support in their new situation – to furnish both an explanation and solace.

The first (creation in six days) story has been crafted with great care. Our discussions revealed to me many new ideas about it. These include, for example, that one purpose of the story is to supplant older *genesis* myths of battles with the sea monster and instead to emphasise the pacific nature of the enterprise with a focus on 'speaking' as God's means of enacting creation. Similarly, the story obliterates shadows of 'hosts of heavenly beings'. The story is written as a prose poem which carefully narrates God's careful well-planned actions. The rhythms of the language echo the rhythm of the week, culminating in the day of rest. It seems to me that in the end it is this idea of the day of rest, the seventh day, being integral to the very fabric of the universe that is the primary purpose

of the story. And I've been reflecting on the reason for this.

Others may have a different view and I'm happy to be corrected, but I don't get a sense that in the books from Joshua to Kings, Shabbat is an overarching or even a particularly significant concern. What seems to be important are initially local shrines and temples and eventually the Jerusalem temple. These operate every day all year. People go when there is a need: as the lunar months come and go and the seasons progress; when there is a personal or family change – a child arrives or comes of age, or a wanted child isn't conceived; when there's an illness or a dispute to be resolved or a sin to be atoned for. In these situations, the shrine or temple is always there. Its daily life goes on regardless. And the activities of those in attendance, the priests and the supplicants, are physical, performing rituals and making sacrifices.

The exiles in Babylon were bereft of land, culture, temple; living in restricted areas, working as *corvée* labourers for the benefit of their Babylonian masters; probably traumatised. The threats to the preservation of their cultural heritage would likely have been apathy, alienation, depression and eventually assimilation. But it appears that somehow the principle that they could rest every seventh day was agreed. It would have been one thing to agree that everyone could have a day off every seven days, but for everyone to share the same day off seems to me to have been an amazing feat of labour negotiation. The next step was to capitalise on this so that it could be the bedrock of their cultural preservation. I imagine a gradual move to a new pattern where the day of rest, the seventh day, was used for meeting and for speaking, for reciting songs previously associated with the temple, for retelling ancient stories and for

narrating new stories reflecting their new reality. I imagine ritual and sacrifice replaced by speaking activities at weekly gatherings.

As with the discussion of the first story, the Torah Chat group has progressed very slowly through the second (Adam and Eve) account. Although this has raised many illuminating points, it seems to me that the approach misses the overall dramatic effect of a well-told folk tale. I recall at Limmud several years ago listening as Clive Lawton retold the story of Dinah. In a large hall Clive held his audience spellbound, a charismatic raconteur, walking back and forth on the stage, ponytail swinging. The story unfolded until, after a moment's theatrical pause, as Simeon and Levi murdered the men of Shechem, there was a great gasp of shock. For at least one person in the audience the sudden turn of events was totally unexpected and the sheer horror of the story was truly felt.

I imagine the tale of Adam and Eve being told time and again by great storytellers. Twists and turns are added, side stories alluded to, embellishments made with a flourish – all to keep the audience entranced. With each retelling there are small changes responding to what worked well previously and what didn't. Eventually a particular version is written down, a snapshot taken. As it happens, in this version much is made of the serpent while other really fascinating asides are omitted. What I hear is quite a loose use of language. The exact words don't seem so crucial; what's important is the overall effect: Adam and Eve are banished, exiled, punished for a wrongdoing which somehow didn't seem so wrong at the time but which had catastrophic consequences. The banishment from the garden would I think resonate with a people banished from their homeland. ■

Being Human

By Meira Ben-Gad

Twenty-odd years ago, I dislocated my shoulder. It's something I remember because it left me with a meta-physical conundrum, along the order of 'If a tree falls...' Micha and I being prepared neither to administer (him) nor receive (me) an on-the-spot repair such as one occasionally sees on TV, we drove to the nearest ER (A&E to you; we were in Houston at the time). I clearly recall the doctor explaining that he would reinsert the shoulder joint in the socket, that it would be incredibly painful, but that I would remember none of it because he would first give me something to keep my brain from forming memories for about five minutes. And indeed, the next thing I knew it was all done, and it had apparently been, as promised, incredibly painful (I'm told I vocalized this observation rather emphatically), but, also as promised, I remembered nothing. So, my conundrum: did I suffer during this procedure, or did I not?

The question, while appealing, is of course fallacious. It is rarely true that if we don't remember our suffering it doesn't count, because generally when people forget their suffering it is deliberate (if unconscious) – a defence mechanism; a way of enabling a damaged mind to look forward. But it becomes part of what shapes us.

Right now, most of us aren't really suffering much at all, relatively speaking, and it's disingenuous to pretend we are. (A few of us are, very much.) But our dislocation is nonetheless painful. A recipe learned on the go: take two parts grief, three parts fear, stir in some garden-variety anxiety (can be home-grown), season with petty annoyances, garnish with a slice of apprehension.

When Torah Chat moved online at the start of the lockdown, it seemed appropriate to begin back at the beginning, with chapter 1, verse 1 of Genesis. For the past eight or ten weeks now we've been making our way through chapters two and three, the Adam and Eve story.

Oh my, what a story. The more we find, the slower we advance; the slower we advance, the more we find. This is the greatest drama of all time, whose theme is nothing less than the human condition. Act Three of this drama gives us the original dislocation: our progenitors' ejection from the Garden of Eden. The big question is whether this culmination of the tale is really, as it seems on the surface, about sin and punishment (the Christian Fall), or whether the story as a whole is aetiological – a way of expressing (and thereby understanding) what it means to be a human being. This latter approach offers several readings (noncompeting; mythic truth can hold multiple concurrent meanings). Perhaps the Garden of Eden represents childhood, and the bite of the fruit symbolizes the bittersweet moment when we realise our children have minds of their own, and will go their own way. Perhaps the story captures some communal memory of pre-agricultural societies – a simpler, more innocent time, in which technology and innovation had not yet begun to impart their multiplicitous blessings and curses. Either way, in this reading the expulsion from the garden is not a punishment but simply what must be, because of what is.

Suffering is built in to being human. We are made of Earth, and so we are vulnerable, frail, subject to physical pain and all the body's needs. We are also made of God's breath, and so are cursed and blessed to be reasoning beings – and therefore both self-aware and able to conceptualize the future. We have discussed a bit in Torah Chat whether animals can be perceived as conscious. I personally am of the view that some animal species (some primates, at least some cetaceans, likely elephants, perhaps some corvids) are indeed self-aware in a way similar to us, and may even consciously plan for (and be anxious about) the future. But even if this is true, for the moment human beings are the only species known for sure to tell stories about their condition, and the authors of Genesis

chapters two and three clearly tapped into something.

What about the talking snake? My (not yet fully developed) view is that the story very cleverly externalizes some aspect of man(kind) – of the human – and manifests it in the form of this universal archetype, the snake. In the biblical story, man(kind) and snake are both described as *Arum*. These are homonyms, meaning naked in the case of the man and woman, and something like shrewd, sly, cunning in the case of the snake. Ironically, the snake's duplicity results in the man and woman disguising themselves (covering their nakedness) after they eat of the tree. In addition, modern scholars have noted that the name Chava – Eve – has cognates in the Aramaic and Arabic words for snake, *chinya* and *tha'aban* respectively (One ancient Egyptian word for snake is *hefa*, which may or may not be connected.) Snakes in ancient cultures are associated with fertility and rebirth, because of the way they shed their skin. In our story it is the woman, Chava, whom the snake approaches, and who first eats of the fruit before giving it to the man. So the woman in our story is indeed the life force (*Em Kol Chai*, the mother of all living things; Gen. 3:20). It is she who displays the qualities of curiosity, desire to learn, and invention that will lead her and Adam out of the garden; she who thereby introduces pain and suffering to humanity; and also she who will carry and bear the next generation. All these things relate to being consciously oriented towards the future, and all are bound up with being human.

Our current dislocation will pass. Our vulnerability to suffering will not. There is no magic pill to make us forget our traumas (though, perhaps disturbingly, various groups of neurologists are working on such a thing). Both individually and collectively, we must – again and again and again – find a way to live with our memories of the past, and our fears about the future. ■

Yiddishing in Corona Times

By Barbara Borts

When I am asked what I have been doing during the lockdown, I respond, “*Ikb hob zikh geyidisht* – I have been Yiddishing.” I have filled my time with Yiddish activities in a way that I haven’t been able to in many years.

Yiddish has not been absent in my life. As with many in my generation, I come from a typical American Jewish family whose *bobe-zeydes*, aunts and uncles had come from Eastern Europe and spoke Yiddish. My father, much more than my mother, whose skills were weaker, spoke Yiddish at home and went to secular cheder, but when married, and one has heard this story countless times, Yiddish became the language in which to speak in front of the children without being understood. What is interesting is that said children did not want to learn the language at that point, so as to understand. What was Yiddish to us, anyway, in our modern American lives? It was exotic, it was comical, but also sometimes, it was the language of songs sung to us. And I continued to sing it, but that was all.

I began a more serious study of Yiddish some years ago, at McGill University. Yiddish was everywhere in my part of Montreal – theatre, concerts, Bialik School, and the older people, sitting at the food court of Cote-St-Luc Shopping Centre and chatting away in their native tongue. I used to sit and listen, and my students in the various Jewish studies courses I taught conversed with me in Yiddish. It was a Yiddish Gan Eden.

When I left Montreal I found courses, but no sonic Yiddish background. There was the Boston Arbiterring group, and back in London, my wonderful friend, the late Barry Davis, taught a group which I joined. We met in a synagogue in Hampstead; during our class, a Talmud shiur was also taking place. The rabbi, a Lubavitcher, would pop in on his way out, but so would some of the students, many of whom spoke Yiddish. There were pockets of Yiddish in London, but when I moved up to Newcastle, nothing

really. A word here, an expression there, a song somewhere else. And a non-Jewish senior lecturer in music at Newcastle University, who taught himself and now teaches students how to research, in Yiddish, the music of the Holocaust.

I include these biographical notes to explain that as a would-be Yiddishist I was in *goles*. Once the Workers Circle began online teaching, I logged on once a week to a course but, as it met from 23:30–01:00, it was often quite exhausting. But there it was. Barry had passed away, Montreal friends were aging (and Cote-St-Luc shopping centre was no more) and I resigned myself to a bit of Yiddish with the music lecturer, until...

Lockdown.

Something quite remarkable happened during lockdown, which may not have happened with any other cultural or linguistic group. Yiddish happened. At first, it was slow. A smidgen of music, a concert maybe, then people appearing, groups opening up like blossoms. And then it was everywhere – reading and translating Russian Yiddish literature, Yiddish writings on race. Whole worlds of Yiddish in California, in Michigan, in Seattle, in Warsaw, in France, in Israel, and, of course, in New York.

And then it exploded. One moment I was told by YIVO (the Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, the main organisation for the preservation of all things Yiddish) that a course I was interested in was in-person only; the next minute, even their prestigious six-week summer programme was going to be held completely online. Every serious Yiddishist had done the *zumerprogram*, but how was I to afford it and six weeks in NYC, and how could I leave the dogs for so long? Because of the coronavirus, it became a reality. For six weeks, from 15:00 often until 22:30, I was online with people from all over the world, and mornings and all day Sunday, I was doing homework. A virtual reality opened up for me. And it continued,

with another three-day course, and, as I write this, KlezKanada, whose first conference I attended when I lived in Montreal, and where I am currently doing Yiddish language and music. And the reading circles and lessons and Facebook pages continue to proliferate. Soon, for instance, there will be a Yiddish festival in Argentina. I could attend this year.

I have looked, and see nothing like it with other languages. Yiddish is unique in that respect. Virtually all other languages are connected to a place, a nation, a land-mass. You can find online courses, a drop of Spanish, a French conversation session, but nothing like what is happening with Yiddish.

What is happening? People do not need a large online Spanish diaspora, because there are Spanish speakers everywhere, and there are, of course, Spain, Mexico, Cuba, and the whole of South America. Yiddish was once the language of Jews living in Eastern and middle Europe and even in Western Europe, but those Jews lived for the most part as unwelcome intruders, strangers, on the land of others. The Jews there mostly learned the autochthonous languages, but they also had their own language, Yiddish, which means ‘Jewish’, and they took it with them when forced to flee to new places or when they emigrated on their own initiative. The others, who remained, well, what the pogroms didn’t accomplish, Hitler, *y’makh shmo*, attempted, and almost completely murdered the remaining Yiddish speakers and their world.

The immigrants to safe places like the UK, Canada, the USA, discarded Yiddish for the most part possibly because they felt more comfortable in these other lands and had less of a need for difference, for continuity with their past, for a Jewish language. That is not to say that Yiddish didn’t thrive in some circles, and it continued to be spoken by Hassidim. But it was no longer the language of the majority of the world’s Jews, and with the decision in Israel to suppress Yiddish,

that might have been the end of it. Even languages spoken by the people of a country find it difficult to maintain the languages – look at Gaelic, Welsh, Celtic, Icelandic. How much the more so a language unrooted to a place.

Slowly, over the years, small miracles began to take place. Yiddish is being learned and taught and researched and sung and acted, all over the world. That YIVO summer programme had more attendees than it ever had before. Yiddish, that displaced language, became the paradigm for the diasporic Jewish world, a world, to borrow from Heschel, in which time is more important than space. Yiddish is the language of Jews-in-time and requires for its existence no conventional boundaries. We, *libhobers fun yidish*, lovers of Yiddish, are keeping it alive online, in reading circles, conversation groups, translation fellowships, and even in some families, where children are raised bilingually. The man who translated Harry Potter into Yiddish was raised speaking Yiddish – and Tamil (his father is Tamil, and now an Orthodox Jew) – but he is one of a growing number of native speakers of the language without a land. Many of these families are from the former Soviet Union, whose number also include some of the best Yiddish language musicians and teachers. And in Israel, the place of abode of both my grammar teacher and my literature teacher from YIVO (a married couple), Yiddish courses are very popular.

I am only beginning to think about this, but I wonder if this proliferation of Yiddish is a way to locate the dislocated. What we lost in space, we who need community and minyan, we gained in time. And quite literally in time. The courses and sessions I attended had participants from the West and East Coasts of the USA, from Canada, from Florida, from Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, from France, from Germany, from the UK, from Israel, from Eastern Europe. It was as inclusive a group as you could imagine. There were religious Jews of varying degrees; Bundists, socialists, activists; researchers into the Holocaust and into Russian and Polish Jewish history; gays, lesbians and trans Jews; musicians, singers, chazans, rabbis; and a sprinkling of

non-Jews – my Yiddish theatre instructor is an eminent Episcopalian non-Jew who speaks a gorgeous Yiddish and learned his craft from the late, great stars of Yiddish theatre.

The intensive courses are over for now, but much remains online, even if some people can congregate. I will have a reading group on a Sunday evening, a conversation group on a Tuesday evening, another reading group on a Thursday even-

ing, and who knows what else will present itself after the festivals. I am no longer dislocated. I meet with my former YIVO group, and with others with whom I intersect at different events and in different classrooms. I have found my place and it is *umitum*, everywhere, where Yiddish and Zoom meet.

Blaybn ale gezunt, sbtark, un sheferish – Please stay healthy, strong, and creative. ■

A Rosh HaShanah Rap

By Miriam David

Dislocation, separation,
lack of communication.
Isolation, alienation,
feelings of consternation.

Provocation, agitation,
causes vexation.
Words of accusation provoke
increasing exasperation.

Mobilisation and invasion,
occupation without justification.
Subjugation and segregation
lead to feelings of humiliation.

Aircraft sorties,
bombs of destruction,
Crumbling buildings, clouds of
smoke,
Annihilation.

Leaflet flurries
words of persuasion,
invented by people
full of lies and corruption.

Flight from fear
and persecution,
Security borders,
flimsy rafts in oceans.

Risky decisions,
Channel crossings,
Immigrant deaths,
Governments lacking compas-
sion.

Trust and cooperation,
make possible moderation.
Consensus and commiseration
will result in vindication.

Acceptance, security,
Settled accommodation,
Trust, community and friendship,
Words of recognition.

New lives, new jobs good health,
New language, education.
Inclusiveness, togetherness,
Harmony and connection.

When there is understanding,
compromise and compassion,
Optimisation and aspiration
helps you to reach your destina-
tion.

When there is consensus,
resolve and dedication,
A path will be formed to
lay solid foundations.

When there is realisation
and elevation,
Evolving solutions
Will create positive affirmation.

Creativity, growth and love,
wholeness, integration,
Happiness and awareness,
Inspiration, Spiritualisation. ■

Tangible Connections

By Melanie Kelly

One of the traditions of the New Year which I used to love now seems to have fallen by the wayside, especially in the digital age. I used to love sending and receiving Rosh Hashanah cards. My mum would buy them by the pack from a small Judaica shop on Cazenove Road in Stoke Newington, down the road from our primary school. We'd write and send them to friends and family, making sure we got the correct postal date for the ones going overseas, and look forward to receiving them and displaying them on the sideboard in the lounge. In later years when Jeremy and I sent and received our own, I would take the spent cards after Yom Kippur and cut them up and laminate them to make another display for the Sukkah. The rain usually ensured that despite the plastic coating they never lasted more than the length of the festival, but we still enjoyed them.

The tradition of sending New Year greetings seems to have started in Germany around the 14th century, when there is recorded evidence of greetings being exchanged by the Maharil (Rabbi Jacob ben Moses Moelin). By the 18th century the custom was widespread in the German-speaking Ashkenazi world, and during the 18th and 19th centuries the custom spread, firstly to Poland and then throughout Ashkenazi communities. As postal services began to develop, these greetings started to take on a more standard shape and paper weight. Jewish entrepreneurs began to print and market cards for the occasion, and as the Jewish world expanded the demand for cards to send to loved ones overseas became ever greater. Between 1880 and the end of the First World War the vast majority

of letters sent between Jews in Eastern Europe and America (the largest-growing diaspora) were New Year greeting cards. They were a vital way of families staying connected despite vast distances. As such they often reflected dislocations and the widening gulf between life experiences of families that were separated with little chance of connecting in person again. Of course at that time there was still hope of reconnection and families travelling to meet again, but this was finally shattered by the Shoah.

The National Library of Israel and Beit Hatfutsot (the Museum of the Jewish People) in Tel Aviv have a wonderful collection of these cards, and I thought on the theme of dislocation I'd share a couple of my favourites.

This first one depicts a young girl in fashionable turn-of-the-20th century clothing representing the New Year, standing on the shore of a new land and waving goodbye to an old traditionally dressed man, representing the old year. Although all the text is in Yiddish, it's believed to have been printed in the USA. The poem reads as follows:

Sink, old year! Be gone!
With your pain and sorrow
Sink, sink already with the depths of time!
A new year is coming
With new luck and joy!
From sorrow and misfortune
It shall free the world!



I wonder, is she really saying goodbye to the old year, or to her old life in the old country? How much are the references to 'pain and sorrow' about the 'Chelm' she is leaving? How much is the reference to the new year that 'shall free the world', about the new opportunities that await her in the New World that she stands on the shores of? How would her family remaining in Europe view this card if they were to receive it? Would they be excited for her opportunities or worried about the new temptations moving her away from familiar rituals and lifestyle?

This next card was also printed around the turn of the 20th century somewhere in Eastern Europe, probably Poland. It's printed in full colour (not visible in this image), so it would have been sold at a premium price.



It depicts a family gathered in traditional clothing lighting a Chanukah Menorah in a window. The side message reads 'Of Chanukah a candle to light', followed by a New Year greeting, 'Shana Tova Tikatevu'. No record remains of how or why this card was printed. The National Library suggests that it was printed by a non-Jewish printer who wanted to produce a suitable card and found a Jewish-looking illustration and a copy of the appropriate greeting and married the two together in this incongruous manner. The library has a copy of this card with a greeting written inside, so it was obviously sent. I love the incongruity of the image with the message. Was there enough cross-fertilisation between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds for printers to think this was a good idea? Were there Jewish printers creating Christmas cards? Was

Jewish practice at this time so varied that there were Jews who were not educated enough to understand the mistake, or did they just not care? Pondering these questions and the dislocation between the religious and cultural Jewish worlds is joyous.

As an Israel educator at UJIA, I find the final two cards also interesting. They are both held in the collection at Beit Hatfutsot. If you don't know this museum, it is part of the Tel Aviv University campus and (especially now they've almost completed their refurbishment) one of the best museums I know. When we can all start travelling again, I thoroughly recommend.

Both these cards were printed again at the beginning of the 20th century, before the First World War and in New York. Both appear to display Jews who are doing well in the new country, the 'Goldene Madina', otherwise known as the USA. However, both cards are sporting what we would now recognise as Israeli or Zionist flags. Despite finding security and a level of comfort in their new homes, they are still longing for the



dream of a Jewish homeland. There are other New Year's cards also from this period depicting Herzl with the Sultan of the Turks and others with Alfred Dreyfus. These cards seem to be as much about declaring dreams to be hoped for in the future as they are about good wishes for the New Year. They are quite political in nature. They beg the question of whether our ancestors ever felt truly at home as a people, and have we for the last 50 or so years come to expect a level of permanence in the UK not experienced in previous history. Whatever our connection to Judaism or our feelings about Israel, have we come to be complacent about the idea that Israel is always there if we need it; a backstop? Perhaps what has dislocated us so much about the situation in the Labour party up until recently is the realisation that all is not as we thought; we are not as embedded in society as we hoped. That we have lived through a rare period in Jewish history of being settled, and we should not underestimate this. ■

Dislocations Large and Small

By Ruth Hart

Dislocation has been the universal condition since before the world began. Consider the Kabbalists and the theory that God had to squeeze into a smaller space before space even existed, in order to accommodate the cosmos, and that the creation of light shattered and scattered it. Subsequently, according to the Torah, God divided the waters above the firmament from the waters below it while in geological time the earth itself moved, changed shape, and continents were shifted apart and collided with others.

This Pangeanic view continues with the creation of Adam and Eve. One human is carved out of the other, indicating a dislocation of bodily organs and the muscular-skeletal system, depending upon where you think the spare parts came from, and a dislocation of the mind. Adam recognises that 'this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh', but not that they are no longer of one mind. She is meant to be *ezer k'negdo*, a helper opposite or comparable with him. After the encounter with the snake, she is clearly the leader, but the denouement necessarily indicates putting a distance between themselves and God.

This becomes the story of people, and, *miklal ufrot* – of our people. We learn the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers, the Exodus and the allocation of territory within the resettled land: dislocation in order to find a homeland, to resolve conflicts within the family, to find food, to return to the homeland, to resolve conflicts between tribes. The literal dislocation of Jacob's sinew is caused not by fighting an invader or resisting a tyrant but by another conflict with God, which is repaired not by a return to Eden but by continuing along the road that he needs to take. To quote John Donne, this 'makes me end where I began'. Shanah Tovah. ■

Survival in Auschwitz: My Mother's Story

By Daniel Preter

There has always been this big mystery in our family. A mystery of survival. My mother survived Auschwitz as a 4-year-old, and that without her mother or father. We knew she was there, the tattoo of her prisoner number and the little snippets of family history my grandfather, her father, told gave us that much information. But he was like so many of the survivors: unwilling to share their full story, and keen to simply get on with the life they managed to miraculously preserve. My grandad passed away when I was a teenager, so at a time when I was too consumed with my own life and teenage issues. My mother's mother Rachel passed away in the Lodz ghetto when my mum was only two. And my mother couldn't remember anything, consciously. When asked what recollection she has of her time in the camp, she says it is its smells. Smells of dirt and disinfectant.

We are going through a phase of family tree research in our house these days. I learnt a lot more about my part of the family through a historian in Poland, who did research on behalf of my cousins in Australia. Liz signed up to ancestry.com, which opened archives and documents

about her family and revealed some very interesting facts. Beni had to do some work on the Holocaust for school recently, and so Liz had another look on the website. Whilst doing some random searches, she came across a book about survivors of the Holocaust and their stories. It is a collection of stories written down in Yiddish just after the war, in my birth town Munich of all places. A few years ago, the Australian Holocaust researcher Freda Hodge came across these stories and compiled them in a book called "Tragedy and Triumph: Early Testimonies of Jewish Survivors of World War II" (Monash University Publishing). In one chapter (Chapter 21: 'In Auschwitz with Two Small Children') a lady named Esther Weiss describes how she was sent from Lodz, Poland, to Auschwitz in 1944, the same year as my mother and her dad. She talks about the hardship, and the separation from her husband. She also describes a little 4-year-old girl called Mira Herszkowicz, and the girl's father Szoel. Mira Herszkowicz was my mother.

My mother was brought to Auschwitz with her father, but on arrival got separated from him. Esther Weiss had arrived with her own two children. She realised that this little girl had no chance of survival unless someone took her under their wing and protected her, if possible, from the dangers of this inhospitable place. And so she did. She took on my mother like a third child and managed to protect her, keeping her from being taken from their barrack and killed whilst she battled through illness and hair-raising situations with her own children. She managed to do so until liberation, after which their paths diverged. My mother went into a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw and was almost adopted by a Polish military official. This was until my grandfather, who was liberated in southern Bavaria (another story),

learnt that she was still alive and moved fast to reclaim her.

So here we are. My mother, and so I and my children, owe our lives to the selfless and courageous Esther Weiss. I spent the last weeks and months trying to find out what happened to Esther Weiss and her family after the war, so far unsuccessfully. In the story she said that they moved to Stuttgart, Germany, but it ends here. I feel indebted to her, and her descendants, and finding them would mean a lot. Just saying thank you would in no way do justice to this woman's bravery and kindness, but it feels an essential thing for me to do.

There are so many other questions. How did my grandad manage to keep himself and his daughter so long in Lodz, as the majority of Jews were deported to Auschwitz two years before? Why did he never mention Esther Weiss, who should be a household name in our family, knowing that she looked after his daughter? What other stories did he omit to tell? I am sure there are many more secrets hiding out there and we can only hope to uncover a few more of them. ■



Mira after the war at age 5 or 6, and with Daniel last month.

Gedaliah

By Mike Fenster

Jews and dislocation are a bit like bread and butter – it is built into our DNA. In our early myths, our patriarchs criss-cross the Middle East, constantly having to move due to famine, family disputes, or divine will. Only Isaac stays mainly in one place, but he can be excused as he spent a life in shock at his father's attempted proclivity. A generation of Israelites had to die in the desert, leaving their home in Egypt but unable to complete their journey.

Eventually our people settle down, but it's a troubled history. Following the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom and the 10 tribes being absorbed into the huge Assyrian empire, the future for Judah/Judea seems perilous. Looking back to 586 BCE, the destruction of the first Temple and the exile to Babylon seems the ultimate dislocation. So many facets of Jewish identity were lost – the Temple is razed to the ground along with all of those tangible symbols that linked the people back to the time in Sinai, such as the broken fragments of the first tablets which were supposed to have been in the vanished ark. The Davidic line seemed ended when Zedekiah was blinded, after seeing his sons murdered by the Babylonians, and later died in captivity. The Jerusalem elites were all killed or exiled.



In 1935, a clay seal impression bearing the inscription 'Gedalyahu, who is over the House' was found in excavations at Lachish, a city destroyed by the Babylonians during their campaign against Judah. The seal dates roughly to 600 BCE and was found in layers associated with the Babylonian destruction. Scholars believe the seal may refer to Gedaliah, who would have held a senior position in the royal court.

Yet arguably, two strategies to deal with this dislocation were advanced. On the one hand the Babylonian exiles seemed to be prepared to bide their time and pray for a return and restoration of things as they once were. An alternative strategy was being advanced by Gedaliah and his followers. Not every Judean was killed or exiled by the Babylonians and the survivors were congregating in and around Mizpah, a small town in the territory of Benjamin in the north of Judea. They saw the future as an accommodation with the Babylonians in a non-sovereign Jewish state. Even as Jerusalem was falling to the Babylonians, Gedaliah had been appointed as the new governor of a Jewish province.

Both the Gedaliah faction, and the exiles in Babylon, had to work out how the religion needed to adapt. We have Ezekiel's prophecies about a new Temple to be recreated in the future, and the later books of Ezra and Nehemiah allow us to understand their approach. No post-destruction texts survive from the Gedaliah faction which can help us to understand their ideas, although Jeremiah was in their camp. Would they have contemplated setting up an alternative shrine in the territory of Benjamin? We'll never know, as within a few months Gedaliah was assassinated by Ishmael ben Nataniah. We commemorate this assassination on the day after Rosh Hashanah, on the Fast of Gedaliah, the 3rd of Tishri. This is one of four fasts commemorating the events of 588–586 BCE. One reason for this fast is that this coda to the events of that year led to many of the remaining Judeans fleeing to oblivion in Egypt. But it's one of only two events in the Jewish calendar named after a person, and I wonder if the rabbis of the Mishnah who decided that the fast should remain in the calendar felt that Gedaliah was not just a righteous individual, but also a politically significant individual who, had he survived, might have taken the Jews into

a whole different future. Possibly the rabbis of Eretz Israel 600 years after Gedaliah's death sympathised with the leader from Mizpah who might have led the people in another direction. But it wasn't to be. There is evidence that a significant number of Jews remained in Eretz Israel throughout the exile, but after Gedaliah's death they are sidelined in our Jewish narrative.

As we approach the Fast of Gedaliah, I am conscious of the parallels between Gedaliah and Yitzhak Rabin. Ishmael ben Nataniah thought the Governor was collaborating with the Babylonians, and Yigal Amir thought the Prime Minister was collaborating with Israel's enemies. Both murders had tragic consequences.

There are always multiple responses possible to dislocation, both on the personal and on the political level. Change always follows, nothing reverts back to pre-dislocation times, but at the time no one can predict which of the competing responses to that dislocation will eventually succeed. For a short time it looked as if Gedaliah's approach might be the best response, and the rabbis may have sympathised with that idea. But a murder ended that option.

As we approach the Fast of Gedaliah, I am always conscious of the parallels between Gedaliah and Yitzhak Rabin. Ishmael ben Nataniah thought that the Governor was collaborating with the Babylonians, and Yigal Amir thought the Prime Minister was collaborating with Israel's enemies. Both murders had tragic consequences on the personal and political levels. The Fast of Gedaliah reminds us that tragic dislocatory events play out in ways which no one can predict. ■

Dislocation in Lincoln's Independent Minyan

By Steve Griffith

It is always good to start with a definition to ensure the reader knows what you are writing about. The trouble I found is that 'dislocation' has so many meanings depending on context and which dictionary is consulted. The simple answer therefore is to give my own definition. At least I will know what I am writing about.

I have based this definition on the experiences I have witnessed among the members of our tiny Independent Minyan here in Lincoln (LIM). Put simply, dislocation has occurred here because our members are where they do not want to be. But that is only half the picture. The stress and worry come from not knowing how long this will last and even less how to get back to a place of familiarity again.

We normally meet every month for Shabbat plus for all the major festivals. Suddenly, this is not only no longer possible, but it is no longer allowed. As the founder and leader of our little kehilla, I have kept in constant touch with each member and could judge their reactions. Two have been strictly shielding and have not left home since March; one has contracted the virus, but thankfully fully recovered; four have been clearly very frightened by the risk the virus poses and have needed some degree of third-party help with shopping and other needs beyond

the home; three have managed to keep going working from home; while the rest of us (all retirees) have plodded on regardless.

One unexpected challenge was to try and make sense of the changing rules and regulations that came weekly from the Cabinet Office. Why? Because for sure none of our members fully understood what they could or could not do, where they could or could not go and what they should or should not wear over their faces. So we became their source of knowledge. And we were constantly being asked when we could meet again for a Jewish service.

So, we decided to try and have everyone meet over social media in order at least to see each other and share our experiences. Such a simple thought soon proved to be impossible to achieve. LIM members must be among the most diverse users of social media. Each seemed able to use only one format. How to get about 15 people together using a mix of Zoom, Skype, Facetime and WhatsApp while two members do not even own a computer or have an email address!

As the peak of the pandemic passed and lockdown restrictions have eased, so we have tentatively ventured out to meet in each other's gardens. We cannot form any LIM-centred bubbles as everyone has

their own family bubble. The church hall where we normally meet cannot accommodate us because the room we use is allocated specifically for pre-school classes and therefore not available to any other outside group.

Like everyone, we had to cancel Pesach communally. With each successive month we have had to cancel the planned LIM Shabbat service. Now we approach Rosh Hashanah with no prospect of meeting as usual in one room and still no knowing when the dislocation will end and how we will return to our normal routine.

So we will do what we can. Because Erev Rosh Hashanah this year is on a Friday evening, we hope to meet as collectively as we can at least to hear the Shofar blown before Shabbat comes in. We cannot hold any services, but we can toddle down to the nearby lake for Tashlich. I think a loaf of bread each should make up for our inability to seek forgiveness in shul. ■

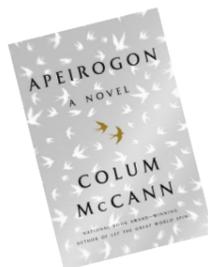
Steve and Micky Griffiths are longstanding members of Kol Nefesh, and founders of the Lincoln Independent Minyan. We normally see Steve and Micky on Yom Kippur (indeed, Steve is one of our Yom Kippur shilichei tsibbur, prayer leaders). We will miss them greatly this year!

The Kol Nefesh Yamim Nora'im Book Group

Join us on Zoom in the days leading up to Yom Kippur to discuss Colum McCann's novelised true story *Apeirogon*, about an Israeli Jew and a Palestinian working together for peace. Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan both lost their daughters to the conflict between their peoples, the first killed by an Israeli soldier, the second by a suicide bomber. Somehow they became fast friends and partners in the struggle to end the conflict.

The book is composed of a thousand mini-chapters, some only a sentence or two, so it's easy to read in short bursts.

Keep an eye out for the meeting date and time.



Going Back to My Roots?

By Shelley Marsh

My answer to the question 'Where are you from?' has changed over time.

When I lived in Israel, even if I answered 'Jerusalem' I would be asked, 'Yes, but where are you from?'

For me, and possibly for many people who have lived in more than one country, belonging to one location is a bit vague. I feel I have connections to locations but a sense of dislocation is also sometimes present.

Shoresh is the Hebrew word for root. It was one of the first words I learned in Hebrew because it was also the name of the moshav (cooperative settlement) where my uncle and his family lived. Shoresh was my home from home and, many years later, it remains my official place of residence in Israel, according to my Israeli identification papers.

Moshav Shoresh is located in the beautiful Judean Hills, 15 kilometres west of Jerusalem. I first visited the moshav on my first trip to Israel in 1976. A 10-year-old from Kenton in London, I was amazed by the freedom my cousins had, roaming around the moshav every evening, walking to places which were so unfamiliar to me: the chicken houses, the pine-coned woods, the Friday night 'DIY cinema' in the Beit Ha'Am (community hall). To my mind, my cousins, along with another five or so of their peer group, lived the kind of lives I read about in Enid Blyton stories. On the moshav everyone appeared to have a dog (all of whom ate stones... and seemed to thrive on them!) and we

had adventures which took us on hikes around the area, hikes which my parents permitted but would never have allowed my sister and I to have back at home.

As a child, I sat with my cousins on the roof of an abandoned Arab house in the valley. We ate fresh apricots and walnuts, talking about the similarities and differences of our lives and particularly between British and Israeli schools. My cousins roared with laughter at their realisation that we called our teachers by their surnames with a respectful 'Miss' or 'Sir'. From that day to this, one cousin calls me 'Mish Mish', his childhood pronunciation of 'Miss Marsh' – as well as the Hebrew word for apricot.

At that time and in subsequent visits, walking through the Judean Hills gave me a sense of independence and autonomy. Spending a gap year in Jerusalem, I felt that Israel was a place of promise, of hope – not least that one day there would be peace. In early adulthood, I lived in different parts of Israel, moving every year for 15 years. Nowhere really felt like 'home' and answering the question 'Where are you from?' became even more confusing. Returning to the UK, to visit family and friends, I would refer to 'going home', as returning to Israel (wherever I lived) was also home.

The location of home was not straightforward.

I have been blessed to remain in touch with fantastic friends, who live all over the world. Many of them, like me, have moved to countries and we have spoken, over many years, about the feelings of

being connected or not to the place we have found ourselves in.

Is that dislocation, a disconnection from our location?

In their song 'Dislocation', the Counting Crows sing:

Dislocation...
I am fading out in stereo
I don't remember me...

Perhaps the feeling of finding oneself in a place where one doesn't have roots is more to do with feeling comfortable in one's own skin, with good people surrounding us, rather than the actual place we settle in? Perhaps it is people and places which help us to form our identities and grow into who we have yet to become?

My hopes for peace in Israel haven't yet been realised, but Shoresh is the place where I have twice voted against the current Prime Minister, in the same Beit Ha'Am where I watched those Friday night films projected onto a large screen constructed of white bedsheets. Shoresh was and remains a place which has shaped my identity.

I visited Shoresh last year, as I do most times when I am in Israel, aware that even though I still have a connection to the place, I no longer belong there. The Arab houses have long since been demolished, the house I used to live in burned down in a fire in the mid 1990s, and the Friday nights in the Beit Ha'Am have been replaced by Netflix... but the Shoresh dogs still chomp on stones. ■



Honey for a Sweet New Year...

We hope you enjoy the honey being delivered with this edition of the magazine – a small gift from Kol Nefesh. Our thanks to anonymous sponsors for helping bring some sweetness into our homes.

Julie Parker, our supplier, has been keeping bees across North and Central London for 14 years. Her raw honey is hand-extracted, filtered and bottled. It carries the flavours of pollen and nectar from local flowers and trees. Nothing is added except the bees' hard work! Email julieparkerbees@gmail.com.



All Getting Along in Ethiopia

By Avi Bram

Dislocation strikes a chord for me this year, as Shahnaz and I have found ourselves 'out of place' repeatedly.

Ethiopia has been our home for the last two years, but in March the British Embassy in Ethiopia prepared to send most of its expat staff back to the UK out of concern that emergency medical care wouldn't be available if Ethiopian airspace closed. But with the global situation changing so fast, it wasn't clear who would be sent back, or when.

Eventually we got our marching orders, and we had about a week to pack and arrange our affairs (including organising care for our chickens) knowing we wouldn't be back for months. It felt very strange to walk out, lock the door and leave behind most of our things! Still, of course, we are very lucky – our displacement was very gentle compared to most.

Back in December (which feels like a very different time!) Shahnaz's parents came out to visit us and we travelled in the Tigray region in North-East Ethiopia. By now, I'm sure most of you have heard me or my mum talk at some point about the Jews of Ethiopia, but the country is also home to ancient holy sites of a number of other religions.

Negash, a small village today, was the site where one particularly renowned group sought refuge in the 7th century CE: the earliest group of Muslims who fled persecution in Mecca, Arabia, because of their Muslim faith. The Prophet Muhammad wrote to the Christian King of Ethiopia, whose reputation as a merciful and just

ruler had spread, to seek refuge for his companions. King Armah granted his protection and allowed the Muslims to settle and worship freely – even refusing to send them back when the Meccan leaders demanded their return. While some did later return to Arabia (including Uthman, who became the third Caliph) others remained in Ethiopia, married and had children, making their place of refuge their home. Their graves are still there today.

We also visited the famous rock-hewn Ethiopian Orthodox churches which are literally carved out of a cliff-edge and date from around the same time. These structures have been in continuous use since then. Even more incredible, though far lesser known, was the Almaqah Temple. This Sabaeen monument, dating from 800 BCE, was discovered by chance in 2007 by a farmer in his field. The temple contains statues and figures, and most impressively, a carved altar that is extremely well-preserved. Thought to have been used for religious sacrifices, the altar even has a channel carved into it to allow the blood from sacrifices to drain away.

Little is known about the Sabaeans. The kingdom of Saba stretched across modern-day Yemen, Eritrea and Ethiopia for more than a millennium, and is referred to as Sheba in the Bible. Although historians argue about how many kingdoms there were, and when and where, there was clearly a huge amount of movement and exchange across the Red Sea, and the culture of the Sabaeans was a major in-

fluence on Ethiopian and Arabian peoples that came after.

So – were they followers of the Noahide laws, like their Muslim and Christian successors? My internet research is inconclusive. On the one hand, their worship seems similar to that of the ancient Israelites, and they had laws against incest and sexual misconduct. On the other hand, they seem to have worshipped a number of different gods, and may have also had idols. Nonetheless, we can see the Biblical story of the Queen of Sheba visiting Jerusalem to share wisdom with King Solomon as an assertion of shared values between the two people. The Ethiopian tradition goes even further, asserting that King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba had a son together who went on to become King Menelik I, the famous ruler of Abyssinia.

In any case, the intention behind the creation of the Noahide laws is important, not just the letter of the law. It seems to me that in formulating the Noahide laws, the early rabbis were trying to create a basis for different peoples and faiths to get along and offer mutual support in times of difficulty – a universal principle that we see mirrored at different times in history, whether it is King Armah giving refuge to displaced Muslims, or later attempts to give all citizens the equal protection of the law in courts of justice. The dialogue between different cultures and religions in Ethiopia which – at times – enabled peaceful coexistence, mirrors the process and aims of the Noahide laws. ■



Left and above: The altar at the Almaqah Temple in Tigray, Ethiopia.

Right: Tigray's rock-carved churches.



Are You Feeling Dislocated?

By Danny Kalman

What a crazy, turbulent world we are currently experiencing. As we entered this decade who would have predicted that words like 'social distancing', 'lockdown', 'in your bubble' and 'being furloughed' would be commonplace. The fact that we must wear masks in shops and public transport would have been unthinkable four months ago.

No surprise, then, that many of us are feeling dislocated from our usual life-styles and have had to adjust accordingly to the 'new norm'. Our customs and habits have been turned upside down as we no longer shake hands or give friends a hug. Now we wave awkwardly, smile and maybe touch elbows. Going to the theatre, concerts and

stadiums are a distant memory and travels plans in the main cancelled.

There is little wonder that we feel 'dislocated'.

During the last few months many of us have taken up new activities or hobbies, as suddenly we have more time on our hands. The fact we have been in lock-down mode has given me the opportunity to try several new things, one being more walking and listening to podcasts. One of my favourites is 'How to Fail' by author and journalist Elizabeth Day. I recommend it as it wonderfully highlights the fact that the best way to learn is by making mistakes. The podcast 'celebrates' the top three mistakes of a diverse range of guests as they share their stories.

One unmissable guest is the philosopher Alain De Botton (founder of the School of Life). The interview took place during the height of the lockdown and, unlike other guests who select three failures, in a special edition he challenges our concerns and beliefs about the impact of the virus. One particular point that struck a chord with me was about being connected/disconnected during lockdown. He articulates how anxious and vulnerable we are all feeling during these uncertain times.

De Botton challenges the conception that that those living with their families during lockdown are therefore connected, and those living by themselves would be disconnected. He asks, does that necessarily follow? He

makes the point that even if you are with others you can still feel disconnected if you do not feel comfortable sharing your innermost thoughts. Conversely, those living alone may feel a sense of connection if they are content in their own space and company. Their feeling of connection may also be satisfied by reaching out to others in a similar situation through technology.

During these turbulent times, reaching out to family and friends you have not spoken to or seen for whatever reason is so important for both you and them. If there is only one good thing that results from this pandemic, it should be that we renew friendships and be nicer to each other. ■

Sparks-Designs By Einav Diamond Limor



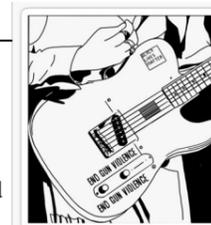
The idea originated with Tik Tok. Basically, I was really bored, and I saw someone turning TV show posters into drawings, on an iPad. I liked the idea so I figured out how to do it.

At first I focused on my favourite photos of celebrities, but now I've started to do other subjects like movie characters, singers and Spotify playlist designs.

I already knew about Red Bubble as a place to get stickers printed. I also wanted to get my designs on stickers, and I couldn't find any similar designs to mine, so I decided to upload mine to Red Bubble. At the moment I've got several different designs. (So far I have made a staggering three sales!)

You can find my designs on www.redbubble.com/people/Sparks-Designs/shop?asc=u. By the time you read this I may also have an Etsy account.

If you have any photos or characters that you'd like me to do, please email me: designsbysparks@gmail.com.



Dislocation and Finding Home

By Adam Hayek

Adam Hayek has been an occasional visitor to Kol Nefesh for some time, and is a regular participant in our Covid-era pre-Shabbat Friday evening Zoom programmes. We wish him well as he approaches the end of his conversion process.

Dislocation has been a common theme in my life. My origins spring from a country that has been ravaged by many wars. In my lifetime alone there have been two major ones, including the 1991 Gulf War which I experienced as a child. I will never forget the sounds of sirens and constant bombing that occurred, particularly on the first night. Fortunately for me I did not experience the 2003 Gulf War as I had eventually settled in the UK. The country I refer to of course is modern-day Iraq, or Babylon as it was known in 620–539 BCE.

Despite their dislocations, Jews reasserted their dedication to Jerusalem by contributing annually to the Temple. The ritual carried deep significance as a bonding device.

The Jewish people experienced the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century BCE, and it was a serious dislocation from the homeland. One could argue the historicity of the 'Return' from that displacement, but the migration was a fact, not to be altered. Jews dwelled in Egypt in the 6th century, as papyri from a Jewish military colony at Elephantine reveal. An archive of documents from Babylon provides evidence of Jews in a variety of trades and professions there even after their supposed restoration to Judah.

This event of dislocation was not the only major one of course. In 70 CE, the Romans destroyed the second Temple which was then a thumping blow and in turn created a long period of anguish. It is thought that this time round, a mass migration of Jews began into the Mediterranean which in turn developed the

consciousness of the Jewish diaspora for centuries to follow.

Though I cannot imagine what the Jews went through in those periods, one thing I can relate to is being forced to move from one country to another. Having to adjust to new communities, friends and cultures, only to be moved again and repeating the whole process. My experience was different in the sense that we moved due to my father's profession but even so, I can say that it was somewhat disruptive. On the plus side, it did strengthen me as a person and provided me with the ability to adapt to changing situations at a very young age, which I am sure has stood me in good stead in my adult years. Despite the prolonged persecution of Jews, perhaps it made them stronger to be where they are today. A

relatively successful peoples with close-knit communities and a longing to help one another.

My major and final dislocation occurred in 1994, when my father decided to leave the Iraqi regime and, with the help of the British,

we settled in the UK. For the first time, I felt I could call somewhere home. Again, there were difficulties in adapting to a new country, but I tried to assimilate to a new alien culture as best as I could. In ancient times, Jews everywhere faced a choice of either maintaining adherence to a segregated existence or assimilating to new environments. For those who inhabited a world of Greek culture and Roman power, the fact of dispersal had long been an integral part of their existence and a central element of their identity.

Despite their dislocations, Jews reasserted their dedication to Jerusalem each year by contributing annually to the Temple. The ritual carried deep significance as a bonding device.

The synagogue also supplied a vehicle for a wide range of activities that promoted

the shared interests of Jews which included study, discussion of the scriptures, traditions, law and prayers. These traditions are continuous to this day, as is Israel being a focal point which creates a bonding sense of belonging wherever one is in the world.

I write this as my interest in Judaism began many years ago, but my real experience of the Jewish community began when I befriended a Jewish man in 2013. Since meeting him, I have cultivated many close relationships, and ultimately ended up marrying my wife Danielle, an Israeli Jew. All in all, I felt that the community was the most welcoming out of any that I have encountered in my life. I have lived in several countries and hence have always experienced some social difficulty. I am very happy to have met so many from the community who made me feel that I am part of something strong. Since my marriage, it also felt that it made further sense to convert so that if I am blessed with children, it would be easier for them to be part of a Jewish community and learn how best to live a Jewish life. They will be Jewish after all.

I grew up as a Catholic Christian and although my family were somewhat religious, I never quite connected with the religion itself. I felt fearful and judged when experiencing the faith itself. I do not feel this with Judaism, quite the contrary. Judaism provides me with learning on how best to live my life while on this earth.

Masorti Judaism was introduced to me three years ago by another friend. It seems like a natural route to conversion as I also agree with the egalitarian principles.

I have many more thoughts on my reasons for converting but I can conclude that collectively, Jews have positively influenced me more than any other and no matter where they are, it seems as though the strength of the community will always remain. ■

Dislocation

By Yehoshua Frankel

Yehoshua Frankel is a regular participant in our Wednesday Torah Chat sessions on Zoom. We're delighted to have him as a friend of Kol Nefesh, and all of us in Torah Chat welcome his presence and his insights.

My name is Yehoshua Frankel and I am from the United States. I live in New Jersey. Thus the walk to Kol Nefesh on Shabbos is particularly difficult. I have had the privilege of studying Torah for the past several months with the exemplary community of Kol Nefesh on Wednesday evenings, online of course.

The subject of dislocation is directly related to my experience with Kol Nefesh. I am disabled and I walk with a cane. I have something called venous stasis from birth, which means I have a vein insufficiency. It has affected my walking in the last several years. I am sixty-two years old. In addition, I have medical concerns relating to my neurologist that are waiting to be dealt with. I have had trouble accessing Torah study for medical reasons in my local community even before the Covid-19 crisis began, and thus I went online seeking opportunities for Torah study. When the pandemic caused people in both Great Britain and the United States to stay at home and have less social interaction, Kol Nefesh moved the weekly study session that I understand has been going on for 15-plus years online, and thus I was able to join the study group.

This is the first time in my 62 years that I have had any communication with anyone in Great Britain. It has been an eye-opening and very positive experience for me. I believe it is not primarily a technology story and instead is a human compassion story. It was Kol Nefesh and their willingness to allow me to study with the group that has made a major change for me. In fact, they have welcomed both myself and my wife and a friend of mine named Mitch and his wife as full study partners. He too is from

New Jersey and we both reside in the same community. Due to the true compassion of the Kol Nefesh community what started out as dislocation has resulted in meeting new friends across national borders.

I believe that G-d brought the connection of Kol Nefesh to me. I am very thankful for this. Maybe Hashem saw my dislocation and knew that the people of Kol Nefesh had the compassion that was needed to reach out to others in the midst of their own dislocation due to Covid-19. My esteemed study partners know that I am always focused on *Geula* – Redemption – and I would like to make a point regarding *Geula*. It is my view that this type of connection is exactly the kind of goodness that is needed for the redemption of the entire world to take place. *Geula Sheleima*, the complete redemption of all of mankind and a world of goodness for all of mankind, will take place as a mandate for the world, and it is acts of true compassion and unity across national, state, local and other boundaries that will be central as a fundamental basis for this transformation. With true compassion at the centre of human life, dislocation, although extremely difficult and challenging, can have redemptive aspects that are waiting to be discovered.

My Hebrew is so-so and I ask my more knowledgeable study partners from Kol Nefesh Hebrew questions all the time. They are always willing to help me with my understanding of the meaning of Hebrew words and they are never annoyed at my many questions. It is no secret that I have great admiration for the Kol Nefesh community and I thank them for the opportunity to study Torah across national boundaries. In fact, I consider them to be friends.

The seven Noahide laws have an aspect that in my view demonstrates the opposite of what I have referred to as true

compassion. One of the laws is generally stated, "Do not eat the limb of a living animal", but this is not the law. The law is to not eat blood, as stated very clearly in the Torah in the portion of Noach. We the Jewish people are misstating this law and, in my view, extending misplaced compassion, in contrast to true compassion, to the non-Jewish world that I believe tends to conceal the truth about the issue. Jews salt and soak all meat products so as to remove all blood possible. Non-Jews don't do this. This is not a criticism of those who eat meat that has not been soaked and salted, but rather a recognition of the lost opportunity for clarity of what I believe is misplaced compassion. The Torah has several examples of true compassion which is exemplary and is embodied in the 13 Attributes of Mercy of Hashem. In addition we are told of examples of misplaced compassion which is not helpful at all. It is such an honour to study with the exemplary Kol Nefesh community which so demonstrates true compassion and so many other notable and always positive qualities.

With true compassion at the centre of human life, dislocation, although extremely difficult and challenging, can have redemptive aspects that are waiting to be discovered.

The Ten Days of Teshuvah are a big opportunity for me. We ask Hashem for *Rachamim*, compassion (as you can see I'm working on my Hebrew), with the prayer for Hashem's 13 Attributes of Mercy. This prayer is repeated many times on Yom Kipper as a central part of the liturgy. I cannot imagine a better base for asking Hashem for true compassion than to live that way in relation to your fellow human beings. L'Shanah Tova to the entire community. In fact L'Shanah Geula, please G-d inscribe the Kol Nefesh community for a year of Geula. ■



THE KOL NEFESH COMMUNITY mourns the loss of one of our members, Paul Kinchuk, to Covid-19. We send strength and comfort to Anna, Bethany, and Emily, who suffered the devastating loss of a much-loved husband and father a week after the tragic deaths of Paul's parents, Geraldine and Stuart Kinchuk, also from Covid-19.

תהיינה נשמותיהם צרורות בצרור החיים
May Their Souls Be Bound Up in the Bond of Life



Paul was born the younger of two sons to Stuart and Geraldine Kinchuk, on 10 January 1971, in Wembley. Tragically, both Stuart and Geraldine were taken from us just a week before Paul.

Paul was always worried that his destiny was to become an accountant. His whole family were or are accountants or bookkeepers. He was adamant that this was not his path and in some ways was very lucky that he had one work passion, and that was computing. He became a successful computer programmer.

He was not interested in the politics of business and found contracting suited him. He worked many years for our wonderful NHS. It was not easy to contract as every six months to a year he would have to start the interview process again, learn a new job and meet new people. He was still in touch with many people he met along the way and I have received some lovely comments from his colleagues. I received a wonderful message from his last manager which summed up



Paul's working life for me: "I had a great affinity to Paul; he was well-liked and very good at his job."

Paul had a huge love for Sci Fi and superheroes. His favourites were Dr Who and Star Trek and Marvel. He would watch old episodes from years ago time and time again. Paul loved cars – especially convertibles. He always wanted to have the roof down, even in winter when it was bitterly cold.

Some of Paul's many attributes described by friends include 'calm presence', 'funny', 'loyal', 'best friend anyone could have', 'his one-liners kept people laughing for hours'. He has passed these attributes on to our lovely daughters, Bethany and Emily.

Paul Robert Kinchuk, z"l
 פנחס אליעזר בן שמואל מרדכי וגיטל ז"ל
 10 January 1971 – 16 April 2020

Stuart Michael Kinchuk, z"l
 שמואל מרדכי בן צבי ז"ל

Geraldine Kinchuk, z"l
 גיטל בת אברהם ז"ל

יהיה זכרם ברוך

Whilst the girls were growing up we all begged him to get a dog. He really was not an animal person and I believe it must have been impossible for him to think of living with a dog, let alone loving one. In the end we wore him down and ended up with a dog and two rats.

He grew to love them all. Although he would never admit it out loud, he loved Milo (the dog) and he became his only ally in the house, as he was the other male!

Anna Kinchuk

Community News

Mazal Tov...

... To **Rosalind & Paul Collin** on the birth of their first grandchild, Rafael Joseph Collin, son to Jason and Katie.



Rafael Joseph

... To **Keren Bowman & Simon Peterman** on their recent marriage. Mazal tov as well to proud parents **Zvia & Andrew Bowman.**



Keren & Simon

... To **Holly Blue Hawkins** on graduating from and joining the faculty of the Gamliel Institute.

... To **Jonathan Burns and Ezra Sharpe** on outstanding A-level results in this very difficult year. We wish them both luck as they head off to uni.

... And to all the young people who finished GCSEs last year, as they begin A-levels, college, or apprenticeships.

Welcome to New Members

- Keren Bowman & Simon Peterman**
- Siobhan Allen**
- Maya Brooks**
- Patsy Aronson**

And sorry to see you go...

Goodbye to members who are leaving us.

You're always welcome within our doors.

Paul & Jo Amit and Family

Handmade Facemasks by Rochelle Bloom

I can't promise you a mask that makes you as inventive as Jim Carrey or as beautiful as Cameron Diaz ... but my machine-washable, reversible, plain or patterned handmade masks will get you into trains, buses, boats and planes, not to mention shops, offices and banks.

And help stop you sharing your germs!

The two examples at the top are my original model, which expands. The third model down ties on the top of the head – good for those who find elastic behind the ears irritating. The model at the bottom is contoured for a better fit.

Like the NHS itself, they are free at the point of delivery (though collection is preferred). So hurry now while my sewing machine is still humming and text me on 07429 074 324.

If you order, a donation to Kol Nefesh would be much appreciated.



Hands across the Lands




THIS SUMMER, with Israel tours and other summer programmes cancelled due to the pandemic, the UJIA offered financial support for community projects that would connect young people to Israel. Our project, Hands Across the Lands, aimed to link Kol Nefesh children and teens with similar-aged children from Mayanot Synagogue in Jerusalem (Rabbi Joel's community in Israel), while im-

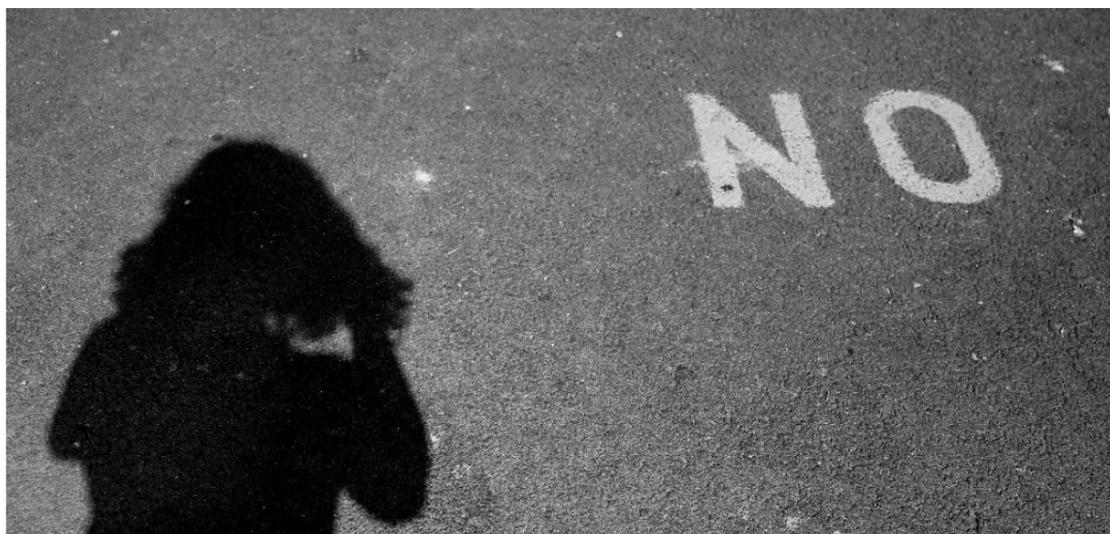
parting photography and IT skills and developing their understanding of how to use visual art to express their experiences and feelings. The project, led by professional photographer (and KN member) Marc Morris, attracted over 20 participants from the larger KN community and Mayanot.

Marc taught the children how to use mobile phones or cameras to take photos which reflected their experiences and feelings during the lockdown. He then guided them in creating digital collages of their photos that could be turned into postcards and posted (with a personal message) to their counterparts across the sea.

On these pages you can see some of the impressive photos and collages produced by our young people.

Huge thanks go to Marc for running the programme, to the parents who helped make it happen, and to Jonathan Burns, who helped document the project on film. Thank you to Miriam Burns and Leah Greenfield for sharing their personal reflections on the experience. And of course, we're very grateful to the UJIA for the generous funding that made this project possible.

The film made by Marc and Jonathan documenting the project will be shared with the community during our Zoom event preceding Erev Rosh HaShanah, and will then be available for members to view at leisure. Watch for further details. ■



KOL NEFESH MASORTI SYNAGOGUE

דל נפש מסורתי

In Their Own Words ...

I loved doing Hands Across the Lands with Miriam and Marc. It was really fun using Marc's camera to take pictures of flowers in his garden. It's inspired me to take up photography again after a little break. It was a really good experience and I learnt lots of new skills, for example how to take photos using a different angle to give the photos a new perspective.

I loved learning from Marc and it's a memory I'll keep for a very long time.

Leah Greenfield (aged 11)



In Their Own Words ...

I really enjoyed being part of the Hands Across the Lands project with Marc, Jono and Leah. It was so fun learning how to use a camera professionally, and to understand what Marc does for a living. I learnt some new skills, and had so much fun while doing it! I hope to carry on with photography and maybe develop a better appreciation towards it. It was a great opportunity, and I am very pleased with the final results.

Miriam Burns (aged 11)



My Friend, Josephine Zaras

By Cheryl Sklan

Finding a new friend isn't easy. I'm not everyone's cup of tea. I have strong opinions, values, and politics, and I'm a feminist. But when I find someone I hold on tight to them, because they will change my life.

Josephine was just that person. I've only known her for about five years. She was 93 when we first met, and the chemistry between us was right. She was a feminist too, and in fact she introduced herself to me as a feminist and an activist. As we became friends, I worried that she would die before I got to know her, but we had five years of friendship that I will value for the rest of my life.



She was a tiny woman, very beautiful, who enjoyed her clothes, jewellery and rings. She had a wonderful smile, and a cheekiness that endeared her to everyone she met. She made me feel loved, and someone who mattered to her.

She helped with the Kol Nefesh refugee group, and would arrive every week, driven by her chauffeur, Matt, a lovely Irishman. When she arrived every week, she was greeted by the women as if she was the Queen. She loved it, and she would dance and sing to them, crack jokes, and admire everyone's clothes, colours and hair.

She was very challenging and would always try to get us to go on demonstrations, write letters to MPs. She felt there was a solution to every problem. She hated the Tories and their lack of empathy. She'd always been an activist. She was at Greenham Common, and she had driven with her daughter Sarah across Europe to deliver goods to the people of Sarajevo. We had many lunches together where we would talk about feminism, and how the world would be a better place if everyone was a feminist.

Josephine was a non-practicing Jew who had experienced tremendous poverty as a child, and her joie de vivre was extraordinary. She died at the age of 97. Shortly before her death, she and her family felt that she should go into a home. Until then she had lived independently.

This was a magnificent woman who has left an imprint on my life, and has inspired me to believe that old age does not mean the end of your life. I will miss her. ■

Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue Ten Days of Learning & Reflection 5781

THE PERIOD OF THE HIGH HOLY DAYS is our culturally mandated time for reflecting on our lives. It provides an opportunity for turning over our core values and assumptions and pondering which areas of our lives we need to develop and work on.

For the last 20 years Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue has offered a unique ten-day spiritual retreat during the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. As a community we take a pertinent theme and explore it in depth from a variety of perspectives. Through this process we begin to allow ourselves to stop, think and re-order our priorities – to reconnect to our deepest take on reality. We aim to arrive at Yom Kippur having done the inner work necessary to put our utmost into that great day of reckoning.

In Hebrew mythology Rosh Hashanah marks the anniversary of the creation of the world, or more specifically the creation of humanity. Some of the key liturgy of the High Holy Days reflects the universality of that underlying narrative – “Everyone in the world will pass before You...” The imagery of this prayer addresses us as humans, not as Jews.

As the world passes through the ongoing crisis of Covid-19 we are more than ever aware of the both the fact of, and the dangers inherent in, the interconnectedness of our species. On the one hand we feel a sense of common fate and that what each of us does affects everyone else; on the other hand, we are observing a thickening of borders, boundaries, and separate national and ethnic identities. Our species is aware, perhaps as never before, that it is engaged in a confrontation with a common enemy; and we confront it by locking our borders and even our front doors! In significant ways we are both more connected and more disconnected than at any other time in living memory.

All this leads to a heady sense of disorientation that somehow does not feel so unfamiliar to Jews: to what extent do we stand shoulder to shoulder with humankind and to what extent do we stand with and for our family and our tribal covenantal commitments?

This year’s ten-day programme will examine how Judaism has understood the common-core obligations that are shared by and bind all humanity. These shared laws are normally referred to as the Noahide Laws, or the ‘Commandments of the Children of Noah’. What are these laws, how did they evolve over time, and what do they say about the how the rabbis understood the differences and the similarities between Jews and non-Jews?

Please join us for all or some of the sessions this year! All sessions are stand-alone and require no background knowledge. We hope to see you there! ■

The Ten Day Programme

All weekday sessions will be on the usual KNM Zoom link, available from the home page of our website. Some of Rabbi Joel’s material usually delivered as divrei Torah will be recorded. A broad introduction to the theme is already available, and can be found on the High Holy Days page of the website, www.kolnefesh.org.uk/high-holy-days-2020.

Here’s an outline of the Zoom events being planned, with one session for each of the Noahide Laws. Dates and times still tbc.

18th September ■ Pre-Rosh Hashanah Zoom: Introduction to the theme

Weekday Sessions:

The Seven Noahide Laws

■ Prohibition of ...

Idolatry | Blasphemy | Murder |
Sexual immorality | Stealing | Eating flesh
torn from a living animal

■ Obligation to establish courts of justice

27th September ■ Pre-Yom Kippur Zoom: Conclusion

Weekday sessions will be at 8.15–10pm, preceded by Selichot and shofar-blowing. The session on the 24th will be held at 3–4.30pm so as not to clash with a Masorti event.

Confirmed speakers as of this writing include our members Greg Ostroff and Joel Fenster, both lawyers, who will discuss the injunction to establish courts of justice.

Look out for more details in upcoming bulletins and emails, including the full programme for the pre-RH and pre-YK Zoom events, a Zoom Yizkor observance, the Yamim Nora'im book group, and the Kol Nidrei Appeal.



CST wishes
our community
a peaceful,
healthy & safe
New Year

It is CST’s mission to protect our Jewish communities up and down the country. We are committed to you, and ensuring your security, so that Jewish life can continue to exist and thrive in the UK.

The past year has been filled with challenges, both individual and collective. The pandemic has touched all of our lives, some in deeply tragic ways. The ability to physically meet with friends, family and in community – the networks that can make the most difficult and uncertain of times more bearable – has been removed. Where there is crisis, anger and blame follow, often directed at Jewish people. Now that we can gather together once again, CST is here to make sure it happens safe from prejudice and physical harm.

We wish that the security we provide were not necessary, but sadly terrorism, although rare, is a reality that can happen anywhere. Last Yom Kippur, the synagogue in Halle, Germany, was attacked by

a neo-Nazi. Using a homemade gun, he tried and failed to enter the synagogue, but did kill a passer-by and a customer at a nearby kebab shop. It was the cooperation of the congregants and shul staff, simply properly closing the door behind them, that saved the lives of those inside the service.

CST is here to protect you and facilitate the flourishing of Jewish life. This works best when you work with us. Please be mindful of basic security procedures and of our many dedicated volunteers who are devoting their time and efforts to ensure our safety, allowing us to spend the High Holy Days in peace. We wish you a safe, happy New Year, and a meaningful fast.

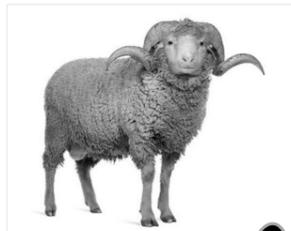
Please consider volunteering for CST or donating to us. We are a charity and we cannot do our work without your help. In an emergency, call the Police and then call our 24-hour National Emergency Number 0800 032 3263.

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Community Security Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1042391) and Scotland (SC043612)


PROTECTING OUR
JEWISH COMMUNITY



Blow Your Own Shofar!!

Since the start of Ellul, the Kol Nefesh community has been coming together on Zoom every day for 10–15 minutes. The centrepiece of this event is hearing the blasts of the shofar from a member of the community, together with a short piece of music from the Yamim Nora'im and a 'Thought for the Day'.

First, Rabbi Joel taught us how to make our own shofarot! Raw rams' horns can be found online, or obtained from an abattoir. Or if you're in sheep country you can find them during rambles in the fields.



Here are a few photos from our Ellul events so far.



Best wishes to the community for a happy, healthy, safe and peaceful New Year.

Rochelle & Ian

Georgia, Richard, Ruth and Hannah wish everyone a happy New Year and well over the fast



Masorti Judaism

Supporting our Young People and Communities Through Crisis

5780 WAS NOT QUITE what we had expected at Masorti. We are lucky to have a dedicated community and leaders who have risen to the challenge to keep people connected to each other, their community and their Judaism throughout this isolating time. Our rabbinic team and professional staff conducted online services via Zoom, taught classes, held story time sessions for children and were also available for regular drop-in 'Coffee and Chat' sessions online.

Rabbi Natasha Mann, a new rabbi at New London Synagogue and Hatch End Masorti (Mosaic Masorti), said: "I'm generally talking to far more people. I'm really fortunate that I have a support system from Masorti. My mentors are supporting me as an individual, as well as helping me process how to be a spiritual leader in this difficult time."

Noam, our youth movement, has led everything from cooking courses to a talent show online. Kelim, the programme that sends young adults to the Conservative Yeshiva to study, couldn't go ahead. Instead, Noam Mazkirut designed a virtual U-Kelim programme, bringing together leaders and learners over five days. Ayala, a participant, said: "I really missed being part of a community. It was sessions from Noam, both leadership and learning sessions, that kept me sane and got me through."

Noam made sure young people didn't miss out on important human connection after many months apart. They ran two weeks of socially distanced face-to-face camp, and an additional Kaytana day camp for their youngest members. They launched a free-of-charge day camp in partnership with Alma Primary, with priority places given to children of key workers and vulnerable children.

One parent said: "You were determined to provide whatever was possible and we were so impressed with your communication, planning and creativity in pulling 'camp' off. While we are sure this was not the summer you anticipated you were able to give our girls the so-

needed sense of community and learning that they love. Noam has again been a highlight of their year and provided such a lift after such a difficult few months."

Here are some more of our achievements this year:

- Community life under lockdown**
 Masorti communities ran 600 online events with 16,000 attendees over three months.
- Young people**
 Noam was one of the only youth movements to run face-to-face summer camps. We welcomed 200 participants plus 50 youth volunteers across four sites.
- Jewish learning and guidance**
 Our rabbis produced emergency guidance on saying Kaddish, observing Pesach, and Zoom minyanim under lockdown. We hosted 130 participants at Masorti's Weathering the Storm seminar and over 200 people took part in a study session about Coronavirus and the High Holydays.
- Fundraising**
 Masorti Judaism was awarded £50,000 by the National Lottery Community Fund and £23,000 by the London Community Response Fund to support our work under lockdown. Noam members and families raised another £25,000 to support our vital youth programming.
- Pride Shabbat**
 Noam and Masorti Judaism celebrated Pride Month by launching the first Pride-Day Shabbat and delivering 100 hand-made Pride kits to community members.

We are proud of the way that our communities have responded to the crisis creatively to nurture and support each other. We wish everyone a Shana Tova.

Matt Plen, Chief Executive, Masorti Judaism

Coming Up from Masorti Judaism

The Al Chet Challenge
 12pm daily from 1st September

Join us at 12pm daily on our Facebook and Instagram pages to reflect on the different Al Chet sins as we count down to Yom Kippur. No registration required, but make sure you are following our Instagram or Facebook pages to take part.

Digital Selichot Service: An evening of meditation, song and teaching
 September 12th, 9pm

A cross-communal evening of music, learning and reflection to prepare for the Days of Awe. Registration is required. Sign up on <https://masorti.beaconforms.com/form/c3487f41>

What God wants of us: Feed the hungry; change your ways; learn forgiveness from a whale

September 24th, 8.30pm
 An in-depth exploration of the impact of the prophetic readings on Yom Kippur, with Rabbi Levi Lauer on the Isaiah Haftarah, Eleanor O'Hanlon on Jonah and Suzanne Kapelus on Nineveh. Registration is required. Sign up on <https://masorti.beaconforms.com/form/3a4770c1>.

From the Convenors



Dear Friends,

It's been half a year since we wrote, in the last issue of this magazine, "We write this entering our second week of what looks to be our 'new normal'". That was shortly before Pesach. Since then, things have changed both much, and little. 'Little' in the sense that we're still running most of our activities on Zoom; we've only just begun to reintroduce in-person Shabbat services for limited numbers; and SARS-CoV-2 still poses a real threat to many of our members. 'Much' in the sense that half a year on, we mainly know what we're doing! We've got the intricacies of Zoom pretty well covered, we're running a range of successful meetings and events (both regulars and one-offs), and we're enlisting the skills, talent, and inventiveness of our members to produce a meaningful and inspiring Yamim Nora'im. At the start of the pandemic we were focused mainly on supporting everyone in the community through a highly stressful and frightening time; now we gather on Zoom to learn, explore, daven, chat and laugh.

All this, of course, is thanks to the hard work, dedication, and mind-blowing creativity of so many members. We won't try and name them all, as there are indeed many, and we know we're almost sure to miss some. But we want to single out a few groups of individuals. First, the stalwarts who have been running weekly events on Zoom, keeping the pulse of the community and initiating new programmes and sessions (Cheryl's Desert Island Discs on Tuesdays at 11am is the latest of these). Second, our wonderful Welfare Pelach, who have been ensuring that everyone in the community is reached and looked after. Third (and here we simply have to name names): Mike Fenster, who has been our Zoom Czar from the beginning, managing the Zoom calendar and handling all the technical details (hosting, recording, etc.). Fourth, all the people with tech skills who have supported Mike and everyone else in exploiting and using this technology. Fifth, those who are putting in time and energy to get our nascent in-person Shabbat services off the ground. Last, but most certainly not least, our outstanding Yamim Nora'im planning team, who have worked incredibly hard over recent weeks, developing and executing a multi-pronged approach to making the Yamim Nora'im this year special and meaningful. You have been the best anyone could hope for.

Actually, we have one more person to thank: our Rabbi. As you all know, these past few months Rabbi Joel was on sabbatical from the Conservative Yeshiva, and he, Susanna, Shira and Kalya were living with Rabbi Joel's parents in Cheshire. Rabbi Joel was going to spend extra time in Edgware with us, and in between Kol Nefesh weekends he and Kalya had planned a series of visits to the great European capitals. They managed one trip, to Athens, before lockdown hit. The result was that instead of enjoying well-deserved time off with his family, Rabbi Joel found himself spending countless hours on Zoom – in planning

meetings, frequent discussions with the Masorti rabbinic team, running our weekly pre-Shabbat programme, teaching at least once a week, and generally helping keep us all on an even keel as we scrambled to adjust to the surreal state in which we found ourselves. So thank you, Rabbi Joel, for all of that.

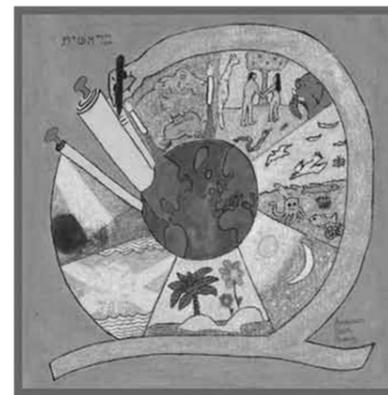
There have been two dark points amidst the shafts of light. First and most tragically, one of our families suffered a terrible series of losses to Covid-19. Paul Kinchuk, husband of Anna and father to Bethany and Emily, and Paul's parents, Stuart and Geraldine, all succumbed to the virus in April, at a time when the country was struggling to cope with what was then still a very new and poorly understood disease. We share in the grief of Anna, Bethany, Emily, and the rest of the extended family. Others in the community have also lost family members or close friends during these months. May all their memories be a blessing.

Second, we know that there are members of the community whose needs we haven't been able to meet over the past few months. In particular, there are individuals who for reasons of health or distance are not able to partake in any of our in-person services, either on Shabbat or over the Yamim Nora'im. While we've done our best to ensure a mixture of recorded material and live Zoom events before and after Shabbat or chag, we're aware that this is only a partial solution. Along with most of the other Masorti communities, we made the decision this year not to employ technology during Shabbat or chag even in ways seen as halachically permissible by many Masorti/Conservative authorities (i.e., 'set-and-forget' or passive streaming). We promise that after the Yamim Nora'im, we will revisit this question as a community and consider together all its benefits and ramifications.

Finally, we (Liz and Meira) have a request. As of Hanukkah, we'll have been convenors of Kol Nefesh for three years. It's been a wild ride: KN's eighteenth birthday, our Values and Vision process, our Masorti-supported growth project (sadly interrupted by the pandemic), the search for new premises and then the expected move (now thankfully delayed), and now Covid-19. Much as we have enjoyed and learned from the role, it seems time for us to pass the mantle. We invite anyone who thinks they might be interested to speak with us. We'll be glad to answer questions about what's involved, what will be expected of you and what you might expect in the role.

We wish the entire community a safe and healthy 5781. Shanah Tovah.

Meira Ben-Gad & Liz Preter

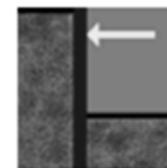


Wishing you all,
and your families,
Yamim Nora'im Tovim,
and strength, good health,
and happiness in 5781.
Kathy Lichman

Lisette and Daniel
wish the Kol Nefesh community
a peaceful and healthy year

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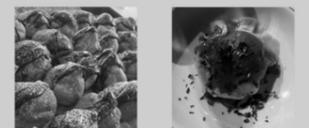
Shanah Tovah!



SHMU'S FOOD

cooking with passion

I am 16 and and love
creating food that is
exciting and fresh.



I mainly focus on
modern European
cuisine and pastry. I
also have spent time
developing interesting
vegan food.



I am available to
cater small events and
dinner parties, I also
can bake cakes and
pastry to order.



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Let's talk!

Allan Myers Email: apm@maurice-apple.co.uk

Mark & Tanya Novick
 wish the Kol Nefesh community
 a Shana Tova

Wishing all the community
 a healthy and happy new year.

Marc and Hayley Herman

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Kol HaKehilah

The Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue Magazine

Rosh Hashanah 5781/2020

Dislocation

In this issue:

Writing by Rabbi Joel, Chazan Jacky, Daniel Borin, Gabi Peretz, Paul Collin, Holly Blue Hawkins, Andrea Grahame, Maurice Gold, Meira Ben-Gad, Barbara Borts, Miriam David, Melanie Kelly, Ruth Hart, Daniel Preter, Mike Fenster, Steve Griffiths, Shelley Marsh, Avi Bram, Danny Kalman, Adam Hayek, Yehoshua Frankel, and others.

Cover art by Paul Collin.

—
Editor: Meira Ben-Gad

With thanks to Paul Collin for help putting together this issue!

—
Thank you to everyone in the community who helped with the publication of this magazine by submitting articles or artwork, buying ads, printing, and mailing.

We are also grateful to The PrintHouse for their friendly, efficient, and professional service over the years. Please do consider using The PrintHouse for all your printing needs.

If you'd like to be involved in the production of the next issue – or if you'd like to suggest a theme – please let us know! The next edition will be Pesach 5781/2021.

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of KNM.

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