

Or Zarua

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May the King Answer Us When We Call: The Nature of Jewish Prayer

An adult education course on four Sundays between Pesah and Shavuot by Marc Ashley

Does God respond to prayers about who should win a football game? Even if we conclude not, is it less absurd to think that God responds to prayers about more lofty issues? Join an adult education course this spring that will take these questions seriously.

Prayer is a universal religious phenomenon. It reflects the visceral human need to address the terrors, joys, and mysteries of life. "The reason why we pray," wrote the great philosopher of religion William James, "is simply that we cannot help praying." Prayer comes in many forms and settings, sometimes spontaneous and often fixed, generally directed to a being higher than ourselves. Through prayer, we Jews petition, praise, and thank God for both small and large blessings, affecting our personal and

collective welfare.

Although our inclination toward prayer as an effort to mitigate life's contingencies may be clear, the agenda of our prayer is nevertheless enigmatic. Indeed, whether we accomplish anything when we pray is open to question. We should pray as if it matters, or else much time and energy—for diligent Jews, in regular services through the day, week and year—would seem wasteful. But do we really believe that our prayer makes any difference in the world? Does prayer reach beyond ourselves? Is it reasonable to believe that God responds to our prayers, whether it implicates our national destiny or the outcome of sporting events?

Most people know from personal experience that prayer often seems unfulfilled. Because the apparent failure of our prayers can lead us to question God's

allocation of justice in the world, the siddur becomes both a conduit and crucible of our religious faith. Prayer can be inspiring and frustrating, uplifting and challenging. It is certainly worthy of our close attention.

Please join congregant Marc Ashley in his annual adult education course (now in its Bar Mitzvah year) held between Pesah and Shavuot. This year's course, "May the King Answer Us When We Call: The Nature of Jewish Prayer," will focus on Jewish conceptions of the purpose and meaning of Jewish prayer. We will meet on four consecutive Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in the OZ library on April 15, 22, 29, and May 6. The course is open to all Congregants (and their guests) and does not require prior knowledge of any kind. Please join us as we figure out together why we show up in shul to engage in tefilah.

Or Zarua's Core Ideas

A sermon by Rabbi Wechsler given on the Congregation's 23rd Anniversary

On the 23rd anniversary of Congregation Or Zarua (celebrated Shabbat, January 28, 2012), Rabbi Wechsler addressed the core ideas that were part of the founding of the Congregation and have guided his thinking for nearly a quarter of a century. Part of that address, as guided by his speaking notes, follows.

There are seven "Core Ideas" that have determined so much of what goes on at Or Zarua. The first three are well

known. The remaining four, though less a part of our religious vocabulary, are equally as important.

1. **Torah**
2. **Avodah: Worship**
3. **Gemilut Hasadim: the practice of kindness**
4. **Authenticity**
5. **Men and women have equal access to all roles in synagogue life including ritual**
6. **Small size**
7. **Simplicity**

These ideas work in a dynamic relationship with each other. Let me illustrate:

1. Torah

The study of Torah is a central concern of the Avodah (Worship). That is to say that our religious services contain Torah study in addition to the structure that is normally associated with them. As a result, the sermon, usually conceived of as a comment on issues of the day from the rabbi's perspective, is, instead, a

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ק"ק אור זרוע
Congregation

OrZarua

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FOUNDED 1989

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If you are interested in serving on a synagogue committee, please contact the office for the committee chair's email address.

President's Message

by Diane Okrent



I love Pesah! Oh, yes, the work involved is prodigious—planning, inviting, cleaning, shopping, cooking—but I always conclude that the end justifies the means. When I slip into my seat at our Seder table and gaze at my husband at the other end of the long table and see my family and friends gathered together, my exhaustion lifts and I am re-energized. My heart is filled with love and gratitude and pride that we are all together again to celebrate Pesah.

What a profound tradition we have to gather in our homes year in and year out to retell the origins of our people and to celebrate our survival then and now. We learn from the Torah that, from that first Pesah in Egypt, we are to celebrate in our homes with our families and neighbors. *"The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ...Speak to the whole community of Israel and say that in the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a household. But if the household is too small for a lamb, let him share one with a neighbor who dwells nearby..."* (Exodus 12:1-4). In a recent lecture at Or Zarua, Dr. Eliezer Diamond pointed out that Pharaoh sought to destroy the Hebrew families by enslaving the men. At that first Pesah, the family was reconstituted and celebrated the impending Exodus together.

Among our Pesah preparations, my husband and I have always tried to enhance our Seders with readings from a variety of Haggadot and other sources. Our experiences at Or Zarua have provided many more ways to bring new meanings to our Seders. Me'ah classes provided new perspectives on Jewish history and practice. The semester on Rabbinics in Me'ah was particularly inspiring as we began to understand how the rabbis, in the Mishnah, created a religion out of the ashes of the Second Temple, believing that it was possible to have a viable and robust form of Judaism without the Temple and sacrifices. In the class on Pesah, we

learned how the rabbis especially sought to make Pesah a meaningful experience without the Paschal sacrifice while keeping the hope of liberation alive. We studied the passages of the Mishnah that appear virtually unchanged in our modern Haggadot. At our Seders, I have read passages from the Mishnah—three of the four questions we ask are there, so are the sons, and the instructions of Rabban Gamliel. *"Whoever has not referred to these three matters connected to the Passover has not fulfilled his obligation, and these are they: Passover, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs."* (Mishnah Pesachim, 10:5)

In February, many of us were privileged to study with JTS scholars at the Context Passover mini-course to honor Rabbi Wechsler. We learned how the egg got to the Seder plate; how the ceremonial aspects of the Seder—karpas, dipping, and haroset—came to have significance; why we tell the story in different ways and put ourselves into the story; how we should dip our pinkies as we enumerate the plagues; how "Pour out thy wrath," entered the Haggadah in the Middle Ages; and the importance of women in the story of Passover. You can hear these lectures on the Or Zarua website, www.orzarua.org.

Judaism has always emphasized the virtues of study. In the Haggadah, the rabbis have been studying the laws of Passover all night. At Congregation Or Zarua, we are continually studying and learning. Indeed, we have a well-earned reputation as a learning and intellectual community—for our children and ourselves. I encourage every member to join us in study—come to services, join the Talmud class, study the weekly parashah and the commentary of the Malbim, learn to read Torah and Haftarah, and commit to Context the next time it is offered. Doctors tell us that mental stimulation contributes to a longer and healthier life. So, come to Or Zarua and enhance your intellectual and spiritual health!

I wish you a sweet, happy, healthy, and meaningful Pesah!

Purim Food Drive

Helping the hungry in our community

Observe the Purim mitzvot of *Matanot LaEvyonim* (Gifts to the Needy) and *Mishloah Manot* (Giving of Food and Drink) by bringing non-perishable food items or a check to the Purim Spiel on Wednesday, March 7.

Helping those in need is a year-round responsibility for Jews, but on Purim it is a special mitzvah to remember the poor.

Donated food will be distributed through the Yorkville Common Pantry (YCP), one of the city's largest providers of emergency food. Recommended items include dry milk, pasta, cereal, canned

food of all kinds, peanut butter, rice, and beans. Don't just clean out your cabinets—add these items to your shopping list.

Current levels of unemployment are at all-time highs and many people are under significant economic duress. The current economic conditions have caused an increase in the need for food packages at pantries like YCP.

In addition to donations of non-perishable food, financial assistance is also needed. Please make checks payable to Congregation Or Zarua, marked for the Met Council for Jewish Poverty. Checks can also be mailed to the OZ office.

SHABBATONS WITH RABBINICAL CANDIDATES

March 16-18 and March 30-April 1

Congregation Or Zarua will host two Shabbatons with different visiting rabbinical candidates, the first on Friday night, March 16, through Sunday morning, March 18, and the second on Friday night, March 30, through Sunday morning, April 1. During the Shabbatons, each candidate will have the opportunity to lead services, speak, present a Dvar Torah, teach, and meet members. There will be six opportunities at each Shabbaton to meet with the candidates: Friday Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat (open to all), Friday night dinner (\$40 for adults, no charge for children under ages 12), Shabbat services on Saturday morning (open to all), Saturday lunch (\$40 for adults, no charge for children under age 12), Saturday afternoon Seudah Shlishit (no charge, but reservation required), and Sunday morning minyan followed by breakfast (open to all). The candidates will speak at the end of lunch on Shabbat. Those who go home for lunch can return to hear the candidate speak. RSVP at 212-452-2310, ext. 39 or www.orzarua.org by March 9 and March 23.

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PURIM SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 7

The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College
East 68th Street
(between Lexington and Park Avenues)

5:45–7:30 p.m.

Minhah for Ta'anit Esther, Ma'ariv, and Megillah reading
in the Kaye Playhouse

6:30–7:30 p.m.

Children's Activities
upstairs in Lang Recital Hall

7:30–7:45 p.m.

Brief repast for fasters
in the lobby of the Kaye Playhouse

7:45–9:00 p.m.

Children's Costume Parade and Purim Spiel:
MIRTH AND MITZVAHS
in the Kaye Playhouse

9:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.

Purim Seudah—Buffet Dinner
in the lobby of the Kaye Playhouse

Thursday, March 8

7:00 a.m.

Shaharit and Megillah reading
at Congregation Or Zarua

SAVE THE DATES

Celebrate Israel Parade
Sunday, June 3

"Israel Branches Out"

Or Zarua Gala
Monday, June 4

In honor of Rabbi Wechsler
Special Guest: Chancellor Arnold Eisen

6:00–10:00 p.m.

Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers

**Yom Hazikaron/
Yom Ha'atzmaut Program**
Wednesday, April 25

Details to follow

Tikkun Leyl Shavuot
Saturday evening, May 26
Minhah/Ma'ariv, panel discussion
and dairy desserts

Or Zarua's Core Ideas

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teaching of the Torah (Dvar Torah). That teaching is to be authentic, that is to say, based on classical sources.

As well, Or Zarua has been committed, from the very first service, to a complete reading of the Torah. In many (if not most) Conservative congregations in America, only one-third of the weekly reading is read. We vowed never to do that and to make it possible always to hear the entire reading; that is the only way that it can be understood. For example, if each parashah is read so that only the first third is read this year and the second third next year, anyone who follows the reading from week to week knows that it makes no sense!

Reading of Torah is not a formality or a token; it is the center of the community's life. That is why the bimah is located in the center of our sanctuary, placing the Torah reading in the community's center. Similarly, when we constructed the building, we made sure that every seat had a sight line to the reader's stand, again putting Torah at the center.

Torah also informs and creates the structures of the community's life. Torah creates rules that are the rules of the halakhah. Halakhah then provides the vocabulary of the common life. After all, there are many ways to structure a community's life, many rules that can be adopted to give it order and meaning. If Torah is central, then the basic rules mean that the community is based not on whim nor even on individual preference, but on a constant point of reference that is transcendent. Therefore, the community gathers meaning from something beyond it; the community lives and programs its life in response to divine revelation. That allows for a wide variety of individual levels of observance and individual commitments to religious practice. But the community's practice is not based on individual views. It transcends those views to root the community in the Torah.

2. Avodah

The religious services of Or Zarua are traditional because we were seeking

authenticity in religious worship. When we discussed, early on, whether to include English in the service, one of our thoughtful founders said: "That's not authentic.

When I come to the service, I want to know that I am coming to a real service, not a service designed for people who don't know. I don't know Hebrew, therefore you have to teach me. Bring me up to the service. Don't bring the service down to my knowledge. I am here to grow." I've never forgotten those words.

We wanted the service to be participatory so that it would be neither pompous nor entertaining. We forbade musical instrumentation for the same reasons. It also brought us closer to the authenticity of the Ashkenazi rite: plainer and focused on praying people. We were fortunate to have people who could lead and we felt that lay leadership would result in a more serious experience than professional leadership. The leader faces the ark because the service is not entertainment but worship.

Our prayers proceed more slowly than the services in other communities. This allows people to follow even if they find the service to be difficult. Also, no one will ever think that prayer is done by rote. You need time to think when you pray, and that is what should be going on at Or Zarua.

3. Gemilut Hasadim

Lest we concentrate too much on ourselves, we felt we had to take a stand with and for the community, gentiles and Jews. Our first communal projects were related to the resettlement of Soviet Jews in New York. For years we have run a weekly program for formerly homeless people on the Upper East Side. Similarly, we took to heart the immediate economic problems of this past winter and developed a major campaign to raise funds for Met Council. We repeated that campaign this year. In hard times, Or Zarua is easing the burden of those who would otherwise suffer.

The Congregation began, as well, with a complete commitment to the support of the State of Israel. During the second

Intifada, Or Zarua, among the smallest of congregations, sent the largest contingent on a UJA mission of any congregation in America. To us it didn't seem so large, just that everyone else stayed home. And that is why, as rabbi, I have made it a policy not to criticize the State, even if I disagree with its policies. My approach has been, while predictable, aimed at supporting the Jews who, as a result of their democratic state, have decided on the policies that work best for them. Marching every year in the Israel Day Parade, Or Zarua has stood steadfastly by the Jewish State.

4. Authenticity

I have already said much about this. I would like to extend this a little further, though, by saying that authenticity also involves intellectual integrity. There are other "authentic" services around. We have striven to combine that with intellectual rigor and integrity. Hopefully that is reflected in everything we do, from services to programming.

5. Men and women have equal access to all roles in synagogue life including ritual

Or Zarua, while being "traditional," has been radically modern in the involvement of women in all aspects of synagogue life. Most congregations that include women in ritual roles are liberal in their worship policies and Torah readings. Or Zarua is nearly unique in providing a traditional environment where women who wish to participate in leadership are fully welcome to do so.

6. Small size

We put it this way: we wanted to be as small as we could be and yet still pay the bills. There needed to be a small alternative in New York; a Conservative steibel, as it has sometimes been termed. There are limitations to being small, but the benefits are unique. By building in a plot 25 feet wide, we committed ourselves to this small size.

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Hesed Events and Programs

"The world exists for the sake of kindness."—Rashi

Salvation Deliverance Church

● "Pre-owned" adult and children's clothing, toys, dolls, games, and related items can be put to good use by the many transitional homeless residents in the South Bronx, including single, jobless mothers and their children, as well as unemployed men. OZ partners with Salvation Deliverance Church, whose members are housekeepers caring for their own local needy.

Home Visit Volunteers

● Volunteer to visit and cheer ill or home-bound Or Zarua Congregants.

Monday Night Pizza at NCS

● Or Zarua Congregants serve pizza, salad, soda, and good cheer to men and women with a range of mental health and addiction issues at the Neighborhood Coalition Shelter's East 81st Street Residence each Monday from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Please consider making a \$180 contribution to the Hesed Fund to cover OZ's weekly food costs.

Ronald McDonald House

● Jewish children come from across the U.S. and around the world to undergo serious medical treatment at New York City hospitals. Many reside with their families at Ronald McDonald House and have no local support system of friends or relatives. The chaplain at Ronald McDonald House alerts us when OZ may be of service to families who may require kosher meals, synagogue services, and other assistance.

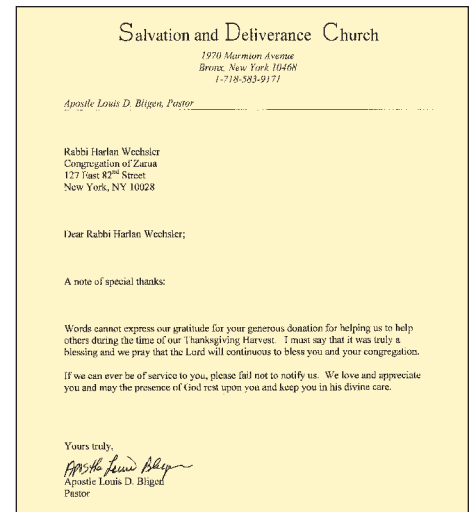
Chemotherapy Caps

● Attractive knitted caps in all sizes for children from babies to teenagers residing at Ronald McDonald House while undergoing chemotherapy are welcome donations.

Butterfly Garden

● "Green thumbs" are needed from spring through fall to help care for Ronald McDonald House's 7th Floor Terrace Butterfly Garden.

To participate in any of these Hesed programs, please contact Richard Stadin at stadin1@aol.com or 212-879-0448.



A letter from Pastor Louis D. Bligen of the Salvation and Deliverance Church in the Bronx thanking Congregation Or Zarua for food donated to their Thanksgiving Harvest. Gathered by OZ members from Eli's and the Vinegar Factory, the food was delivered on Erev Thanksgiving as part of this annual Hesed program. A second delivery was made on Erev Christmas.



A few of the more than 25 chemotherapy caps and scarves knitted by Mina Greenstein for Ronald McDonald House residents.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

April 26

YOM HA'ATZMAUT, \$2,000

May 26

SHAVUOT PANEL, \$1,000

May

ANNUAL MEETING, \$2,000

For additional information, please contact the synagogue office at 212-452-2310, ext. 14.



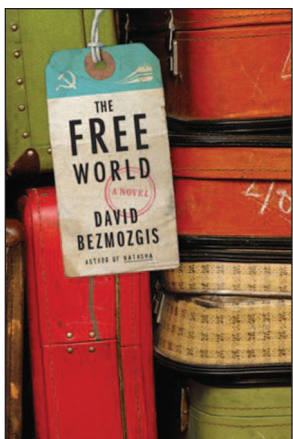
Food gathered at Eli's and the Vinegar Factory on Erev Christmas 2011 was delivered to Ronald McDonald House, NCS East 81st Street Residence, Yorkville Common Pantry, and the Salvation and Deliverance Church in the Bronx.

Or Zarua Book Discussions

The Free World by David Bezmozgis on Sunday, March 18

Please join us for our next Or Zarua book discussion on Sunday, March 18 at 7:30 p.m. in Or Zarua's library. Terry Edelstein will lead a discussion of *The Free World*, the first novel by young Latvian émigré David Bezmozgis, which was named a 2011 Notable Book by *The New York Times*.

Among thousands of Soviet Jews who slipped through a crack in the Iron Curtain and landed in Italy in July 1978 to secure visas for new lives in the West are three generations of the Krasnansky family. There is Samuil, a Communist and Red Army veteran, who reluctantly left the country to which he dedicated himself; Karl, his elder son, eager to embrace the opportunities emigration affords; Alec, his younger son, a charming, handsome 26-year-old philanderer; and 20-year-old Polina, Alec's new Russian wife, who broke



away from her first husband and from her old family to join this one.

As Bezmozgis describes it: "Alec would see a circus and want to join; Karl, meanwhile, would estimate the cost of feeding the elephants and postulate that the acrobats suffered from venereal disease."

Polina writes to her sister in Latvia, who is thinking about whether to emigrate as well, "I couldn't even begin to list all the things I haven't understood about some of the people we've met."

Rome is the Krasnanskys' way station and purgatory. They immerse themselves in the carnival of emigration, in an Italy rife with love affairs, hustles, dislocation, and the promise and peril of a new life. Where they will end up—Canada, the United States, Australia, Israel, a cemetery in Rome, or back in Latvia—is a question that shadows the narrative.

Adam Langer in *The New York Times* wrote that Bezmozgis is "an astute and compassionate observer, a meticulous historian and a gifted stylist...subsuming his voice to that of his characters and finding humor through ironic observation....He has created an unflinchingly honest, even-handed and multilayered retelling of the Jewish immigrant story that steadfastly refuses to sentimentalize or malign the Old World or the New." *The New York Times Book Review* wrote, "Bezmozgis overturns clichéd expectations of immigrant idealism; he knows his characters too well to have any illusions about them. While his depictions don't flatter his subjects, they honor them by conveying each person's individual history, motivations and truth."

Our selection for the following book discussion, on June 3, is Shalom Auslander's *Hope: A Tragedy*.

For more information on Or Zarua book discussions or to suggest a book, please contact Reed Schneider at 212-860-8611 or Deborah Wenger in the synagogue office at dwenger@orzarua.org.

Parashat HaShavua with the Malbim

A new class with Rabbinic Intern Joe Schwartz, Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m., 7th floor

Join OZ's Rabbinic Intern Joe Schwartz for a discussion of the commentary of the Malbim (Rabbi Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Weiss, 1809-1879) on the week's parashah. The Malbim wrote one of the most popular commentaries on the

parashat (plain meaning) of the Torah in the last century—a masterwork of exposition that draws out the subtle shadings of the biblical narrative while at the same time defending the authority and relevance of the received tradition.

No Hebrew is necessary, and participants may attend as many or as few class sessions as they like. The class will continue into the summer.

Registration is not required—come and learn!

Life Events at Congregation Or Zarua

A community such as ours shares good times and bad with its members. When something good happens in your family—birth, graduation, engagement, or marriage—let us share your joy. When something bad happens—illness, hospitalization, or death—let us share your burden.

Sometimes people are reluctant to communicate these issues on their own. If you know of a member who is coping with illness or loss, please contact the OZ office at 212-452-2310, extension 12 or 14, so that Rabbi Wechsler can be informed.

TORAH READERS

If you are able to read Torah or Haftarah and would like to do so on a Shabbat, please contact Henry Glanternik at hjgmoose@aol.com. Alternatively, you may sign up online at www.orzarua.org by choosing "Read Torah" under the "Prayer" drop-down menu.

Lasting Effects of the Holocaust

by Ilana Burgess

Growing up in Hungary immediately after the Holocaust made for a very strange childhood. Although I did not realize it at the time, most of the children around me did not have extended families. No grandparents, uncles, or aunts. Education was very strict at home and in school. We, the Jewish children, were warned constantly that we should behave well because we were representing all the Jews around the world.

Arriving in Israel in the middle of the summer changed many things except we, the children of Jews from Europe, did not have big families. I never did ask why our families were so small. Maybe deep inside me I knew that it would hurt my parents.

I liked to visit my Yemenite friends. Their grandparents were available to take care of the children and tell their stories. In contrast, I did not know anything about the lives of my parents, about the war, and

surely not about the Holocaust.

When I was 11 years old, my parents put me in a kibbutz. I started reading in Hebrew on a regular basis and soon I was reading through books at great speed. One day I discovered a picture book with black and white photos showing kids, women, and older men holding their hands up high and soldiers pointing machine guns at them. The kids, women, and older men had yellow Stars of David on their coats.

I started asking questions. I started hearing the word Shoah. I heard horrible jokes about Holocaust. I realized why I did not have relatives. Eventually my mother opened up and told me as much as she felt was appropriate for my age. My father never spoke about his hardship in a labor camp; he only showed me a picture of his young daughter who disappeared when the Budapest Ghetto was liquidated.

As I grew older I came to understand

why certain things were missing from my childhood. I became angry that the survivors seemed to be embarrassed by their history—almost as if they had committed a crime. Maybe it was because people asked why they went without a fight.

Eventually, I came to understand that our people were heroes, that they did fight in the camps, in the ghettos. Their fights were physical, mental, and religious. I eventually understood that countries fell into German hands in as little as one day.

When I became a teacher, I decided that part of my teaching will be about the Holocaust. As a nation and as individuals, we cannot forget. We owe it to ourselves to honor every Jewish child, every Jewish baby that was marked at birth only because he or she was Jewish.

Our Holocaust service, Yom Hashoah V'eha G'vua, at Congregation Or Zarua, will take place on Wednesday, April 18 at 7:30 p.m.

CAJAC's Mission

Saving Jewish at-risk cemeteries

Andrew Schultz, the executive director of The Community Association of Jewish At-Risk Cemeteries made a presentation to Congregation Or Zarua's Hevra Kadisha at their Zayin Adar dinner on Thursday night, March 1, at 6:30 p.m. Established in 2006, CAJAC's mission is to provide for the preservation, repair, and restoration of Jewish cemeteries that have fallen on hard times or have otherwise become orphaned.

Our cemeteries, built and operated by local synagogues or burial societies (landsmanchaften), are subject to the vagaries of demographic and economic shifts of Jewish populations. We do not have a central authority responsible for the care of our cemeteries. As a community, we do not want the constant movement of our people to negatively impact the dignity of

a cemetery, nor do we want to lose the historical records that a cemetery contains.

CAJAC, a non-profit organization supported by UJA Federation of New York, provides for the care and conservation of orphaned Jewish cemeteries primarily within Metropolitan New York. CAJAC's definition of care and conservation includes repair of gravestones, upkeep and maintenance of grounds, and providing management and security. CAJAC also works to convert cemetery records to electronic form so that the history they hold will be accessible. CAJAC's mission is carried out in accordance with Jewish religious practice and tradition.

If you wish to know more about CAJAC, please contact its White Plains office at 914-357-4198 or visit its Website at www.cajac.us.

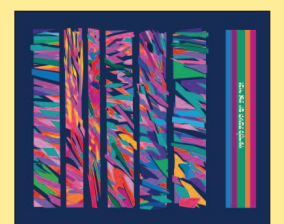
—CHARLIE SPIELHOLZ

IN THE OZ GALLERY

Rudi Wolff's "Our Colorful Bible," on display in the OZ social hall, presents two series of serigraph prints inspired by the Ten Commandments and Bereshit. Both prints pictured below are from the Ten Commandments series.



Thou Shalt Not Murder



Observe the Sabbath Day

Lucy S. Dawidowicz Lecture

presented by Sharon Liberman Mintz on Wednesday, January 25

SUZANNE GOLDSTEIN



Sharon Liberman Mintz (far left, above), curator of Jewish art at the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, presented the 2012 Lucy S. Dawidowicz Lecture for Congregation Or Zarua's 23rd birthday. Ms. Liberman Mintz spoke of the history of illuminated Scrolls of Esther; a recording of her presentation is available online at www.orzarua.org. After the lecture, which was held in the OZ library, the group moved to the social hall to enjoy birthday cake and champagne.

TALMUD CLASS

**Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m.
in the OZ Library**

This year we are studying Tractate Sanhedrin, which deals with the laws of capital punishment, composition of the courts, and judicial procedures.

Classes are held most Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m. in the OZ library.

Classes are taught by
RABBI WECHSLER

No prior knowledge of Talmud, Hebrew, or Aramaic is required.

OZ Cemetery

Gravesites for Members

The Or Zarua section of Beth El Cemetery is located in Washington Township (Bergen County), New Jersey, just 10 miles away from the George Washington Bridge. Beth El Cemetery is



HARVEY BRENNER

A view of the Or Zarua cemetery section.

well maintained and landscaped with trees and shrubs. The cemetery's design provides a serene and beautiful final resting place that reflects the values and aesthetics of Congregation Or Zarua. Gravesites within the Or Zarua section are available for sale solely to members of our Congregation. Burial is limited to persons of the Jewish faith. If you are interested in buying gravesites in the Or Zarua section, please contact the synagogue office at 212-452-2310, ext. 14.

OR ZARUA CRAFTS CLUB

The next meetings of the Or Zarua Crafts Club will be held on Sundays, March 18 and April 15, at 10:15 a.m. in the OZ library. Remember, no experience is necessary to join the Crafts Club, and older children and nonmembers are also welcome to attend.

Or Zarua's Oral History Committee

Who are these people? What are they doing? Where are they?

Do you recognize any of the people in this photo? Do you know the location? Do you know what year this is taking place? If you know the answers to these questions or if you know some of Or Zarua's history, you might have information or memorabilia to share with Or Zarua's Oral History Committee.

The Or Zarua Oral History Committee is working to preserve the unique history of our Congregation, both to commemorate our foundation and growth and to share our experience with others. If you have any precious memories of our early days, please contact Caroline Golden or Gerry Solomon. Photos, letters, newsletters, meeting notes, correspondence, objects, and other pieces of memorabilia are especially welcome.

Under the guidance of Or Zarua's founding president and Oral History Project Director, Mimi Alperin, a group of Congregants have developed interviewing skills and have been trained in the use of digital recorders. Practice interviews among the members of the Committee have already produced information about the roles Or Zarua has played in the lives of Congregants. Interviews of our earliest founders have already begun.

What are your memories or questions regarding the early years of Congregation Or Zarua? Send them to Meredith Katz at mekatz@jtsa.edu and they may be featured in our next Oral History update. Stay tuned!

WELCOMING GUESTS AT OZ

It is important for us as a community to make guests and new members at our services and kiddushim feel comfortable and welcome. If you are seated next to someone whom you do not know, please reach out and introduce yourself. Making this effort is consistent with our culture and will repay dividends.



Can you identify this traditional Or Zarua celebration, the people, and the year the photo was taken? It's an event taking place this month, but at a different location. The two-story building at 127 East 82nd Street shown here was eventually torn down and replaced by our new, seven-story home. Find the answers below.

Or Zarua's Core Ideas

continued from page 4

7. Simplicity

Many of us have felt that synagogues in America frequently suffer from an overdose of pretension and formality (not the same thing). We wanted to create an ambience that is honest and unpretentious. Simple is good, both in the way things look and in the way they are embellished during ritual. Simple is good because people don't need pomposity to be happy. Simple leaves room for what really counts. Meaning is found in honesty and focusing our communal energy on the tasks at hand, on Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Hasadim.

I review these core values not because I think that a new generation must follow them without thinking, but so that a new generation will review them and try to see what motivated a group of dedicated Jews to found a new Congregation and to see it grow and contribute to life in our city and in our times. It is my hope that what has worked so well will continue to be the basis of future growth and future creativity for those who will follow us.

—RABBI HARLAN J. WECHSLER
SHABBAT, JANUARY 28, 2012

Answer: An early Purim Spiel, circa 1997, presented in the original Or Zarua sanctuary. Visible faces, from left to right, are Vera Silver, Dara Murray (the OZ Purim Spiel's first Esther), Art Rosenbloom, and Zella Goldfinger.



127 East 82nd Street
New York, NY 10028 • 212-452-2310

March 2012 • Adar / Nisan 5772

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 • 7 Adar 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Zayin Adar Dinner 7:00 pm Purim Spiel Rehearsal	2 • 8 7:15 am Minyan 5:31 pm Candlelighting, Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat	3 • 9 Shabbat Zachor 9:00 am Shaharit Tetzaveh
4 • 10 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 5:00 pm Purim Spiel Rehearsal	5 • 11 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Torah Reading Class: Somerstein	6 • 12 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Context: Diner 7:00 pm Context: Graduate Seminar 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	7 • 13 Fast of Esther 7:15 am Minyan Erev Purim (at Hunter) 5:45 pm Minhah, Ma'ariv, and Megillah Reading 7:45 pm Children's Parade and Purim Spiel	8 • 14 Purim 7:00 am Minyan and Megillah Reading 7:30 pm Pesah Context: Rabbi Wechsler	9 • 15 Shushan Purim 7:15 am Minyan 5:38 pm Candlelighting, Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat	10 • 16 9:00 am Shaharit Ki Tissa Shabbat Hayeled (Children's Shabbat)
11 • 17 8:45 am Sunday Minyan <i>Daylight Savings Time</i> <i>begins</i>	12 • 18 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Torah Reading Class: Somerstein	13 • 19 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Context: Graduate Seminar <i>No Context: Diner</i> 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	14 • 20 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class	15 • 21 7:15 am Minyan	16 • 22 7:15 am Minyan 6:00 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 6:46 pm Candlelighting Shabbaton with Visiting Rabbinical Candidate	17 • 23 Shabbat Parah 9:00 am Shaharit VayakhelPekude Aufruf of Jonathan Cohen Shabbaton with Visiting Rabbinical Candidate
18 • 24 8:45 am Sunday Minyan Shabbaton with Visiting Rabbinical Candidate 10:15 am Crafts Club 7:30 pm Book Discussion	19 • 25 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Torah Reading Class: Somerstein <i>Hebrew School Spring</i> <i>Break begins</i>	20 • 26 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Context: Diner 7:00 pm Context: Graduate Seminar 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	21 • 27 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class <i>Hebrew School closed</i>	22 • 28 7:15 am Minyan	23 • 29 7:15 am Minyan 6:00 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 6:53 pm Candlelighting	24 • 1 Nisan Rosh Hodesh Nisan Shabbat Hahodesh 9:00 am Shaharit Vayikra Bar Mitzvah of Jonathan Mack
25 • 2 8:45 am Sunday Minyan	26 • 3 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Torah Reading Class: Somerstein <i>Hebrew School closed</i>	27 • 4 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Context: Diner & Gampel wrap-up 7:00 pm Context: Graduate Seminar 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	28 • 5 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class <i>Hebrew School closed</i>	29 • 6 7:15 am Minyan	30 • 7 7:15 am Minyan 6:00 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:01 pm Candlelighting Shabbaton with Visiting Rabbinical Candidate	31 • 8 Shabbat Hagadol 9:00 am Shaharit Tzav Shabbaton with Visiting Rabbinical Candidate



127 East 82nd Street
New York, NY 10028 • 212-452-2310

April 2012 • Nisan / Iyar 5772

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 • 9 Nisan 8:45 am Sunday Minyan Shabbaton with Visiting Rabbinical Candidate	2 • 10 7:15 am Minyan	3 • 11 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Context: Graduate Seminar 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	4 • 12 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class	5 • 13 7:15 am Minyan Evening: Bedikat Hametz	6 • 14 Fast of the Firstborn / Siyum 7:00 am Minyan Erev Pesah 7:08 pm Candlelighting First Seder	7 • 15 1st Day of Pesah 9:00 am Shaharit 7:15 pm Minhah/Ma'ariv 8:13 pm Candlelighting 8:15 pm Or Zarua Congregational Seder Second Seder
8 • 16 2nd Day of Pesah 9:00 am Shaharit	9 • 17 Hol Hamoed 3rd Day of Pesah 7:00 am Minyan Hebrew School closed	10 • 18 Hol Hamoed 4th Day of Pesah 7:00 am Minyan No Context No Parashat HaShavua class	11 • 19 Hol Hamoed 5th Day of Pesah 7:00 am Minyan Hebrew School closed No Talmud Class	12 • 20 Hol Hamoed 6th Day of Pesah 7:00 am Minyan Erev 7th Day of Pesah 6:15 pm Minhah/Ma'ariv 7:14 pm Candlelighting Office closes at 1 pm	13 • 21 7th Day of Pesah 9:00 am Shaharit Erev Last Day of Pesah 6:15 pm Minhah/Ma'ariv 7:15 pm Candlelighting Office closed	14 • 22 Last Day of Pesah 9:00 am Shaharit Yizkor
15 • 23 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:00 a.m. Ashley Adult Education Course 10:15 am Crafts Club	16 • 24 7:15 am Minyan	17 • 25 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Context: Graduate Seminar 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	18 • 26 7:15 am Minyan 7:30 pm Yom Hashoah Service No Talmud Class	19 • 27 Yom Hashoah 7:15 am Minyan	20 • 28 7:15 am Minyan 6:15 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:23 pm Candlelighting	21 • 29 9:00 am Shaharit Shemini
22 • 30 Rosh Hodesh Iyar I 8:45 am Sunday Minyan Bat Mitzvah of Jessica Raviv 10:00 a.m. Ashley Adult Education Course	23 • 1 Iyar Rosh Hodesh Iyar II 7:00 am Minyan	24 • 2 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Context: Graduate Seminar 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	25 • 3 Yom Hazikaron 7:15 am Minyan Erev Yom Ha'atzmaut No Talmud Class	26 • 4 Yom Ha'atzmaut 7:00 am Minyan	27 • 5 7:15 am Minyan 6:15 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:30 pm Candlelighting	28 • 6 9:00 am Shaharit Tazria-Metzora
29 • 7 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:00 a.m. Ashley Adult Education Course	30 • 8 7:15 am Minyan					

Hebrew Poetry

by Or Zarua's Hebrew High School students

The students in Or Zarua's Post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah Hebrew class wrote poems in response to one they read by the Israeli poet Rachel the Poetess (Rachel Bluwstein, 1890-1931). The students had visited Rachel's grave when they were in Israel last May. Rachel the Poetess is well known to children throughout Israel; her poems are included in the mandatory curriculum of the Israeli school system.

In the poem read by the OZ students, Rachel the Poetess describes wanting to have a child although she was sick with tuberculosis. In her poem, Rachel repeats words that she thinks that are important.

In response (from right to left), Rebecca Ashley writes about wanting a sister with whom she can interact; Arielle Kaminsky desires a soft, fluffy cat; and Talia Spielholz imagines traveling to new places.

—ILANA BURGESS

חתול לו היה לי
חיה קטנה ומתוקה
פסים שחורים, ועינים ירוקות.
ומאוד רכה.

טיול זה מה שאני רוצה
טיול נפלא.
עם מוזיאונים, מאכלים שונים, ונופים יפים.
טיול ארוך ויפה,
זה מה שאני רוצה.

טיול זה מה שאני רוצה
טיול נפלא.
ערים ערים, ארכיטקטורה מענינה, ואנשים נפלאים,
טיול מלא התפעלות,
טיול למקומות קרובים ורחוקים
טיול זה מה שאני רוצה.

טליה ספילדולץ

לשחק איתו
להסתכל עליו בשנתו
חיה קטנה
חיה יקרה

פלפי אקרא לו
פלפי שלי
מענין וחמוד השם
אקרא לו יום ולילה
בוא לאכול אלוש לו,
זה הזמן ללכת למיטה.

עוד אחכה ליום שהוא יבוא
שאני אוכל לשחק איתו
לשמור את נשימותיו בשנתו
נשימות יקרות
עוד אחכה לו.

חתול לו היה לי
חיה קטנה ומתוקה.

אריאל קמינסקי

אחות לו הייתה לי, אחות קטנה
שער צהוב ועינים חומות
לתת נשיקות ולשחק עים בורות
לאחוב אותה
אחות קטנה
חמודה.

אחות לו הייתה לי, אחות קטנה
שפתיים מוחיכות, ועינים מבריקות
לעשות דברים של בעות וללכת יחד לקניות.
לאחוב אותה
אחות קטנה
חמודה.

רבקה אשלי

HEBREW SCHOOL CALENDAR

March 2012

- Mon 5** Classes in session
Wed 7 Erev Purim/Purim Spiel
Sat 10 Shabbat Hayaed
(Children's Shabbat)
Mon 12 Classes in session;
B'nai Jeshurun
Wed 14 Classes in session
Mon 19 Spring break (no classes)

April 2012

- Mon 2** Classes resume
Wed 4 Classes in session
Fri 6 Erev Pesah (no classes)
Mon 16 Classes resume
Wed 18 Classes in session;
Yom Hashoah/Holocaust
Memorial Service, 7:30 p.m.
(all encouraged to attend)
Mon 23 Classes in session
Wed 25 Classes in session
Mon 30 Classes in session

May 2012

- Wed 2** Classes in session
Mon 7 Classes in session
Wed 9 Classes in session
Mon 14 Classes in session;
B'nai Jeshurun
Wed 16 Classes in session
Mon 21 Classes in session
Wed 23 Last day of school



Or Zarua Hebrew School first-grade students and their teacher, Yael Gordon, participated in a Tu B'Shevat Seder (left). The class also interviewed Rabbi Wechsler in his office (above), posing such questions as: "Once you become a rabbi, do you need to keep studying? Why did you become a rabbi and not a professor? How hard is a rabbi's job? And if you become sick, who comes to the service instead?" Observers were not sure if the rabbi or the students had the better time!

Choosing Our Next Rabbi

by the Rabbinical Search Committee

The Search Committee is pleased to announce that two candidates under consideration to be our next rabbi will visit Congregation Or Zarua in March. We will have a Shabbaton on March 16-18 and another on March 30-April 1. Please see the box on page 3 and watch the weekly e-blast for more details, but be sure to reserve by March 9 and March 23.

During the Shabbatons, the candidates will be speaking, leading services, presenting Dvrei Torah, teaching, and meeting Congregants. The Shabbatons will cover Friday services for Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat, Friday night dinner, Saturday morning services, Kiddush and lunch, Saturday afternoon Seudah Shlishit, and Sunday morning services and breakfast.

We look forward to the Congregation

meeting the candidates and we strongly encourage each member of OZ to attend sometime during each Shabbaton.

Thus far, the Search Committee has received and reviewed more than 30 resumes and conducted 15 phone interviews and five in-person interviews. Although two candidates have been selected to visit with us for Shabbatons, the Search Committee continues to receive resumes. Each resume we receive is considered; the close date for accepting and reviewing resumes is the date our next rabbi of Or Zarua is actually named. The candidates come from a wide range of backgrounds with diverse experience.

The facilitated discussions held in September informed the Search Committee in its evaluation of the candidates. In January, a facilitated discussion was

conducted among some of our youth—ages 13-22. Our young members expressed thoughts similar to the adults.

What distinguishes Or Zarua for them is the feeling of community—an extended family where “people are interested in me.” Our youth are inspired to read Torah and Haftarah and lead services when they see adults participate. When asked about the qualities important in our next rabbi, they listed: learned and intellectual, passionate about what he or she is doing, approachable, interested in everyone, and a good speaker “able to convey profound messages in sermons.” For the future of OZ, the youth wanted to see more educational and social programs for teens and better food at Kiddush. It was encouraging to hear such enthusiasm from the next generation at Or Zarua.

Family and Youth Activities

March 2012

Wednesday, March 7 • 5:45 p.m.

PURIM SPIEL “Mirth and Mitzvahs”
The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College
Details in box below. RSVP by March 6.

Saturday, March 10 • 10:30 a.m.

SHABBAT HAYELED

Celebrating Our Children
JUNIOR CONGREGATION

For 2nd grade and older. Service led by students, teachers, and parents.

Sunday, March 11, 4 p.m.

TEEN BILLIARDS

Meet at East Side Billiards

163 East 86th Street
(between Third & Lexington Avenues)
RSVP to Ilana Burgess by March 8.

March 16-18 and March 30-April 1

SHABBATONS WITH RABBINICAL CANDIDATES

See page 3 for details.

RSVP as needed by March 9 and March 23.

April 2012

Wednesday, April 18 • 7:30 p.m.

YOM HASHOAH

Holocaust Memorial Service

RABBI WECHSLER TEACHES ON SIRIUS XM RADIO

Sundays at 3:00 a.m.,
5:00 a.m., and 7:00 a.m.



Rabbi Wechsler can be heard on SiriusXM Stars Channel three times each Sunday. Subscribers to SiriusXM Satellite Radio can access the program, “Rabbi Wechsler Teaches,” on Channel 107. Nonsubscribers can obtain a free, three-day trial at www.siriusxm.com.

OR ZARUA MINYAN Contact Sheldon Adler at sheldon.adler@skadden.com or choose “Daily Minyan” under the “Prayer” menu on www.orzarua.org to sign up for a day or two each month.

PURIM SPIEL, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

All Or Zarua students and their families are invited!

Wednesday, March 7 is Erev Purim. Or Zarua will be conducting Purim services and presenting its annual Purim Spiel at the Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College on East 68th Street between Lexington and Park Avenues. The Or Zarua Youth Department will hold regularly scheduled classes that day. To make it easy for students who wish to attend the Spiel, “Mirth and Mitzvahs,” and other Purim festivities (please see page 3 for complete schedule), we will serve a pizza dinner, do homework, and then walk together to the Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, arriving at approximately 7:00 p.m. If your child is not enrolled in the Hebrew School, you can join us at 6:00 p.m. at OZ. RSVP by March 6 to Ilana Burgess at 212-452-2310, ext. 15 or iburgess@orzarua.org.

Guidelines for Passover

The guidelines below were prepared for the Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Jewish Law and Standards by Rabbi Mayer Rabinowitz. They were accepted by the Committee on December 12, 1984 and are updated annually by Rabbi Wechsler. Remember that the kosher for Passover home is a unique and transcendent experience for adults as well as children. Pesah feels different to the extent that it is different, and special foods and practices are the source of the special experience.

The Torah prohibits the ownership of hametz (leaven) during Pesah. Therefore, we arrange for the sale of the hametz to a non-Jew. The sale—mekhirat hametz—is accomplished by appointing an agent, usually the rabbi, to handle the transfer. The transaction is a valid and legal transfer of ownership. At the end of the holiday, the agent arranges for the reversion of ownership of the now-permitted hametz. If ownership of the hametz was not transferred before the holiday, the use of this hametz is prohibited even after the holiday (hametz she-aver alav ha-Pesah).

The Torah also prohibits the *eating* of hametz during Pesah. We often need guidance when shopping and preparing for the holiday because many common foods contain some admixture of hametz.

During the eight days of Pesah, hametz does not lose its identity, even in an admixture. Therefore, the minutest amount of hametz renders the whole admixture hametz, and its use on Pesah is prohibited.

Following are some general guidelines. Consult Rabbi Wechsler when there is any doubt about the status of a product. Examine the Kosher le-Pesah label: If it does not bear the name of a rabbi, does not contain one of the recognized symbols of rabbinic supervision, or is not integral to the package, check with the rabbi.

Foods

● **Prohibited foods:** leavened bread, cake, biscuits, crackers, cereal, coffee containing cereal derivatives, wheat, barley, oats, spelt, rye, and all liquids containing ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol.

According to Ashkenazic custom, the following foods—kitniyot—are added to the prohibited list: rice, corn, millet, and legumes (beans and peas; but string beans are permitted). The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards has ruled unanimously that peanuts and peanut oil are permissible. In contrast, Sephardic authorities permit the use of *all* kitniyot on Pesah.

● **Permitted foods that DO NOT require a Kosher le-Pesah label:** fresh fruit, fresh vegetables (for legumes, see above), and eggs.

● **Permitted foods that DO require a Kosher le-Pesah label:** all baked products (matzah, cake, matzah flour, matzah farfel, matzah meal, and any other products containing matzah), canned or bottled fruit juice (often clarified with kitniyot, which are not listed among the ingredients), canned tuna (often processed in vegetable

broth and/ or hydrolyzed protein, even when packed in water), wine, vinegar, liquor, oil, dried fruit, ice cream, yogurt, and soda.

The following processed foods (canned, bottled, or frozen) DO require a Kosher le-Pesah label *if purchased during Pesah*: milk and milk products, butter, juice, vegetables, fruit, spices, coffee, tea, fish, and meat.

Non-Food Items

● **Detergent.** If permitted during the year, powdered and liquid detergents DO NOT require a Kosher le-Pesah label.

● **Medicine.** Because many pills are made with hametz binders, follow this guideline: If the medicine is required for life-sustaining therapy, it may be used on Pesah; if it is not for life-sustaining therapy, some authorities permit, while others prohibit the use of the medicine. Consult Rabbi Wechsler.

Kashering

● **Utensils.** The process of kashering utensils depends on how the utensils are used. According to halakhah, leaven can be purged from a utensil by the same process through which it was absorbed into the utensil (ke-voleo kakh poletu). Therefore, utensils used in cooking are kashered by boiling, those used in broiling are kashered by fire and heat, and those used only for cold food are kashered by rinsing.

● **Earthenware.** China, pottery, etc. may not be kashered. However, fine

WHAT IS THE FAST OF THE FIRSTBORN?

Ta'anit bekhorim, the Fast of the Firstborn, is a custom observed on the day before Pesah to commemorate our gratitude for surviving the pre-Exodus tenth plague, which smote all firstborn Egyptians but spared all firstborn Hebrews. It is a dawn-to-dusk fast, which this year falls on Friday, April 6.

WHO IS CONSIDERED A FIRSTBORN?

A firstborn is a male child who is the first child born either to his mother or to his father. Even if he is the first male born to either parent, having an older sister precludes his firstborn status—he is not the first child.

WHY ONLY THE MALE FIRSTBORN?

In the ancient world, male firstborns were subject to Temple service. It was this hierarchy that was the target of the tenth plague.

HOW CAN A FIRSTBORN AVOID FASTING?

The mitzvah of attending a siyum—a completion of the reading of a tractate of Talmud—overrides the mitzvah of observing this fast. Firstborns can opt to attend a siyum, which is followed by a festive meal. The meal is part of the deal, so the fast is legitimately broken. Synagogues facilitate this choice for firstborns by scheduling a siyum for the morning before Pesah.

translucent chinaware that has not been used for over a year may be used for Pesah if scoured and cleaned in hot water.

● **Metal.** Utensils made entirely of metal and used in fire (such as a spit or broiler) must first be thoroughly scrubbed, cleaned, and then heated to the highest possible temperature. Utensils used for cooking or eating (such as silverware or pots) must be thoroughly scrubbed, cleaned, and then completely immersed in boiling water. These metal objects should not be used for a period of at least 24 hours between the cleaning and the immersion in boiling water. Metal baking utensils cannot be kashered for Pesah.

● **Ovens and ranges.** Every part that comes into contact with food must be thoroughly scrubbed, cleaned, and then heated to the highest possible temperature for a half hour. For ovens with no self-cleaning feature, use the broil setting; for self-cleaning ovens, use the self-cleaning feature to achieve the highest temperature. Continuous-cleaning ovens must be kashered in the same manner as regular ovens.

● **Microwave ovens.** These do not cook food by means of heat. After the interior is cleaned, place a cup of water inside. Keep the oven on until the water disappears. A microwave oven that has a browning element cannot be kashered for Pesah.

● **Glassware.** Drinking glasses and stemware require only a thorough cleaning, by hand or in a dishwasher, before Pesah.

● **Glass cookware.** There is a difference of opinion as to whether glass cookware should be kashered. One opinion is that it must be kashered—after a thorough cleaning, boil water in the cookware so that it overflows the rim. The other opinion is that only a thorough cleaning is required.

● **Glass bakeware.** Like metal bakeware, glass bakeware may not be kashered for Pesah.

● **Dishwashers.** Clean any food trap or filter and leave the dishwasher unused for 24 hours. Then, complete a full wash cycle with detergent.

● **Electrical appliances.** If parts that come into contact with hametz are removable, they can be kashered in the appropriate way (if metal, follow the rule for metal utensils). If the parts are not removable,

then the appliance cannot be kashered. However, all exposed parts should be thoroughly cleaned in either case.

● **Tables, closets, and countertops.**

If they have come into contact with hametz, surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned and covered before use.

● **Kitchen sinks.** Metal sinks must be thoroughly cleaned and then doused with boiling water. Porcelain sinks must be thoroughly cleaned and outfitted with a sink rack. Items may be soaked in a basin placed inside a porcelain sink.

● **Hametz and non-Passover items.**

In order to prevent accidental use, all non-Passover kitchen items and hametz whose ownership has been transferred should be separated from Passover items, marked, covered, and placed in a locked area.

An ever-increasing variety of Kosher le-Pesah products is available in local markets as well as in the specially dedicated Pesah stores that appear each year. Patronize these special Pesah stores, for they provide an important service to the Jewish community.

CONGREGATIONAL SECOND SEDER

Saturday, April 7, 8:15 p.m.
immediately following services,
which begin at 7:15 p.m.

We invite you, your family and your friends to share the second Seder with us on Saturday, April 7. Services will start at 7:15 p.m. Our Congregational Seder, led by Rabbis Wechsler and Ezra Amichai, begins at 8:15 p.m., immediately following services.

Please make Seder reservations by
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28
at 212-452-2310, ext. 39 or
www.orzarua.org

OZ Members: \$75 adults; \$50 children
aged 5-12. Non-members: \$125 adults;
\$60 children aged 5-12. All children
under 5, no charge.

Watch your mail for an invitation.

OMER BASICS

What's an omer? An omer is a unit of measure for cut sheaves of a grain crop. The 49-day period between the second day of Pesah and the day before Shavuot is referred to as the period of sefirat ha'omer—the counting of the omer.

Why do we count it? The Torah tells us in Parashat Emor (Leviticus 23:15-16) that an omer of barley was brought to the Temple on the second day of Pesah as a "wave offering." This omer of barley consisted of newly harvested grain, and new barley could not be eaten until the omer offering was brought. Starting on the second day of Pesah, 49 days were counted, at the end of which Shavuot was celebrated and an offering was brought to the Temple from the early summer's wheat harvest. The counting, sefirat ha'omer, is done at nightfall each day during the seven weeks. The counting of the omer connects the Exodus from Egypt with the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. In eagerness, we count the days of waiting for the revelation.

How do we observe it? For a period of time during the counting of the omer it is traditional to observe certain semi-mourning customs, such as postponing weddings and foregoing haircuts. This tradition may have an agricultural origin in that the period leading up to the summer harvest is a time of concern for the continuing safety of the crop. But also during this time of year in the second century CE, some 24,000 of Rabbi Akiva's students perished—they were most likely killed by the Romans.

What is Lag B'Omer? Lag B'Omer is the 33rd day of the counting—"lag" is an acronym made up of lamed (30) and gimel (3). The massive fatalities of Rabbi Akiva's students halted on that day, and the customs of semi-mourning are suspended. Lag B'Omer is observed as the yahrzeit of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai, the person said to have authored the mystical book, The Zohar. This year Lag B'Omer begins on the night of Wednesday, May 9.

Pesah Meal Match

First Seder, Friday, April 6

Do you need a place for the first Seder on Friday, April 6? Would you be able to host people around your Seder table? Please let us know so that we can create a sense of community at Pesah.

We welcome hosts who celebrate in many different ways—making their own Haggadah, following the traditional one, or offering children lots of opportunity to interact—as we know there will be interest

from our members. Congregants wishing to be guests, please let us know what Seder atmosphere is most attractive to you.

Please note: This matching is available only for members of Congregation Or Zarua.

If you would like to be a host or a guest, please complete the form on page 17 and send it to the synagogue office or register online at www.orzarua.org by 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 4.

Ma'ot Hittim Fund

Assist needy Jews to prepare for Passover

The Haggadah tells us that every Jew must experience the Exodus from Egypt, and the Mishnah tells us that a Jew should drink four cups of wine at the Seder, even if they come from the public dole.

We therefore raise special funds each year to assist less fortunate Jews who cannot afford to prepare for Passover. We forward the funds, called

ma'ot hittim (wheat money), to two communal organizations—the Joint Passover Appeal in New York and the New York Board of Rabbis—for distribution to needy Jews.

We hope that you will give generously to the fund as many will benefit from your kindness. Please make your check payable to Congregation Or Zarua and write Ma'ot Hittim Fund on the memo line.

Sell Your Hametz

Rabbi Wechsler will arrange the transaction

Before Passover, we are required to “sell” any hametz in the household to a non-Jew. The transaction is normally arranged by the rabbi to ensure compliance with the requirements of halakhah.

Send the completed form on page 17 to the synagogue office no later than noon on Thursday, April 5 or email it to dwenger@orzarua.org. It is customary to enclose a contribution to Or Zarua's Ma'ot Hittim Fund with your authorization.

SCHEDULE OF PASSOVER SERVICES 5772/2012

Thursday, April 5

Bedikat Hametz at night

Friday, April 6

Fast of the Firstborn/Siyum

Shaharit 7:00 a.m.

Erev Pesah

Candlelighting 7:08 p.m.

First Seder

Saturday, April 7

First Day of Pesah

Shaharit 9:00 a.m.

Minhah/Ma'ariv 7:15 p.m.

Candlelighting 8:13 p.m.

Second Seder 8:15 p.m.

(Congregational)

Sunday, April 8

Second Day of Pesah

Shaharit 9:00 a.m.

Monday, April 9

Hol Hamoed

Minyan 7:00 a.m.

Tuesday, April 10

Hol Hamoed 2

Minyan 7:00 a.m.

Wednesday, April 11

Hol Hamoed 3

Minyan 7:00 a.m.

Thursday, April 12

Hol Hamoed 4

Minyan 7:00 a.m.

Erev Seventh Day of Pesah

Minhah/Ma'ariv 6:15 p.m.

Candlelighting 7:14 p.m.

Friday, April 13

Seventh Day of Pesah

Shaharit 9:00 a.m.

Erev Last Day of Pesah

Minhah/Ma'ariv 6:15 p.m.

Candlelighting 7:15 p.m.

Saturday, April 14

Last Day of Pesah/Yizkor

Shaharit 9:00 a.m.

Festival ends 8:20 p.m.

Pesah Meal Match

Do you need a place for the first Seder? Would you be able to host people around your Seder table?
Please let us know so that we can create a sense of community at Pesah.

I would like to participate in a first-night Seder on Friday, April 6 as a: (check one)

☐ **GUEST** I prefer a ☐ Traditional Seder ☐ Innovative Seder ☐ Interactive Seder

Are you planning to bring children? _____ If yes, how many and what ages? _____

Are there any food restrictions? _____

☐ **HOST** I offer a ☐ Traditional Seder ☐ Innovative Seder ☐ Interactive Seder

How many people will you host? _____ How many children will be attending? _____

What are their ages? _____ Do you welcome children as guests? _____

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Best time to call _____

This meal match is available only for members of Congregation Or Zarua.

Register at www.orzarua.org or mail or fax this completed form **by 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 4** to:

CONGREGATION OR ZARUA, 127 EAST 82ND STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10028, FAX: 212-452-2103

Authorization for the Sale of Hametz

Dear Rabbi Wechsler: In accordance with Jewish law, please sell all hametz in my possession at the locations listed below. Enclosed is my contribution to Or Zarua's Ma'ot Hittim Fund.

Name _____ Apt. No. _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Other Locations (vacation home, office, etc):

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Send this completed form no later than **noon on Thursday, April 5** to dwenger@orzarua.org or to:

DR. HARLAN J. WECHSLER, RABBI

CONGREGATION OR ZARUA, 127 EAST 82ND STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10028, FAX: 212-452-2103

The Or Zarua Community

Fund contributions received between December 1, 2011 and January 31, 2012

Mazal Tov

Karen Perlman and Lawrence Norflus, on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Kayla Shari Prince, on the Bat Mitzvah of her daughter, Alyssa
Judy and Robert Golub, on the brit milah of their first grandson, Zev Aviv
Emily Braun and Andrew Frackman, on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Daniel
Beth and Joshua Nash, on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Samantha
Jennifer Mieres and Haskel Fleishaker, on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Zoe

Gala Event

Evelyn Kenvin and Arthur Rosenbloom

Gallery Fund

Marilyn Shapiro, in memory of Sylvia Doltisky's brother

General Fund

Willi and Arthur Aeder, in honor of their newest great-granddaughter, Arielle Gelernter; the naming of Bernie Tolpin's granddaughter; and Pat Davidson's 80th birthday; and in memory of Simon Katz
Anthony Banfield, in honor of Iris and Daryl Gruar's son, Ilan
Judy and Marc Chamlin, in memory of Simon Katz
Pat and Alan Davidson, in honor of Pat's birthday
Elsbeth and Edward Haladay
Harjen Charitable Foundation, for the Or Zarua IT website upgrade project
Susan and Edward Kopelowitz, in memory of Edward's father, Joseph Kopelowitz, on his yahrzeit
Amy L. and Gregg Mashberg
Alan Nadel
Luisa Paulino
Marilyn Pomerance
Charlotte Schwartz, in memory of her father, Jacob Simon
Barbara Scott and Jonathan Bromberg, in memory of Barbara's father, Harold Scott
Dara and David Shapiro, in honor of the birth of Boaz Daniel Friedman, son of Arielle and Greg
Marilyn Shapiro, in memory of her beloved mother, Sarah Steinman, on her yahrzeit

Estelle Siegman and Lee Siegman, in memory of Simon Katz
Irene and Sidney Silverman
Maurice Sonnenberg, in honor of Micah Wolfensohn
Janet Spaly and Greg Roth
Nancy and Ray Treiger, in honor of Pat Davidson's 80th birthday
Amy Wineburgh
James and Elaine Wolfensohn, in memory of Bessie Botwinick's yahrzeit

Hanukkah Appeal

Rosalind Devon
Francine and Samuel Klagsbrun
Helen Nash
David Silver and Rana Arons Silver

Hebrew School Fund

Marcia Kalin and Stephen Rayport, in honor of Ilana Burgess for the calendar fund
Aliza Kaplan

Hesed Fund

Ethel Bass-Weintraub and Barry Weintraub, in memory of Anita Bass's yahrzeit
Judy and Robert Golub, in honor of the brit milah and naming of their first grandson, Zev Aviv Golub, son of Chanan and Sivia Golub
Judy and Robert Golub, in memory of Channah Rubin
Aliza Kaplan
Alan Nadel, in memory of his parents, Bernard and Thelma Nadel
Daniel and Suzan Rosen
Helene Ruddy, in memory of her husband, Gerald Ruddy, and her parents, Sally and Harry Bardin
Judith and Barry Schneider

Hevra Kadisha

Martha and Frederick Mendelsohn, in memory of Fredrick's father, Norman Mendelsohn, on his yahrzeit
Alan Nadel, in memory of his parents, Bernard and Thelma Nadel
Miriam Wallerstein, in memory of her father, Abraham Patt, on his yahrzeit, and in memory of Simon Katz

High Holy Day Ark

Emily Braun and Andrew Frackman

Kiddush Fund

Ellen and Said Hawa, in memory of Said's father, Salim Hawa
Dore Hollander, in memory of her mother, Sylvia Hollander, on her first yahrzeit
Ruth Horowitz and Michael Nachman, in memory of Ruth's mother, Barbara Horowitz
Catherine and Phillip Isaac, in memory of Phillip's father, Yacov Isaac, on his yahrzeit
Judith and Herbert Lukashok, in memory of Judith's father, Abraham Berg
Alan Nadel, in memory of his parents, Bernard and Thelma Nadel
Karen Perlman and Lawrence Norflus, in honor of Kayla's Bat Mitzvah
Laura Resnikoff, in memory of her father, Israel Resnikoff
Lynn and Mark Somerstein, in honor of the anniversary of Mark's Bar Mitzvah
Bernard Tolpin, in memory of his father and mother, Ezra and Pauline

Kol Nidre Appeal

Robin Adelson and Jeffrey Shinder
Marcel and Sheldon Adler
Mimi and Barry Alperin
Ethel Bass-Weintraub and Barry Weintraub
Gail Billig and Mark Lowenthal
Emily Braun and Andrew Frackman
Kendra Collins and Andrew Plevin
Ellen DeJonge-Ozeri
Laurie Dien and Alan Yaillen
Alisa and Daniel Doctoroff
Mona Dreier
Beth Fisher and Harvey Himel
Mechele and Sander Flaum
Naomi Friedland-Wechsler and Rabbi Harlan Wechsler
Felice and Darrell Friedman
Pam and Mark Gold
Zella and Glenn Goldfinger
Constance and Leonard Goodman
Linda and Jeffrey Haberman
Marvin Heyman
Aliza Kaplan
Melissa Kashan Lader and Craig Lader
Francine and Samuel Klagsbrun

The Or Zarua Community

Fund contributions received between December 1, 2011 and January 31, 2012

Sarah Klagsbrun and Eric Weinstein
 Terry Krulwich and Paul Posner
 Judith and Herbert Lukashok
 Bonnie Maslin and Yehuda Nir
 Jennifer Mieres and Haskel Fleishaker
 Debra and Warren Nachlis
 Alan Nadel
 Diane Okrent and Aaron Shelden
 Shirley Okrent
 Susan Rock Okrent and Russell Okrent
 Robert Olden
 Lesley and Jay Palmer
 Elizabeth Philipp
 Marilyn Pomerance
 Brooke and Richard Rapaport
 Caryl Ratner
 Helene Ruddy
 Margare Rudigoz and Richard Goldberg
 Emily and Brian Sahn
 Robert Schallop
 Evelyn and Morton Schwartz
 Clair Seager and Daniel Galron
 Vera and Robert Silver
 Ellen Bromberg Skolnick and Robert Skolnick
 Nancy and Arthur Sobel
 Shelley and Howard Spindel
 Linda and Jerome Spitzer
 Sara and Walter Squire
 Audrey and Richard Stadin
 Evelyn Sucher and Andrew Irving
 Sharon and Marc Teitelbaum
 Alice and Thomas Tisch
 Bernard Tolpin
 Sharon and David Topper
 Elaine and Aryeh Weiss
 Michael and Helene Wolff
 Ellen Wetter-Brenner and Mark Brenner
 Cathy Zises

Kosher Food Pantry

Marcel and Sheldon Adler
 Faith and Harvey Brenner
 Tamara and Ronald Jasper
 Janet Katz
 Allen Mayer, in memory of Clara Okrainetz,
 Lina Mayer, Esther Mayer and Eva Mayer
 Judith and Barry Schneider, in memory of
 Barry's mother, Ellen Schneider
 Dara and David Shapiro
 Thuy and John Shepherd

Miriam Wallerstein, in memory of her father, Abraham Patt, on his yahrzeit

Lectures

Helen Cytryn

Library Fund

Lorraine and Herb Shapiro

Minyan Fund

Vera and Robert Silver
 Marilyn Shapiro, in memory of her father,
 Eli Shapiro, on his yahrzeit

Natan Sharansky

Alan Nadel

Oral History Project

Mimi and Barry Alperin

Purim Spiel Fund

Elaine Blum
 Rosalie Goldberg
 Diana and Harrison Goldin
 Francine and Samuel Klagsbrun
 Carol Rosenbloom and Ira Kay
 Barbara Sassoon

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Sylvia Adelman, in honor of Samuel and Ruth Perelson

Mechele and Sander Flaum, in honor of Rabbi Wechsler

Ramie Lepler, in memory of Simon Katz
 Allyn Maultasch, in memory of Jonathan Maultasch

Linda and Jerome Spitzer, in memory of Linda's father, George Kirsten
 Jerome and Linda Spitzer, in honor of Pat Davidson's 80th birthday
 Alice & Thomas Tisch Foundation, in honor of Rabbi Harlan Wechsler

School Tzedakah

Karen Perlman and Lawrence Norflus

Sukkot Meal Program

Aliza Kaplan
 Sarah Klagsbrun and Eric Weinstein
 Lesley and Jay Palmer
 Sara and Walter Squire

Tzedakah Fund

Helen Cytryn, in memory of Max Katz,
 Sarah Katz and Leo Isaacson

Youth Programming Fund

Ilana Burgess, in honor of the birth of Iris and Daryl Gruar's son, Ilan

VISIT WWW.ORZARUA.ORG

Explore Or Zarua's past, present, and future



Have you missed an Or Zarua lecture, class, or discussion? Would you like to hear a presentation a second time? Or Zarua's website, www.orzarua.org, contains recordings of many of the presentations given by guest speakers and teachers at the synagogue.

Natan Sharansky's discussion of "Israel, the Arab Spring, and World Jewry" on November 10, 2011, has been posted.

By clicking on the drop-down menu titled "Learning" and choosing "Adult Study," followed by "Recorded Talks," you can also access lectures by Professors Ruth R. Wisse, David Roskies, and James Kugel, and Rabbis David Silber and Harlan Wechsler. You can even listen to the Or Zarua Klezmer Band.

There are many other resources on the Or Zarua website—upcoming events, service schedules, current art gallery shows, minyan sign-up, and much more. So take a moment to explore www.orzarua.org and see what has been, is currently, and will be happening at OZ!

**CONGREGATION OR ZARUA**

127 East 82nd Street
New York, NY 10028-0807

CONGREGATION OR ZARUA

MARCH/APRIL 2012

March/April Checklist

- Megillah reading and Purim Spiel, Wednesday, March 7, 5:45 p.m., Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. See full schedule on page 3.
- Donations to the Purim Food Drive can be made at the Purim Spiel on Wednesday evening, March 7 (page 3).
- Teen billiards, Sunday, March 11, 4:00 p.m. RSVP to Ilana Burgess by March 8 (page 13).
- RSVP by Friday, March 9 for the Shabbaton with an Or Zarua Rabbinical Candidate on March 16-18 (page 3).
- RSVP by Friday, March 23 for the Shabbaton with an Or Zarua Rabbinical Candidate on March 30-April 1 (page 3).
- RSVP by Wednesday, March 28 for the Congregational Second Seder on Saturday night, April 7 (page 15).
- Sign up by Wednesday, April 4 for the Or Zarua Pesah Meal Match for the first Seder on Friday night, April 6 (page 17).
- Contract to sell your hametz by noon on Thursday, April 5 (page 17). Please remember the Ma'ot Hittim Fund (page 16).
- Fast of the Firstborn/Siyum, Friday, April 6, 7:00 a.m. (page 14).
- The Holocaust Memorial Service will take place on Wednesday, April 18 at 7:30 p.m. (page 7).
- OZ Book Discussion features David Bezmozgis's *The Free World* on Sunday, March 18, 7:30 p.m. (page 6).
- The Crafts Club will meet on Sundays, March 18 and April 15, at 10:15 a.m. in the OZ library (page 8).
- Marc Ashley's class, "May the King Answer Us When We Call: The Nature of Jewish Prayer" will meet on four Sundays, April 15, 22, 29, and May 6 at 10:00 a.m., in the Or Zarua library (page 1).
- Talmud Class with Rabbi Wechsler is Wednesday nights at 8:00 p.m. in the library.
- "Parashat HaShavua with the Malbim," taught by Rabbinical Intern Joe Schwartz, meets Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m. (page 6).
- Sign up for one of the many Hesed activities listed on page 5.
- Rudi Wolf's "Our Colorful Bible" is currently on display in the OZ Gallery in the social hall (page 7).
- Attend the minyan and breakfast on Sunday mornings, March 18 and April 1, with the rabbinical candidates (page 3).
- Please sign up for the morning minyan.
- Hear "Rabbi Wechsler Teaches" on Sirius XM Radio (page 13).
- The Or Zarua Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 17.
- The 2012 Israel Day Parade will be held on Sunday, June 3.

EDITOR'S NOTE

If you have an idea or article that is appropriate for publication in the *OZ Newsletter*, please contact Charlie Spielholz at cssrs@earthlink.net. All copy for the May/June 2012 issue should be received by Monday, April 9.