

The UJC Shofar

August, 1991



UJC welcomes New Year with old friend

Rabbi Sam Joseph Back For High Holidays, Torah Dedication, Bar Mitzvah

Buffet, Talk set for September 11 The New World Order — Where Do We Stand?

Following dinner at The Jewish Club, Rabbi Sam Joseph will address the recent, dramatic political changes in the world from a Jewish perspective in a talk that touches on issues such as anti-semitism, inter-faith relations, and the implications for a Middle East peace settlement. He will also be taking a look at Jewish life in the U.S. today and discussing relevant issues such as conversion and mixed marriage.

The buffet starts at 7 p.m. and is \$95, exclusive of drinks. Call Lily at the Club (801-5432) to book. Non-members may pay by cash.

Meet, Host Rabbi, Susan Frankle

Rabbi Joseph will be available to meet with members of the community regarding personal or family matters during his stay here from September 7-22. Please contact him for an appointment at The China Fleet Club (529-6001) or through Kathy Goeld (812-6549).

It is also hoped there will be UJC members interested in having Rabbi Joseph and/or Susan Frankle to dinner or showing them around our city. This is a chance to not only enjoy their delightful company but to make your High Holidays particularly meaningful as well. Please make arrangements by calling Kathy Goeld (see above).

Coloratura Susan Frankle to assist as Cantor

Prolific author, teacher, and traveller Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph joins The UJC to conduct High Holiday services at the China Fleet Club for the third straight year (see schedule, page three). Of particular significance this year, he will be bringing a Torah donated by Congregation Ohabai Sholom of Nashville, Tennessee and dedicate it to The UJC in a special ceremony during the Rosh Hashanah morning service.

This visit is also of special meaning since he will be conducting the Bar Mitzvah of Steven Isaacs in a Shabbat service on September 21 (see page two).



Associate Professor of Jewish Religious Education at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Rabbi Joseph has won the affection and respect of the rapidly-growing Reform/Liberal community here with his enormous enthusiasm, warmth, energy, and willingness to do whatever he could to help our young congregation.

Rabbi Joseph received a Ph.D. in Education in 1979, three years after his ordainment at HUC-JIR. As a specialist in leadership training, he travels widely throughout the U.S. and overseas and is much in demand to conduct seminars and workshops for religious, civic, and business organizations. He has written numerous articles, co-edited *Jews and the Founding of the Republic*, and is the author of *How to be a Jewish Teacher: an invitation to make a difference*.

Susan Frankle, a coloratura soprano, makes the journey to Hong Kong for our High Holiday services from

that other great bastion of Jewish culture, New York City. Born in Lorain, Ohio, Ms Frankle, now a legal secretary, is a graduate in Voice from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She has sung the High Holidays professionally for several years as a freelance Cantor, primarily for the San Francisco B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation. She is described by a colleague as having a 'gorgeous, sweet voice, operatically-trained.' By good chance, her talents came to The UJC's attention during a search conducted this summer.

*From the chairman . . .***Son of the Commandment,
Son of the Community**

We are accustomed to hearing that Yom Kippur is the holiest day in the year. I was therefore surprised to read recently that 'contrary to popular belief, the Sabbath is the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar' and 'that in biblical law, the penalty for violating the Sabbath (death) is much more severe than the penalty for violating Yom Kippur (excommunication).' It is interesting to note, therefore, that from this traditional viewpoint the Bar Mitzvah of Steven Isaacs comes at the succession of two of the most sacred days of the year, the Sabbath immediately following Yom Kippur.

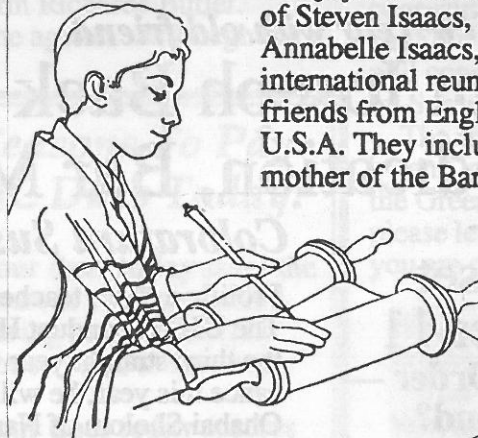
I would like to add another dimension or layer of meaning to this Shabbat/Bar Mitzvah service on September 21. As rewarding and meaningful an experience as it will be for Steven, his family, and friends, it will also be a very significant event for the Reform/Liberal Jewish community of Hong Kong. It must be recalled that it was on September 24, 1988, just three years less three days from Steven's Bar Mitzvah, that our community celebrated the Bar Mitzvah of one of its sons who had earlier been denied this important rite of passage because he was a Reform Jew. The foundation of this Congregation stemmed directly from the consequent commitment of its founders that this would never happen again to any Jewish boy in Hong Kong.

Steven's Bar Mitzvah, therefore, is both evidence and encouragement that this commitment continues to be met. His Bar Mitzvah is the fourth in which our UJC members have been involved and we share the hope that there will be many similar life-cycle events celebrated in the years to come by UJC members. In this respect, the decision by Steven's parents to have the Bar Mitzvah in Hong Kong and not abroad is an important endorsement that will help us further that objective. And by inviting the entire community to attend, Les and Annabelle Isaacs are performing a valuable community service, if we believe that Bar/Bat Mitzvahs breed Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. I do, and I believe this is how our Congregation and community grow and become stronger.

I therefore expect to see a large number of UJC members at Steven's Bar Mitzvah. We will be there not only to thank and congratulate the Isaacs and their friends, but to welcome and celebrate this Son of the Commandment, as we know the meaning of Bar Mitzvah to be, as a son of the community.

Family, Friends Gather from Around the World for Bar Mitzvah of Steven Isaacs

Community invited for UJC Shabbat service
September 21 at Aberdeen Marina Club



The joyous occasion of the Bar Mitzvah of Steven Isaacs, son of Les and Annabelle Isaacs, will also represent an international reunion of family and friends from England, Australia, and the U.S.A. They include the brother and mother of the Bar Mitzvah boy's father and the sister and parents of his mother.

Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph will conduct the Shabbat/Bar Mitzvah service. It is also expected that Ms Susan Frankle will assist as Cantor.

Steven, a boarding school student at Scots College in Sydney, has been studying for his Bar Mitzvah with Yacov Moselle and Rabbi Joseph. Given the time, work, and expense that have gone into arranging this Bar Mitzvah, it is hoped that the Isaacs won't be deterred from doing it one more time for Steven's brother, Andrew, 7.

The Shabbat/Bar Mitzvah service begins at 9:30 a.m., followed by a Kiddush. The entire communi-

It is clear that, while not biblical in origin, twelve and thirteen were recognized as special points in one's life nineteen hundred years ago. BUT the Bar/Bat mitzvah celebration as we know it today is not simply the time when a child becomes obliged to observe the commandments; it is the time when children are first allowed to participate in and perform the various rituals associated with full membership in the community.'

ty is invited. There will be a private dinner for friends and family that evening in the ballroom. The Aberdeen Marina Club is on Shum Wan Road.

Kadoories Extend Break the Fast Invitation

In keeping with their annual tradition, Lord and Lady Kadoorie and Sir Horace Kadoorie have sent invitations to members of The Jewish Club and Ohel Leah Synagogue and their guests, and the U.K. and U.S. Armed Forces, to 'Break The Fast following the Yom Kippur Service at the Ohel Leah Synagogue and the Jewish Club' on Wednesday evening, September 18. Ohel Leah Synagogue is at 70 Robinson Road; The Jewish Club is in Melbourne Plaza, 4/F1., 33 Queen's Road Central.

The Days of Awe

The evening service of Rosh Hashanah is relatively short and much like other evening services, with a few exceptions. The distinctive melodies of the Days of Awe which are heard again and again during both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services are introduced here.

At the morning service for Rosh Hashanah, the themes of judgment and repentance are repeated. The recurrent image of God as a father-king is given voice in one of the most memorable prayers and melodies of all the Jewish holidays, *Avinu Malkenu*, 'Our Father, our King.'

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur begin and end this ten-day period of reflection and repentance called, in Hebrew, *teshuvah*, which literally means 'turning.' The sabbath between the two holidays is called *Shabbat Shuvah*, the 'Sabbath of turning.' This is a time to take stock of relationships with others and, when necessary, to say 'I'm sorry' about thoughtless words, missed opportunities for kindness, and any offense given in the past year.

'The power of words and vows'

Kol Nidre is the evening service for Yom Kippur, named for its opening prayer and one of the most famous passages in our liturgy. Chanted dramatically by the service leader, it proclaims null and void those vows and promises that we may make and fail to fulfill in the coming year. Thus, we begin Yom Kippur with a recognition that our best intentions can go astray. The full meaning of *Kol Nidre* has been the subject of debate for generations, though it clearly addresses the power of words and vows, a recurrent theme in the Yom Kippur liturgy.

The evening service then continues with the stately, somber melodies of the Yom Kippur liturgy and the penitential and confessional language of the Day of Atonement. The communal confession, repeated several times during the holiday, is an alphabetical listing of communal sin that begins, 'We abuse, we betray, we are cruel. We destroy, we embitter, we falsify.'

The morning service, *shacharit*, traditionally includes a Torah reading from Leviticus which describes the sacrificial rites for Yom Kippur in the Temple. Some congregations substitute another Torah reading, often Deuteronomy 29:9—30:20 which ends with the lines 'I have put before you this day life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life. . .'. The morning *haftarah* reading is Isaiah's angry sermon which denounces those who fast out of rote ritual while what God really desires is justice and mercy.

The memorial or *yizkor* service is the time when a special memorial prayer for the dead is recited.

Mincha, the afternoon service, traditionally includes a reading from the Torah that outlines the laws of incest, though this too is often replaced with another portion, Leviticus 19, called 'the holiness code,' which includes the injunction to love your neighbor as yourself. The *haftarah* reading is the Book of Jonah.

'From death to life'

Neila, from the Hebrew 'to lock,' is the concluding service. The name refers to the symbolic closing of heaven's gates and communicates the sense that time is running out. At *neila*, the liturgy changes in its reference to the Book of Life; 'Write us in the Book of Life' becomes 'Seal us in the Book of Life.' *Neila* concludes dramatically with the responsive recitation of the Shema, *barukh shem* (three times), and the phrase 'The Lord is God' (seven times), followed by *kaddish* and then the final *shofar* blast which evokes the feeling of a successful passage from sin to repentance, from death to life.

(Adapted, abridged from *Living a Jewish Life*, Anita Diamant and Howard Cooper, Harper Perennial, New York, 1991 and *The Jewish Holidays*, Michael Strassfeld, Harper & Row, New York, 1985)

**The United Jewish Congregation
of Hong Kong**

High Holidays and Shabbat Shuvah Schedule of Services

5752/1991

conducted by

Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph

with Susan Frankle
performing as Cantor

ROSH HASHANAH

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 8, 8 p.m.

(Light refreshments will be served
following the service)

Rosh Hashanah Day

Monday, September 9

Morning service, 10 a.m.

(at which The UJC's first Torah
will be dedicated)

Children's Service, 12:30 p.m.

Shabbat Shuvah

Friday, September 13, 8 p.m.

(At home of Bob and Grace Green, see page 4)

YOM KIPPUR

Kol Nidre

Tuesday, September 17, 8 p.m.

Yom Kippur Day

Wednesday, September 18

Morning service, 10 a.m.

Children's service, 12:30 p.m.

Recess

Discussion, 2:30 p.m.

Yizkor (Memorial service), 4 p.m.

Afternoon and *Neila*

(concluding) service, 4:30 p.m.

China Fleet Club

Auditorium, G/F

6 Arsenal St., Wanchai

Hong Kong

Visitors Welcome

Approval of New Constitution, Bigger Committee Sought at August 29 AGM

The UJC General Committee will ask members to approve a new constitution at the upcoming AGM. Based mainly on the existing Rules, the new document (technically, the Memorandum and Articles of Association) only differs substantially from the present Rules in limiting the liability of individual UJC members. The revisions were drafted mostly by UJC members Robert Meyer and Victor Falk assisted by the law firm Richards Butler.

Election of a new General Committee is also on the agenda. Although the present Committee has 13 members, it is hoped to elect the maximum of 15 members allowed by the Rules to enable the greatest possible participation of UJC members in leadership roles.

In accordance with practice, members will also be asked to approve the Chairman's annual report, the Treasurer's report and audited accounts, and the appointment of an auditor.

Since the Rules require the AGM to be held within 15 months of the previous one (May 31, 1990), it is necessary to convene the meeting before the end of this month, even though the Committee recognized the desirability and greater convenience of scheduling it for September or October.

The meeting will be held at The Jewish Club starting at 6:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served from 6 p.m.

Greens Host Shabbat Shuvah September 13

Bob and Grace Green welcome UJC members, guests, and visitors to their home for the second consecutive year to attend Shabbat Shuvah. Rabbi Sam Joseph will conduct the service, assisted by Susan Frankle as cantor.

The service will be followed by an Oneg Shabbat. To assist the Greens with their planning, please let Susanna Chan know if you are coming (463-8156).

Three Reasons To Pay Your UJC Dues Today!

1. Paying your dues today saves the time and cost of sending reminders . . . leaving more funds (and energy) for services to the community.
2. Paying your dues today ensures that you won't miss even one issue of The Shofar with all its news of UJC and community events.
3. Paying your dues today **AT RATES UNCHANGED OVER LAST YEAR** means that you continue to be an official member of a dynamic Jewish congregation in Asia committed to serving your needs and those of your family.

In the event you have misplaced your invoice, please get in touch.

What: Shabbat Shuvah
Where: 1 Robinson Road, Flat 4A, Mid-Levels
When: Friday, September 13, 8 p.m.

Parking: Limited parking available on driveway curbside (not street) and in carpark. Ask guard for help.

Directions: As you proceed into roundabout at top of Garden Rd., keep in left lane. Do not go onto overpass. After exiting roundabout, No. 1 is first driveway on left (marked by blue and white sign, shared with Villa Elegance). No. 1 is white building with red, white and black lobby (no fish tank).

The Shofar

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General Committee

Chairman	Bob Green
Vice-chairman	Carol Betson
Treasurer	Victor Falk
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Ritual, Religious	Robert Meyer
Adult Ed.	Jonathan Kriegel
Membership	Mark Michelson
Liaison	Charles Monat
Liaison	Tomas Frankenberg
Publicity	Robin Krieger
Social	Janet Golden
Education	Veronica Frankenberg
Research	Anthony Polsky

The Shofar

Bob Green Editor
Asst. Editor Martha Josephson

Holiday 'Treasures' Sought

Visited your 'home' Temple or Synagogue this summer? Come across an interesting Jewish text? Found a good book or article about Judaism?

Please keep The UJC in mind. The Shofar is always collecting these 'treasures' from abroad to share with our readers. In fact, such information serves as inspiration for many of our services and provides material for some of our adult education programs.

To contribute readings, information, or suggested material for our newsletter, please contact the UJC. If you're a visitor attending our services, perhaps you'd like to arrange an exchange of newsletters between your Congregation and our's.

■ Martha Josephson

Rabbi and Mrs. Bloom Share Shabbat with UJC

Rabbi Irving Bloom of Temple Israel in Dayton, Ohio and his wife Pat shared a special and intimate Shabbat service and dinner-discussion with UJC members and guests on July 26 at The American Club in Central.

The Blooms passed through Hong Kong before and after a holiday trip to China and managed to meet quite a few UJC members during each stay.

All those who met this dynamic, warm and interesting couple heartily welcome them back to visit us on their next trip east.

According to Tradition . . . and Practice

Whatever the origin of the Days of Awe — a subject much debated by scholars — they are today a celebration of the beginning of the new year and a striving for atonement of our misdeeds of the past year.

'They are the only times when most synagogues are filled. Jews who rarely or never attend worship services find their way to the longest, most formal services of the Jewish year. The reasons for this loyalty are complex. Childhood memories and nostalgia draw many people. And some rabbis have suggested that there is a magical element to high holiday services that makes attendance seem like the renewal of an ancient Jewish life insurance policy, a hedge against death, or at least a repudiation of assimilation.'

The period is devoted to a careful examination of who we are in an attempt to become cognizant of the ways we have failed — failed others, failed our own selves, and failed God. This introspection is meant to lead to regret and remorse for the harm we have done, to attempts at restitution when possible, and to turning away from our past selves to better selves who will act differently in the coming year.

The entire Hebrew month of Elul which precedes the New Year is designated as one of repentance for wrongs committed against family, friends, and neighbors, either knowingly or unknowingly—and restitution is to be made. It is the time to begin the year among those for whom we care, coming together with family and close friends to greet one another, to share a walk, a visit, or a meal.

'A call to penitence.'

The blowing of the shofar (ram's horn) during the High Holiday services is a reminder of the ram that Abraham substituted for Isaac and the shofar sounded at Sinai. It has long been regarded as a call to penitence. Ancient tradition has handed down three distinct shofar-notes: a long, drawn-out sound (*tekiah*), a broken, plaintive sound (*shevarim*), and a series of sharp, staccato sounds (*terruah*).

'Afflict our bodies.'

To aid in focusing our minds on the tasks of repentance and atonement, we are told to 'afflict' our bodies through fasting and other forms of abstinence from pleasurable acts such as bathing and sexual relations. We are meant to feel that the natural course of our existence is suspended on this day while our lives, or at least the quality of our lives, hang in the balance. Children under the age of 13 are not expected to fast, however, nor is anyone for whom a lack of food or water might cause physical harm. Pregnant and nursing women are forbidden to fast. People who cannot or do not fast, including children, often choose a modified fast, drinking or eating just a little.

The 'Book of Life'

One of the overarching metaphors of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is 'the Book of Life.' According to legend, on the first day of the year, the names of the righteous are written in this book, inscribed for another year of life. But those who are not entirely righteous have the next ten days in which to turn away from their wrongs and repent before the book is closed and sealed on Yom Kippur.

The traditional Rosh Hashanah greeting is *Shanah tovah* ('A good year'); or *Le-shanah tovah tikatevu* ('May you be inscribed for a good year [in the Book of Life]', pron. le-SHAH-nah TOE-vah tee-kah-TAY-vu. The appropriate response: *Gam le-mar* or *Gam lekha* (fem. -lakh) — 'The same to you.' The proper greeting to extend during the period following Rosh Hashanah is *Gemar hatimah tovah* ('A good final sealing [to you]!') or *Hitimah tovah* ('A sealing for good!').

"Perhaps the best example of the reflexive nature of prayer and sin is the Jewish approach toward atonement. Prayers to God do not wipe away sins committed against other people. The only way to do that is by asking the person you wronged for forgiveness. It is not necessary for the other person to accept the apology, only that the request for forgiveness to be offered sincerely. This is what is meant by 'making teshuva,' that is, 'turning' away from your own sin by taking action." Diamant (see below)

'I don't see how we can become reconciled with our friends by means of liturgy. We cannot be forgiven without apologizing and asking for forgiveness; we cannot forgive until we are addressed. We must be bold enough to speak to those whom we have wronged, whether they know it or not, and we must perform the oft-times humiliating and cathartic act of seeking forgiveness. The liturgy can provide a stimulus, but it cannot serve in lieu of a person-to-person dialogue. That is the wisdom of beginning the Ten Days of Teshuvah with Rosh Hashanah and following it with seven days for human interaction before Yom Kippur.' Edward Greenstein (quoted in Strassfeld, below)

High Holiday Observances

Before the Fast

"Eating fish on Rosh Hashanah is customary in both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions because of its ancient association with fertility and immortality. In some families, on Rosh Hashanah the head of the household is served the head of a fish [note the similarity with the Chinese custom of honoring a guest in this manner] over which he recites a blessing that 'we will become like a head, not a tail.' One explanation for this custom goes back to the ancient belief that what one eats determines what will happen during the year; thus, eating fish, because they are so prolific, will cause us to multiply.

"One of my favorite Rosh Hashanah dishes is a fish recipe that I learned from my good friend, Israeli author Bina Ofek. Although we can't get the same kind of fish as she did, and don't have those magnificent Israeli tomatoes for the sauce, we still enjoy our adaptation of her recipe."

Bina's Fish Patties

Patties: 2 lbs. ground freshwater fish; salt and pepper to taste; 1/2 cup bread crumbs; 2 eggs; 1 cup water; 1 teaspoon ground cumin; 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley; 6 teaspoons oil.

Sauce: 3 (16-ounce cans tomato sauce; 2 medium onions, peeled and chopped; 1 green pepper, seeded and chopped.

Mix together all the ingredients for the patties in a large bowl. Refrigerate for several hours. Then form the cold mixture into about 16 patties. In a frying pan, saute the patties, a few at a time, in hot oil until brown on both sides. Place the patties in one layer on a greased baking dish. In a separate bowl, mix together the tomato sauce, onions, and green pepper. Pour the sauce over the patties. Cover tightly with foil. Bake at 350° for one hour. Serves 8.

(Text [abridged] and recipes are from *Jewish Family Celebrations*, Arlene Rossen Cardozo, St. Martin's Press, N.Y., 1982)

After the Fast

'After services, some families have a tradition of enjoying a big break-fast meal together in the home of friends or relatives; often this is a communal meal where each family brings one of the many courses.

'It's traditional to break the fast with something sweet, both because it's symbolic of a sweet year to come and because it raises the blood sugar. It's also traditional to eat something salty to help replenish the body's lost salt.

'The break-fast meal is almost always a dairy meal because it's light and easy to digest. In our home we break the fast with orange juice, coffee cake, and tea

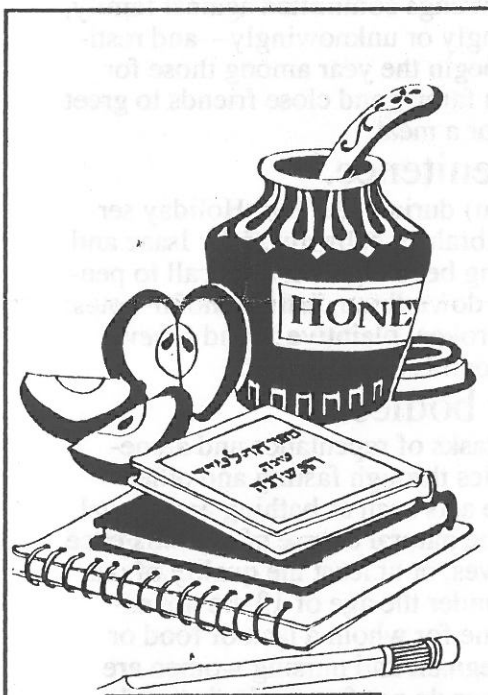
or coffee. Our favorite break-fast coffee cake is a simple one that Mother brought over one year at the end of the fast. We have been making it ever since. The rest of our menu often includes fresh fruit and salmon salad. Lox with bagels and cream cheese is another popular break-fast treat.'

Mother's Break-Fast Coffee Cake

Batter: 1 1/2 cups flour; 1/2 cup sugar; 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder; 1/2 teaspoon salt; 1 egg white; 1/4 cup corn oil; 3/4 cup skim milk

Topping: 1/2 cup tightly packed brown sugar; 1/2 cup chopped nuts; 2 teaspoons cinnamon; 2 tablespoons flour; 2 tablespoons corn oil.

In a bowl mix together the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar. In another bowl, beat the egg white; mix with the corn oil and milk. Add the egg-milk mixture to the dry ingredients. Mix topping ingredients together in a separate bowl. Grease an 8" x 8" x 2" pan. Alternate batter with topping, in two layers, finishing with topping. Bake the cake in a 375° F. for 25 to 30 minutes until it is brown on top. Serves 8.



The most common food traditionally associated with Rosh Hashanah is the dipping of apples in honey. As an expression of a desire for a sweet year, apples or other food — e.g., challah — are dipped in honey at the beginning of meals on Rosh Hashanah. The phrase 'May it be Your will to renew us for a year that is good and sweet' is recited.