

The triumph of the human spirit over adversity can be extremely humbling...

Recently I helped organise an event for people in the West of Scotland who had benefitted from organ transplants to pay tribute to the organ donors and their families.

It was an intensely moving occasion, attended by many hundreds of people. Muriel Gray, not often given to emotional display, had a catch in her voice as she spoke of how a kidney transplant had changed her mother's life. Sam Galbraith told us with his usual wry wit just how close to death he'd been, and how someone else's misfortune had given him many extra years of political and personal success. Hundreds of recipients and their families came forward with bunches of flowers to be handed out later to the families of the donors.

But what was even more moving because it was so unexpected was the message from the donors. Marsha Gladstone, mother of the Glasgow teenager murdered in a terrorist bombing in Tel Aviv, and Ellen Burns, whose daughter had been killed in a road accident, both spoke movingly of their loss, and of the hard decision they were asked to take at the most awful of times – but what was so remarkable was that both found it in them to express not resentment but gratitude for the opportunity to turn hopelessness into hope, death into a new life for someone else.

Acts of charity are important in Judaism as in many other faiths, and the medieval rabbi Maimonides taught that different types of charitable deed have different moral value. Giving in public, for example, ranks very low, for the motive is suspect, whereas helping someone to help himself ranks highest.

Second only to this is charity in which the donor and the recipient don't know one another, for in that case there can be no ulterior motive, not even the desire for gratitude. That is the level that the transplant donor families have attained: they do not know who will receive the organs, nor do the recipients know from whom they came.

That is what was symbolised by this anonymous exchange of flowers, and I knew we had it right when, from the balcony above, a tear fell on my sleeve.

EPHRAIM BOROWSKI, SCoJeC DIRECTOR IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY** ON RADIO SCOTLAND, ABOVE WAS BROADCAST 13 AUG 2004

Aberdeen's Pride & Joy

MARK TAYLOR

David Taylor recently celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in Aberdeen Synagogue on 10 July 2004. Both David's grandfathers took the service, something of a tradition in the family as David's grandfather also took the Bar Mitzvah service of David's uncle, in Dundee, almost twenty five years ago. David's grandmother baked her "secret recipe", extremely moreish strudel for the Kiddush, just as she had done twenty five years ago for the Kiddush in Dundee.



David started studying for his Bar Mitzvah in Leicester and completed his studies at the "yeshivah" in Alford, Aberdeenshire. At one point David was so inspired by his Cheder lessons with Rabbi Kanterovitz that he said he wanted to become a Rabbi. This ambition has since faded and David now wants to be the next Frank Lloyd Wright.

David was joined by family, friends and members of the local community. Guests travelled from near and far including London, Glasgow, Dundee, Beersheva, Houston and Watford. The gathering of the clans started on the Friday, and celebrations continued through a hectic weekend concluding on Monday. As David says "it was a bit nerve racking but went well".

Mazal tov!

THE CORNERS OF SCOTLAND

CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:

Dundee

Paul Spicker: 01382 540 078

Aberdeen

Ehud Reiter: 01224 485 601

Argyll & Highlands

Frank House: 01445 712151

Students

Dan Roeback 07951 070 730



Welcome...

...to the growing newsletter for the scattered Jews of Scotland. The fringes on the Arba Kanfot seem to be made of elastic – in this issue we welcome London as a suburb of Scotland... and Four Corners wings its way to Shetland, Findhorn, Beersheva (Israel) and Co. Cork (Eire) as well as the length and breadth Scotland.

Thanks to all who gave us valuable feed-back and contributions. If you don't see what you want in these pages, please submit alternative material!

We would be delighted to start an 'ask the Rabbi' section for queries of halachic, spiritual, intellectual or community nature, from whatever viewpoint. Our wide range of Rabbinic and other knowledgeable contacts will be called upon for their specialist advice. No question is silly or irrelevant, no job too big or too small for our capable team!

PLEASE SEND COMMENTS & CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE,
222 FENWICK ROAD, GIFFNOCK, GLASGOW G46 6UE
TEL: 0141-577 8208 FAX: 0141-577 8202

E-MAIL: J-SCOT@J-SCOT.ORG
CONTACT: LEAH GRANAT 07887 488 100

FOUR CORNERS IS PRODUCED BY SCoJeC,
THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION OF
ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND.
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS,
NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF SCoJeC.

FOUR CORNERS IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEB
www.j-scot.org.uk

ISSUE 3
ROSH HASHANAH 5765
SEPT 2004

Some useful definitions:

JEWDO: A traditional form of self defense based on talking one's way out of a tight spot.

CHUTZPAPA: A father who wakes his wife at 4am so she can change the baby's diaper.

DEJA NU: Having the feeling you've seen the same exasperated look on your mother's face but not knowing exactly when.

DISORIYENTA: When Aunt Sadie gets lost in a department store and strikes up a conversation with everyone she passes.



Edinburgh's Mikveh Restored

DR PHILIP MASON: PRESIDENT, EDINBURGH HEBREW CONGREGATION

In the 1920s, plans were drawn up by the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation to build a Synagogue in Salisbury Road on the south side of the city. Their aim was to build a structure 'of an imposing nature, and fit to be ranked among the beautiful houses of worship of the city'. Today all who approach and enter the Synagogue, whether local or visitors, never fail to remark how beautiful a building it is – especially following the extensive refurbishment that took place over the past year.

Married women immerse in the mikveh – a pool of water – on a monthly basis, whilst some Chassidic men dip daily. There are also smaller mikvaot for dipping cooking utensils before their first use.

The Mikveh is a building to the rear of the complex. Unused for a number of years it had fallen into a serious state of disrepair. Although the ritual bath within the Mikveh had been brought back into use a few years ago, the building itself still required renovation. The roof had to be renewed, structural movement in one corner necessitated new internal brickwork and a new steel lintel. However the timber screens around the ritual bath were retained, stained and varnished and brought back to life.

The year's activities were brought to an exciting conclusion with the Rededication of the Mikveh by Lady Amelie Jakobovits. Sunday March 28th 2004 was an unforgettable and highly charged afternoon for the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. Following the Official Opening, Lady Jakobovits was taken on a tour round the now fully restored building by Bill and Val Simpson who had done so much for the project.

Welcoming Lady Jakobovits to Scotland, John Cosgrove, Chair of SCoJeC spoke of happy memories of previous visits by Lady Jakobovits and her late husband the former Chief Rabbi and stressed the importance of the Mikveh in Jewish life. In a moving and emotional reply, Lady Jakobovits remarked that she was overwhelmed with admiration for the Edinburgh Congregation, and she unveiled a plaque commemorating the event.

We were pleased to welcome so many friends who had come from Glasgow, Gateshead, Leeds and London to share in the rededication and reception. For all the pride felt by those present, the restoration could not have proceeded if it hadn't been for the grant received from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the very generous legacy received from the will of the late Betty Franklin and the guidance, assistance and generosity of a great number of people including Rabbi David Sedley, Dayan Gukovitzki, Rabbi Weiss, B Z Dunner, Mrs M. Whiteson, The Ten Trust, and Dr Ian Leifer – to whom we shall always be very grateful.

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE IN THE EDINBURGH STAR FEBRUARY 2004

Anyone wishing to use the Edinburgh Mikveh please contact Valerie Simpson, 0131 667 1521.

Glasgow also has a Mikveh! Contact Margalit Borowski, 07831 104110



ABOVE: A STAINED GLASS WINDOW WAS DESIGNED, CREATED AND PRESENTED BY MRS VALERIE SIMPSON, A COMMUNITY MEMBER.

BELOW: THE MIKVEH POOL



What's in a Name?

My name is Simon Phillips.

I've been called that or some variant for over 50 years.

What is a name anyway? An identifier, something your parents liked, something picked in desperation from a book of names, a random sequence of letters these days? Some people suggest that it becomes part of the character of the person named. What if the name and the character don't really match?

Some time ago, I began to feel regret that my name, fine though it was, lacked continuity with my family. The name Phillips only dated from my father's time although I have heard that my grandparents did use the name in the later years of their lives. My paternal grandfather was Myer Lipkowitz – born I believe somewhere around the Russian/Polish border area. All I ever knew with any degree of certainty was that he arrived in England around 1910, married Lily White (original name unreadable from a Russian birth certificate) in the East London Synagogue and as a result, my father Isaac Philip Lipkowitz was born in 1916.

Here follows a "dark ages" period. I know nothing of the intervening years except that my parents married and several days later, my father took ship for India where he spent the next 5 years in the required service of His Majesty and having as good a time as was possible under the circumstances. 1947 saw him return to England and in 1948, he formally renounced his name in favour of Philip Phillips.

I was born in 1951 – Simon Phillips. Until about the age of 10 I remained in ignorance of the family name but eventually found out while attending my cousin's Bar Mitzvah – the first time we ever met! Ten years later, we met again, at his wedding and finally, a few years later, at his mother's funeral.

The years passed by, I won't say placidly, until in 2003, ten years after my Father's death, I discovered several old family papers. My Father's birth certificate, his army pay book, his discharge papers/references, my parent's marriage certificate and some army compassionate leave papers.

Interesting relics! Like so many things we happen upon through life, they started a train of thought. Where did my family originate, what were they like, what caused the family rift? Some answers were obvious enough, but fifty years had passed since their marriage and ninety since my Grandfather set foot in England.

So. Time to find out. The search for roots perhaps! Aargh! I must be getting old. I didn't have much to start with - my cousin's name and the knowledge that the family had been East London Jewish. First step then was the internet. Well, it's my job and I use it all day, every day. I've never been so impressed by it before or since. Lipkowitz popped up instantly – apparently once known in Prague (c. 1500 CE). My cousin's work address and telephone number and, hunting for matters Jewish, the name Jacqueline Speyer cropped up. Living only about 15 miles away, and with knowledge of the (rather small) Jewish community in the area. So, to cut a long story short, I made contact with her and, within a few weeks, met several other members of the local (??) community. I also made contact with my cousin. He happily provided me with some family information which I hadn't known until then. Hopefully more will be forthcoming when I travel south later this year to meet him, it seems that we each have items of interest for the other.

So, much contemplation of the past and many new friends and acquaintances all starting to encourage me toward new paths in life. It seemed proper at that point to restore the use of the old family name. After one more email discussion with my cousin, I took the plunge and changed my name by Deed Poll. On the twenty-fourth of June this year, I became Isaac Simon David Lipkowitz. Possibly the start of an identification with the family I hardly knew.

The future will doubtless unfold as it always does but now, my name is Isaac Lipkowitz.

Are you going to be anywhere in the vicinity of Oban on Yom Kippur? Would you like to take part in an untraditional, D.I.Y service on Kol Nidre (Friday evening 24th September) and Yom Kippur (Saturday 25th September)?

Yom Kippur in Argyll

Gentle, easy-going davening (prayers) and bring along anything you'd like to share – poems, stories, personal experiences and join in discussion of what Yom Kippur means to you.

And ... (very importantly) enjoy a convivial meal at the end of the fast!

Please do come along and join us!

FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT
JOHN AND CHERRY FREEMAN
01631 770243



Mezuzah

KATHY HAGLER

At the side of my front door there is a little box nailed to the lintel. It is just about two inches long and half an inch wide, and goes unnoticed by just about everyone, even though it is quite ornate.

When I lived in Israel, I did not bother with a mezuzah as I was not at all religious and everyone was Jewish anyway. But here in the Galut (literally Exile, i.e. everywhere outside of Israel) where most people do not know I am Jewish, I felt I had to do something – though very discreet indeed – to announce my religion (or my past, or my ethnicity, or my belonging?) so up went the mezuzah. But I might as well not have bothered as nobody notices, and the few that do, don't know what it is and never ask. I suppose if they think about it at all they presume it to be some kind of odd ornament.

End of story – or is it?

Inverness seems to be a missionary town, but the missionaries are not of the ordinary kind. There are Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons and a few others, whose particular semi-Christian beliefs I don't remember at the moment. They do not lack perseverance and hardly a week passes that one or the other does not knock on my door, especially now that I am retired and at home during the day.

I like to be polite, so I don't slam the door in their faces, but I also like to be firm and I no longer let them into the house.

So we talk at the front door, me telling them that I am really not interested, them not listening, just going on with their spiel, shoving magazines and pamphlets into my hands, insisting even when I tell them it's a waste because they'll go straight into the bin.

When I get frustrated as a last resort I point to my mezuzah and ask them if they know what it is. They never do of course, and when I tell them that it symbolises my religion they tell me, slightly embarrassed, that they have never heard of it.

At this point I have the high moral ground, and I can ask them – slightly sneering, admittedly – that if they cannot be bothered finding out what other religions other people adhere to, what right do they have to push their own.

So far it's been working.

Glasgow's Garnethill Synagogue Celebrates Anniversary

Garnethill Synagogue was in the news again in June when more than 300 members and friends from all walks of life and religions gathered in the shul for a special service to celebrate its 125th anniversary.

The synagogue president Gerald Levin welcomed the congregation, and introduced the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, who told the gathering "Garnethill is one of the great names in the architectural and congregational history of British synagogues. As the mother synagogue of Glasgow it set the tone and the pattern for synagogues in the city. Today the demography of Glasgow Jewry is much changed from the days in the Victorian era. You have been loyal and well served by spiritual and lay leaders and the love and admiration for your services and programmes have spread beyond the borders of Scotland. "I offer my most sincere good wishes to your longevity and look forward to identifying with future anniversaries and events in your beautiful and impressive building." The Glasgow Jewish Singers led the singing in fine fashion and were enjoyed by everyone, even if some did not understand all the words of the service.

Garnethill was the first purpose-built Jewish house of worship in Scotland

125 years

BY HENRY DIAMOND

BELOW RIGHT: RABBI SACKS AT GARNETHILL PULPIT

and since it opened its doors in 1879 its members have always made an incalculable contribution to the life of Glasgow and the rest of Scotland, in medicine, science, the law, local and national government, diplomacy, scholarship, and the visual and performing arts.

Because of its proximity to Glasgow University its membership has over the years included 10 professors. One member, Myer Galpern, became Lord Provost of the city and later a Member of Parliament, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, and a life peer, Ernest Greenhill was City Treasurer and later also a life peer, Sir Horace Phillips was British ambassador to Turkey, Benno Schotz was Sculptor in Ordinary to Queen Elizabeth and Dr Jack E Miller was awarded the Gold Medal of the British Medical Association for his work for nine years as the national treasurer.

In 1998 Zvi Avraham, a council member, negotiated with the Israel Antiquities Authority for the loan of the Exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which ran for four months in Glasgow's flagship Art

Gallery and Museum in Kelvingrove and was the most financially successful temporary exhibition ever held in the city.

Garnethill has had 7 ministers in its 12 decades. First the Rev. E. P. Phillips, who served for half a century. The synagogue's 7th spiritual leader is Morocco-born Aharon Soudry, a lay reader with a deep knowledge of the ways of Judaism. He is a Bachelor of Science graduate in biology of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he met his wife Rosalie, a science graduate (zoology) of Glasgow University.



In an age when it is possible to send probes to Mars it is interesting to reflect that when Garnethill was opened in Hill Street, Queen Victoria still had two more decades to reign, the telephone and the gramophone were still grating infants, Tchaikovsky's masterpiece Eugene Onegin was given its first performance in Moscow, and Mr McTear of St. Rollox Chemical Works, Glasgow, claimed to have made artificial diamonds.

Equality, Human Rights and Alphabet Soup!



The government in Westminster proposes to set up a new organisation to oversee issues of equality and human rights. The Commission for Equalities and Human Rights (CEHR) will incorporate the work of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Commission for Race Equality (CRE) and will have responsibility for the additional areas covered by new equality legislation - Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation and Age, as well as for Human Rights.

As you can see - and were no doubt already aware - government initiatives have a habit of generating vast quantities of acronyms incomprehensible to anyone not in the know, and this one is no exception.

SCoJeC (to throw in an acronym of our own) is in the know about this particular initiative, being represented on both the SEHRRG and the SE&HRC.

And what, you may not unreasonably ask, are they?

In translation the SEHRRG becomes the Scottish Equalities and Human Rights Reference Group - which probably doesn't make things that much clearer. It's been set up by the Scottish Executive with representatives from each of the six equality 'strands' (government speak for race, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation

and age) as well as from business, the public sector, the trades unions, Scottish government and the like. Its job has been to provide a wide Scottish perspective for the TF (Task Force) in London who have been advising the WP (White Paper) drafting team at the dti (Department of Trade and Industry - and ALWAYS lower case!) who have actually written the CEHR proposal.

The SE&HRC (Scottish Equalities and Human Rights Coalition) has been set up by SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Services) and provides a forum for voluntary sector organisations such as the Scottish Human Rights Centre (SHRC), National Children's Homes (NCH) and Oxfam (best known by its acronym, but actually Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) to come together with representatives of the equality 'strands' to discuss 'best practice' and ways of 'mainstreaming equality' (plain Scottish: stopping and preventing discrimination).

Alphabet soup aside, there is an important issue here. There are potentially very big advantages to having a single commission, particularly for those groups covered by the new equality legislation - and that includes us. The three existing equality commissions have built up a large body of expertise which hasn't yet been developed around the new 'strands',

and their skills and experience will be more easily shared within a single organisation. It's not all good news though - this is a huge undertaking and there is a lot of concern that some aspects of the government's proposal have not been well thought-out.

As a GB-wide organisation, albeit with a Scottish committee, the CEHR will not have the resources or staffing to put the equality agenda into practice at grassroots level. Its role will be in promoting best practice, advising Ministers and organisations, and undertaking a limited amount of casework. The voluntary sector will play a significant role in turning equality theory and policy into practice, in building an evidence base of good and bad practice, in assessing the effectiveness of existing legislation, in assessing ways of implementing existing legislation effectively and in stimulating and influencing political debate.

As a result of its involvement in the SEHRRG and SE&HRC, SCoJeC (sorry! see above!) has input into the Task Force - and thus into Government thinking about the CEHR - and also has input into the way in which the equality agenda is being taken forward at grassroots level in Scotland. Input into policy-making and also into making things happen on the ground.

The Equalities and Human Rights agendas have lots of implications for the Jewish community in Scotland, and SCoJeC is committed to ensuring that the concerns of the Jewish community are heard and taken into consideration at all levels.

Succah Party 2004

We are planning a Succot event - an opportunity for people from as many corners of Scotland as possible to get together, eat, talk and generally have a good time. Date: Sunday 3rd October, Time and Venue yet to be arranged - but if you live somewhere it's easy to get to from north south east and west, have a big enough garden to accommodate a succah for a day - and space inside in case it should just happen to rain - we'd love to hear from you!

PLEASE CONTACT LEAH GRANAT:

MOBILE 07887 488 100 OR EMAIL: LEAH.GRANAT@ONETEL.NET



FINISHING THE BUILDING & EATING IN THE JNAH SUCCAH 2001



Kosher in the Wild West

JACQUELINE SPEYER

The Glasgow Jewish Telegraph recently carried a photo of McCaigs Tower, Oban and an article by a tourist on his experience regarding Jewish dietary requirements in Argyll. In brief, he had a difficulty obtaining fridge-space in the hotel in which he was staying. An off-the-cuff story that he was a Rabbi on an interfaith mission did the trick and he seemed to enjoy his stay. The following letter has been submitted for publication:

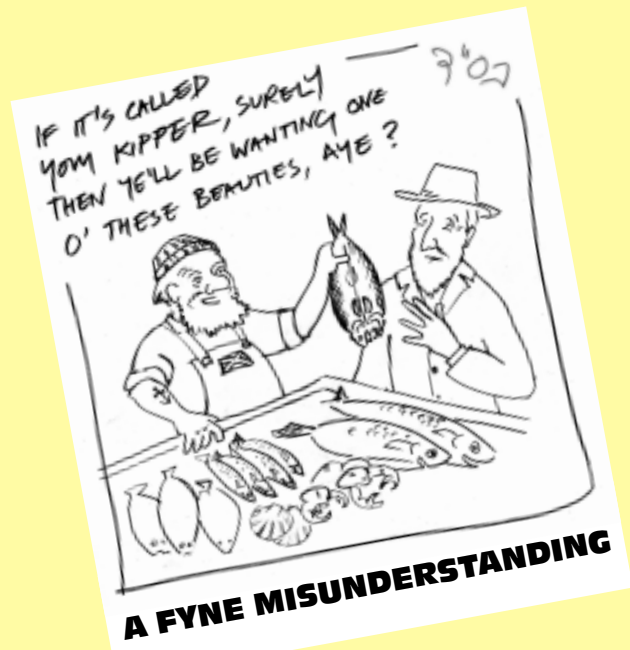
I was amused to read Joseph Mintz report on his 'Highland Fling with Kosher Food.' His way around the Kashrut problem inevitable in Oban was inventive, but not all of us would pass as a Rabbi... Having lived 19 years in Argyll, I would like to add a few comments to assure potential tourists they don't necessarily have to use this technique.

a) It is unreasonable expect locals - anywhere - to be aware of Jewish food requirements, but generally West Highlanders have a high standard of hospitality, and are gentle accepting folk. In 19 years, the most unfriendly reply I received when I said I was "Jewish" was that it must be better than being English! Any curiosity thereafter was genuine, unbiased and nicely tempered with Highland reserve. My difference was respected and not challenged.

b) Travelling with all your food is unnecessary if you are reasonably independent and don't mind being vegetarian when your salami from the city runs out. When I started keeping Kosher I was amazed how little my diet changed. The only things I bought from Glasgow were meat, cheese and wine. I was helped enormously by the excellent London Beth-Din book 'the really Jewish food guide' which lists standard products available in any supermarket.

c) Jewish tourists to the West Highlands may also wish to know that there is a scattered community group - the Jewish Network of Highlands and Argyll, and a quarterly newsletter "Four Corners" which spans the whole of rural Scotland. Both can be contacted through the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities.

THE MONTH OF TISHRI & the Days of Awe



The Essence of the High Holy Days

ADAPTED FROM JNF ALMANAC

Rosh Hashanah (New Year) is a period of personal judgment, and we are also commanded to rejoice... The knowledge that God is merciful and will enable us to receive a favorable verdict relieves any harsh feelings, which might accompany such a time. It is 'the birthday of the world' and a chance for a clean slate for us all.

It is followed by the 'ten days of repentance', the Fast of Gedaliah and Shabbat Shuvah (Return) - so called from the customary reading of Hosea (14:2) "Return ('Shuvah') O Israel, to the Lord, your God, for you have fallen by your iniquity". Also called Shabbat Teshuvah ('the Sabbath of Repentance') which is the same word - when we repent, we return.

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is a day of joy mixed with solemnity and awe, it is the day on which our verdict is sealed. It is a day with many abstentions. One is forbidden to eat, drink, wash, rub cream into the skin, wear normal leather shoes, and have marital relations. Yom Kippur atones for sins against God, but sins against fellow humans cannot be atoned for until the injured party has agreed to forget the wrong doing. On this day we examine our interpersonal relationships. The sound of the shofar (trumpet made from a ram's horn) we began before Rosh Hashana closes the day.

A week later **Succot** "the festival of our Rejoicing" begins. It is also known as the "Festival of Ingathering" of crops. The Succah (a temporary booth used for eating and sleeping for the 8 days of the festival) stresses that all material possessions are transitory and that acquiring them is not a value in itself. The only possessions that we can acquire for all eternity are the commandments we fulfill and the spiritual content we impart to our lives.

Hoshana Rabbah, the last day of Succot, is also believed to be the final day of the "Days of Awe" - the last chance before the verdict for the year to come. Thus Hoshana Rabbah is a mixture of the joy of Succot with the seriousness of the Days of Awe.

Then **Shemini Atzeret** is a festival in its own right, symbolizing God's love for Israel. After the Jews have been in Jerusalem for seven days in their temporary abodes God says: "Please stay with Me for another day, for I find it hard to part from you".

We finish the yearly cycle of reading the Torah now, and a feast is made just as when one completes studying a tractate of the Talmud. This is **Simchat Torah**, "rejoicing of the Torah".

When we want to solder a piece of silver to a silver vessel the edge of the piece must be cleaned so that no foreign substance may intervene. Likewise when a person wishes to cleave to God he must purify himself of every foreign thought beforehand.

CHASSIDIC

Spiritual Accounting System

ADAPTED FROM RABBI NOAH WEINBURG, AISH WEBSITE

**To be successful in business, you need a good accountant.
The same principle applies in the game of life.**

If you ask someone: Are you eating to live, or living to eat? Of course they'll tell you they're eating to live. Now ask What are you living for? They won't always have a good answer, but at least you made them think about what they're doing in life. Unfortunately the majority of us are very busy doing and accomplishing, but we don't know for what.

Everyone has instances in life where something wakes us up and we're confronted by the question: "What has my life been all about up till now?" Momentarily we may be scared, and we may try to escape by turning on the TV or grabbing a newspaper.

A man I know was accidentally shot, and as a result became a paraplegic. While lying in the hospital, he was faced with this question: "What is life all about? What am I living for?" Today he will tell you that God did him a great favor by paralyzing him; otherwise he may have gone through his entire life without ever asking this fundamental and crucial question. Some day we may be told we only have six months to live, but then it may be too late to consider the question. So we might as well start asking ourselves now.

God has told us what we're here for, and what we really want in life is to love Him. What we have to do is get in touch with this desire of our souls and then plan how to attain that love. We say this in the Shema twice daily (and it's written in the mezuzah): "To know that God is One, and to love Him with everything we have." if this is what we really want, then we should ask, "What am I doing to attain it?"

This is the process a Jew goes through on Rosh Hashana: The most powerful tool against wasting your life is Cheshbon Hanefesh — Spiritual Accounting. We need a regular system to evaluate how well we performed. and take stock of where we stand.

On Rosh Hashana, we make a cheshbon covering the previous year. Figure out what we did right and what we did wrong — and then make a plan to correct those mistakes. We have to take responsibility for our lives because no one else will do it for us. We are all created in God's image and have the potential for greatness.

In "The Path of the Just," Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato says: "The foundation of good action and the root of true service of God is for a person to know his goal in this world." This is our motto in Judaism. If a person has clarity on where he's going in life, he'll get there. Otherwise he'll just remain in a state of confusion all his life. This is the common denominator of "free will" available to every human being.

The shofar blasts like an alarm clock. We can either wake up and ask the right questions, or sleep our lives away. The Almighty wants us to wake up and live.

Calendar of events

Festival	Hebrew date	Scottish Date
Rosh Hashana	1-2 Tishri	16-17 September
Shabbat Tshuva	3 Tishri	18 September
Fast of Gedaliah	4 Tishri	19 September
Yom Kippur	10 Tishri	25 September
Succot	15-21 Tishri	30 Sept-6 Oct
Hoshana Rabba	21 Tishri	6 October
Shemini Atzeret	22 Tishri	7 October
Simchat Torah	23 Tishri	8 October

FROM THE London Corner

JUDITH LIPMAN

Life has taken on a Scottish flavour lately...

On the first Shabbat of each month, I attend Friday evening service at the Liberal shul and enjoy a convivial chavurah supper with a guest and a talk or a shiur if a High or Low Holy day.

This Friday evening the guests was, of all people, the Anglican chaplain to Dundee University! The minister had met the Liberal Rabbi at a prior interfaith meeting. I was able to interview him briefly and learned that Dundee Uni is twinned with Nablus and there is a strong anti-Israel pro-Palestine sentiment on campus. There is a Jewish chaplain and the Jewish students form a close-knit group. Apparently there are not many Jewish people in Dundee. How do you feel about this Dundee? Let's hear from you.

The second unusually Scottish element came on my annual holiday (aka Respite Break – it's pure indulgence as really – och never mind. I've left the puir wee soul in the hands of carers) in Kings Lynn. Erev Shabbat was moving, relaxing and humorously light-hearted. I went to John and Jeanette and their daughter, a lovely "kein ein horah" 14 year old with a sense of humour matched only by the wit of her father. There were two other Jewish women there. John, helped competently by Jeanette, led the prayers and conducted the service. We women all lit our own two candles and said the prayer. It happened that the lady on my left at the supper table came from Giffnock originally. Her name is Ruth and surprise surprise she kens folk in the community and hopes to get in touch.

Ties between the Corners

RABBI DAVID ROSE

It is a cold winter's afternoon in Aberdeen. A hint of snow is in the air. Around 5.00pm a train pulls into the station and a strange man with a beard and kippah disembarks. He is met by a distinguished looking gentleman who bundles him into a car and whisks him off to an address on Dee St where people are already eagerly awaiting his arrival. After an hour or so he is taken back to the station and embarks on the 7.25 train to Edinburgh.

This monthly scenario is not something out of a spy novel but rather a somewhat dramatised version of my monthly trips of to the small but active community in Aberdeen. About 10 to 15 people normally attend these monthly shiurim (informal lectures) and though it may be cold outside the

Jews came to Lynn Bishop as it was then known in 1066 with the Normans and returned after the expulsions. There is the remains of a Norman synagogue incorporated into a lawyer's office and also a Jewish cemetery post civil war was now maintained by Kings Lynn Council. Apparently, there are about 40 families in Lynn area with at least one Jewish member.

So that was one Friday night supper in London (the Dundonian Chaplain even brought a wedge of millionaire's shortbread from Aberdeen – the English didn't know what it was and looked puzzled as this gannet dived in!) and a soul-feeding spiritual connection with all those past Jews in Kings Lynn on the next Friday evening. Wow!

And Sunday at Hunstanton bus station in urgent need of disabled facilities I found a church. When relieved I was offered a cup of tea, apparent native custom post-service. Friendly lot – and I heard there were visitors from Scotland. Curious I asked the lady in question: she only came from Lochgilphead, where the Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands originated 10 years ago, and she works as a MS volunteer in the Arms Centre where we used to meet, and knows one of our 'founder members.' I explained to her how I knew the place and when I left the church I felt so homesick and sad remembering the wonderful close times we had up there and all the happiness. I felt very alone.



atmosphere inside is warm and welcoming. I normally come bearing a fresh loaf of bread and salmon, humous and other delicacies are laid out for supper. After chatting for a while we normally have an hour long shiur on a topical subject; interspersed with lively questions. People are enthusiastic and interested to learn more and I, for one, greatly enjoy visiting this small but warm and welcoming community.

We in Edinburgh greatly enjoy welcoming visitors from Aberdeen for Shabbat and we hope to, together, plan a Shabbat in Aberdeen in the coming year. I also send a weekly parasha sheet to Aberdeen with northern Shabbat times all year round. We both gain a lot from our association with each other and may it go from strength to strength.



STEPHEN KLINER, HON. PRESIDENT,
GLASGOW JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

It (was) All Going On

J Fest 2004 was a celebration of the Glasgow Jewish Community - a positive and vibrant community feeling, an opportunity to show the strength of a community working together and to showcase a host of activities covering all age groups and types of organisation. J Fest 2004 was intended to create a celebration of the Glasgow Jewish Community - a positive and vibrant community feeling, an opportunity to show the strength of a community working together and to showcase a host of activities covering all age groups and types of organisation.

The first Community Week was held in 1994 in response to a challenge from the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks. During his first pastoral visit to Scotland he had urged the community to show that it cared about its future and to undertake a programme of renewal. The Representative Council at that time took up the challenge and coordinated a very successful week of communal events.

This time too we aimed to open the doors to all the richly varied elements that go to making up our community. As one of the advertisements put it, "ten days of events for the entire community - A ball, a book launch, a card brunch, coffee mornings, discos, a fashion show, musical entertainments, a Moral Maze, open days, Purim events, Question Time, self defence, shul suppers, speakers - a gantze Megillah! Watch this space!"

And the Community did take heed and did watch the space. Participation was at record levels and people were seen at many events clutching their programmes and asking each other "What are you going to next?" There were films, an arts and crafts fair, shul suppers, the Brownie and Guide 60th Anniversary, self defence classes, a celebration of Jewish music "From Solomon to Swing", authors, speakers, "Melody and Mirth" (entertainment for all), and a question panel. It was of particular satisfaction that Edinburgh participated, holding a communal supper at which they were joined by a bus-full of people from Glasgow.

The Community can take no small satisfaction that J Fest 2004 was an unquestionably tremendous success. We, as a community, excelled ourselves. Without a doubt we showed that while the community may be getting smaller it is certainly no less active. With 42 events crammed into a ten day period the community should, as the Jewish Telegraph said, "be extremely proud of itself".