

# OR ZARUA

Congregation

NEWSLETTER / VOLUME 21:6

AV / ELUL / TISHRI / HESHVAN 5770

AUGUST-OCTOBER 2009

## Scattered Yet Together

By Ortal Isaac

*Editor's Note: Ortal Isaac wrote this article last May as a ninth grader for a school project. She attends Lycée Français de New York.*

**“And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, as dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass...”**  
—Micah 5:6

Dandelion flowers—commonly referred to as a variety of weeds—reside in playgrounds, graveyards, parks, grass plots in parking lots, streets, mountainsides, near rivers, streams. Everywhere. Anywhere. They are perceived as annoyances, flowers that sprout up anywhere, unexpected and unwanted in people's perfect, trim gardens. Many see them as pesky small shrouds of white fluff, simply sitting, waiting for a gust of wind to pass by and whisk away their translucent crowns to some distant place. However people often overlook many things about the dandelion in their quick glances. With small, delicate, intricate seeds ensconced within a blanket of what could be pieces of clouds, the dandelion manages to produce true beauty while struggling: living in harsh environments, surrounded by biting, icy winds, sweltering heat, drought, animals of prey... Factors that make life a struggle for a mere dandelion force it to fight to be living every day. More than simply having to survive, dandelions need to plant seeds to ensure the blooming of new flowers. The tiny seeds travel on the wind's wings, miles and miles away. They travel on water, animals, leaves, and peoples'

coats. Like all flowers, the dandelion has adapted to have a means of safeguarding the future generations held within the seeds: by adapting, making them air-light. The Jewish people are very similar to flowers, constantly having been oppressed, ostracized, hunted, exiled, and persecuted throughout history. When Jews are exiled from one country, they are like the dandelion's seeds—being blown away, scattered, sent wandering in the wind. Yet these seeds form new communities, which blossom all around the world, thanks to an invaluable spirit and a sense of togetherness that have stayed strong through the Diaspora and centuries of struggles.

The Maccabees. Masada. The destruction of the First and Second Temples. Slavery in Egypt. Amalek. Haman. The Inquisition. Blood Libels. The Dreyfus Affair. The Holocaust. Persecution after persecution, exile after exile. Pogroms. Hatred. Violence. In every time and age, a new tyrant rises up against us. A new Amalek, a new Pharaoh, a new Hitler, a leader of anti-semitism. Yet we have overcome time after time, as we have been chased over and over again, as the saying goes: “They oppressed us, we won, let's eat.” The Jews may be scattered around the globe, but have always had their Judaism to unite them. This tie is so strong because Judaism is not just a religion, it is a culture, filled with traditions, languages, holidays, values, opinions, customs, philosophies, texts, foods, peoples...

We may have traveled far, but in adapting to different countries and lifestyles, we have enriched Jewish culture over the years, not lost it. That is what makes our religion so strong—the threads that hold it together are not simply one dull gray, but thousands of colors, deep hues of red, orange, brown and gold from the Middle East, rich blues, purples, and creamy whites from Europe, fiery tones of green, yellow and turquoise from South America. We are a scattered field of the most beautiful and diverse flowers from across the globe, continuing to blossom and grow, each generation teaching the next all it knows so it can grow to its full potential.

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### “WELCOME BACK” KIDDUSH LUNCH

Saturday, September 12

Welcome the month of Elul by feeding your body and your soul! On September 12, Or Zarua will sponsor a Kiddush lunch after Shabbat services. This event will provide a wonderful opportunity to greet new and prospective members as well as congregants returning from their summer travels. Please invite friends who may be interested in joining Or Zarua. No reservations are required.

ק"ק אור זרוע  
CONGREGATION

# OR ZARUA

A CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE  
FOUNDED 1989

127 EAST 82ND STREET  
NEW YORK, NY 10028  
phone: 212-452-2310 fax: 212-452-2103  
www.orzarua.org

DR. HARLAN J. WECHSLER, *Rabbi*  
ANDREW J. FRACKMAN, *President*  
HARVEY M. BRENNER, *Executive Director*  
ILANA BURGESS, *Youth Education Director*  
CHARLES SPIELHOLZ, *Newsletter Editor*

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Andrew J. Frackman

The past two months have been a busy time for Congregation Or Zarua.

- We completed our fiscal year on June 30. The results confirmed our hopes: we experienced a relatively modest deficit, thanks largely to effective cost-savings that we implemented and the leadership of our financial team, headed by Alan Nadel and Morty Schwartz.

- Following a search led by Diane Okrent, Sara Stone and Alan Ilberman, the Board hired a new executive director, Harvey Brenner, who started on July 14. We have also been fortunate in being able to hire as a full-time bookkeeper Luisa Paulino, who had been working with us since March on a temporary basis. We look forward to working with Harvey and Luisa, together with Dina Linsk and our building staff, led by Anthony Banfield, in the years to come. Please welcome them when you have a chance.

- We are hard at work on plans for the High Holy Days and next year's programming, which you will hear more about later in the summer.

- And, we have mailed membership and Hebrew School materials to you all in a timely fashion, even though we were operating without an executive director.

- We had some wonderful programming over the past few months, including the exhilarating performance of our own Klezmer Band at the Congregation's Annual Meeting in May and a powerful lecture by David Harris, the head of the American Jewish Committee, on "The State of World Jewry" in June. We also formally dedicated our Congregational cemetery section at Beth El Cemetery in New Jersey in early June.

In short, we have been busy during a time when we have been short-handed. I personally want to thank the officers of the Congregation, who have stepped in to handle all of these tasks and operate the Congregation in such an admirable fashion. We are fortunate to have such able leaders.

We welcome four new trustees to our Board—Betsy Dizengoff, Mechele Flaum, Sarah Klagsbrun, and Ben Marcus. It is important for us as a community to bring onto the Board new trustees who bring their own unique perspectives on our community. I also thank Shelly Binder, Fran Klagsbrun, and Michael Schwartz for their prior service on the Board.

We have a lot ahead of us early in the autumn, with Rosh Hashanah starting on the evening of September 18, less than two weeks after Labor Day. We are always focused on improving the strength of our services, which get better year after year. As a community, we must all stretch this year to increase our giving in order to ensure that we do not run a deficit.

Our deficit last year was entirely attributable to a shortfall in giving to the Kol Nidre appeal, which fell during the worst moment in the economic crisis. We can—and must—strive to bridge that shortfall this year on Kol Nidre in order to ensure the continued vibrancy of our community and to avoid a reduction in our full range of services and programming. A modest increase by each of us will permit us to maintain the high level of programming that we have had in the past.

L' Shanah Tovah!

## OZ Committee Chairs

ADMINISTRATION	Alan Ilberman
AESTHETICS	Aaron Shelden
BOOK DISCUSSION	Reed Schneider
BUILDING	Diane Okrent
CEMETERY	Aliza Kaplan Mort Schwartz
HESED	Stephanie Failla
HEVRA KADISHA	Vera Silver Gerry Solomon
HOUSE	Janet Katz
ISRAEL	Aliza Kaplan
LIBRARY	Barry Feldman
MEMBERSHIP	Michael Schwartz
MINYAN	Sheldon Adler
PROGRAMMING	Sara Stone
PUBLIC RELATIONS	Aaron Shelden
PURIM SPIEL	Arthur Rosenbloom Bonnie Maslin Tibor Feldman Barbara Sassoon
SCHOOL	Betsy Dizengoff
TORAH/HAFTARAH	Yaakov Shechter
WEBMASTER	Jay Palmer

If you would like to serve on a synagogue committee, please contact the office for the committee chair's email address.

**MEET, GREET & SEAT** Ushers are needed for Shabbat services throughout the year. Please email Janet Katz at [jmkatz@nyc.rr.com](mailto:jmkatz@nyc.rr.com) to add your name to our list of volunteers. You will be contacted by email only. Your help is greatly appreciated.

**HIGH HOLY DAY SERVICES 5770/2009**

**Friday, September 18**

**Erev Rosh Hashanah**

Evening (Ramaz) 6:15 p.m.–7:15 p.m.

**Saturday, September 19**

**First Day Rosh Hashanah**

Morning (Ramaz) 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Evening (Ramaz) 6:45 p.m.–7:40 p.m.

**Sunday, September 20**

**Second Day Rosh Hashanah**

Morning (Ramaz) 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Tashlikh 5:45 p.m.–6:15 p.m.

(in Central Park)

Evening (Ramaz) 6:45 p.m.–7:35 p.m.

**Saturday, September 26**

**Shabbat Shuvah**

9:00 a.m.

**Sunday, September 27**

**Erev Yom Kippur**

Minhah (Or Zarua) 1:20 p.m.–1:45 p.m.

Kol Nidre (Ramaz) 6:15 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

**Monday, September 28**

**Yom Kippur/Yizkor**

Services (Ramaz) 9:00 a.m.–7:30 p.m.

**Friday, October 2**

**Erev Sukkot**

6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

**Saturday, October 3**

**First Day Sukkot**

Morning 9:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Evening 6:20 p.m.–7:20 p.m.

**Sunday, October 4**

**Second Day Sukkot**

Morning 9:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

**Friday, October 9**

**Hoshana Rabbah**

Morning 7:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m.

**Erev Shemini Atzeret**

Evening 6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

**Saturday, October 10**

**Shemini Atzeret/Yizkor**

Morning 8:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

**Erev Simhat Torah**

Evening 6:15 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

**Sunday, October 11**

**Simhat Torah**

Morning 9:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

**High Holy Days, 5770/2009**

The New Year, 5770, begins Friday evening, September 18. As has been our tradition, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Services will be held at the Ramaz Upper School Auditorium, 60 East 78th Street (between Park and Madison Avenues).

All service times are listed in the box at left. If you require additional tickets, please contact Luisa Paulino at lpaulino@orzarua.org or 212-452-2310, extension 10. Tickets are \$350 and include Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Services.

Tashlikh will be held at the Central Park Reservoir on the second day of Rosh Hashanah, Sunday, September 20 at 5:45 p.m., prior to the evening service, which begins at 6:45 p.m.

Or Zarua will also be offering Alternate Services for the High Holy Days, to be held in the Ramaz Chapel on the second floor; their smaller size provide a much more intimate davening experience. Or Zarua's Alternate Services focus on interaction, singing, discussion and interpretation of history, prayers and customs. Participants include both novice and learned daveners.

Since the Ramaz Chapel only seats about 100 people, you will need to make a reservation if you wish to attend the Alternate Service. Please contact Luisa Paulino (lpaulino@orzarua.org or 212-452-2310, extension 10) as soon as possible.

**OR ZARUA YOUTH HIGH HOLY DAY SERVICES 5770/2009**

**Rosh Hashanah**

**Saturday, September 19 (First Day) 10:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m.**

2-4 years old (accompanied by an adult)  
Kindergarten-Grade 1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-6, Grades 7 and above

**Sunday, September 20 (Second Day) 10:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m.**

2-4 years old (accompanied by an adult)  
Kindergarten-Grade 1  
Grades 2-3  
Grades 4-teens, Special Service

**Kol Nidre**

**Sunday, September 27 6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.**

Grades 1-3 and Grades 4-6

**Yom Kippur**

**Monday, September 28 11:15 a.m.–1:15 p.m.**

2-4 years old (accompanied by an adult)  
Kindergarten-Grade 1  
Grades 2-3  
Grades 4-teens, Special Service

A playroom will be open during all services for very young children who are accompanied and supervised by an adult. Children may not be left alone in this room.

**ADDITIONAL HIGH HOLY DAY TICKETS** are \$350 each.

To order, contact Luisa Paulino at lpaulino@orzarua.org or 212-452-2310, extension 10.

**DINNER IN THE OZ SUKKAH**

**Erev Sukkot, Friday, October 2**

Services begin at 6:00 p.m., Dinner promptly at 7:15 p.m.

**Reservations must be received before noon on Friday, September 25.**

\$36 adults; \$15 children aged 5-12; No charge for children under 5

RSVP: 212-452-2310, ext. 39 / lpaulino@orzarua.org / www.orzarua.org

## Rabbi Silber: *Echoes of the Akedah*



Rabbi David Silber will lecture on Wednesday evening, September 23, at 8:00 p.m., on "Echoes of the Akedah." His talk will describe and discuss uses of the Akedah story, which is read on Rosh Hashanah.

The lectures of Rabbi Silber, founder and dean of the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education, have become a staple part of Or Zarua's schedule of events in connection with the High Holy Days. Based on his past talks, we can count on an interesting and thought-provoking presentation which will enrich our understanding of a key part of the Rosh Hashanah service.

The Drisha Institute, opened in 1979, offers an advanced program of Jewish studies for women, providing women full access to classical texts of the Jewish tradition and preparing women for leadership positions in Jewish education. A number of Or Zarua members have studied at Drisha. For the past several years, Drisha has also provided increasing opportunities for men.

Rabbi Silber also lectures and teaches in other venues. For twelve years he conducted a weekly Bible class at a midtown law firm. Several of Rabbi Silber's lectures on the Book of Samuel are collected in the *Tanakh Companion to the Book of Samuel*, published by Ben Yehudah Press.

## EATING IN THE SUKKAH

It is a mitzvah to eat in the sukkah during the Festival of Sukkot. Or Zarua is offering congregants several opportunities to have lunch or dinner in the sukkah on the roof of our building.

### Dinner on Erev Sukkot

Friday, October 2

*This meal requires reservations. The cost is*

\$36 for adults, \$15 for children aged 5 to 12, children under 5 are free. RSVP by Friday, September 25.

### Two Free Enhanced Kiddush Lunches Immediately After Services

Saturday, October 3

Sunday, October 4

*No reservation required for free lunches.*

### "Bring Your Own" Dinner

Saturday, October 3

*No reservation required for this event.* Or Zarua will provide challah and dessert. You bring dinner and all service items, including beverages, plates, cups, napkins, and utensils. All food brought to the sukkah must be kosher.

If you wish to dine in the sukkah at times other than those listed above, please notify the synagogue office. We ask that you conclude your evening meal by 9:00 p.m.

To make reservations for any event, call the synagogue office (212-452-2310, extension 39), email Luisa Paulino (lpaulino@orzarua.org) or sign up online at [www.orzarua.org](http://www.orzarua.org).

## SLEEP IN THE SUKKAH

*Saturday, October 3*

All Or Zarua children are invited to join our overnight sleepover starting after Shabbat at 7:00 p.m.

*Have your parents RVSP to Ilana Burgess at [iburgess@orzarua.org](mailto:iburgess@orzarua.org) by Friday, September 25.*

## ETROGIM AND LULAVIM FOR SUKOT

The joyous holiday of Sukkot begins Friday evening, October 2. Congregation Or Zarua will again arrange for the purchase of etrogim and lulavim. All orders are delivered in complete sets: etrog in a box, lulav with hadassim and aravot in a bag. Three different sets, each certified for use on Sukkot, are available:

- Standard Sets (Gimmel), \$55.00 each
- Choice Sets (Bet), \$65.00 each
- Special Sets (Aleph), \$80.00 each

If you wish to purchase a set, please be sure that your order is received at the Or Zarua office by noon on Wednesday, September 16.

You may order etrogim and lulavim sets online at [www.orzarua.org](http://www.orzarua.org) or by contacting Dina Linsk (212-452-2310, extension 12 or [dlinsk@orzarua.org](mailto:dlinsk@orzarua.org)).

The sets may be picked up at Or Zarua on Thursday, October 1 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday, October 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon.

## SELIHOT

*Saturday, September 12*

8:00 p.m.

### SINFUL DESSERTS

Join us for an evening of community as we usher in the Yomim Noraim with a dessert reception.

9:15 p.m.

### STUDY

Rabbi Wechsler will teach "Mystical Repentance in the Writings of Rav Kook." His source is Rav Kook's *Lights of Repentance*.

10:00 p.m.

### SELIHOT SERVICES



# HARVEY M. BRENNER, *Our New Executive Director*



Harvey M. Brenner has joined Or Zarua after serving as executive director of Temple Har Shalom in Warren, New Jersey, for the past six years, following a successful career in sales, marketing and general business management for more than 30 years.

He has been responsible for budgets in excess of 25 million dollars and managed as many as 250 people for such "household name" companies as International Playtex, Max Factor and Faberge.

Harvey holds degrees in Economics (B.A., Queens College) and Education (M.S. Ed., St. John's University), as well as certifications in Forecasting and Budgeting and Strategic Planning (SPAR Institute).

Having passed several examinations in synagogue management, including personnel and facilities management, finance and budgeting, temple governance, temple membership and public relations, Hebrew literacy, Reform Jewish customs and practices, and the history of Reform Judaism, Harvey was recently awarded his F.T.A. credentials as a Fellow in Temple Administration by NATA, The National Association for Temple Administration (his professional peer organization), The Central Conference of American Rabbis, and The Union for Reform Judaism. His final requirement was the submission of an original thesis on "Synagogue Consolidations and Mergers and the Role of the Synagogue Administrator," which is available online at: [natanet.org/uploads/5388HBrennerMergingCongregations.pdf](http://natanet.org/uploads/5388HBrennerMergingCongregations.pdf)

Harvey also has served his own Conservative synagogue (Temple Beth Ahm, Aberdeen, New Jersey) in virtually every "lay leader" capacity, including

nearly nine and a half years as chairman of the board.

As a college student and newlywed, he served many Long Island congregations as youth leader, USY advisor and youth director.

In conclusion, Harvey feels it's "b'sherrt" that he work in synagogue life as his maternal grandmother was a founder and only honorary president of Jamaica Jewish Center in Jamaica, New York, back in the early 1900's. It's only fitting, therefore, that he follow in her footsteps and looks forward to a long and successful association with Congregation Or Zarua.

## OZ USY Wins METNY Grant

By Laurie Dien

OZ USY successfully applied for and received a METNY USY Chapter Enhancement Grant. METNY (New York Metropolitan Region of United Synagogue Youth) created this initiative to help USY chapters revitalize their programming. After the programs take place, chapters will report back to METNY and the programs will then go into METNY USY's Program Bank, which will serve as a resource for USY chapters to learn and share ideas. The positive Jewish experience that our youth have in USY makes an impact that lasts a lifetime! So what's in store for OZ USY?

**A Night at the OZ Club!** On Saturday evening, October 17, from 8:30

p.m to 11:00 p.m. the social hall at Or Zarua will be transformed into a Karaoke night club with a D.J., an ice cream "bar," and hip hop dancing led by an expert. All Jewish teens in grades 9 through 12 are invited. Admission for this fun evening is only \$10! For further information, contact our USY advisor Jenny Wallner ([jenzo25@gmail.com](mailto:jenzo25@gmail.com)) or Ilana Burgess (212-452-2310, extension 15 or [iburgess@orzarua.com](mailto:iburgess@orzarua.com)). Check your email and snail mail boxes for more information.

And don't forget we also have a **Kadima chapter** for Jewish youth in grades 6 through 8. For more information on Kadima, please contact Ilana Burgess and watch for upcoming events.

### Youth Education Calendar

#### SEPTEMBER 2009

- Wed 9 In service for teachers
- Thu 10 In service for teachers
- Mon 14 Hebrew School begins
- Mon 21 B'nai Jeshrun, 6 p.m.
- Sat 26 Junior Congregation, 10:30 a.m.
- Mon 28 Yom Kippur (*no classes*)

#### OCTOBER 2009

- Sat 3 Sleep in the Sukkah, 7 p.m. (*all children are invited*)
- Mon 12 Columbus Day (*no classes*)
- Sat 17 USY: A Night at the OZ Club, 8:30 p.m.
- Mon 19 B'nai Jeshrun, 6 p.m.
- Sat 24 Junior Congregation, 10:30 a.m.

#### NOVEMBER 2009

- Sat 14 Junior Congregation, 10:30 a.m.
- Mon 16 B'nai Jeshrun, 6 p.m.
- Sun 22 Annual Talent Show, 10:30 a.m. (*everyone is invited*)
- Wed 25 Thanksgiving (*no classes*)
- Thu 26 Thanksgiving (*no classes*)

# A DREAM FULFILLED: The Or Zarua Cemetery Dedication

By Gerry Solomon

With the dedication of the Or Zarua section of Beth El Cemetery in Washington Township, New Jersey, Congregation Or Zarua realized one of its earliest goals, set by the synagogue's founders two decades ago.

As a group prepared to leave for the cemetery on a sun-drenched Sunday morning in early June, Rabbi Wechsler reminded the morning's minyan that one of the first developments after Or Zarua's founding was the creation of the Hevra Kadisha; the intent was to follow that with the purchase of a cemetery. The dedication of the cemetery, then, represents the fulfillment of that dream.



Entering the Or Zarua section of Beth El Cemetery through the stone threshold.

"The community of Or Zarua has meaning both in this life and in the next one," said the Rabbi. "With the dedication of our cemetery Or Zarua is now able to serve all of our people, from cradle to grave, the entire span of living."

Led by Rabbi Wechsler, the Or Zarua congregants entered the cemetery section through its stone threshold for the hour-long dedication.

At the landscaped central area, Psalms 91, 102 and 103 were recited.

Next, Or Zarua "took possession" of the cemetery plot. Rabbi Wechsler explained that real property is acquired



Rabbi Wechsler (center) recited psalms at the landscaped central area.

by walking around the perimeter. As we walked completely around the Or Zarua section, we recited the Psalm 104. This psalm speaks of the glory of the entire creation, from the mountains, to the animals, to the human beings. Its words put into perspective who we are and what is the meaning of our life span.

The dedication ceremony concluded with the burial of Or Zarua's genizah—worn-out siddurim and other writings and objects, such as tefillin, that must be buried according to Jewish tradition because they contain the Holy Name or are used in worship.

After the Rabbi and congregants took turns shoveling dirt into the opened grave, he recited Psalm 119, an alphabetic acrostic made up of eight verses for each letter



"Taking possession" by walking around the perimeter of the plot.

of the Hebrew alphabet. We spelled the name of our city by reciting the verses which spell out the name New York. (This psalm is often said to help someone who is ill; one takes the letters of the person's name and recites those verses.) We recited "New York" to pray for our city, its health and its welfare. As Rabbi Wechsler noted, here too there is nothing like being in the cemetery to remind us how important it is to seek the welfare of our home and to contribute to its well-being.

In light of 9/11 and the city's suffering, these prayers have special poignancy.



Rabbi Wechsler and congregants took turns in the burial of Or Zarua's genizah.

Being in New Jersey, he added, emphasizes how so much of the suffering of 9/11 was felt by people who were from New Jersey but who died in New York. The Beth El Cemetery is located in Bergen County, New Jersey, near the town of Paramus.

The Or Zarua section of Beth El Cemetery was purchased three years ago from the Workmen's Circle. It has 276 gravesites available for sale only to current Or Zarua members for burial of persons of the Jewish faith. About half have already been sold. If you are interested in purchasing graves, please contact Harvey Brenner or Andrew Frackman.

# The Case for Israel: Democracy's Outpost

In a new landmark documentary, *The Case for Israel: Democracy's Outpost*, Alan Dershowitz asserts "it is time for a proactive defense of Israel to be offered in the court of public opinion." Mr. Dershowitz, a distinguished Harvard Law School professor and outspoken champion of individual rights, presents evidence from leading historians, analysts, legal experts and leaders on both sides of the political spectrum to make the definitive case for Israel's legitimacy and right to self-defense.

A screening of the film will be presented at Congregation Or Zarua in late October or early November, in co-sponsorship with the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America. Mr. Dershowitz is expected to lead a discussion of the film accompanied by Rabbi Harlan Wechsler and CAMERA. The 77-minute film by Doc Emet Productions premiered last fall at the Haifa International Film Festival, with a subsequent American premier in New York, and is currently screening at film festivals throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Israel.

In *The Case for Israel: Democracy's Outpost*, Dershowitz argues that real peace in the Middle East can only occur when the Palestinians, Arabs and their allies value the creation of a Palestinian state more than they oppose the presence of a Jewish state.

Through incisive conversations with 28 commentators—ranging from Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Ambassador Dennis Ross, and former Israel Supreme Court President Aharon Barak to Opposition Leader Benjamin Netanyahu and senior analysts Caroline Glick and Natan Sharansky—Dershowitz discusses Israel's history, Jewish claims to a homeland,

individual rights under Israel's democratic system of government, the security fence, and military conduct in the face of terrorist attacks.

Nearly two years in the making, *The Case for Israel: Democracy's Outpost* is produced by Gloria Greenfield and Michael Yohay, the principals of Doc Emet Productions, who together bring 50 years of film production experience to the project. The film has been an official selection at numerous international film festivals, including special mention or award designation in the documentary category. The screening, discussion and reception are open to the community.

## TALMUD CLASS

Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m.  
beginning October 14

conducted by  
RABBI WECHSLER

Classes are taught in English; familiarity with Hebrew or Aramaic or previous study of Talmud is not necessary.

## SHABBAT MELODIES ON OR ZARUA WEBSITE

You can access the Shabbat Melodies page directly at  
<http://www.orzarua.org/davening.shtml>

Or go to [www.orzarua.org](http://www.orzarua.org) and click the link on the home page.

Shabbat Melodies are in mp3 and wma formats, which play in both Mac and Windows environments.

## OZ Book Discussions

Our next book discussion is scheduled for Sunday, October 18, at 7:30 p.m. in the Or Zarua library. Our reading list in 2008-2009 included the following titles: *The Septembers of Shiraz* by Dalia Sofer, *The Ministry of Special Cases* by Nathan Englander, *The Life of David* by Robert Pinsky, *Friendly Fire* by A.B. Yehoshua, *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks, and *A Pigeon and a Boy* by Meir Shalev. We are still determining our reading list for the New Year, 5770, and welcome recommendations from congregants. For more information, please call the office at 212-452-2310, extension 12, or Reed Schneider at 212-860-8611.

**OZ CRAFTS CLUB** Knit or crochet squares for a child's blanket, crochet kippot for a Hebrew school in S'derot, or work on a project of your own. All ages and skill levels are welcome. We generally meet the second Sunday of every month from 10:15-11:45 a.m. in the library. Our next meetings are scheduled for August 9, September 13, October 18, November 8 and December 13. For more information, contact Carrie Fox at [cfox@aya.yale.edu](mailto:cfox@aya.yale.edu).

## THREE-DAY CRASH COURSE IN HEBREW

This course, taught by Mark Somerstein, is designed to give people a chance to learn to read Hebrew in the most economical way. Many have found their way to Hebrew literacy by following this road. It relies on proven methods that empower people to teach themselves. It is an excellent way to begin the High Holiday period and may enable you to better follow the services. This journey begins at 7:30 p.m. on the 7th floor of Or Zarua on Wednesday, September 9, and continues on Thursday, September 10 and Tuesday, September 15. Let's take it together. To register, please call 212-452-2310, extension 12 or email [dlinsk@orzarua.org](mailto:dlinsk@orzarua.org).

## Scattered Yet Together

*continued from page 1*

The universal sense of community in Judaism is one that I love. The importance of traditions and “passing the torch,” communicating knowledge to the next generations is a large part of Jewish culture. For the seeds of a flower to grow and thrive when the time comes for them to bloom into flowers themselves, they need to be properly taken care of, well watched over, nurtured. Giving the younger generation knowledge about history so that it can shape the future; teaching them about Torah, holidays, Halakha, Tzedakah, Jewish history, Talmud, and customs is so important because it instills ethics, values, and morals that they will remember for their entire lives.

With holidays like Passover and Sukkot, Jews go back in time every year,

all over the world, to relive past struggles to always keep memories and traditions alive, by sitting in the Sukkah, or welcoming Elijah the Prophet into their homes. These holidays, traditions, texts, and stories are the base of Judaism, no matter what denomination, race, gender, or nationality you belong to. These customs are what hold the Jewish people together, no matter how far apart they may be, and once the younger generation of Jews has matured with them and thrives in the world, they, like the seeds of flowers, blossom and bloom, their petals of diversity, rainbow-colored, stretching into every domain, all over the world: art, science, literature, music, dance, math, politics, philosophy, finance, filmmaking, acting, medicine... Jews' success has not gone unnoticed: scores of Nobel Prizes, Academy Awards have gone to them. They have had and continue to have a profound impact

upon the advancement of world culture, technology, and science. Like flowers, Jews continue to plant their seeds across the globe, ensuring that vibrant flowers continue to bloom, thanks to the nurturing they receive.

The Jews are a dispersed people, much like the seeds of flowers, drifting in the wind. Yet once those seeds find resting ground, they bloom into the most unique flowers, thanks to the Jewish sense of togetherness and community which has united us over the centuries, no matter how far apart. It is this sense of community which most heartens me about my Jewish heritage, this spirit derived from Torah, and all the various traditions, opinions and customs of Jews around the world, that still exists and is strong despite years of oppression. This spirit still helps the Jewish people bloom into some of the most colorful flowers in society today.



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