

The Shofar

July/August, 1992

UJC Plans October Retreat at Missionary, Kung Fu Film Site

Ben Steinberg Tape Available

In response to inquiries from several members who attended the evening with Ben Steinberg, the composer/conductor of Jewish liturgical music has written The UJC with details of how to obtain a tape of his music.

'A Ben Steinberg Concert' is a program of his liturgical and concert works featuring Cantor Richard Allen with the choir and instrumentalists of Reform Congregation Kenneth Israel of Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. The music on this was recorded live during two service-concerts.

The program includes *L'Cha Dodi*, *Oseh Shalom*, *Shalom Rav*, *Hashkivenu* and other popular melodies composed by Ben Steinberg.

To obtain an order form (to be sent to Congregation Keneseth Israel), please call Angela or Mr. Rick at 463-8156. The cost of the cassette is listed as US\$10.00 plus \$2.00 for postage but it may be wise to include an additional \$3.00 to cover foreign postage.

Help Still Wanted

UJC seeks executive administrator for 20-hour work week to: establish and maintain computerized mailing list, files and library; handle inquiries and bookings; coordinate arrangements for religious services and other events; make arrangements for visiting rabbis and others; assist officers with correspondence, secretarial, membership, financial and other functions; help prepare and mail flyers and newsletters; and other functions as may be required. Fluent English, experience, good typing, basic computer skills essential, knowledge of Jewish religion and customs helpful. Salary \$4,000 - \$5,000 per month, depending on experience. Apply with resumé to The UJC, GPO Box 6083, Hong Kong.

Rabbi Sam Joseph, Cantor Robin Helzner to Lead Study, Songs During Family Weekend

The UJC 'Retreat Search Team' has reported favorable results following a recent rainy Monday spent tracking around mountains in Shatin and Hong Kong. The team — Kathy 'Motorola' Goeld at the wheel, navigator Janet Golden, visiting retreat consultant Golin Ben-Chorin, and back-seat adviser Bob Green — covered some very wet and sometimes precarious ground in the challenging quest. All four had volunteered for the mission.

With Bob Green cowering behind, Kathy Goeld earned the team's respect early on by expertly maneuvering a narrow, winding mountain lane under repair that banked on a six-foot deep ditch. Not long afterwards, Janet Golden showed her good form as a golfer when she played a skillful chip shot with a nearby branch to lift a dead rat from the pathway.

Next Year in Jerusalem?

Talk around the 'UJC Table' the last two Sunday nights at The Jewish Club has had a lot to do with the possibility of organizing a UJC trip to Israel around February or March next year.

Israeli youth leader Golan Ben-Chorin (visiting at the time) and Israeli Vice-Consul Mark Regev have both offered to help. Another possibility raised at the informal gathering of UJC members and friends was to join one of the tours led by Rabbi John Levi of Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne who regularly visits Israel with members of his Congregation. The UJC has faxed Rabbi Levi and is waiting for a reply.

If there's enough interest (around 15 or 20 people would be an optimum number), The UJC will turn its attention to determining the most convenient time and working out an itinerary with reference to specific objectives of the group. Depending on the numbers, the scope may be widened to include non-UJC members as well.

Those who may be interested in joining such a trip are urged to get in touch with Michel and Susan Millodot or Al and Sharon Fine.

about kung fu actor Bruce Lee.

As presently planned, the weekend retreat will begin around midday Saturday and include study and discussion sessions with Rabbi Joseph, a havdalah (end of Shabbat) service, activities for children, and mountain walks. It is hoped that Cantor Robin Helzner, an accomplished folk singer who accompanies herself on the guitar, will also participate. The UJC has booked the dormitory for those who wish to stay over Saturday night. Prices for meals and rooms are almost nominal. Informal response from members has been very enthusiastic. Details will be announced in the next issue of The Shofar for those wishing to book.

Upon the conclusion of the day's explorations, the chance encounter notwithstanding, the team's conclusion was unanimous. If all goes according to plan, a number of UJC members and friends will spend Saturday and Sunday, October 3 and 4, on a beautiful, serene mountain in Shatin — the Tao Fung Shan Christian Centre.

The large, wooded expanse with sweeping views, purchased in 1931 by Norwegian Lutherans for \$3,500, is housed with offices, a temple, small stone chapel (with remarkable echoes), library, conference hall, a 20 room (40-bed) dormitory with clean but spartan air-conditioned rooms, dining hall, and director's residence. They are mostly built in the style of a Buddhist temple or monastery with red-tiled roofs and white walls.

Because of the unique and authentic architecture and atmosphere, the Centre has often been used to shoot Chinese historical films and television dramas. Within recent weeks, it has been the site for the film being made

focus on Ethics: Belief and Morality

Until the recent secularization of Judaism, the root of all Jewish ethics was belief in Adonai, the God of whom the Bible speaks. The fact is easily overlooked. Adonai is not exactly like every other sovereign, unitary God. The monotheism of many Asian faiths manifests itself in the final fusion of all opposites, including, somehow, good and evil. In other words, for Asian religions, ultimate reality no longer distinguishes between the moral and the immoral. Adonai is not that kind of one God. Rather, our religious seers said that Adonai is ultimately good and holy, words which overlap considerably in the Bible.

The Jewish sense of responsibility flows from this primal intuition. Because Adonai is our standard and ideal, goodness and holiness become the primary concern of Jewish character, not secondary or instrumental interests. We do not seek to transcend these qualities for a higher state in which they merge with their opposites. The Jewish passion for the ethical derives from this bedrock consciousness of the ground of our being. With any lesser view of the place of righteousness in reality, I do not see that we can have anything like the imperative Jewish ethical style.

The moral corollaries which arise from this religious insight are relatively familiar. The unity of God implies that there is but one ethical standard for all people, in all places, and at all times — though, as we shall see, efforts to apply it in a given society are necessarily but approximations of it. Hebrew monotheism requires our ethics to have this universal reach, to expand our personal moral horizon beyond our self, our class, or race, or tribe.

Moreover, Adonai is not a withdrawn, uninvolved, solitary sovereign. The Bible teaches that the one God of all the universe is intimately concerned with people. For all our littleness, God 'wants' us to do good. God 'commands' the right and we are the one creature in the universe who 'hears' that command and is free to respond to it positively. Ethics has a great immediacy and significance in Judaism because the one, good God relates to us, 'asking' that we respond with our deeds. And our ethical responsibility is consequently activist, social, and directed toward building covenants with others.

If God were everything and people were but God's slaves or serfs, our resulting 'ethics' would consist of mere instinct or habit. Human beings — all of them — have an extraordinary status among created things. They are fashioned God-like enough that they may be God's co-workers. They are co-creating the universe. They must therefore be treated with high regard. Ben Azzai (early second century C.E.) said that the most inclusive principle of the Torah was the statement, 'When God created humankind, in the likeness of God he created them, male and female He created them' (Gen. 5:1-2).

All human beings have a direct relationship with God. None may claim to have displaced the rest of humankind from God's embracing concern. "Do you not belong to me as do the Ethiopians, O Israelites?" declares Adonai.

'Did I not bring Israel up out of Egypt and likewise the Philistines from Kaftor and the Arameans from Kir? Behold, the eyes of Adonai are one our sinful kingdom, to wipe it from the face of the earth — though I will not utterly destroy Jacob's household,' declares Adonai" (most 9:7-8).

It takes no special training or occult experience to understand one's ethical responsibilities. All people can know what God wants of them. Therefore study, as well as ritual and prayer, is a religious duty. But living with a touch of sanctity is the apex of Jewish duty. As R. Simeon b. Gamiel said, 'Not the study but the doing is critical' (P. Av. 1:17).

And, against much contemporary morality, classic Jewish ethics is emphatically social. People are not created isolated but as members of families, neighborhoods, and peoples. They therefore are enjoined, as Hillel put it, 'Do not withdraw from the community' (P. Av. 2:5). In contrast to Ben Azzai, cited above, R. Akiba taught that the most inclusive principle of the Torah was Leviticus 19:18, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself' (Sifra 89a).

On the whole, Jewish meta-ethics has not changed much over the centuries. The language and other symbolic forms we have used to draw closer to God have certainly varied. So, too, have our ways of describing human nature and our responsibility. Nonetheless, we easily recognize ourselves as the heirs of the Talmud as against, say, the Bhagavad Gita or the Pali canon of Buddhism. And, for all our modernity, we share the religious faith of our Jewish forebears in much greater depth than we do that of the non-Jewish thinkers from whom we have learned a great deal.

Significant change comes into our ethical life as we move from ideals and general principles to rules of conduct or, the most specific ethical instruction, decisions in a given case. For all that, a word needs to be said in defense of old rules and decisions. To exaggerate, the old is not automatically wrong. Many ethical dicta of centuries ago still prick our consciences. Despite our radically different socioeconomic situation and our changed self-consciousness, our basic human nature and Jewish relationship to God have not greatly altered. Living under the same Covenant as did our forebears, we often understand and express it as they did.

Many of us would gain considerable insight into our contemporary ethical responsibilities by studying the old Jewish formulations of our duties. The ten commandments remain an excellent place to begin — though the first four, technically speaking, are not ethical precepts. One might then expand one's introductory curriculum by reading such biblical passage as Leviticus 19 or the more diverse collection of statutes in Deuteronomy 22 through 25. If you are game for more, peruse an ethical section of any of the later Jewish legal codes. Most are now translated into English, for example, the Mishnah, Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah* and his enumeration of the Torah's legendary 613 *mitzvot*, The Book of Commandments, or somewhat more problematical, Hyman Goldin's rendering of the *Kitsur Shulcan Aruch*.

(continued, page 3)

Jewish Club Elects New Committee

UJC Chairman Co-Opted

Composition of the Jewish Club's General Committee took on a new complexion at the Club's Annual General Meeting June 3 with the election of a slate of candidates believed to have been strongly backed by Israeli members.

UJC chairman Bob Green up for reelection was narrowly defeated, as was redevelopment sub-committee chairman Alan Goldstein. The newly-elected Committee subsequently voted unanimously to co-opt Green as vice-chairman, who, although declining, later agreed to serve instead as an ordinary member. He will continue to head up the adult education sub-committee as well as represent reform/liberal interests.

Dror Ziulkowski takes up the redevelopment portfolio and will apply his energies to interpreting (and hopefully realizing) community wishes for the new Club under construction on Robinson Road.

Other new faces on the committee are Mira Krakowsky (membership), David Sassoon (synagogue), Atara Sivan (education), and Yoni Gewurtz (vice-chairman, House Committee).

UJC members Phyllis Gerstell and Tomas Bohmer continue as secretary and chairman of the Israel sub-committee, respectively.

Richard Bellau, an advertising executive who also represents young professionals in the community, was also reelected. Eric Beare (past chairman), Katia Citrin (chairman, Jewish Womens Association), Robert Dorfman (trustee), Charlotte Godkin (United Israel Appeal), and Dennis Leventhal (Jewish Historical Society) also continue to serve.

Morality, cont. from page 2

Much of classic Jewish ethical teaching reveals a heavy-handed emphasis upon divine reward and punishment. Such motivation and the literalistic treatment of the Bible texts aside, what they say about human relations is often remarkably apt. Here is a text the rabbis ordained we mull over before beginning our daily prayer: 'These are the investments whose dividends one enjoys in this life but whose capital remains for us in the life of the world-to-come: honoring one's father and mother, acts of benevolence, early attendance at Jewish study, hospitality to strangers, visiting the sick, dowering the bride, accompanying the dead to the grave, devotion in prayer, and making peace between one person and another. But the study of Torah is equal to them all' (Shab. 127a). To which others have rejoined, study is equal to them all only because it leads to doing them all.

Excerpted from *Liberal Judaism* by Eugene B. Borowitz, © 1984, UAHC Press.

Coming and Going

Krieger Family on the Move

Congratulations to Simon Krieger on his new job with AT&T in Tokyo. But first, an exciting summer including a trip for him and Robin to Shanghai, then a visit to Barcelona for the Olympics with children Jason and Lisa. Also on the good news front from the Kriegers is the disclosure that Rabbi Sam Joseph will conduct the bar mitzvah ceremony for Jason at the home of Robin's parents in Cincinnati next July (1993). Robin's departure will represent a real loss to the General Committee, particularly the good work she has done with the social committee and as head of the publicity committee. To stay in touch, please pencil in the following address into the UJC Membership Directory sent out this month: 28-9 Kamayama-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, Japan. Home phone will be (813) 34851643.

Wharton Most Likely for Jonathan K.

After sweating it out for most of the spring, Jonathan Kriegel reports from San Francisco that 'It is almost certain that I will attend Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania in the fall.' Jonathan had earlier been accepted by Northwestern for an MBA program but Wharton is a notch higher on his wish list. The former Committee member will be missed by the Congregation for his help in adult education and as one of the lay leaders of our services. His address for the summer is: 1900 Broadway, Apartment 4, San Francisco, CA 94109.

Youth Leader Wins UJC's Praise

Visiting Israeli youth leader Golan Ben-Chorin won the hearts and minds of UJC members during a two-week visit during which he conducted two Shabbat services, met with the Jews by Choice Group, and shared several meals with members. Mark and Kate Michelson hosted him for dinner one evening while Joe Ryant and Shar Reid generously opened the doors of their home and provided a place to stay. It was standing room only at for the June 12 service in The American Club at which Golan introduced some beautiful new Shabbat melodies while accompanying himself on the guitar.

UJC Hosts Visiting U.S. Judge

Chief Bankruptcy Judge Burton Perlman and his wife Alice will join UJC and other community members for the Sunday evening buffet at The Jewish Club on June 28. Friends of the Perlman's Martha and Lee Schimberg will be present as well. Also invited are Judge Gerald Goldfrey and members of Hong Kong University law faculty, UJC members Charles Booth and Carole Petersen. Judge Perlman has chambers in Cincinnati where he heads up the U.S. Bankruptcy Court's Southern District. He is actively involved with the Jewish community there and came to be known to our Congregation through Rabbi Sam Joseph.

Over the last few months, 'regulars' at 'The UJC Table' on Sunday evenings have come to include Susan and Michel Millodot, Al and Sharon Fine, Nancy Pyatt and son Matthew, Steve Kahn, and the family of Bob and Grace Green. Israeli Vice-Consul Mark Regev joined the table last Sunday. The venue has proven to be a popular place for informal get-togethers, good food at reasonable prices, and lots of stimulating talk. Join us on the 28th or some other Sunday.

New Member to Help Lead Services

Concern over the departure of Jonathan Kriegel has been alleviated somewhat by the offer of new member Melvin Bazerman to occasionally lead services. Mel has been a regular at Shabbat services since arriving recently with wife Paulette and young son Haris. Coming from a traditional background, he is well-versed in the liturgy and Shabbat melodies. He was also active in his Jewish community in the U.S. and brings good experience in fund-raising.



Principal of Jewish Day School in Sydney to Visit

Mr. William H. Newman, principal of The Emanuel School in Sydney, will be visiting Hong Kong from August 22 to 25 on his way back to Australia from the Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education in Los Angeles.

The Emanuel School is the only K-12 Reform Jewish Day School in the diaspora.

He has written to The UJC expressing the interest in speaking to as many Jewish families as possible about the benefits of a Jewish education for their children and most particularly, one at The Emanuel School.

The School caters for a significant number of overseas'

students and offers help with accommodation. Beginning next year, the school hopes to offer full board and lodging to students from the overseas' Jewish community in Hong Kong.

Those wishing to contact the principal may get in touch with him at The Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Depending on the interest shown, The UJC may try to arrange a special meeting for Mr. Newman and parents.

Meanwhile, additional material about the school being sent by Mr. Newman may be obtained through The UJC after mid-July. Those wishing to obtain this information may contact Mr. Rick at 463-8156.

The Shofar

Published by
*The United Jewish Congregation
of Hong Kong*

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The Shofar

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Shabbat Services to resume in August

Details to be announced

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Mark Regev Interprets

'Trends and Turning Points— An Analysis of Israeli Election Results'

A walk through the complicated labyrinth of Israeli politics with an informed observer, with comments on what the results may mean for Jews in Israel, here, and the rest of the world.

Tuesday, June 30, 8 P.M.
The Jewish Club
Melbourne Plaza

Co-presented by The Jewish Club &
The United Jewish Congregation
of Hong Kong

The Case for Jerusalem — Unrecognized Capital

As Israel celebrates the 25th anniversary of Jerusalem's liberation, and as it remembers those who died in the battle for the city's liberation, it must not forget that the struggle is not yet over.

Jerusalem is the only capital of a sovereign nation which most of the world community fails to recognize as such. The assault on Israel in 1967 and Israel's consequential 'occupation' of the city's eastern part has nothing to do with this anomaly. The seat of Israel's government was moved to Jerusalem by David Ben-Gurion in 1949, well before the Six Day War. But except for a handful of small countries, no nation moved its embassy to the capital.

Nor is the 1947 UN recommendation to internationalize the city relevant to today's political facts. Such obsolete documents are cited only in Israel's case. When the virulent, totalitarian regime of East Germany — in violation of post-World War II accords — declared East Berlin as its capital, the West promptly acceded to the new reality.

Israel's right to the eastern part of the city, which includes the Temple Mount — Judaism's holiest site — and the Western Wall, symbols for two millennia of the Jewish bond with the city, is conceded by virtually no one. But by refusing to recognize even the western part of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the world questions Israel's sovereignty in any part of the city.

Thus when Menachem Begin was interred in the ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives, American newspapers placed the burial in 'Arab Jerusalem.' And foreign correspondents standing in front of the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem tell their television audiences about relations between 'Washington and Tel Aviv.'

And in what can only be described as a patronizing gesture, President George Bush last week assured Mayor Teddy Kollek that Jews have a right to live wherever they wish in Jerusalem. Had he said the same about Washington, he would have been excoriated for making political capital out of a self-evident, fundamental and inviolable human right.

Israel's right to Jerusalem is so taken for granted by Israelis that virtually no effort has been made to persuade the world of its historic justice. If anything, Israel has bent over backwards to assure others of *their* rights. Thus both the municipal and national governments habitually refer to the city as equally sacred to Jews, Christians and Moslems. This religious, cultural and historic falsification perpetuates the myth that it is a center of pilgrimage for the three religions.

This dangerously distorts the truth. Only Jews deem Jerusalem central to their faith, and only the Jewish religion calls for pilgrimages to Jerusalem. There are, to be sure, Christian holy places in the city and in other places in the land, but no Christian denomination demands fealty to Jerusalem or pilgrimages to its shrines.

In the Koran there is not a single mention of Jerusalem, and the only pilgrimage to which Moslems are obligated is the *haj* to Mecca. When the Temple Mount was under Jordanian occupation, only the Jordanian royal family visited it. No other Arab ruler — including those who now call for a *jihad* to 'liberate' the city from the Jewish infidels — ever bothered. Nor is it 'the third holiest place for Islam' any more than several other cities in the Middle East which claim this honor.

Discouragingly, even reporters who have spent considerable time in the region contribute to misconceptions about it. Pulitzer Prize winner David Shipler of the *New York Times* recently referred to it as 'the capital of many empires, the capital of many nations.'

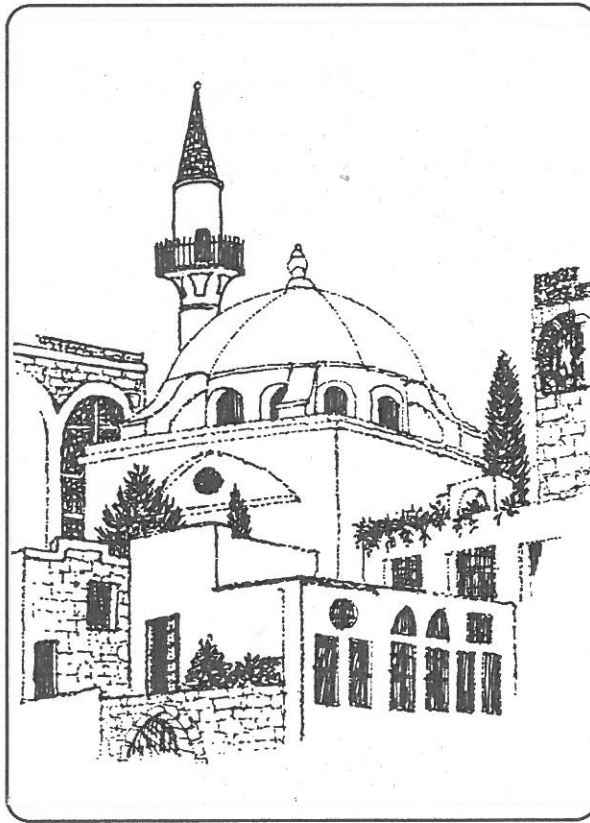
In fact, with the exception of its role in the short-lived crusader kingdom, Jerusalem has never been a capital of anything but the biblical and modern Jewish states. During the Arab conquest, Ramle (built by Suleiman I — the only city founded by Arabs in this country) served as the country's capital.

The Jews are the only people who have continuously inhabited Jerusalem — with short interruptions caused by foreign conquest and temporary exile — for the past 3,000 years. And ever since census-taking began in the early 19th century, the Jewish population of the city is known to have been larger than any other. Today, Jews constitute almost three-quarters of the city's inhabitants. Under Israeli rule, its population has trebled and, for the first time in its history, its shrines are accessible to followers of all religions.

Few seem to know these fundamental facts. But if Israel wishes to attain world recognition of its right to its capital it must make them known. This is the purpose of the International Forum for a United Jerusalem. Endorsed by 90 signatories headed by Mayor Teddy Kollek, its declaration represents virtually all political views in Israel and the diaspora. Signifi-

cantly, it also includes the signatures of five Christian leaders. Reaffirming 'solidarity with a reunited Jerusalem, the indisputable capital of Israel,' it calls for a continuing campaign to disseminate the truth about Jerusalem. That such a campaign is need at all is a measure of the double standard still applied to the Jewish state.

Yesterday, Kollek said the realization of Zionism remained incomplete until Jerusalem was united. Similarly, the recognition of Israel by the world community — now at an unprecedented high — will not be complete until Jerusalem is recognized as Israel's eternal capital.



Adapted, excerpted from *The Jerusalem Post, International Edition*, June 13, 1992

Submitted by Michel Millodot