



Rosh Hashanah: a time for us to look forward together to a joy-filled year

The High Holydays are always a time to look back and ahead and to think about the upcoming festivals. This year is no exception but, in addition, there is more than ever planned, including a pre-Sukkot sleep-over at which BRS's young people will welcome their counterparts from Wimbledon shul; our **joyous, musical official welcome to Rabbi Laura** on 19 November; many more B'nei Mitzvah, including those of at least three adults, and, potentially, a community weekend away next June.

We're looking backwards and forwards in HighLight, too. Backwards to numerous happy family events* over the summer and forward to another amazing year at Cheder, which is our featured internal group for this issue. The external one is Sadeh, where many of the children and their parents had a happy day at the end of last term. **One was the 90th birthday of longstanding member John Goodman (above) who celebrated with members of his family at the end of July (photo, Bob Symonds; Wordle cake, Janvier Palmer).*

Another key theme of the High Holydays is remembering our loved ones. We have formally remembered several members individually at plaque dedications and stone settings, and will have an opportunity to think of all those lost during the Covid lockdowns (whether or not they died of Covid) at our memorial service on 27 November.

The High Holyday services, Rabbi Laura's first with us, will be held at shul and online. You should have received details separately. If you have not, or if you have any queries, please contact the office as soon as you can.

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URGENT: Please support Bromley Food Bank

We are in a time of desperate hardship for very many. Through our 3 Faiths Group and our member Julie Binysh, BRS is in direct contact with Bromley Food Bank, which updates us regularly as to its most urgent needs. Please read Julie's article inside and contribute. There are many personal ways of helping but we urge you to contribute to the communal effort so as to draw attention to the urgency of the situation and to encourage a community-wide response. We also know that times may be - or sadly may soon be - difficult for some of our own members. If you find yourself or someone else needing support, please contact Rabbi Laura in confidence.

EREV ROSH HASHANAH

is on Sunday 25 September

ROSH HASHANAH

is on Monday 26 September

KOL NIDRE

is on Tuesday 4 October, and
YOM KIPPUR on 5 October.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHAIR

As we prepare to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and to welcome in the New Year of 5783, it makes me think of last year. The past year has seen us say goodbye to Rabbi Mati and welcome our wonderful new Rabbi, Laura. We have had a surge of energy and activity, new members and new life, but we have also lost loved ones. The world has started a slow recovery from covid, and there is the awful war in Ukraine. **You will see that one of the Kol Nidre charities we are supporting this year is World Jewish Relief, which is specifically helping those in the Ukraine.** Please take your time to read about this year's charities including the Synagogue itself and to support them by donating any amount you are able to. More details about this are included in our High Holyday mail-out.

This summer, BRS had a bumper number of our youth attending RSY camps. As someone who went to Israel on an RSY camp when I was 16, I know the importance of RSY and youth work. It was at that camp, many years ago, that I first met Rabbi Laura, who was one of the leaders for our group, and look what came from that! We are so lucky at BRS that we have passionate people working to promote the opportunities for the younger members of our community, from the excellent gan and cheder to the b'mitzvah group, and now we are advertising for a part time youth worker. Please email youth@bromleyshul.org.uk for details if you are interested or know of anyone who might be.

In the group photo on page 6 you may be able to spot my son Ezra and his b'mitzvah group friend Keo. This was the first year they both attended the two-week camp in Cromer, Norfolk. They both had a great time. We also had Bea, Samson and Curtis attending the one-week camp. Everyone made friends and I know Ezra can't wait to go back next year.

The kindness of strangers

I was recently reminded of the kindness of strangers and how the mitzvah of "chesed" is so important. My son Lloyd was travelling around Israel at age 17, and was signed up to do a hike near Tzfat. I was already a little worried but when he suddenly became homesick I really became worried. I mentioned this via Whatsapp to the lady who was arranging the hike and she told me she lived just down the road from where Lloyd was staying. So she went along after work to take him some hiking supplies and offer him a home and family to call upon. She then reported back to me, and I now have a new pen pal called Nava, a kind lady who said she would like to think that someone would do the same for one of her children. Kindness asks for no reward. It isn't optional in Judaism, as reaching out to others is a key part of working to make the world a better place. Being kind is integral to what it means to be a Jew.

Rosh Hashanah is a time for us to reflect on the year that has just ended, hope for the year that has begun, appreciate the goodness in our lives, and celebrate. Ten days afterwards we gather again for Yom Kippur, a chance to acknowledge misdeeds and look for opportunities to make things right, to ask for forgiveness and a fresh start. I wish you all "Shanah tovah um'tukah" – **"May you have a good and sweet year"**

Michelle Brooks Evans
chair@bromleyshul.org.uk



A HAPPY MITZVAH: COME AND HAVE FUN DRESSING THE SUKKAH!

SUKKOT begins on the evening of **Sunday 9 October**/ morning of **Monday 10 October** and our traditional **Sukkah dressing will be on the morning of Sunday 9th.**

Do come any time after 10am with greenery if you have some, but your willing hands will be just as welcome. *Good company and tea or coffee guaranteed.*

A week later, **Sunday evening 16 October/ Monday morning 17 October, is SIMCHAT TORAH.**

Who will be honoured this year as our Bride and/or Bridegroom of the Law? **Please look out for details in e-Light in the coming weeks,** and do come and celebrate with our special couple, their families and all the BRS community.



“Seven blessings for seven things that are precious to us, yet concealed”



This Jewish year is closing and, with it, many beautiful changes have started to take place in our community, alongside a deepening of our already healthy and thriving synagogue. We will bring in the New Year of 5783 with services in our own building (and online), with togetherness, music, contemplation, joy and also anticipation. As we celebrate the potential in this new start, I am also aware that, for all my hopes, much is unknown.

The Talmud (Pesachim 54b) refers to seven things that are concealed from us and are always uncertain. I find these help express this mixture of expectations and concerns.

Our sages taught us that the following are the things we don't know, starting, unsurprisingly, with the day of our death and what they enigmatically refer to as the day of personal comfort. Next, we can't be certain about the depth and wisdom of our judgment or what is in someone else's mind.

We are unsure of business activities that will be profitable for us this year. And, finally, it is

also concealed from us when the Davidic monarchy will return or when “the guilty immoral” monarchies, as they call them, will perish.

It is the unknown date of our death that is meant to prompt us to repent every single day as though it is our last - not just to wait for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Nothing like the next variant of Covid to bring home the Talmudic truth that we don't know when, or if, our circumstances will improve for us. If we knew when our difficulties would cease, this premature knowledge might stop us atoning. But if we knew the day of consolation and improvement was far off, our pain would increase tenfold. I believe that it is this very lack of knowledge that gives us the capacity to be hopeful each day.

The Talmud acknowledges that we often make mistakes of judgment – of situations and of the actions or words or even facial expressions of others. We may make assumptions about what someone else is thinking. It urges us that it might be wise to hold back, acknowledge our ignorance and not form opinions on the basis of speculation.

Poignantly, this year particularly, the Talmud refers to the vagaries of financial security. The Rabbis knew that our finances are always uncertain but this is one of those years when we may feel the additional weight of financial uncertainty, as well as, and connected to, the urgency of responses to climate change.

Finally, the Talmud acknowledges that Jewish political independence is vital to our security as a people, and that we are affected by other political sovereignties.

So let us start our new year with seven blessings for those seven things that are precious to us, yet concealed:

May this year bring us health and comfortable longevity. May it bring the assurance that comfort and relief will arrive for all of us and our families, friends and colleagues. May it bring greater depth of judgment and the humility to know the limits of our understanding.

May this New Year bring the ability to trust others even if sometimes we are bewildered by their actions. May it bring us success in business and our finances.

May 5783 bring flourishing and wise Jewish independence in Israel for all its citizens and those in the Occupied Territories and, for us in the Diaspora, the confidence that the ruling government will rule with insight, courage and inspiration.

Shana tovah u'metukah

May we all have a healthy, fulfilling, sweet and happy year.

With so many thanks for welcoming me so wholeheartedly into this fabulous community,

Rabbi Laura

Dynamic Energy and a Great Team

...that's the secret of BRS Chai School

...according to head teacher Frankie, whose report and term dates follow, along with photos from last term and pictures of some of the teachers and helpers who make up her winning team. We hope to bring you mini profiles of some of them soon.

Kayitz (Summer) term was full of learning and togetherness at Chai School. With lockdowns and social restrictions a distant memory, sessions brought pupils, parents and BRS members together for memorable moments and outings. We put the red, white and blue into Shavuot with a special Jewbilee event hosted by Margaret Brearley in her garden, celebrated the diversity of our fathers in our Jewda Best Dad Kiddush for Fathers' Day, and learned about the Jewish journeys of parents and grandparents as part of our families-themed day.

A great day at Sadeh

Finally, the sun shone once again, enabling the much-postponed trip to Sadeh Farm to go ahead. It was one great day at Sadeh as pupils and parents learned about Jewish farming and zoomed along the field zip wire... so, too, for Talia Chan and the Sadeh staff, who had found out that they are now able to remain in these green pastures until 2028.

We welcomed our new Rabbi, Laura, to many of our assemblies. In this short while of getting to know each other, it's been a delight for parents to see the ruach (spirit) and singing Laura's already adding to the Chai School's weekly vibrancy.



Graduation day and other well deserved awards

Term ended with the cutest of graduation ceremonies; our little Gannies who have now moved up to start their journey with Kitah (class) Alefbet (*some of last year's members pictured on right*) collected their caps and prizes. We also celebrated the outstanding contributions to BRS of volunteers Zac Bates-Fisher, Hannah Bekman, Samuel Hyams and Sophie Taylor, who received national Jack Petchey Awards.



Our new term began on Sunday, 11 September. If you're new to our community or area and would like your child/children to join us, **do get in touch with me (Frankie) at cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk**

or call me on 07505 950 795

The coming year will bring a new, heightened focus on experiences and learning by doing. The aim is to give our wonderful children memories and Jewish life skills and, above all, meaningful immersive encounters with our community. It's vital we offer sessions which grow our pupils' sense of Jewishness, not ones simply full of things they need to know to be Jewish. So outings, baking, Israeli dancing, planting, and singing will feature this year at Chai School; and we'll be strengthening the J-Factor with an emphasis on constructive argument skills, non-binary debating and actively encouraging diversity of interpretation and view-points.



Each year there's a different configuration of Kittot (classes) dependent on the age range of our pupils at any one time. We are fortunate to have a wonderful Morim (teaching) team who work hard each week to provide your amazing children with the best learning and Kehillah (community) experience possible. This year many of our graduates will be returning as Ozrim (helpers) to mentor and support younger

pupils. Among them, Maya Jones, Mercury Hodges and Noah Wilkins are set to join James Ashmore (*top right*) and Samuel Hyams (*below*) in this vital role.



After the challenges of lockdowns and their legacy, our aim is to “Build Back Better” this year, not simply for innovation’s sake, but because I firmly believe that learning is created together in the experiences we share. It’s a reflection of BRS’s wider passion for making Judaism come alive for all ages. It is hoped that, this year, our Chai School cheder will build even more bridges and create learning spaces that all BRS members might enjoy.

Queries, Kvetches and questions? Stay and chat

Queries, kvetches and questions to Frankie Gruz, Head Teacher. cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk or call into my room on a Sunday 10.00 – 12.00 for a chat, coffee, matcha tea etc. Dates for Hooray Cheder parents’ social mornings will be announced at the start of each term. These offer a chance for all parents to stay and natter during cheder. Do get in touch if something is not quite right for your child/children, or you have any concerns or compliments you’d like us to take on board.

BRS Chai School term and key dates for your diaries

STAV/AUTUMN TERM 2022

Sessions are from **10 am prompt until 12.30 pm** each Sunday excepting the following session:

16 October, 5pm: **Later Cheder** Simchat Torah and Jewish/Israeli dancing.

HALF TERM: Two-week half-term break - 23 and 30 October

Mitzvah Day: 20 November

Chanukah Fair: 11 December

Term Ends: 18 December - Chanukah Party morning

AVIV/SPRING TERM 2023

Term starts: 15 January

HALF TERM 12 February

Term ends: 19 March

KAYITZ/SUMMER TERM

Term starts: 16 April

Bank Holiday Weekend
30 April: No Session

HALF TERM: 28 May

Term ends: 2 July

A gallery of more teachers, helpers and advisors follows on page 6.



Kittah Gimmel helper James



Above and at foot of page: more of the group who had such fun at Sadeh in July, including parents and helpers. There is more about Sadeh from a volunteer on page 10.



Cheder faces to place and how to keep safe



Above, the RSY group of which Bromley's Ezra and Keo (*far right*) were a part **Right**, some faces you may see around Chai School on Sunday mornings. From top, class teacher Janvier, teacher Robert with a friend almost as colourful as he is, Hebrew specialist Sarit and Ezra, on right again, with more RSY friends.

Below: guest music teacher Vicki, Hebrew teacher Alona and the Gan's Sue



Opportunity for a youth worker and training for security volunteers

As the new academic year begins, familiar faces disappear, temporarily we hope. **Mazal tov to Zac Bates-Fisher**, who has taken up a place at Sheffield University and will be sadly missed from the choir and cheder, to **Grace**, **grand-daughter of Barbara and Alan Kurtz**, who will be Zac's neighbour in Leeds, and to all our young people embarking on new stages of their lives.

YOUTH WORKER

For those remaining in Bromley, we are seeking a part time **young people's activities and engagement worker**. Full job description and where to apply http://www.bromleyshul.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/BRS-YOUNG-PEOPLES-ACTIVITIES-AND-ENGAGEMENT-WORKER_V5.pdf

A CALL-OUT FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO HELP WITH SECURITY

For both cheder and shul events in general, **we rely mainly on volunteers to provide security cover**. This autumn, the Community Security Trust, the Jewish community's expert on many such matters, is running **courses in self-defence on recognising threats**. There's a single day in London on **7 November** and a two-day intensive residential course on **21-22 December**. To find out more: recruitment@cst.org.uk Please contact our own **Graham Harris** if you are interested in this training and/or to volunteer for **High Holyday security at BRS**: grahamh4@aol.com, and to volunteer for Shabbat mornings contact: john.posner@talk21.com **Our thanks to everyone who supports us in this way, week in, week out. A safe year to all!**



More from RSY camp...



IN OUR COMMUNITY

Page contact:
Bob Symonds:
comms@bromleyshul.org

B'NEI MITZVAH

A huge and hearty mazal tov to our seven prospective BMs, whose ceremonies will have taken place before the next HighLight comes out or after the Chanukah deadline.

Social Centre News

Numbers are on the increase at our regular twice monthly Social Centre get-togethers, which is very good to see. We were joined by many BRS members on 27 July, when memories were exchanged before the memorial plaque and classroom were dedicated to our dear friend Pauline Jeffree.



Maureen Pearlstone's report of our 10 August meeting reads: "It was so good to meet up with friends both old and new, with the opportunity to play a game of Rummikub or Scrabble, especially for those of us who confess to being a little older. We were led through some light exercise by Andreas, followed by a very tasty lunch, prepared and served to us by the wonderful helpers.

Then we were given a really interesting talk by Rev. Dr. Petra Heldt, about life as a Christian living in Jerusalem. She had many positive things to say about Israel's inclusiveness of other religions, including the fact that many Arabs were well educated and prominent in the medical profession. She described her

experience being the survivor of a terrorist attack in a Jerusalem market, where she suffered severe burns and had to be hospitalised for several months. How wonderful it is to have our Social Centre, and a special 'thank you' to Barbara Kurtz."

So many summer simchas!



Rabbi Laura with Kéo Kyazze at his bar mitzvah ceremony on 16 July.



Rabbi Larry Becker addresses Noah Wilkins at his bar mitzvah ceremony on 30 July with his mother, Amanda.



Rabbi Laura tries to catch the attention of Anneliese Valerie Darch, held in her mother's arms, following her blessing in the synagogue on 16 July.

Celebrating big birthdays with the community

Mazal tov not only to our cover boy, John Goodman, who celebrated his 90th birthday at the end of July, but to Barbara Kurtz, (below, right, with Sheila Zerihan) who celebrated her eightieth birthday and the twentieth anniversary of her bat mitzvah with a festive kiddush in the synagogue on 27 August.



Barbara contributes to the congregation in so many ways but particularly, nowadays, by helping to run the Social Centre and the Knit, Natter and Stitch Group. Previously, she served with distinction as Hon Sec for many, many years, as Chair and then as Chair of Education, all while devoting herself to her children and grandchildren and helping run a busy business. She gives 100% to everything she does. Can anyone explain how that works?

Another former BRS honorary officer has also just celebrated her 80th: **Mazal tov to Val Barnett.**

GET WELL SOON...

to Barbara Blum, Eunice Carp, Elaine Klahr, Judy Koekoek, Marilyn McKeever, Martin Posner, Heidi Small and any members we haven't heard about yet who have been indisposed. We wish you all **R'fuah Sh'lema**, a complete and speedy recovery, and...every happiness in your **new home** in Beckenham, also, **Eunice.**

Sharing your own simcha

If you or someone in your family is marrying or has recently had a baby, or has enjoyed a sporting or academic success, why not share your nachas with the congregation through publication in Highlight?

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Remembering a man of integrity, humour and love: David Franklin, 1931 to 2021

David's daughter, Judith Parks, explains: David passed away on 27 September 2021. It was the second close family bereavement I suffered last year, and I wasn't equal to writing this hesped at the time but, as we approach the first anniversary of his death, I'm glad and grateful for the chance to remember the wonderful man who was my father.

David Abraham Franklin was born on 26 November 1931 in Dublin, the son of Benjamin Franklin and Sally Burack. His family had been settled in Ireland since 1846, when his forbear Abraham Cohen arrived from Liverpool and set up as a cigar merchant in Clanbrassil Street. Branches of his family became well established, particularly in the arts, and David was always proud of being related to the Levenstons whose dance academy James Joyce mentions in *Ulysses*. He could understand Gaelic and cherished his Irish connection throughout his life.

A pioneer in his field

Along with many other young Jewish Dubliners, David went to school at Wesley College where, he fondly recalled, the Jews sometimes outnumbered the Methodists. From there he won a scholarship to Trinity College Dublin where he read for joint

honours in Mathematics and Physics. He crossed the water to Hatfield, Hertfordshire for his first job, calculating missile parabolas for the De Havilland Aircraft Company. In 1963 he moved to Elliott Automation, one of the UK's first computer companies, and began what would be his life-long work, designing and writing computer software. In 1969, he was appointed Director of the Computing Unit for Medical Sciences at St Bartholomew's Hospital. Whilst there, he co-wrote *A Guide to Medical Mathematics* and presented several academic papers arguing for the usefulness of the computer as an aid to diagnosis. He can therefore be counted among the earliest pioneers who made this now-indispensable part of the modern world a reality.

David was born into a happy and musical family, and throughout his life he had a deep love of music and of theatre, especially comedy. Characteristically, he met our mother Ruth Oldman in 1954 at a lecture Ruth's father Harry was giving on Jewish humour. Mum was a gifted pianist, and David was overjoyed to have found a girl who shared his passion for classical music. They were married in 1956 and stayed happily married until he lost Ruth (*above, with David*) to lymphoma in 2015.

As a little girl, I was besotted with my father, whom I naturally thought the cleverest, funniest, handsomest man in the whole world. My sister Rachel felt the same way. I can remember our mother saying to her, in one of those facts-of-life talks that mothers give daughters, that it didn't matter what a person looked like – you could love them



anyway. 'Like your father,' she added. 'What do you mean?' Rachel cried indignantly, 'Dad's VERY handsome!' And I think he was. Not in a conventional sense, but if ever a man's face was the window to the humour, intellect and kindness in his being, that man was our father David.

Gardening, wood 'n' wine

David came to adulthood in the 1950s, when people didn't work the long hours that we seem to work now. While I was growing up in the 1960s and 70s, what I most remember is that he had time for us, and time for his family and his home. He was a keen gardener, growing herbs and soft fruit and using them to make wine. As children, Rachel and I were used to demijohns full of fermenting blackcurrant juice quietly bubbling away in the airing cupboard. He taught himself D.I.Y and took carpentry classes – we still have a beautiful occasional table he made – and always looked after our house meticulously.

Adoring classical music as he did, he would often relax by listening to gramophone records. I can remember LP covers with names like David Oistrakh, Otto Klemperer, Dinu Lipatti. This was the way I came to know music, and it was a precious heritage. Through Ruth, he expanded his love of theatre, and throughout her amateur dramatic career he

supported her by making props, sets, sound effect tapes, and all manner of marvellous things: a pulley system for Tom Stoppard's play *After Magritte*, which calls for adjustable ceiling fitments, a noose for one of the characters to hang himself from in Alan Bennett's comedy *Habeas Corpus*, a full size Celtic cross in Don Taylor's play about the Great Plague of 1665 *The Roses of Eyam* (while working on it in the garden he baffled the neighbours by calling crossly to my mother 'I can't spend all day on the cross!').

Together with our mother, he was an enthusiastic and welcoming host. They held wonderful musical parties at their house in Southgate – with themes like Noel Coward, the Second World War and Old Time Music Hall and, when they moved to Camberwell in 1983, they loved running Crotchets, their chamber music dining club.

His Jewishness was important to him throughout his life, and when he and Ruth came to south London they were delighted to find the BRS community. David was a secular Jew, but the history and culture of his heritage was central to him. 'It's something to lean your back against,' he said to me once. A deeply caring family man, he never got over the death of Ruth, and the loss in January 2021 of his son-in-law, my husband Roger, whom he loved and depended upon, left him bereft and may have hastened his own decline. David's work, and all his remarkable achievements in the development of computer software and its application to medicine, went on in the background of our happy family life. My sister Rachel and I both wish we'd known more about it at

the time – it was just what Dad did and we didn't think to ask questions. But we always knew that our father was a man of great integrity, who took immense pride in our achievements and those of our children – after putting up with Rachel and me, he was overjoyed to have grandsons who enjoyed mathematics. Throughout his life he was a man who prized independent thinking, intellectual curiosity and artistic creativity.

David's stone setting will be at **11.30am on Sunday, 11 December** at the Western Cemetery, Bulls Cross Ride, Cheshunt EN7 5PF, followed by a buffet lunch at the Pied Bull. We would love to see you there.

Judith Parks, August 2022

Knit, Natter & Stitch

We continue to meet monthly, where possible, at my home. I am delighted to say that all the items we're making have now got "homes" to go to. Joan Goldberg, our champion stitcher, was pleased to learn that her beautiful incubator covers have finally been welcomed in Leeds' neo-natal unit – thanks here to Erin Frankel. She is now busy making fabric cot blankets for the prem baby unit at the PRUH. They are also happy to receive a steady supply of cannula mitts and knitted cot blankets. The blankets go home with the babies, so there is need for a constant supply. Mindful of the passing of time, we are making hats, scarves etc to go to Eastern Europe with the "shoeboxes" in December. The group still consists of quite a small number of regulars and new members are very welcome. Details from me at 07946 408063, **Barbara Kurtz**

PLEASE HELP BRS TO HELP OTHERS

As part of a Bromley 3 Faiths Group initiative, BRS collects for

BROMLEY BOROUGH FOODBANK.

There is a box for donations in the shul lobby. These are needed more than ever in these difficult economic times, as the demand for help grows and more people struggle. People are referred by local agencies such as Citizens Advice, and receive emergency supplies to tide them over. They are given long-life tinned and dried food, as well as toiletries and so on. Anything you bring to shul will be very gratefully received and put to good use, but if you cannot make it in person, you can **donate money** via <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/>

For more details or to offer help: **julie.binysh@btinternet.com**

Also through B3FG, BRS supports **recently arrived refugees**, including recent arrivals from Ukraine, with

"WELCOME HAMPERS"

of staple foods for families arriving in Lewisham from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan via the Refugee Council. You can donate directly to B3FG: Sort Code 204545 / Account No. 63523179.

For more information or to offer help, contact:

Howard Binysh : 07715 527911

Misty morning meditation and much more



“I came to Sadeh Farm from Kentucky!”

So says **Mandy Felice**, who is currently working on the famous local Jewish farm. She explains, “I took to Instagram in search of more far-reaching Jewish community, a community that included folks with shared interest of Tikkun Olam, an intersectional community that celebrates queerness, and Jews from all walks of life... The rabbit hole brought me to @sadeh_farm instagram where I noticed the applications for the autumn fellowship were open. Now I find myself residing in an old green caravan (Old Greenie) on the grassy fields of Sadeh.

A fellow’s day on the farm includes chore rotation of processing compost, strimming nettles, watering crops, and (everyone’s favourite) tending to the chickens! Daily programming includes all kinds of life-skill learning, from microbrewing beer and wine, to restorative land practices, to traditional bread and pastry baking, to artistic creativity workshops. Fellows also have weekly sessions covering a wide range of

topics with spiritual leaders. My favourite practice has been Avodat Lev. Occasionally we start our days a bit earlier with Avodat Lev, or service of the heart, where we meet together in the Willow Dome to sing songs of wonder and gratitude. I love carving out the space in the fields to sound our voices together. A ritual tuning-in before farm work. A misty morning meditation.

To me, Sadeh means cultivated community. I will bring this feeling of connectedness wherever go by remembering that I am part of what makes the whole Jewish community, just by being myself.

Mandy is pictured left (far right) with fellow Fellows Sarah, Rosie and Luka. Our thanks to her for this insight into a little of what goes on on the other side of the fence.

This year’s Chanukah Fair will be from 12.30 to 3.00 pm on Sunday 11 December

with everyone’s favourites, including
bagels and stalls selling
everything from plants to toys,
plus, of course, Chanukah candles
and other festival supplies, so that you
can stock up in good time.

This may seem a little premature while we are still looking forward to the High Holydays, but the next HighLight will barely be out before the Fair is upon us.

Please contact Sonia if you’d like to run a stall:
Soniahyams@yahoo.co.uk

You’ll find updates in e-Light as the day gets closer

Chanukah itself begins on 19 December.

STOP PRESS: MAZAL TOV



... to all the **Weils** on the marriage of **Robin and Jenny** on 26 August.

Artist and BRS member **Mandy Wax** is a member of Memento Collective, a group of five contemporary artists who have found inspiration in the work of Sigmund Freud. Their exhibition

Death, Dreams & Desire

responds to Freud’s ideas and thinking through a multitude of creative approaches. All of the senses will be stimulated through sound, film, photography, drawing, textiles and paint.

Mandy is interested in how traces of the past can haunt the present.

Her pieces are often about sadness, longing and loss, themes that seem particularly relevant at this time of year.

DEATH, DREAMS & DESIRE will be at **SAFEHOUSE 1, PECKHAM SE15 3SN. 22**

What makes Reform rabbis angry?

'What makes me angry?' is the title of a short book published this year by Reform Judaism and edited by Rabbi Jonathan Romain. Each short chapter is written by one of our rabbis who express their frustration about something and the extent to which it makes them angry.

Rabbi Romain himself briefly describes his anger at **widespread cruelty to animals**, which he attributes largely to Christian attitudes dating back to Thomas Aquinas in the 13th Century, and before him to the inferiority of animals relative to humans expressed by Aristotle.

BRS BOOK CLUB

Under the infectiously enthusiastic leadership of Judy Woolfe, the club has had many lively meetings online, including on *The Netanyahus*, a very humorous book. Nobody could decide how much of it was true. Its members will have discussed *Everything Flows*, Vasily Grossman's final testament, by the time you read this.

Not just books, either!

Judy is a mine of information about Jewish history, places of interest, music, literature and cultural events, and an authority on all sorts of music and a keen traveller – as are many of the other members – so please contact her about the book club – new faces and suggestions always welcome – and you never know where it might lead! At the very least you can compare notes and make recommendations: jwoolfe@ntlworld.com

Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu's anger concentrates on the **silencing of Jews** that occurred in response to the antisemitism and anti-Israel propaganda of the hard-left that took over the Labour party of Jeremy Corbyn. She felt the Labour party had been the natural political home of so many Jews since their families had arrived in this country, and is angry about the effect this episode has had on all of us who might want to participate in the ongoing discussion about Zionism, the State of Israel and a potential State of Palestine.

Rabbi Miriam Berger writes a very moving piece on the lack of a progressive Mikveh, and the **powerful role the ritual of full body immersion** can play in our physical and spiritual lives, particularly when the potential for something is not realised. She provides many examples of the challenges to mental health in which the ritual of Mikveh can provide support, such as the pain of a premature death and unsuccessful IVF. Her Wellspring Project should be considered for our support.

*Some of Rabbi Romain's own reflections have now been published under the title **The Naked Rabbi**. If you would like to review it or any other book, please tell us at comms@bromleyshul.org.uk*

Following the success of *Into the Mouth of the Lion*, **Amelia Kyazze's *Ahead of The Shadows*** is due out this month. She will speak about it to the Social Centre on **9 November** and to BRS Book Club in due course. Please watch out for dates.

Our own Rabbi Laura's chapter is on how **online abuse** makes her so angry. In contrast to Judaism which holds the community most dear, social media lead us to compare and rate ourselves. Are we doing better or worse than someone else? This can result in pretence and constantly looking for where the grass is greener, as well as abuse of others, twisted psychology, negativity and cruelty. The information we inadvertently give corporations and other third parties online is also subject to commercial and political abuse. Rabbi Laura is not against the internet of course, but does get angry about 'online abuse, misuse and exploitation of human psychology'.

The 21 short chapters in this book are **all instructive and thought provoking**. You may not agree with all the opinions expressed but, like me, you might give some thought to one or two things that make you angry and, perhaps, what you might be able to do about them.

John Posner



Books for younger BRS readers can be found among the Judaica in the cabinet in the shul lobby

Texts remote? No! They inform today's world

Reinterpreting teachings in every generation

Acharei Mot covers Leviticus chapters 16-18. When Matthew de Lange read it in April, he tackled head on what puzzles people about why we still read and try to interpret ancient and seemingly irrelevant texts that, in many cases, alienate them from formal services or even Judaism as a whole. His compellingly argued d'rasha concluded, "... **we are duty bound to reinterpret the teachings of Torah in each generation, taking into account our changed understanding of the world.** We value intentionality in a way Leviticus doesn't. I doubt I am alone in feeling remote from a world where two priests are struck dead for approaching God with incense in the wrong way."

Making sense of our texts

The duty that Matthew identified has been taken to heart by all our recent B'nei Mitzvah.

Making sense of sacrifices

Matthew was not alone. **Solly Dahdi** also had to grapple with why the priests Nadav and Avihu were struck dead for getting sacrificial procedure wrong, saying "This seems to be too harsh a punishment," and asking, "What are sacrifices for and who are they for?" "Sacrifice" in Hebrew is "korban", from the root "to be close to", so sacrifices were to help people get closer to God and respond to what God requires. Today, we speak to God through prayer... [and] we think, we act, **we do acts of kindness.** In this way, we do what God requires of us in the world. **It's what I am learning how to do ...** as a member of the air cadets. We learn skills like first aid that would

enable me to help people in the event of an air crash... and, of course, how to fly. This is a skill which you might think would be used in war, but it can also be **used for humanitarian missions.**

Why trust is vital

Maya Jones explained that Kedoshim (Lev 19) talks about how rules affect society and the Jewish people. "You should not steal nor lie to another." These two rules are so crucial that they are used commonly in the world today... **"The moment you lie or steal you break someone's trust.** This person could have been close to you or a stranger. Long after you have forgotten what you did, [they] won't forget and something important will have been broken. If lying in your personal life can cause so many ripple effects, imagine how it would affect society. **What happens to the world when you can't trust the stranger walking down the street,** when you can't trust the police keeping you safe? When you can't trust another country to stop firing weapons after [agreeing] a ceasefire or a cessation of fighting while people are evacuated? The idea of trust is that you can rely on the truth of the people around you. The moment that trust goes, so does the basis of society and everything collapses. **If we can't trust each other, the real question is, who can we trust?"**

Our current law comes from Torah

Noah Wilkins, too, was interested in the importance of justice in Jewish teaching. So much so that he prompted Rabbi Larry Becker to give a detailed and heartfelt sermon about slavery. After discussing blood avengers and

honourable solutions, Noah concluded, **"To me, Judaism is about learning, not just taking things at face value...** I think it's important we look deep into what we learn, and see how it applies to our modern lives... the fact that regulations and rules similar to some of those in the portion still exist within modern courts and judicial systems shows just how foundational and important laws and judicial principles from the Torah are, even today. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means that I am growing up, and have to interpret things for myself, including the Torah and laws like these. I must use my own experience and opinions to make decisions."

Slavery, a modern plague

Although Rabbi Becker's sermon was prompted by Noah, it was **Sam Hyams** whose portion drove him into considering how a tyrannical regime's change in attitude towards **migrants** could lead to **slavery**. "When Joseph's family came to Egypt," he said, "they were warmly welcomed. However, over a period of time the attitude towards the Israelites changed. They [were] **enslaved** and treated harshly. My portion made me think a lot about slavery. The Israelites [as] slaves in Egypt, were treated poorly. Moses, as a young man, could not resist trying to stop the injustice happening before his eyes; he killed an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite, even though he did not know the man being beaten.

"Slavery is a true plague of the world today. Modern slavery is the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain. [It] happens all around us, but often out of sight. People can often become entrapped making

our clothes, serving our food, picking our crops, working in factories or in our houses. From the outside, [these] can look like normal jobs but people are being controlled. They can face violence or threats, be forced into inescapable debt or have their passports taken away and be threatened with deportation. Many [who] have fallen into this oppressive trap were trying to escape poverty... to improve their lives and support their families. 40 million people are estimated to be trapped in modern slavery worldwide today. One in four ... are children, almost three quarters women and girls; over 10,000 were identified as potential victims in the UK in 2019. My portion [also] made me think about tyranny. Pharaoh is a tyrant and has absolute power... unfortunately tyrants exist in the world today. These people are corrupt with power and treat people in awful ways to stay in power... this is not right, and the Torah attempts to teach us this."

Help not shame

Mercury Hodges said, "My reading refers to a mysterious skin disease, often, incorrectly, interpreted to be leprosy. At first, I [wondered what] leprosy had to do with sin. Then I ... found out that the mysterious skin condition ... is often **called 'the gossip disease'**, because it only appeared on a person who spoke ill of others; the punishment made visible what you did behind people's backs. Gossip was a major pastime in Biblical times, and it hasn't gone away. In those times punishment was about inflicting suffering and shame on the person who has sinned. Perhaps **these days we focus**

more on trying to make people understand the consequences of their actions. For example, on social media people might say terrible things, but there will be just as many people ready to defend the victim and explain why it's wrong. We also see this in friendship groups. If someone behaves badly they're often made to see the error of their ways when others come together to point out their bad behaviour – **this, to me, is the true meaning of community.** It's these kinds of people that I want to be surrounded by... For me, one of the most important things about becoming B'mitzvah is taking responsibility for myself and my behaviour. **Becoming an adult is about putting out into the world that which I want to get back."**

Learning to love, not hate

Keo Kyazze, whose Hebrew name is Shalom, peace, ironically had a portion that "describes God as angry, full of rage, and rewarding those who avenge God," even though, as he said, "Judaism teaches [that] **God created all humans in God's image - whatever our background, race, age, sexuality or gender...** Throughout time, there has always been racism, segregation, sexism, extremism, and hatred of people who are different. But ... always, there were people trying to fight against it, to fight for what was right. Often, there are many, many more people who believe in the goodness of others than those who want to hate. We just need to hear from those people, and believe that we can make a difference." He closed by quoting Nelson Mandela's words, "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion.

People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for **love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."**

That's all, folks! (for now)

Sadly, we just don't have room to reproduce in full these excellent d'rashot. However, we hope the extracts have given you a sense of the proactive way in which our young people* go about finding meaning and context for ancient teachings in a world that has undergone massive change even in their lifetimes, never mind the past several thousand years. The full texts are available on application. We've several more BRS BMs before 2022 is out, never mind 5783, so watch this space!

**Of course, we are also indebted to our many adult readers whose insights have sustained and inspired us year in, year out, not least during the recent pandemic.*

Gifts, books and Judaica for all ages await at BRS



Don't forget our Judaica shop in the BRS lobby. Information from and special requests to Shane shanelask@gmail.com

MORE JEWISH RESPONSES 5782/3

As the new year approaches, the Board of Deputies reflects on events affecting and affected by the Jewish community

Although the worst of the pandemic appears to have passed, says **Marie van der Zyl**, President of the Board of Deputies, in her Rosh Hashanah message, "life for many of us has not been easy this year. Like the Covid epidemic which preceded it, there is not a huge amount any of us can do to change the [economic] situation as individuals. However, as a community, what we saw during Covid was a wonderful willingness to help ... the less able among us. This spirit is just what we need now when so many people are experiencing so much hardship...

"Of course, we don't need to be reminded that there are millions suffering in Ukraine, as Russia continues its senseless aggression there. We continue to both be inspired by the resolve of the Ukrainian people, and to pray for peace. I urge all those who are able to donate towards the charities collecting on behalf of the victims of this terrible conflict.

"On a happier note, this summer we celebrate the second anniversary of the Abraham Accords which brought together Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco in a landmark agreement which has sparked new hope in the Middle East and the prospect of a peaceful future to the region. Sadly, not all parties have bought into the spirit of reconciliation which is why we campaigned hard

for the UK Government to ban Hamas in its entirety and were delighted with the legislation which means that the organisation is no longer able to lobby for support in this country.

"Over the past 12 months, we have advocated for the small but vibrant Belfast community which found itself struggling for its very existence after the Northern Ireland Protocol cut off its supply of kosher food, [as well as ensuring that every candidate in the] local, regional and Devolved Assembly Elections [understood] the key areas of interest and concern for Jewish communities across the country. Thanks to Board of Deputies campaigning, the Government asked social media companies to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism so that racists will no longer be able to harass Jewish users with impunity.

"[With this summer's reminder of] the importance of action against climate change, we are working with EcoSynagogue to make a difference within our community.

"We are also working to facilitate the [recommendations] of the ground-breaking Commission on Racial Inclusivity in the Jewish community... We provide official inspection of religious education in Jewish schools and our team monitors and protects our religious freedoms.

"The Board of Deputies is here to help and support Jews across the UK, whatever their interests and concerns. I wish everyone a **Shana Tovah** and a happy year ahead."

See page 15 for the Movement for Reform Judaism's new year message



SAVE THE DATE!

**A special community-wide
@Home weekend for BRS
Friday to Sunday evening
23 to 25 June 2023**

We'll be staying home in our synagogue and in other venues nearby to cherish our synagogue, our community and our members and potential members!

For all ages, all stages and all interests

The weekend will be a joyous mixture of just being together, celebrating, services, learning, playing and singing. We'd love (and need) lots of participation in planning and during the weekend.

You can join our fabulous "weekend @home" team by emailing Michelle Brooks Evans, Adrian Jackson, Vicki Hart and Rabbi Laura at weekendaway@bromleyshul.org.uk

Fuller details soon. *Meanwhile...*

SHANA TOVA 5783
to all our readers
from
Rabbi Laura,
the Board
and all at BRS



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IN CASE OF EMERGENCY (in the event of a bereavement)
Janet Posner (07841 373309) or Stephen Weil (07764 475209)

A NEW YEAR MESSAGE FOR 5783 **from the Movement for Reform Judaism**

This Rosh Hashanah will, for many, be the first time post-pandemic that we will all gather in great numbers, without restrictions, and we are looking forward to the sweetness and joy that comes with being together in person in our communities.

However, the year we leave behind does not immediately promise a better future. There is much to worry about: the exceptional heatwaves of the summer confirm the pressing nature of climate change and remind us of our personal and communal responsibilities towards the environment.

The War in Ukraine reminds some of us of our own ancestral homes and ... experiences of displacement of previous generations, and has reawakened our obligation to look after refugees and the dispossessed... The worrying cost of living rise has pushed many households to the brink of poverty. It, too, calls out to us to help alleviate the hardship of others by giving tzedakah, or to foodbanks, and to offer ourselves as volunteers wherever we can. *(there are details of ways in which we can do this at BRS on p9)*

We read: 'on Rosh Hashanah we consider how judgement is formed and on Yom Kippur we consider how it is sealed, but repentance and prayer and good deeds can change the harshness in our destiny'. Although the past year leaves us with many worries for [the future], belonging to communities that are part of a Reform Movement dedicated to Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) gives us a voice, and purpose in a changing world.

When things are broken they do not have to remain that way; we can turn things around. Teshuvah means 'repentance', but also 'turning'. As a movement, we are committed to turning things around and responding when response is needed, reaching out to refugees, helping combat climate change, and [creating] a more sustainable, kinder society, starting with our own communities, and so ensuring that 5783 will be a truly good and sweet year.

Please send contributions for Chanukah HighLight to: comms@bromleyshul.org.uk
by 20 NOVEMBER 2022 and if you have an idea for a regular or one-off feature, or a skill that you can bring to the production of HighLight or its online weekly companion, e-Light, please tell us at the same address.




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shana tova

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