

The Shofar

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Pointing for late August arrival Rabbi Search Nears End

If all goes as expected, The UJC will have a new rabbi in time for High Holiday services this September — Rabbi Howard A. Kosovske. Although a few details still need to be worked out, the Rabbi told Karen Handmaker, chairperson of the rabbi search subcommittee, that he was 'looking forward very much to coming to Hong Kong.' Now living in the Boston area, Rabbi Kosovske came to Hong Kong for four days in June during which time he conducted a Shabbat service and education programs and met with congregants and Committee members.

Presently the head of the Institute for Jewish Living in Canton, Massachusetts, an organization which he founded, Rabbi Kosovske previously served as rabbi for Temple Sinai in Sharon, Massachusetts (1986-1992), Tree of Life Congregation in Columbia, South Carolina (1976-1986), Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, Massachusetts (1974-1976), and Temple Beth Israel in Sharon, Pennsylvania (1971-1974). He was also in the U.S. Army Chaplaincy at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey and Frankfurt am Main in Germany from 1967 to 1971.

Ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1967 where he also received a Doctor of Divinity degree (*honoris causa*) in 1992, Rabbi Kosovske lists, among his significant achievements, the implementation of various educational, outreach, social action and interfaith programs at the congregations he served. At Tree of Life Congregation, he helped raise funds and supervise the building of a new synagogue and created an endowment fund.

He describes the Institute for Jewish Living as an institution founded 'to reach out to the unaffiliated and the formerly affiliated of the Jewish community.' It is a model, he says, through which individuals and families can rediscover their Jewishness and find their way back to organized Jewish life.

Describing himself as a 'people's rabbi' whose central focus is the individual, The UJC's prospective new leader says he is 'committed to making Judaism current, contemporary, and relevant' to the lives of his congregants. He describes himself as, above all, a teacher who uses every occasion, on and off the pulpit, 'to teach something of our heritage.'

He expressed a particular interest in reaching out to members from the age of 22 (the time they graduate from university) to 38, 'the average age,' he says, 'at which a family's eldest child is 8 and must be enrolled in Hebrew school to fulfill typical Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirements.' It is with respect to this age bracket, he explained, that many synagogues fail to offer meaningful programming, something he would make one of his chief goals to correct.

The rise in intermarriage is also of great concern to him. 'My responsibility and that of the synagogue,' he said regarding the increase in families with non-Jewish or newly-Jewish spouses, 'is to outreach to everyone in those families in a way that will ensure the continuity of the Jewish people.'

Rabbi Kosovske, noting the importance for a synagogue

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Named Chief Rabbi for China and Hong Kong UJC Roasts, Toasts Rabbi

Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph was the target of tongue-in-cheek tributes from friends, family, colleagues and congregants (not mutually exclusive categories) from all over the world at a Roast and Toast July 1 at the American Club.

The pace was set by Mr. David Shapiro who, following a delicious buffet dinner arranged by Mel Bazerman and Grace Green, told the 90-some UJC members and friends that he had consulted comedian Don Rickels on the art of roasting. 'Very slowly, and with lots of salt,' he said Rickels told him after learning where Rabbi Joseph was from. 'Those birds from Cincinnati are very tough.'

Bob Green targeted on the Rabbi's switch, soon after his arrival, from a beautiful, carefully-sourced leather briefcase (purchased, it was later learned, from a hawker at the Star Ferry underpass) to handsomely crafted, top-of-the-line supermarket bags from USA & Co. and exclusive, limited edition Park and Shop cloth bags which could be easily personalized with a marker pen. Perhaps, Mr. Green speculated, the Rabbi felt these bags would not only enhance his status in meetings with the Trustees but also gain him the sympathy and respect of the working-class members of the Congregation. 'Considering their value, I'm very happy to announce that Rabbi Joseph has agreed to donate these bags to The UJC,' Mr. Green said. 'We will either make them the first and second prizes in tonight's raffle or give them to our fund-raising chairman Mel Bazerman to auction off to the highest bidder.'

This gesture was far outweighed in importance, however, by news of the Rabbi's promotion, relayed by fax from Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, president of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. The message told of the HUC Board of Governor's 'endorsement of Rabbi Joseph for the position of Chief Rabbi of mainland China and Hong Kong.' 'His dedicated service and creative leadership,' the announcement read, 'have earned him the respect and admiration of all the Jews of China and all the Jews who eat Chinese food.' 'This means all Jews,' said Carol Betson who was reading the fax. Rabbi Joseph will be based in Kaifeng on the fourth floor of the Regional Museum next to the Kaifeng steles (stone tablets commemorating the Sung Dynasty Jewish settlers).

Robert Meyer commended Rabbi Joseph's contribution to the liturgy, particularly the *Ya-Ba-Bim-Bum*, *Yai-Di-Dai-Di* and *Bim Bam* wordless melodies (*niggun*) which the Rabbi apparently believed could be more easily grasped and understood by the average UJC member than more technically difficult songs with words (like those earlier introduced by Anne-Marie Marans).

ShaBAT Man, as Mr. Meyer referred to the Rabbi, had also distinguished himself by telling the same bad jokes over and over. These included the 'Tora, Tora, Tora' joke (told yearly after passing through Narita airport in Japan carrying a Torah for High Holiday services); the comment at each Bar/Bat Mitzvah that the Haftorah is really not 'Half of a Torah'; and the joke about the congregants in a small town in Oklahoma who, when he was a student rabbi, all broke for lunch on Yom Kippur at the local Dairy

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Raffle Nets \$66,000

Executive Committee members declared The UJC's first raffle 'a real success' at their July meeting and praised Mel Bazerman for his work in organizing and running it.

Reporting to the Committee, Mr. Bazerman said that anticipated profits are expected to be around \$66,000. He said he was disappointed, however, that most of the support came from only 20 percent of the membership, 'most of it the same people who always help and contribute.' He thanked Al Fine in particular for his help in selling 15 percent of the tickets on the night of the raffle. First prize, round trip business class tickets for two to Phuket and a stay at the Sheraton Laguna Hotel and Resort, went to Joseph and Elane Fine.

Mr. Bazerman described the raffle as 'a good learning experience from which we should profit in the future.' He suggested that the next raffle be held in April/May and that more people get involved.

Rabbi Search

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to operate in a fiscally sound manner, also sees his role as that of someone who can assist lay leaders with long-term development and fund-raising. He stressed the need for the rabbi to act as the congregation's primary spokesperson in the community and take an active role in community affairs. His long-term goal 'is to equip as many of my congregants as possible with the tools to access the depth of our Tradition and to enhance their ability to lead rewarding Jewish lives.'

He has taught university courses on Judaism and lectured on the topic at a number of colleges and universities under the auspices of the Jewish Chautauqua Society including Clemson, Columbia, University of South Carolina, Erskine, Westminster, and Wheaton. He has also conducted a number of adult education workshops and courses on Talmud, Torah, Shabbat, and Jewish education. He has had articles published in a number of professional journals on the aged, sexual exploitation, Jewish holidays, and brotherhood.

The 53-year-old rabbi and his wife Barbara, Assistant Director of Development for the B'nai Brith's Anti-Defamation League, have two daughters, Riqi, 26, a teacher of Judaica in the Boston area and Jolie, 23, a graduate student in harpsichord at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Founders Leave Hong Kong for Argentina

The UJC honored founding members Tomas and Veronica Frankenberg at a special Shabbat service June 24.

Resident here for nine years, the Frankenbergs were instrumental in the establishment and growth of the Congregation. They also gave generously of their time, resources and talent to Ohel Leah Synagogue, The Jewish Recreation Club, and the Jewish Women's Association. Both served on The UJC's Executive Committee, helping in holiday and festival arrangements, children's education, and community relations.

The Frankenbergs presented a pair of silver candle holders 'as an eternal symbol of enlightenment to The UJC and its members,' Mr. Frankenberg said. 'We will be far away geographically but near in our hearts forever.' The UJC, in turn, gave the family a Chinese antique silver condiment set.

Speaking of his 'strong spiritual bondage' to The UJC, Mr. Frankenberg told congregants how, in light of the absence of any religious options when he first came, he felt he 'had to do something to respond to my four children, our own needs and the ridiculous injustice that was done to fellow worshipers who were denied equal rights. . . . Out of this frustration we were lucky to join a group that made it possible to form this new community. . . . Today, we have a full community in place, the hard work done by all paid its fruits, and we are so proud to be part of it.' He thanked members and Rabbi Joseph for their contribution and strongly encouraged them to work closely with the Trustees.

Rabbi Joseph commended the Frankenbergs for their contribution by quoting from the *Pirkei Avot* (Sayings of the Fathers). 'In a place where no one behaves like a human being, Hillel teaches us to strive to be a human being.' *Mentsh-lichkayt* — rectitude, responsibility, and generosity of spirit — is what the UJC must strive for, the Rabbi said, pointing out that this is what the Frankenbergs exemplified and brought to the Community.

Videotape of roast for sale

Rabbi Takes Ribbing at Farewell Dinner

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Queen — and even invited him to join them! [He refused.] Mr. Meyer also noted how, by bringing progressively smaller Torahs to The UJC over the years, the Rabbi had, in collusion with Hong Kong's optometrists, created a thriving business from Bar and Bat Mitzvah students studying their Torah portions.

Barbie is Jewish! This was the startling revelation from an insider at Mattel Toys, Mrs. Paulette Bazerman. She disclosed that the Jewish owners of Mattel, Mr. and Mrs. Handler, had named the doll after their daughter Barbara when it was introduced in 1959. 'It was recently discovered that although she was 35 years old,' Mrs. Bazerman said, 'Barbie has never had a Bat Mitzvah. Since Rabbi Joseph will be leaving Hong Kong, Barbie did not want to miss the opportunity and has decided to have Rabbi Sam officiate at this occasion.' Mrs. Bazerman, responsible in Mattel for getting clothes produced for Barbie, presented Rabbi Joseph with a limited edition Bat Mitzvah Barbie and a Rabbi Sam doll dressed in traditional clothes, complete with *tallit* and *kippot*.

Mr. Bazerman told the story of

Rabbi Joseph as a schoolboy, relayed by fax from Michael Joseph, the Rabbi's brother. As a 5th-grader in Mrs. Kaufman's class, a teacher whom 'he had crossed swords with all year,' young Sam Joseph was asked in class to describe what he wanted to be when he grew up. 'A neurosurgeon,' he said. 'I hope there will be a cemetery next to the office where you practice,' his teacher commented to which he quickly replied, without missing a beat, 'And I hope you will be my first patient.'

Sharon Fine, 'official' UJC photographer, gave the Rabbi an album containing photographs taken at UJC events during the year he served the Congregation. 'It is always difficult to say farewell to friends we love,' she said, adding that it had been a wonderful year and personally, a very fruitful one. Mr. Green then presented an engraved plate expressing the Congregation's admiration and gratitude for the Rabbi's year of service.

The well-planned evening, organized by Mr. Bazerman who also acted as Master of Ceremonies, concluded with a raffle.

A videotape of the roast is available for \$200.00 by calling or faxing the UJC office.

Correspondence

Shofar to be archived

I was so pleased to receive your thoughtful letter of May 18, 1994. It was my privilege to meet with your congregation and to witness the enthusiasm and commitment of The UJC. I have no doubt that your congregation will continue to grow and be a forceful entity in your community.

I appreciate receiving the copies of *The Shofar* and look forward to any other issues which you may send. I will forward these bulletins to the American Jewish Archives of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Our Archives house 4,000,000 pages of records, manuscripts, and documents making it a major center of research of the Jewish people.

It was wonderful to hear from you.

With kindest regards,
sincerely,
Alfred Gottschalk

[Dr. Gottschalk is President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion]

Rabbis say thanks

Please accept this small donation toward the continued growth of The UJC as our way of saying 'thank you' for a delightful Shabbat. We continue to be amazed by all that we hear — and have now seen — about the growth and dynamism of this unique Jewish community. Your success is a tribute to your dedication, hard work and commitment. May you continue to go from strength to strength.

We look forward to seeing the members of The UJC again — in your part of the world or our's.

Shalom, Betsy and Michael Trop

[Rabbi Betsy Trop, Associate Rabbi at Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne, and Rabbi Michael Trop of the Leo Baeck Center in Melbourne visited Hong Kong in June].



'We are entering an exciting new phase'

Trustees Announce Support

The Incorporated Trustees of the Jewish Community of Hong Kong gave their strongest ever endorsement of UJC's role in Community affairs at the Jewish Club's Annual General Meeting on June 2.

'Ten years ago,' Trust Chairman Michael Green said in reading his report, 'our Community was very different from today. Then we did not have a Kosher restaurant or a *Mashgiach*, or a daily *Minyan*. Today we have all of these with the Trust bearing the cost to the benefit of our more observant Members. We are delighted to have had the resources to provide these additional benefits. Now we intend to provide benefits and support within the terms of the Trust and within our financial means to other groups within the Jewish Community of Hong Kong including The United Jewish Congregation.'

Mr. Green said that although the Trust is presently out of funds, the members 'have decided to seek a loan in order to continue and expand financial support made to a wide range of Jewish activities covered by the Trust. We have committed, pending negotiations on our loan, support to The United Jewish Congregation, Carmel School and Chabad in addition to our regular support for the Synagogue Ohel Leah, the Cemetery, the *Mikvah* and the Club. This demonstrates our intention to support a wide range of activities leading to a diverse and richer Jewish life in Hong Kong.'

Mr. Green expressed the hope that a working group can be formed of Community members and Trustees 'to plan for our new Community

Centre.' Specifically, he said, "we must plan for an active 'living' Community Centre that will be the home to all Jews residing in Hong Kong. We are entering an exciting new phase in the life of the Hong Kong Jewish Community and our new Centre should serve the educational, social and recreational needs of all our members." Trustee Robert Dorfman said the working group would probably be formed this fall.

Regarding the sensitive issue of a sanctuary for The UJC, Mr. Green said 'neither Ohel Leah Synagogue nor the Jewish Community Centre will be used as a place of worship for Reform Jews.' He added that in light of 'the concern of some members of the Community over this . . . we intend to make available separate premises, with a separate address, in a separate tower in Robinson Place, for the use of other congregations including religious services and including The United Jewish Congregation.'

Mr. Green said the Trustees had consulted a number of Jewish Community leaders and rabbis worldwide 'representing a wide spectrum of Jewish life and observance.' Noting the expanding size and diversity of the Hong Kong Jewish Community, he expressed the Trustees' wish for a continuing dialogue 'with all facets of the Community' in order to 'reach out to as many Jews as possible in Hong Kong.' He said the Trustees 'have shown maximum respect and sensitivity to the needs and beliefs of the majority of residents' and that they 'do not intend to allow one group to impose its views on another.'

Immigration Doubles Doctors in Israel

French Finance Rescue Teams

Doctors looking for jobs in Israel may find themselves working instead in Africa and other countries as part of international emergency medical rescue teams.

The idea is borrowed from the concept that originated with the creation, by a French-based voluntary organization, of *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (Doctors Without Borders). With twice as many doctors as it had just a few years ago due to immigration, Israel has something like six doctors per 1000 residents, probably the highest ratio in the world. CRIF (the umbrella organization of French Jewry) has funded a program which offers doctors the opportunity to take a two-month training course in preparation for emergency assignments. Two 10-doctor teams are slated to go to Africa after training and another team will be on call for Doctors Without Borders. Some of the doctors joining the program are serving in the Israeli Defence Forces Medical Corps. All are under 35, unmarried, and free to leave on short notice.

Portrait of a Rabbi

[The following excerpt from *Forward*, February 18, 1994, is by a screenwriter about her search for 'a temple, a home' in Los Angeles.]

After seven years and nearly a dozen synagogues, I found Mishkon Tephilo, one of the oldest congregations on the West Coast in the unlikely spot of Venice beach. It has been in its present location since 1948 and prior to that was situated on the lot next door since 1915, when it opened its doors as an Orthodox synagogue for people who had summer homes in the nearby resort communities. As Los Angeles started growing and becoming more developed, so did the congregation. In its heyday, Main Street, where the temple is still presently located, had 10 kosher butchers.

Forty years later, Main Street is a place where you're less likely to see Jews walking to shul on Saturday than trolling the avenue's trendy shops that charge \$150 for a pair of jeans. It hasn't been easy for Mishkon Tephilo to survive in such a super-assimilated neighborhood. In 1985, they almost had to close their doors. Membership was dwindling, and there didn't ever seem to be enough dues. Generous contributions kept the place afloat but no one knew for how long. But then, in 1989, a miracle happened to Mishkon Tephilo. She goes by the name of Naomi Levy.

Only a few months after Mishkon hired the first Conservative female rabbi in Los Angeles, a petite 26-year-old, the community was buzzing. This young, fiery, funny transplanted Jew from Brooklyn came in with a fervor for getting people back to the synagogue. She told stories in her New York accent filled with sympathy, empathy and wisdom. After two years, membership had increased by 50%.

I had the pleasure of hearing her speak for the first time at Rosh Hashanah services last year. I never knew exactly what I was looking for in a *shul* until I found it. It's a Conservative temple that sings the songs and prayers in the same tune I did growing up. There's no organ. The congregation is mixed with people of all ages. The topics are timely. You come as you are, in jeans or in lace. There are lectures and classes that range from 'Feeling Comfortable in Synagogue, an Introduction to Prayer' to next week's *megillah* reading and Purim party after a *hamentashen* bake off. But most importantly, a woman is running the show in a Conservative congregation.

For someone who is now only 30, and just recently gave birth to her first child, Naomi, as I call my rabbi, has more spirituality, knowledge and wisdom than most people three times her age. But the reason Naomi can pack the house that holds as many as 500 is her ability to connect while telling a great story.

From the chairman . . . Losing a good driver

Rabbi Joseph became a congregational rabbi again for the first time in years and failed, as we found out, to match the traditional picture some of us had in our minds about how a rabbi should look and behave. First of all, no beard, although there was certainly enough hair on top to compensate. And instead of cloistering himself away in a study, he made it a point to cover as much ground as possible. A typical day might take him from a hospital visit in the New Territories in the morning, a lunch and learn session in Central District at mid-day, a Bar Mitzvah class in Repulse Bay in the afternoon, and maybe another class back in Central in the evening. He was all over the place.

Rabbi Joseph, The UJC's first fulltime rabbi and our yearly High Holiday rabbi before that, had departed a long way, it seemed to us, from the original priestly class, the Levites, who had been commanded to 'stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood (Ezekiel 44:15). While the only responsibility of an ancient priest was his service inside the Holy Temple, Rabbi Joseph's responsibilities were completely outside the temple, made necessary, perhaps, by the fact that The UJC did not have a temple. But the ancient priests had other responsibilities, as we learn by reading further in Chapter 44, and we can see the real connection with Rabbi Joseph when we read the words 'And they shall teach My people. . . .'

Rabbi Joseph came to us as a teacher from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and returns to his teaching job this fall at HUC. That's what he enjoys doing the most. To accomplish this, he would not let little things like the lack of a fancy office and big staff get in his way. Until The UJC could find the funds for a small place in Central, he worked out of his home, my office, Hank Goldstein's office, and Chuck Monat's office. He plugged his laptop into any computer printer he could find. His conference room was a table at McDonald's. In addition to what he had learned at Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Joseph developed skills which could equal those of any rabbi in the world in photocopying, licking stamps, and stuffing envelopes. He became a familiar face at the print shop and post office. Within the first few weeks of his arrival, he put into place the most comprehensive adult education program the Jewish Community of Hong Kong had ever seen. When The Jewish Club denied him a place to teach, he went out and found another.

Rabbi Joseph, we learned, was the kind of rabbi who, in the words of Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, a columnist in *The Jerusalem Post*, 'raises the funds, builds the schools, equips the dining hall, hires the cooks, provides the bus service — in effect does everything necessary so that children will be able to learn Torah.'

The children were us. As a modern-day rabbi-educator, Rabbi Sam came prepared to create the framework necessary to enable him to teach. Our temple was The American Club some nights, City Hall on others. Our schools were the Ladies Recreation Club and function rooms in various apartment buildings. 'Build it,' Rabbi Joseph was so fond of quoting from a favorite film, *Field of Dreams*, 'and they will come.'

It shouldn't be too surprising, therefore, that Rabbi Joseph chose another saying about building as the subject of his *Dvar Torah* at the last UJC Executive Committee meeting he knew he would be attending. From the *Pirkei Avot*, he read one of the most famous of the 'Sayings of the Fathers' (II, 20-21): "'Rabbi Tarfon said, the day is short, and the work is great, and the laborers are sluggish, and the reward is much . . . he used to say, It is not the duty to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.'"

The day is short, Rabbi Joseph told us, means that Jewish people do not subscribe to a 'Waiting for Godot' existentialist type of philosophy that allows us to sit around doing nothing, waiting for something to happen. The work is great, he explained, means 'great' in the sense of 'fabulous.' The laborers, he said, are us, and it means 'we must overcome the tendency to neglect what needs to be done.' 'The reward is much' refers to the reward in this world and in the world to come. The last sentence, Rabbi Joseph said, 'means that we must do what is within our power to do. It's holy work, and we can see that the reward is great.'

And indeed, the Rabbi did not desist.

UJC expedition searches for traces of Sung Dynasty Jewish Community in China and finds its own Discovering Communities — Old and New

A group of 18 members and friends of The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong recently returned with some new perspectives on community after visiting Kaifeng, a city 470 miles southwest of Beijing in China's Henan province, where a number of Jews settled nearly 900 years ago.

There's a fine line between the unaccustomed, bizarre, and surreal. Arising from the many unusual experiences China offers, the line is not often easy to discern and the struggle for context and perspective can be challenging. Friday morning, the carefully-planned itinerary had us on the way to a Shang Dynasty village, the foundations of which had been unearthed not many years before. Just a few hours removed from our familiar world in Hong Kong, we found ourselves on a narrow, bumpy dirt road somewhere in the vast plains of central China, wheat fields lapping at the sides of our tour bus, on an excursion viewed with some suspicion by the good honest peasants looking up from their work, perhaps as a threat to the soil.

After touring a museum adjacent to the archeological site with an interpreter whose language specialty was hard to determine, we were led onto a platform overlooking the manicured remains of a 3,500-year-old efficiency apartment. Staring down at the crumbling stone walls and crudely dug holes once used for cooking fires — dwellings that a few of us renamed Shang Villas, Mel Satok observed, quite truthfully, that 'these excavations are the real pits.' The UJC's Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph agreed that they would not, indeed, have made suitable premises for a spiritual leader after Robert Meyer explained how we had, in fact, rejected housing not that dissimilar in our search for an apartment preceding his arrival in Hong Kong last year.

As members of the First UJC Heritage Plus Tour, we were on a dig of our own, sorting through historical layers in the search for roots of the Jewish presence in China. Since none of the accounts we had read put Israelites in the Central Plains until some 3,000 years after the Shang, there was little need to linger at the pits, fascinating as they were. And even with the most optimistic projections of tourist arrivals in mind for the remaining years of the century, I found it hard to accept Mel's cheery appraisal at each dusty, deserted intersection that this would be a great place for me to open a retail store selling Shang Dynasty replicas and the like.

From Father Matteo Ricci's first encounter with a Chinese Jew in 1605, a succession of missionaries, scholars, travelers and journalists have speculated on when, why, and how Jews came to live in China. If they were not descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, then perhaps they came as silk traders during the Han Dynasty some 2,000 years ago. If not the Han then maybe the Chou, and what did the Chinese terms *Xiyu* and *Tienzhu*, referring to their origin, mean after all — India, a place far to the West, the Western Regions, any of several Middle East countries, or Persia in particular? These and many other questions have been debated for centuries by those researching the history of what had come to be called the 'orphan colony' of the Diaspora.

But Mr. Wang Yi Shia, sitting erect on an overstuffed sofa in the lounge of Kaifeng's Dong Jing hotel and flanked by two friends said to be descendants of the Kaifeng Jews, preached a confident, point by point analysis of how the Kaifeng Jews came to be. The Director Emeri-

tus of Kaifeng Museum and President of Kaifeng Institute for Research on History [of the] Jews, as his calling card would have us know, lectured our assemblage with the authority of an expert who has presented his account to many previous groups of Jewish visitors — how many, although he emphasized the word 'many,' he would or could not say.

On the plane from Hong Kong to Zhengzhou, our first stop on our journey, Rabbi Joseph had passed out some immensely helpful background material on the old community. From these readings, Mr. Wang's talk, and other sources we learned that the Jews who settled in Kaifeng came most likely from India or the Middle East, possibly Persia, sometime in the Sung Dynasty between 960 and 1126. These early settlers may have been traders, merchant-adventurers, or simply a group of families seeking haven from oppression, war, or famine — the record doesn't say. In 1126, the Sung Dynasty emperor granted permission to build a synagogue.

The history of the community is written in stone, literally — five-foot tall, two-and-a-half foot wide grey limestone slabs, rounded at the top like large commandments with inscriptions in Chinese script lightly incised by chisel. These accounts, dated 1489, 1512, and 1679, summarize in traditional Chinese commemorative style the history of the community and precepts of Judaism. Descendants of the *Ching Chen* ('Purity and Truth Religion'), as they were known in Kaifeng, could stand in their synagogue's courtyard where the stones were erected and read, among other things, about the construction, repairs, and improvements to the synagogue, its reconstruction following devastation by flood in 1461, and about members who had achieved high positions in the civil service, military and various other professions.

Badly weathered and barely decipherable, the tablets or steles as they are called by historians are safe for now in a dusty room of the Kaifeng Museum, locked away like heirlooms in three glass cases until the growing stream of far distant relatives like us merits their enhancement in a display more worthy, perhaps, of their importance. Safe for now, maybe, since we learned from our guide the next day that thieves had cleaned out the museum's porcelain collection the year before in a middle-of-the-night burglary, the largest theft of its kind in post-1949 China.

As the guard removed the padlocks and pushed back the accordion-style iron door protecting the museum's treasures, voice levels went a decibel down, not quite the conditioned hush reserved for high-ceilinged museum rooms but certainly no irreverent loudmouths here either. The green and white terrazzo floor, covered with gritty dirt, had not been washed in months or years and bore running shoe imprints that looked as old as the steles themselves. Red velvet curtains hung the length of tall, latticed windows, five on each side, that opened onto a balcony skirting the room on all four sides. Never mind that it sloped in places, that a few tiles were cracked or missing, or that some of the window panes were broken. It's remarkable enough in a country this poor, some might have thought, that space is reserved for artifacts of such a small and extinct or nearly extinct minority.

If, on this peaceful Sabbath morning in China, Sharon Fine, a Taiwan-born member of our Congregation, heard Confucian echoes while reading these ancient tablets, they resounded from the efforts of the old Kaifeng community to stress the compatability of its Judaic principles with Con-

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Confucian values. The Chinese character for 'Way,' as Sharon pointed out, resonated with traditional Confucian and Taoist overtones. Here it was used to describe the 'Way' of the 'sect which adheres to the Scriptures,' as the Jewish community referred to itself, and to show how it was in harmony with the precepts of Confucianism, the state religion of the time. Both were devoted, for example, to sovereign and parent, both revered their ancestors, and both attached importance to charity, civic responsibility, pursuit of learning, and dignity of labor.

Making it in Sung Dynasty China meant going the civil service route, studying for the examinations in the hope of becoming a scholar-official and member of the Confucian literati. The pressure to succeed and the resultant inclination to adopt Confucian values would have produced the same kind of conflicts between traditionalists and the more secular-minded that have arisen historically in almost all Jewish communities. The good guys kept kosher, observed the Sabbath, holidays and festivals, married within the community, practiced circumcision, and married among themselves. The bad guys — radicals, progressives, and reformers — brought such non-Jewish practices as ancestor worship into the synagogue, burned incense not only in honor of Jewish patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but also their more immediate ancestors, and even performed the kowtow, made food offerings, and burned incense in honor of Confucius. More disturbing was the practice of animal sacrifice which had been officially discontinued by Judaism following the destruction of the Second Temple but, apparently borrowed from the Chinese, became an integral part of synagogue life within a few generations of its establishment.

According to Mr. Wang, the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) was a golden era for the community during which it grew to as many as 500 families or 4,000 individuals. Kaifeng had the largest and best established of around a dozen Jewish communities in China. A number of members achieved high positions as scholar-officials in the civil service as well as in the military, commerce, and various professions. Only 200 families survived the 1642 flood, however, and although they returned two years later from where they had fled to safety to rebuild their homes and restore the synagogue, this was an important turning point marking the decline of the community and the beginning of what Mr. Wang called a period of national assimilation.

In fact, by Matteo Ricci's time in the early 1600s, intermarriage had been going on for generations. By the late 1500s, memorial books showed that over a quarter of the married women were non-Jewish by birth. Reports from a succession of travelers showed a steady decline in numbers, observance of religious rituals and holidays, and knowledge of Hebrew. Intermarriage had occurred to such an extent that by the mid or late 1800s almost all members of the community were indistinguishable physically and otherwise from the rest of the Chinese population. They dressed like them, spoke the same language, ate the same foods (except, perhaps, for pork), went to the same schools, worked in the same occupations, and probably bound the feet of the women. The last rabbi died sometime around the beginning of the 19th century and without a successor, religious activity stopped inside the synagogue. By the mid-19th century, the community 'ceased to function as a viable religious entity' in the words of one scholar.

The roof terrace surrounding the room where the steles were displayed overlooked Baogong Lake to the north, an artificial body of water constructed in the Ching Dynasty.

It was a bright, sunny morning in May, slightly hazy, with the temperature in the comfortable low 70s. If we had been standing at this vantage point just 831 years earlier, looking to the northeast, we would have seen the newly-constructed Temple of Purity and Truth around two miles in the distance, just southeast of the intersection of Earth Market Character Street and Fire God Shrine Street, a place our guide Alex Liu helped us identify by sighting on a church steeple. We could have attended morning, afternoon, and evening services conducted by *Lieh-wei* (Chinese transliteration of Levi) *Wu-ssu-tu* (Chinese transliteration of Persian *ustad*, meaning master or rabbi). We might have been summoned to prayer by the beating of a resonant jade chime shaped like violin, as was the case in later years, after ritually bathing in the *mikveh* in an adjoining building and changing our garments ('to help dull the ardor of sensual desire and quiet his spirit,' as was written on the 1663 stele). Men and women would be separated during the service, there would be no instrumental music, and if practices observed in later centuries then prevailed, men would wear blue-colored *yarmulkes* at prayer but no shoes and Rabbi Levi would cover his face with a transparent veil while reading from the Torah.

Although the synagogue continued to be the focal point of the community's spiritual and communal life, the influence of Chinese Confucianism came to be increasingly seen, particularly in the architecture and furnishings of the synagogues built to replace those destroyed by floods in 1461 and 1642. The yellowed drawing we saw hanging in the museum, based on a sketch made in 1722 by a French Jesuit, depicted a synagogue that looked more like a pagoda, fronted and flanked by a series of pavilions and halls dedicated to ancestors.

As the pace of assimilation accelerated and adherence to the traditions and tenets of Judaism diminished, the synagogue fell increasingly into a state of disuse and disrepair. By the middle of 19th century, members had begun to sell some of the community's 13 Torahs, manuscripts, artifacts, and even the synagogue's bricks and tiles. In 1850, a visitor found The Temple of Purity and Truth to be still standing, but 'in deplorable condition.' It was torn down sometime between 1851 and 1866 and by 1867, there were only mounds of rubble and traces of an entrance court. The 400' x 150' site 'on which a succession of imposing synagogues had so proudly stood for seven long centuries was now little more than a scrubby bit of wasteland,' . . . 'almost totally covered with mire and pools of water,' according to visitors.

There's little to see these days on *Jiao Jing Hu Hung*, 'Lane of the Scripture Teaching Religion' as the Chinese call the street where their Jewish neighbors lived. We stopped there on Saturday afternoon and wandered up and down the labyrinthine alleys of Kaifeng's old Jewish quarter where the synagogue once stood, 'a warren of narrow paths bordered by crumbling grey stone walls.' Yes, there is still a Jewish family living here we were told by a neighbor who pointed out the house, but no, that family had moved away and died long ago, our informant quickly added when our guide came over and joined the conversation.

While the rest of the group went off to explore a nearby Moslem mosque, Gina Levy and I followed the twisting lane to where it ended — public toilets at the rear of a hospital that now stood on the site of the old synagogue. The only traces of The Temple of Purity and Truth were maybe the inlaid stones that covered the hospital courtyard and these stone, unlike the steles, had nothing to say. Trying to get back to the bus by another route, we found ourselves

(continued on page 7)

trapped in the hospital courtyard. Rushing past the rooms of the bedridden, there was no time to commiserate, decrepit as the conditions appeared to be. We were 150 years late for the last service.

The first Shabbat service in around 150 years had taken place the night before in a private dining room at our hotel, following dinner hosted by the Kaifeng branch of the China International Travel Service. Our Chinese hosts were 'blown away', as someone in our group put it, when Sharon Fine began the blessing in Hebrew over the Shabbat candles. Sharon had quickly become the most valuable member of our group other than Rabbi Joseph, lending expert assistance at every stop along the way with her translating, interpreting, and organizing skills. Now she was revealing yet another of her amazing abilities, chanting melodies in a language that had not been heard in these parts for many years.

Sitting at Sharon's table was Chin Guang-Jong who, as a Kaifeng resident claiming Jewish descent, had attended the meeting earlier in the afternoon with Wang Yi Shia. Although he had barely said a word, Mr. Chin now seemed rather intense in expressing interest in his Jewish heritage and his wish to obtain books to learn more. He had been too moved to say much at the afternoon meeting, he explained to Sharon. He said he wanted to go to Israel but had been unable to get permission from the Chinese Government.

Replying to a question at the end of his talk, Mr. Wang, choosing his words carefully, had estimated that there were around 300 or 400 people in Kaifeng today who 'could be said to have Jewish ancestors.' Most have blended entirely into the general population, both physically and psychologically, through assimilation and intermarriage. There are still a few, however, who have some Caucasian features like Shi Yu-Lian, 'Director of [the] Kaifeng Study Association on Jewish History' and 'A Descendant of Chinese Jews', as his name card denotes, also present at the meeting, and Chang Shing-Wan, who some of us felt could easily pass as the brother of Eli Schwartz, one of our members. Like Chin Guang-Jong, Chang, a fitness instructor with a straw hat that he wore at a rakish angle, professed interest in Judaism, bringing a Christian Bible with him on a visit to our hotel with the request that Rabbi Joseph give him a Hebrew name.

As Michael Pollak has observed in his book *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries*, 'For the better part of a century after the synagogue was dismantled there were always a few individuals in the city — and there may still be some today — from whose hearts and minds the yearning for a return to Judaism was never totally eradicated.' Although all were as Chinese as their neighbors, 'in the innermost recesses of their hearts and minds some few of them may still choose to regard themselves as *bona fide* members of the House of Israel.'

We had come neither as missionaries 'to fan the

sparks of Judaism still flickering in the hearts of our lapsed co-religionists,' nor to judge how genuine this interest was. We were simply a small group of people with the common denominator of also being from a Diasporic Jewish community in China, interested in studying and learning from the experiences of those who had preceded us by 800 or 900 years. The challenge, in sorting through the diverse elements of this saga, was to relate it to our own experience and situation as Jews and to make sense of the information we were being given. At times, it seemed contradictory, creative, even suspect. The line I read in a short story by John Updike shortly after returning, *Cruise*, expressed my confusion perfectly: 'Was Djerba, a sleepy hot island off of the Tunisian coast, distinguished by a functioning synagogue and a disused thirteenth-century Aragonese fort, *really* the land of the Lotus Eaters?'

It was hard to understand, for example, how the Chin family burial plot with its recently erected memorial tablet, out in the middle of a wheat field far from the city, had come to be on the tourist itinerary. The villagers and their children, some shoeless and half-naked, certainly wondered as well as they gathered around while Rabbi Joseph led kaddish. It was something he had been looking forward to doing, a way of connecting, perhaps, with the ancient community. 'Can you imagine how many years its been

since anyone said kaddish here?' he asked me.

Like Kaifeng, Hong Kong is as sophisticated a city as a modern-day Marco Polo would be likely to find, 'a mart for all things precious and expensive,' as he wrote in his travel diary, where 'shops were spread with rare goods from every corner of the country, and restaurants offered sumptuous dishes famed at home and abroad.'

But unlike the Kaifeng Jews who were almost completely cut off from world Jewry and lived in isolation for centuries, our Congregation in Hong Kong is

more plugged in by modern means of transportation and communication to what's happening internationally than many small communities in the United States. The fact that we can read Torah and scriptures in our native language, English, unlike the Kaifeng Jews who did not translate them into Chinese, contributes to understanding and the continuity of our community. And unlike Kaifeng Jews who were 'under pressure to adapt to the prevailing ethic as the only path to wealth and status,' we have many options. It is not a case of 'assimilate to survive.'

Was the willingness of the Kaifeng Jewish Community to adapt to Chinese ways 'the seeds of its eventual destruction,' as Pollak asks, 'or the reason that the Community was able to exist in almost total isolation from the rest of world Jewry as long as it did?' We could argue the question endlessly. And yet how much does it really matter? Wasn't our trip far more valuable as a vehicle for defining ourselves as a Congregation? It seemed, from the moment Rabbi Joseph and myself showed up at the airport wearing Planet Hollywood caps, only to be outdone by Seth Friedman with a hat that might have come from Crocodile Dundee, that this trip was about community.

(continued on page 8)



Two Chinese Jews as they appeared in 1851 (*Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries*, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1980)

Travel in China is not often a happy experience. Group travel allows at least for the suffering to be shared and the agony alleviated. In the lovely Wu Hua Hotel in Zhengzhou where the air conditioning was barely working, there was the knowledge, as I hung out the window half the night trying to suck in some cool air, that the experience would be commiserated with and laughed over at breakfast. I would tell of the sleepless hours listening to the whistles of trains racing across the Central Plains, the shouts and snores of watchmen, and the barking of their dogs at the construction site across the road.

Gina, the freest of the free spirits aboard The UJC Express, or so we might have named our bus, last to sleep, last to rise, was seldom seen without the broadest of smiles and the strangest kind of drink in hand — juices made from walnuts and almonds and even some wine aged and flavored by a snake in the bottle. The best and worst at the same time was a can of foul-tasting white birch juice with a label proclaiming it as [sic] 'The winner of the Golden Award in the First International for resisting a weak, healthy life.' Was it Gina who ordered the sweet, weird-looking, cone-shaped things the night most of us went grazing in Kaifeng's Night Market? Rabbi Joseph, as game a dining companion as you're likely to find within halachic guidelines, created a Moslem Big Mac with ten sticks of mutton saté, barbequed while we waited at a roadside stall, and then sandwiched in freshly-baked pita bread. Not to be missed were the vegetable dumplings and green beans with chilies, washed down with the local brew. Exotic as our choices were of the local delicacies, we had drawn the line earlier that day at the glass tank filled with scorpions, waiting for their date with a wok at the restaurant where we stopped for lunch. As Rabbi Joseph remarked, 'Every one of the Ten Plagues was on the menu.'

Maybe we were just lucky. How else to account for the things that came up unexpectedly and made me feel so stupid for being the only one not to bring a camera? Where are the words for a Sunday morning in May when the sound of firecrackers led us to a country wedding on the banks of the Yellow River, and a bride so beautiful in her fuchsia gown that you'd trade your life for a village lad's?

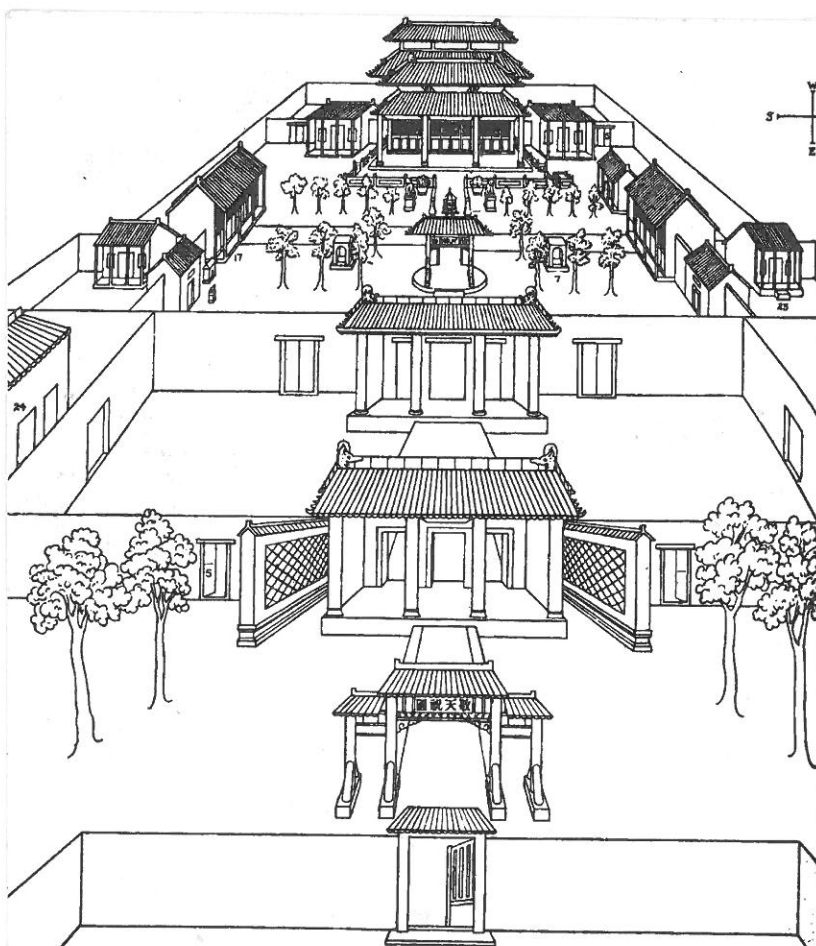
Dreams unfulfilled, there must have been many, and knowing the language but not the words drew a few of us, as a Buddhist monastery was closing late Saturday afternoon, to a blind beggar outside the gate, singing his heart out. Inside the large monastery the air was dead, no monks to be seen, and many huge, golden Buddhas gazed out in serene contemplation from elaborately decorated pagodas. Religion, it seemed, was no more alive here than in the Catholic church we had come across earlier in the old Jewish quarter where two old Chinese ladies approached Rabbi Joseph with tears in their eyes, thinking he might be a priest. As dusk descended, the crowd began to grow, and the beggar, accompanying himself with two wood sticks that he beat together, pitched his lament to a level that rose above the noise of the traffic, singing about the kind of pain you can't relieve, even with a handful of coins.

What we were up to was not exactly a new idea. After all, the Jewish heritage industry is long established and has made for many happy marriages between travel agents and tourist bureaus, particularly in Israel and Europe. But our trip was paradigmatic of a number of things The UJC does well —

or for that matter Reform Judaism — religious and social — which interacted to raise the dividends of this excursion well above that of the standard tour and banquet routine served up to the usual herds that swarm the plains. It made bad breakfasts good and turned cold runny eggs, warm juice, and strangely sweet-tasting toast into a meal for a minor convention of comedians — real food, if not for thought, than at least a few laughs. As Al Fine, who had done such a brilliant, thorough job in organizing the trip, was to say after his return, "Everybody I spoke to said 'I heard you had a good time.' They didn't ask anything about Scriptures Lane or if we saw the old synagogue site, they just wanted to know when we were going to go on another trip."

Wasn't this The UJC's unique contribution to the continuing saga of adult education — not another market for religion, perhaps, but maybe for Jewish retailers, as least as

long as we had Mel Satok? For it was Mel, again, as we studied a scale model of the Yellow River, who pointed to a rock column high above the river, accessed by a single, steep, winding staircase from an adjoining Taoist temple, and said, 'Now that, Bob, would be a great location for you to open a store.'



Exterior view of the Kaifeng synagogue

From a drawing prepared on site in 1722 by Jean Domenge and revised by Joseph Brucker [reprinted from *Mandarin, Jews, and Missionaries*]

Howard's Farewell

(Adapted from a talk by Dr. Howard Wolf at a recent farewell dinner given for him by colleagues in Hong Kong University's English Department and friends)

Farewells are deeply set in the American experience. In some ways, America was founded, from the European side, by saying farewell to the 'old world.' And, as you may know, George Washington (who must be mentioned on occasions like this), bid a famous farewell to his troops on December 4, 1783, in New York City where he shook the hand of each 'cherished veteran' before he set off for his beloved Mt. Vernon in Virginia on the banks of the Potomac River.

Of course this doesn't quite put me in Washington's league. I need another connection and I have one in this: as Washington retired at the end of his second term preferring the pleasures of private life to the enticements of office and power, so I have chosen to leave you, a difficult decision for me, at the end of my second contract (with Hong Kong University).

Grandfatherhood, filial piety, the dramatic shape of three years ('graduating' with the students whom I first taught in our department), and the call of ancient friendships tell me that my three years before the mast-ercharge should come to an end.

My house in Amherst, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, is hardly as stately as Mt. Vernon, but it is built also of red brick and its library, already significant, augmented with my Hong Kong acquisitions including articles and books by friends here, will give me ample opportunity to review and relive these good years with you.

You probably still don't see much of a similarity between me and the 'founding father' of my homeland, and I must confess that I share your puzzlement. But there is a third compelling reason. Washington had the good sense to meet with his troops for the last time in front of a famous tavern (Fraunce's) or a tavern that later became famous.

Washington knew that the prospect of a good meal and a tankard of ale (for those of his poor troops who could afford it) would lessen the sorrow of departure. He knew that a good menu in the right venue was the most appropriate way to conclude this service; that celebration, not commemoration, should be the final note. So once again, Washington and I seem to be on the same wavelength.

Zitzich, Red Yiddish Sit, Speak Yiddish

If you feel deserted by your Yiddish-speaking friends, don't despair. Your presence will be greatly welcomed any Friday night after Shabbat services at the table of Mrs. Hertha Horowitz who is looking for friends to share the pleasures of this rich linguistic mélange.

Hopefully, we will soon be hearing a table of UJC members, friends, and visitors speaking Yiddish on Friday nights at — what place could be more appropriate — the American Club.

Yiddish, a form of German heard by Jewish settlers from northern France about a thousand years ago, took root and expanded in later centuries in the ghettos and became the native tongue of East European or Ashkenazic Jews.

Ex-member creates, overcomes worst fears Out of Hock, Tortured Teacher to Return to U.S.

Growing up in a Yiddish-speaking household and sometimes hearing his parents use the expression *hok mir a chainik*, Dr. Howard Wolf harbored serious fears throughout his childhood about ever coming or being sent to China. He was certain the expression meant 'hocked in China' and referred to what was likely to happen to anyone coming to these parts.

With the unpleasant prospect in mind of ending up in a pawnshop far from home, therefore, his first inclination was to turn down the teaching opportunity offered later in life by Hong Kong University. He was relieved to learn, however, after consulting Leo Rosten's *The Joys of Yiddish*, that the term meant nothing more sinister than, literally, striking or knocking a teapot or kettle and was used, figuratively, to mean 'talking too much' or 'constant chatter.' It may have derived from the meaningless rattling of a cover of a boiling pot, the noisy whistling of steam in a kettle, or possibly children improvising a drum and beating on a kettle. As a result, the expression 'Please, *hok nit kain chainik*' ('Please, stop talking so much' or 'Stop talking nonsense') came to be heard in some, if not all Jewish households.

In learning recently that Dr. Wolf had just become a grandparent, UJC member Jane Horan expressed surprise that he could be a grandfather at so young an age and asked what his secret was of staying so youthful-looking. Dr. Wolf pondered on the question for a few moments, then slowly stroking his stubby beard, replied 'I don't know, maybe it comes from living a tortured life.' One recalls Dr. Wolf, speaking of the former wife of someone very close to him, thinking it might even have been himself, saying, 'She broke every commandment there was and even invented a few.'

Having survived various ordeals, the prolific writer and teacher leaves Hong Kong after three years with Hong Kong University's English Department and many UJC Shabbat services, buffet suppers, and get-togethers. He resumes his teaching duties in Buffalo this fall.

For those who wish to say in touch, his address is: Professor Howard Wolf, Department of English, S.U.N.Y. at Buffalo, Amherst, N.Y. 14260, U.S.A.

Relax, Help The UJC

Clare Ray, offering what she calls a 'relaxing Aromatherapy massage' or an evening of Reiki and Reflexology, will donate all fees received in September and October from her holistic therapy practice to The UJC. Those wishing to make an appointment and experience 'these stress-relieving therapies' may contact Clare at 894-8974 (telephone and fax).



New York City School Attracts a Rainbow Coalition of Jews Finding Unity in Religious Diversity

As Charlton Heston staggers across the screen through the desert sandstorms of Cecil B. DeMille's 'The Ten Commandments,' eager hands shoot up from around the seventh-grade classroom.

'*VaYivrach Moshe mi'pnei Paroh vayeshev b'eretz Midyan*,' one student declares with authority. ('And Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midyan.')

'That's it,' the teacher replies. 'We've just watched a 20-minute *midrash* on that one [Biblical verse].'

The students nod in agreement, their eyes glued to the television, and resume their Torah lesson at the Abraham Joshua Heschel school.

The Heschel school is an up-and-coming New York Jewish day school with an open-minded approach to Jewish education. Catering to students who run the gamut of religious affiliation, from modern Orthodox to Reform to the unaffiliated, Heschel enhances its serious curriculum with an emphasis on creativity and diversity. Inventive teaching techniques, Heschel's administrators say — like the showing of DeMille's epic film as a 'modern-day *midrash*' — are crucial to sustaining Jewish continuity.

'Our mandate,' comments the school's director of Judaic studies, Rabbi Dov Lerea, 'is to enable this generation of kids to connect authentically to Judaism.'

Heschel opened its doors in 1983 to a group of 28 students; this year, more than 350 children are enrolled in its pre-school through eight-grade classes, and the school plans to expand into the 21st century.

Tucked away in a brownstone on the Upper West Side, the Heschel school holds classes in spacious rooms with student art prominently displayed on every wall, a Macintosh computer for each grade, and even a loft in several rooms where students 'can go,' according to one Heschel board member, Rae Janvey, 'when they need to chill out.'

The student body reflects a synthesis of tradition and modernity. First-grade children recite the morning prayers by heart, under the watchful eye of a female teacher wearing *tefillin*. Fourth-grade boys too cool to wear *kipot*, wear baseball caps — acceptable by a school policy that asks only that their heads be covered.

'Our goal is to provide an environment where students from different backgrounds learn respect for people's differences,' says the school's director, Roanna Shorofsky.

Named for the 20th century Jewish rabbi and theologian who championed Jewish scholarship and civil rights, and who marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma, Alabama, the Heschel school tries to inculcate its students with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's sense of social justice. It also strives to follow in his footsteps by carrying out joint programs with black students. In conjunction with a Jewish Museum exhibit, 'Bridges and Boundaries — African Americans and American Jews,' the middle school swapped classroom time with students at Frederick Douglas and Central Park East schools. At Heschel, more than 60 of these middle-school students sat in a circle studying the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. 'Within minutes these kids were discussing the nature of human evil and whether people were capable of real change,' recalls Rabbi Lerea, who led the program.

The administrators at Heschel all speak in terms of 'dialogue,' 'pluralism' and 'Jewish imperatives,' stressing that their students learn to 'take responsibility for a world that needs fixing.' It is as if they are raising a generation of child-philosophers smack-dab in the middle of New

York City, halfway between 42nd Street and Harlem. Fourth-grade students in a social studies program discuss 'What makes humans human?' and a fifth-grade Hebrew teacher asks her class 'What is an ethical person?,' and gets a roomful of raised hands in response.

'This is not a school for people uncomfortable with children asking questions,' says Ms. Shorofsky.

Heschel school tuition runs an average of \$9,500 each year, which buys a carefully planned educational system. The program for nursery and kindergarten children 'integrates Judaic and general studies through . . . interdisciplinary experiences linking the arts, the physical and social sciences, and the humanities,' according to the school's 'Early Childhood' plan. 'These experiences foster high-order thinking and problem-solving skills.' Rigorous enough for your four-year-old?

The directors of the Heschel school admit that accommodating the disparate religious practices of Orthodox and Reform parents can be trying, but Ms. Shorofsky claims that the families associated with the Heschel school are open-minded, even when they differ in their beliefs. 'We're a model for how pluralism can really work,' Ms. Janvey claims.

Exiting the Heschel school building one can hear the high-pitched rendition of '*Hevenu Shalom Aleichem*' coming to an end in the second-grade music class by the door. A new song begins, unrecognizable at first, so foreign does it sound coming these young Jewish children:

'We shall overcome . . .'

■ Benjamin Pollock

Reprinted from *Forward*, January 21, 1994.

Retreat Options Reviewed

Given the difficulty of finding an appropriate site for a September retreat, the Executive Committee is looking at possibilities for later in the year. In light of the recent growth of the Congregation, it's believed there may be enough interest to support both a low budget (\$250-\$450) weekend session with the emphasis on study at a retreat site in Hong Kong or the New Territories and a weekend, relax and study retreat at a resort hotel.

The Westin Resort in Macau has offered The UJC a conference package that would cost around \$1,500 per person (double occupancy, no room charge for children under 18). The Westin offers nature trails, indoor and outdoor pools, day care center, fitness center, buffet meals, etc. **If you are interested in either or both of these options, please complete and return or fax (523-3961) the form below to the The UJC office. Your reply does not represent a commitment.**

☐ I (we) prefer the bare bones retreat with the emphasis on religious study.

☐ I (we) prefer a weekend of relaxation and study with The UJC at The Westin Resort or similar.

☐ I (we) would participate in both of the above.

Name _____

Tel. _____ Fax _____

Mazel Tov!

Matthew Ginsburg and Joanna Fung on their marriage
 Andrew Starger on the birth of his son Jesse
 Mollie Baum-Sherbin and Robert Sherbin on the birth of a daughter Baila Ilene
 Larry and Catherine Lipsher on the birth of a daughter Joanna Zheng
 Daniel and Huiping Krassenstein on the birth of a daughter Mellisa Dai-Li
 Philip Marcovici and Peggy Lui on the birth of a son Luca
 Mary and Dennis Leventhal on David's graduation from HKIS
 Veronica and Tomas Frankenbg on David's graduation from HKIS
 Sharon Yoel on her election to the Executive Committee

Thanks!

Susan Millodot for making a beautiful batik *Huppah* for The UJC
 The Frankenberg family for donating silver candle sticks to The UJC
 Neil Horowitz for leading Shabbat services
 Robert Meyer and Chuck Monat for the use of their conference rooms
 Mel Bazerman for organizing and running the raffle and his helpers, Lois Shulman, Sonia Park, and Natalie Richter
 Mel and Paulette Bazerman and Grace Green for organizing the Rabbi Roast
 Amy Meyer, Susan Millodot, and Zandra and Lisa Diamond for helping with mailings

Our Sincere Condolences to

Henry Tannas on the death of his mother, Shoshana Rosettenstein
 Friends and family of Mr. Karel Weiss, long-time member of the Hong Kong Jewish Community, who died June 23, 1994

Donations

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

(used by the Rabbi to subvent program expenses and help those who may need financial support to participate in a program)

Susan and Michel Millodot and Diana and David Muller in honor of the Adult B'Nai Mitzvah Class
 Philip Marcovici in honor of the birth of Luca
 Mollie and Bob Sherbin in honor of the birth of Baila Ilene

Rabbi's Fund

Wendy and Howard Berk in honor of the Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class
 Rita and Karl Bongarten in honor of the Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class

UJC General Fund

Al & Sharon Fine in honor of the Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class and the Bar Mitzvah of Jesse Alter and forthcoming Bar Mitzvah of Doran Blinderman
 Robert Meyer in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Jesse Alter and forthcoming Bar Mitzvah of Doran Blinderman
 Clare Ray in honor of the Adult B'Nai Mitzvah Class
 Amy and Don DaSaro in honor of the Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class
 Ron and Lois Shulman in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter Heather

Services Fund

(to help defray the expenses of renting function rooms for Shabbat and Holiday services)

Carol Betson and Hank Goldstein
 Pat and Bernie Alter
 Jacqueline and David Blinderman
 Matthew Ginsburg and Joanna Fung
 Natalie Richter and Gideon Sheps

Prayerbook Bookplate Fund

Amy and Don DaSaro
 Susan and Michel Millodot

UJC Funds: Opportunities for giving

There are many wonderful ways to honor, thank, and/or memorialize friends and loved ones in our tradition. One special way is to make a donation to one of the UJC Funds. These funds have specific purposes which in the main help our Congregation with its expenses. Please consider a donation to a UJC Fund as a beautiful tribute to someone special.

Sharon Yoel Joins Executive Committee

Sharon Yoel was unanimously elected to the Executive Committee at its June meeting to replace Veronica Frankenberg who has left Hong Kong to return to Argentina.

Mrs. Yoel, actively involved with The Jewish Women's Association and Carmel School, is expected to bring valuable knowledge and experience to the Committee.

The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong

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 Exec. Administrator: Ms Sarah Milliard
 Chairman: GPO Box 6083, Hong Kong
 Tel. 735-3037, Fax 730-5507

Executive Committee

Chairman, editor, *The Shofar* Bob Green
 Vice-chairmen . . . Carol Betson, Mark Michelson
 Treasurer Peter Kaminsky
 Secretary Elane Fine
 Membership Mark Michelson, Elane Fine
 Children's Ed. Elane Fine
 Adult Education Mollie Blaum-Sherbin
 Financial Karen Handmaker
 Fund-raising Mel Bazerman, Albert Fine
 Legal Robert Meyer
 Religious/Ritual Neal Horowitz
 Liaison Dennis Leventhal, Charles Monat
 Social/Planning Janet Golden, Sharon Yoel
 Mollie Blaum-Sherbin

The Shofar is published bi-monthly by The UJC. Requests for copies and notification of address changes should be addressed to The UJC office.

Services: July/August/September 1994

Shabbat Services

Shabbat services will be conducted by lay members of the Congregation pending the expected arrival in late August of Rabbi Howard Kosovske.

Friday, July 15, 6:30 P.M.

Shabbat Family Service
The American Club

Friday, July 22, 6:30 P.M.

Shabbat Family Service
The American Club

Friday, July 29, 6:30 P.M.

Shabbat Family Service
The American Club

Friday, August 5, 6:30 P.M.

Shabbat Family Service
The American Club

Friday, August 12, 6:30 P.M.

Shabbat Family Service
The American Club

Friday, August 19, 6:30 P.M.

Shabbat Family Service
The American Club

Friday, August 26, 6:30 P.M.

Shabbat Family Service
The American Club

Friday, September 2, 6:30 P.M.

Shabbat Family Service
The American Club

The American Club

Kam Shan Room, 49/f,

Exchange Square II, Central District

Services are followed by an
Italian buffet supper

Members, \$135.00 adults,

\$85.00 children under 12

Non-members, \$150.00 and \$100.00

Welcome visitors and non-members

Ever since its founding six years ago, The UJC has opened its doors to visitors and non-members who wished to attend High Holiday services.

At the same time, to help the Congregation meet the many expenses involved in doing this, it is hoped visitors make a generous contribution.

As a guideline, The UJC suggests a minimum donation of HK\$800 or US\$100 per person for admission to one or all of the High Holiday services.

Visitors and non-members may pay at the reception desk immediately before services with cash or check (H.K. or U.S. dollars). This saves the time and expense of a follow-up call or letter. Contributions are deductible for either H.K. or U.S. tax purposes.

Alternatively, visitors may choose to become UJC members, as follows, and receive, in addition to High Holiday tickets, regular mailings of this newsletter and full membership privileges. Applications are available at the reception desk outside Shouson Theatre or by calling The UJC office at 523-2985.

Membership Fees

Individual

* HK\$1,800.00 (US\$235.00)

Family

HK\$3,000.00 (US\$390.00)

Non-resident (individual)

HK\$800.00 (US\$100.00)

* Residents 30 and under may elect to pay HK\$1,200.00 (US\$155.00) for individual membership

The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong

High Holidays and Shabbat Shuvah Schedule of Services

5755/1994

ROSH HASHANAH

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Monday, September 5, 6:30 P.M.

Rosh Hashanah Day

Thursday, September 6

Children's Service, 9:30 A.M.

Morning Service, 10:30 P.M.

Shabbat Shuvah

Friday, September 9

(time and place to be announced)

YOM KIPPUR

Kol Nidre

Wednesday, September 14, 7:30 P.M.

Yom Kippur Day

Thursday, September 15

Children's Service, 9:30 A.M.

Morning Service, 10:30 P.M.

Recess

Discussion, 3:00 P.M.

Yizkor (Memorial Service), 4:00 P.M.

Afternoon and Neila

(concluding) Services, 4:30 P.M.

Hong Kong Arts Centre

Shouson Theatre, 1/F

2 Harbour Road

Wanchai, Hong Kong

Parking available at Convention

Centre and Shui On Centre

car parks, Harbour Road



Stay in touch with
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